



3 Ghabqas make cautious return after 2-year absence in Kuwait



4 Abdulrahman: Losing reputation and morals cannot be recovered



16 Lakers and LeBron on the brink after Denver rout



Ramadan Timings	
Fajr	04:13
Shurooq	05:34
Dhuhr	11:51
Asr	15:23
Maghrib	18:08
Isha	19:27



Germany, France, Lithuania expel Russian diplomats

US, Britain seek Russia's suspension from UN Rights Council



KRAMATORSK: A young girl cries before the train leaves the eastern city of Kramatorsk, in the Donbas region. — AFP

BERLIN: Germany on Monday expelled a "significant number" of Russian diplomats in what Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock called a response to the "unbelievable brutality" the Kremlin had unleashed in Ukraine. The move, AFP has learned, involves 40 envoys and follows similar moves by European partners in recent days as a reaction to Russia's war on its neighbor.

"The images from Bucha speak to unbelievable brutality by the Russian leadership and by those who follow its propaganda with a boundless will to exterminate," Baerbock said, referring to the town near Kyiv where dozens of bodies were found in mass graves or littering the streets. The Kremlin has rejected Western accusations that Russian forces were responsible.

However, Baerbock said "similar images" were to be feared "in other places that Russian troops have occupied". She said it was essential to "stand up for our freedom and be prepared to defend it". "That is why the German government has decided to declare a significant number of staff of the Russian embassy, who have worked every day here in Germany against

our freedom, against the cohesion of our society, as persona non grata," she said.

Baerbock described the diplomats' presence "as a threat" to the more than 300,000 Ukrainians "who have sought protection here" since the invasion began. "We will no longer tolerate that—we communicated that to the Russian ambassador this afternoon," she said. Baerbock said Germany would take further steps "with our partners" including "imposing harsher sanctions on Russia, decisively expanding support for Ukraine's fighting forces and bolstering NATO's eastern flank".

In another development, France on Monday said it would expel 35 Russian diplomats as part of a joint European action after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. "France decided this evening to expel a number of Russian personnel with diplomatic status stationed in France whose activities are against our security interests," the foreign ministry said in a statement. A ministry source, who asked not to be named, said 35 Russian diplomats would be expelled. "This action is part of a European approach," the foreign ministry

Continued on Page 6

Ramadan Kareem

What do you know about Ramadan?

By Karima Badr Kandil, translated by Arwa Aladd

Did you know that if you want to acquire a habit or give up another, you must commit to it for around 27 to 36 continuous days? Welcome to the best training program ever, at Islam Academy. It's Ramadan! Ramadan is a month that Muslims sanctify and feel its importance. It's also a month wherein the Muslims follow some acts of worship and righteous deeds that they have saved throughout the year, in order to perform them in this blessed month.

I had some personal experiences with this topic that I would like to share with you: When I asked some random non-Muslim people what they would like to know about Ramadan, their questions were about how I could endure hunger and thirst for all these periods of time, especially since most Muslims live in very hot climates! I always answer, "Yes, my friend, you are right, it sounds really terrifying when you think about it, but this feeling of hunger is only there for the first few days. Yet, those who suffer, at first, are, usually, the ones who have neglected fasting during the whole year."

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) advised us to fast on Mondays and Thursdays of every week, or to, at least, fast three days in the middle of each lunar month. Those who don't practice fasting will probably feel a severe lack of water, sugar, sleep, and food (and smoke for smokers) for the first days. Fortunately, it will gradually decrease during the first three days when the body gets used to fasting and food and drink will not occupy the mind.

Rather, a Muslim faster's mind will be free to enjoy peace and their heart will be tranquil. Ramadan is about body & soul, while we may thirst, we also use this time to recharge the emptiness in our soul through acts of worship, kinship ties, giving alms to the poor, and voluntary works that help the needy.

People also ask, "Why Ramadan? Why not any other month?" It's a great question: The sanctity here does not revolve around Ramadan itself, rather, it is in the great event that occurred in it that makes this month special.

Continued on Page 6

4 bedoon activists on hunger strike

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: Four bedoon activists are on hunger strike for the past seven days to highlight the struggles of the country's stateless people, who are deprived of citizenship, travel and other rights. The living conditions and rights of this group are among the thorniest human rights issues in Kuwait, according to reports by human rights organizations.

