



5 North Korea tests new guided weapons system



6 Human trafficking raises alarm in divided Cyprus



15 Liverpool book Cup final, end Man City's treble bid



Ramadan Timings	
Fajr	03:56
Shurooq	05:19
Dhuhr	11:47
Asr	15:22
Maghrib	18:16
Isha	19:37

VOLVO

Pope calls for free access to holy sites in Jerusalem

Pontiff urges peace for Ukraine in this 'Easter of war'



VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis delivers the Easter 'Urbi et Orbi' blessing from the balcony of St Peter's Basilica square in The Vatican. — AFP

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis on Sunday called for free access to the holy sites in Jerusalem as he delivered his annual Easter address amid simmering violence between Zionists and Palestinians in the Holy City. "May there be peace for the Middle East, racked by years of conflict and division. On this glorious day, let us ask for peace upon Jerusalem and peace upon all those who love her, Christians, Jews and Muslims alike."

May Zionists, Palestinians and all who dwell in the Holy City, together with the pilgrims, experience the beauty of peace, dwell in fraternity and enjoy free access to the Holy Places in mutual respect for the rights of each," he said. Clashes between Palestinian demonstrators and Zionist police wounded more than 20 protesters on Sunday morning in and around Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, the site of major clashes two days earlier, police said.

The latest tensions in Jerusalem come as all three Abrahamic faiths mark major festivals: Jewish Passover, Christian Easter and the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Weeks of mounting tensions saw two deadly attacks by Palestinians in or near Zionist coastal city of Tel Aviv in late March and early April, alongside mass arrests by Zionist forces

in the occupied West Bank.

More than 20 Zionists and Palestinians were wounded in several incidents in and around Jerusalem's flashpoint Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, two days after major violence at the site. The latest clashes take the number of wounded since Friday to more than 170, at a tense time when the Jewish Passover festival coincides with Ramadan. They also follow deadly violence in Zionist entity and the occupied West Bank in late March and early this month that has killed 36 people.

Early on Sunday morning, "hundreds" of Palestinian demonstrators inside the mosque compound started gathering piles of stones, shortly before the arrival of Jewish visitors, police said. Jews are allowed to visit but not to pray at the site, also known as Temple Mount, the holiest place in Judaism and third-holiest in Islam. The police said its forces had entered the compound in order to "remove" the demonstrators and "re-establish order".

The Palestinian Red Crescent said 19 Palestinians were wounded, including at least five who were hospitalized. It said some had been wounded with rubber-coated steel bullets. An AFP team near the entrance to the compound early Sunday morning

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Top court has no 'jurisdiction' over citizenship issues

KUWAIT: A top Kuwaiti court on Sunday, ruled that matters dealing with citizenship and naturalization lie outside of its "jurisdiction," saying that these issues are mainly related to national sovereignty and justice. The Court of Cassation has no say on cases dealing with citizenship, Kuwait's highest court said in a statement. Court of Cassation is the higher judicial body with power to try cases contested by the Court of Appeals. It supervises the interpretation of laws and its proper enforcement. At this court, litigants may appeal only on points of law alone, such as violation of law or on erroneous application or interpretation. — KUNA

Weavers turn rags into rugs

NEFTA: Najet unravels an old pair of jeans, raw material for a designer carpet: traditional, eco-friendly crafts are being adapted for new markets thanks to a project born in the Tunisian desert. "I learned to weave at a young age, from my mother," said the 52-year-old from the oasis town of Nefta, 500 kilometers south of Tunis.

Now, she is making a living from it. She is selling her Turkish-style kilim rugs via Shanti, a social enterprise that helps artisans from across the North African country reach buyers and bring vital revenue into some of its most marginalized communities. Shanti is the brainchild of Najet's Franco-Tunisian nephew Mehdi Baccouche. "Unstitching old jumpers,

tearing up old cotton garments, making rugs out of them, it's a folk art found in all Tunisian homes," he told AFP.

