



**7** Sri Lanka parliament speaker warns crisis risks starvation



**12** 'Infurrection': Fox terrorizes humans in Capitol rampage



**16** De Bruyne gives City slender lead over stubborn Atletico



Ramadan Timings	
Fajr	04:12
Shurooq	05:33
Dhuhr	11:51
Asr	15:23
Maghrib	18:09
Isha	19:27



# US and UK announce new sanctions against Russia

## Hundreds of civilians found dead; Putin's daughters targeted



SEVERODONETSK: Residents run near a burning house following a shelling in Severodonetsk, Donbas region, on April 6, 2022, as Ukraine tells residents in the country's east to evacuate 'now or risk death' ahead of a feared Russian onslaught on the Donbas region, which Moscow has declared its top prize. — AFP

KYIV: The US and Britain announced new sanctions against Russia Wednesday after Ukraine said hundreds of civilians were found dead around its capital, as Kyiv warned residents in the east of the country to get out "now" ahead of a feared assault. The White House unveiled measures targeting Russia's top public and private banks and two daughters of President Vladimir Putin, while Britain sanctioned two banks-and vowed to eliminate all Russian oil and gas imports by year-end.

Their actions followed an international outcry after Ukraine said its forces found hundreds of civilians dead around the capital Kyiv, including the town of Bucha, after Russian troops withdrew. In a video address to the UN Security Council on Tuesday, Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky showed harrowing images of corpses-including of children-that he said were victims of Russian atrocities.

The Kremlin denies responsibility and on Wednesday, Putin accused Ukrainian authorities of being behind "crude and cynical provocations" in Bucha, in a call with Hungary's prime minister, the

Kremlin said. The Russian withdrawal from areas around Kyiv and the north is part of a shift in focus towards Ukraine's southeast, in a bid to create a land bridge between occupied Crimea and Moscow-backed separatist statelets in the region of Donbas.

Ukraine Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk on Wednesday warned residents in the eastern Kharkiv, Lugansk and Donetsk regions to leave immediately due a feared Russian attack. "It has to be done now because later people will be under fire and face the threat of death," she wrote on Telegram. NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said there was no sign Putin had dropped "his ambition to control the whole of Ukraine". "We have to be realistic and realise that this may last for a long time, for many months, for even years," he said ahead of a meeting with NATO foreign ministers.

Zelensky called for Russia's exclusion from the UN Security Council, where it is one of five members with veto power, and made an impassioned plea for action in response to the civilian killings.

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### Ramadan Kareem

## Holy Ramadan in Prophet's words

By Teresa Lesher

S alman Al-Farasi (RA) narrated that the Prophet (PBUH) delivered a sermon on the last day of the month of Sha'ban. It can be translated as the following: "O People! The month of Allah (Ramadan) has come with its mercies, blessings and forgiveness. Allah has decreed this month the best of all months. The days of this month are the best among the days and the nights are the best among the nights and the hours during Ramadan are the best among the hours.

This is a month in which you have been invited by Him (to fast and pray). Allah has honored you in it. In every breath you take is a reward of Allah, your sleep is worship, your good deeds are accepted and your invocations are answered. "Therefore, you must invoke your Lord in all earnestness with hearts free from sin and evil, and pray that Allah may help you to keep fast, and to recite the Holy Quran."

Indeed! Miserable is the one who is deprived of Allah's forgiveness in this great month. While fasting, remember the hunger and thirst of the Day of Judgment. Give alms to the poor and needy. Pay respect to your elders, have sympathy for your youngsters and be kind towards your relatives and kinsmen. Guard your tongue against unworthy words, and your eyes from scenes that are not worth seeing and your ears from sounds that should not be heard.

Be kind to orphans so that if your children may become orphans they will also be treated with kindness. Do repent to Allah for your sins and supplicate with raised hands at the times of prayer as these are the best times, during which Allah Almighty looks at His servants with mercy. Allah Answers if they supplicate, Responds if they call, Grants if He is asked, and Accepts if they entreat.

"O people! You have made your conscience the slave of your desires. Make it free by invoking Allah for forgiveness. Your back may break from the heavy load of your sins, so prostrate yourself before Allah for long intervals, and

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## Is this the end of zero-COVID strategy?

PARIS: Jenny Leung, who lost her job as a waitress last month due to Hong Kong's zero-Covid strategy, has one question: "What was it all for?" Her frustration was in response to Hong Kong indicating it could transition towards living with the virus, though the city's leaders have since said it will stick with zero-COVID. Leung, 29, called it a "half-hearted attempt" after more than two years of "a zero-COVID mindset that really hurt all of us".

China finds itself increasingly isolated in pursuing the strategy, which

uses harsh localized lockdowns to snuff out even a small number of infections, after other early adopters such as Australia and New Zealand abandoned it last year. A new daily record number of COVID cases in China on Wednesday of more than 20,000 piled further pressure on Beijing's zero-COVID strategy as millions remain locked down in financial centre Shanghai.

Although Hong Kong now insists it will stick with its zero-COVID policy despite easing some restrictions, experts suggest that the strategy's days could be numbered. Such policies saved lives by fending off worse outbreaks in the early stages of the pandemic, but the availability of vaccines - and the emergence of the more contagious but less severe

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SHANGHAI: People wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) transfer daily food supplies and necessities for local residents during the COVID-19 lockdown in Shanghai. — AFP

## Why are there fears in Jerusalem?

JERUSALEM: After 11 lives were lost in a spate of attacks, some linked to the Islamic State group, Zionist entity placed its forces on high alert for Ramadan, which began last weekend. Why has the Jewish state stepped up security for the Muslim holy month of fasting?

**Why is Jerusalem important?**  
Every evening during Ramadan,

thousands of Muslims gather for prayers at Al-Aqsa mosque in east Jerusalem. Al-Aqsa-known by Jews as the Temple Mount-is located in the Old City in mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem. The third-holiest site in Islam, it is a flashpoint in the long-running Middle East conflict that is often the scene of clashes. Last year, nightly demonstrations in Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa compound escalated into 11 days of war between Zionists and Hamas, the Islamist movement that runs the Gaza Strip.

Violent demonstrations have already left dozens injured this Ramadan. On Tuesday, while visiting the West Bank, Prime Minister Naftali

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JERUSALEM: Zionist security forces detain a Palestinian youth outside Damascus Gate in Jerusalem's Old City during Ramadan. — AFP

## TikTok is having a bad war: Experts

PARIS: The war in Ukraine has rapidly positioned TikTok as the number one source of misinformation thanks to its gigantic number of users and minimal filtering of content, experts say. Every day, Shayan Sardarizadeh, a journalist with the BBC's disinformation team, ploughs through a hallucinatory mix of fake and misleading information about the war

being spewed out on the video-sharing site.

"TikTok is really not having a good war," he told AFP. "I haven't seen another platform with so much false content," he added. "We've seen it all: videos from past conflicts being recycled, genuine footage presented in a misleading way, things that are so obviously false but still get tens of millions of views." He said the most disturbing were fake live-streams in which users pretended to be on the ground in Ukraine but were using footage from other conflicts or even video games - and then asking for money to support their "reporting".

"Millions tune in and watch. They even add fake gunshots and explosions," said Sardarizadeh. Anastasiya Zhyrmon of Access Now, an advocacy group, said it was no excuse to say that the war came as a surprise. "This conflict has been escalating since 2014 and these problems of Kremlin propaganda and misinformation have been raised with TikTok long before the invasion," she told AFP. "They've promised to double their efforts and partner with content checkers, but I'm not sure they are taking this obligation seriously," she added. — AFP