Speaking to Kuwait Times, Mohammed Al-Barghash, a human rights activist, said the bedoon problem has been dragging for over 70

years, but the Kuwaiti government has not offered a proper solution. "The government has complicated this issue instead of resolving it. We protested a lot in various areas over the years and still haven't got our rights," he said.

Barghash said the protest site in front of Sulaibiya police station is to deliver the message that ignoring the issue of stateless people is not acceptable, pointing out that the suffering and struggle of bedoons have led to an increase in the number of child suicides in the country, amid poor living conditions.

"The issue of bedoons must be resolved immediately, where the government must decide if we have rights or not. The Kuwaiti government is saying we have other nationalities and are not originally Kuwaitis. Then why don't they work to prove this, contact

Continued on Page 6



KUWAIT: Bedoon activists rest as they continued their hunger strike to shed light on the struggles of the country's stateless people in Kuwait.

Sweet smell of Ramadan tempts as Muslims fast

DHAKA: Mosques and market streets teem with evening crowds tempted by the scent of syrupy sweets and hefy rice plates, as more than half a billion Muslims across southern Asia break the day's Ramadan fast. The Islamic holy month began over the weekend and during that time believers abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual relations

between sunrise and sunset. The fast is conceived as a spiritual struggle against the seduction of earthly pleasures—but for the nightly "iftar" meal, festive meals traditionally bring families together and there is intense social activity. The centuries-old Chawkbazar market in Bangladesh is a traditional centre for evening meet-ups during Ramadan, with hundreds of makeshift food stalls selling traditional grilled meats and delicacies.

Huge crowds returned to the neighborhood on Sunday for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic put a pin in large public gatherings. — AFP (See Page 11)



DHAKA: Photo shows a plate with traditional food for Muslim devotees to break their fast during the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Dhaka. — AFP

99% of people breathing polluted air

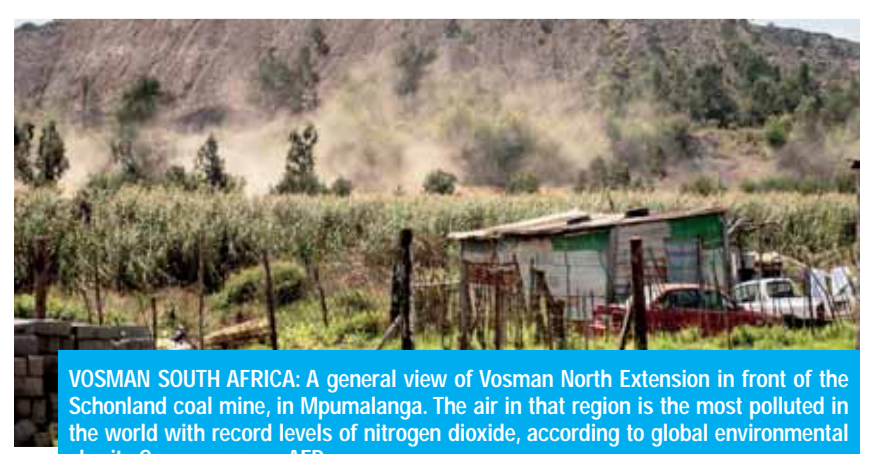
GENEVA: A full 99 percent of people on earth breathe air containing too many pollutants, the World Health Organization said Monday, blaming poor air quality for millions of deaths each year. Fresh data from the UN health agency showed that every corner of the globe is dealing with air

pollution, although the problem is much worse in poorer countries.

"Almost the entire global population (99 percent) breathes air that exceeds WHO air quality limits, and threatens their health," the agency said in a statement. In its previous report four years ago, WHO had already found that over 90 percent of the global population was affected, but it has since tightened its limits, it said.

"The evidence base for the harm caused by air pollution has been growing rapidly and points to significant harm caused by even low levels of many air pollutants,"

Continued on Page 6



VOSMAN SOUTH AFRICA: A general view of Vosman North Extension in front of the Schonland coal mine, in Mpumalanga. The air in that region is the most polluted in the world with record levels of nitrogen dioxide, according to global environmental charity Greenpeace. — AFP

Kuwait Amir congratulates Saudi King on Ramadan

Amir receives greetings from Iraqi, Egyptian presidents

KUWAIT: His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah congratulated in a phone call the Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud on the holy month of Ramadan. During the phone conversation, His Highness the Amir prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow everlasting wellbeing on the Saudi King, and wished further progress and prosperity to both countries and their peoples, as well as both Arab and Muslim worlds. Meanwhile, the Saudi King thanked the Amir for the good fraternal feelings, praying to Allah the Almighty to bestow permanent good health on His Highness.