While the skill "has been around forever", reaching buyers is a challenge, he added. Back in 2014, he had asked his aunt to weave carpets for his friends, soon moving to selling them via Facebook. Seeing the potential, two years later he created Shanti, which buys carpets and takes charge of getting them to consumers. It also employs designers who work with artisans to improve their design skills and make their products more marketable. "These are my creations, they come out of my imagination and Shanti approved them," Najet said. — AFP (See Page 11)



NEFTA: Fatima Alhamal, the local coordinator for Shanti, a social enterprise that helps artisans from across the North African country, is pictured at the rug weaving workshop in the southwestern Tunisian oasis of Nefta. — AFP

Lessons of Ramadan: Gratitude

By Teresa Leshner

By the end of the day, when I finally sit down to a glass of cool water and a few dates, I am overcome with a sense of gratitude. I realize what a blessing food and water are. I realize that many people do not have access to clean water or nutritious food. I realize that many people never feel the satisfaction I do at the end of a balanced and delicious meal. I become aware of how blessed I am, and as I take those first sips and savor the first tastes, I am filled with gratitude.

Not only for the food and drink, but for the opportunity to express my devotion to God through fasting in daylight hours, just as He has asked me to do. I feel fortunate that I have been guided to an annual ritual that, despite the feelings of weakness I experience, strengthens me in every way - physically, mentally and spiritually.

Maryam, mother of Jesus, is a fine example of someone grateful for God's many blessings. The Quran says that when Zachariah found food with her when he visited her, he asked where she got it from. Her response is quite interesting.

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Ukrainians vow to fight to the end

WASHINGTON: Ukraine's prime minister said Sunday that the strategic port city of Mariupol "has not fallen" and that the encircled forces defending the city from Russian attack will "fight to the end." Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal was speaking to ABC's "This Week" hours after a Russian ultimatum for the surrender of those fighters, holed up in a fortress-like steelworks, had expired. "The city still has not fallen," he said. "There's still our military forces,

our soldiers. So they will fight to the end." In a sign of the desperate situation facing the surrounded forces, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Saturday that if they were killed, peace talks with Moscow would be scrapped.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had already said the talks were at a "dead end." Shmyhal said on Sunday that Ukraine wanted a diplomatic solution "if possible," but added: "If the Russians wouldn't like negotiations, we'll fight to the end, absolutely. We will not surrender. We won't leave our country, our families, our land. We will fight to the end."

Asked about reports that Putin believes Russia is winning the war, Shmyhal pushed back.

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47 killed in Afghanistan

KABUL: The death toll from Pakistani military air strikes in the eastern Afghanistan provinces of Khost and Kunar has jumped to at least 47, officials said Sunday, as Islamabad urged Kabul to act against militants launching attacks from Afghan soil. Border tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan have risen since the Taliban seized power last year,

with Islamabad claiming militant groups are carrying out regular attacks from Afghan soil.

The Taliban deny harboring Pakistani militants, but are also infuriated by a fence Islamabad is erecting along their 2,700-kilometre border. Tension between the two neighbors further deepened after Saturday's pre-dawn air assault which Afghan officials now claim was carried out by Pakistani military helicopters. The air strikes hit residential houses in Khost and Kunar along the border, Afghan officials said. Earlier officials had said Pakistani forces had fired rockets.

"Forty-one civilians, mainly women and children,

were killed and 22 others were wounded in air strikes by Pakistani forces near the Durand line in Khost province," Shabir Ahmad Osmani, director of information and culture in Khost told AFP. Najibullah, an official with the Ministry for Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice in Khost said the death toll in the province was 48. "Twenty-four people were killed from one family itself," he told AFP.

Jamshid, a tribal leader from Khost, also confirmed that the death toll was more than 40. "I went yesterday with several people to donate blood for treating the wounded in Khost strike," Jamshid said. — AFP



KHARKIV: Firefighters try to extinguish a fire in a residential building following bombardment in central Kharkiv on April 17, 2022, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine. — AFP