Meanwhile, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Sunday received a phone call from the President of Iraq Dr Barham Saleh, sharing congratulations on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. In the phone conversation, the Iraqi president wished goodness and blessings for both sisterly countries and their people, as well as both Arab and Muslim worlds, while praying to Allah Almighty to bestow good health and wellness on His Highness the Amir and more progress and prosperity for the State of Kuwait under his wise leadership. His Highness the Amir

thanked the Iraqi president for this fraternal contact and good gesture that reflected historical and distinguished relations between both countries and their people, wishing him well and prosperity for Iraq under his wise leadership.

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad



Kuwait Crown Prince, Saudi Prince exchange greetings

Al-Jaber Al-Sabah also received a phone call from the President of Egypt Abdelfattah Al-Sisi, sharing congratulations on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan. In the phone call, the Egyptian president wished blessings for both sisterly countries

and their people, as well as the Arab and Muslim nations. He also prayed to Allah Almighty to bestow good health and wellness on His Highness the Amir and more progress and prosperity for the State of Kuwait under his wise leadership. His Highness the Amir thanked the Egyptian president for this good gesture that reflected historical and distinguished relations between both countries and their people, wishing him well and prosperity for Egypt under his wise leadership.

In the meantime, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Sunday a phone call from Prince Turki bin Mohammad bin Fahad Al Saud, minister of state of the sisterly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the conversation, His Highness the Crown Prince Mishal and Prince Turki exchanged Ramadan greetings, and expressed best wishes for their two countries and all Arab and Muslim nations. His Highness the Crown Prince Mishal thanked Prince Turki for his sincere and brotherly feelings. He prayed for Almighty Allah to grant Prince Turki over-lasting wellbeing, and the government and people of sisterly Saudi Arabia more progress, prosperity and welfare. —KUNA



His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah

KPI wins RoSPA gold award for 11th straight year

KUWAIT: Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI), on Monday, has been named the winner of the 2022 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) for the Chemical Sector Award, in addition to winner of the Occupational Health and Safety Gold Award for the eleventh consecutive year. The Gold award recognizes an organization's overall health and safety performance, policies, and procedures.

Specifically, the industry sector awards are competitive awards given to organizations that show surpass their competitors in leadership commitment to health and safety. The acting CEO Waleed Al-Bin Ali said that KPI's submissions for the awards were assessed by independent, experienced and well-qualified health and safety professionals engaged by RoSPA, liaising with other panel members. It has campaigned on several safety issues in the UK, including matters specific to occupational health and safety.

Organizations receiving a RoSPA Award are recognized as industry leaders in health and safety practice. Every year, nearly 2,000 entrants vie to achieve the highest possible accolade in what is the UK's longest-running health and safety industry awards.

KPI is the international downstream subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, ranked as one of the world's largest national oil companies. Established in 1983, KPI operates over 4,700 service stations across Europe under its brands, Q8, Q8Easy and Tango, and provides over 70 airlines with jet fuel in major airport hubs. It also runs two state-of-the-art lubricant blending plants in Belgium and Italy, and participates in two joint venture refineries in Italy and Vietnam. —KUNA

Kuwaiti physician restores Palestinian child's eyesight

KUWAIT: In a humanitarian gesture, Kuwaiti ophthalmologist Dr Khaled Al-Sabti succeeded in restoring the eyesight of an 11-year-old Palestinian girl living in refugee camps in Jordan after an emergency surgery done in Kuwait. Dr Khaled Al-Sabti who is representing Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) and Kuwait Embassy in Jordan told KUNA the surgery was done on Roa'a Ahd, in the left eye, where she underwent through another operation in her right eye last Wednesday at Kuwait Specialized Eye Center. During their trip last February to the Syrian refugee camps as part of KRCS delegation, they were told that the Palestinian child Roa'a lost sight for almost a year, he said. KRCS has undertaken procedures for hosting the child with the help of the Kuwaiti embassy in Jordan, where she arrived in Kuwait last week with her father, he added.

Meanwhile, KRCS Secretary-General Maha Al-Barjas stressed the KRCS' keenness to implement various humanitarian and relief works throughout the year in various countries in cooperation with its partners. "We at the Red Crescent are a humanitarian relief organization that works within International Red Cross and Red Crescent



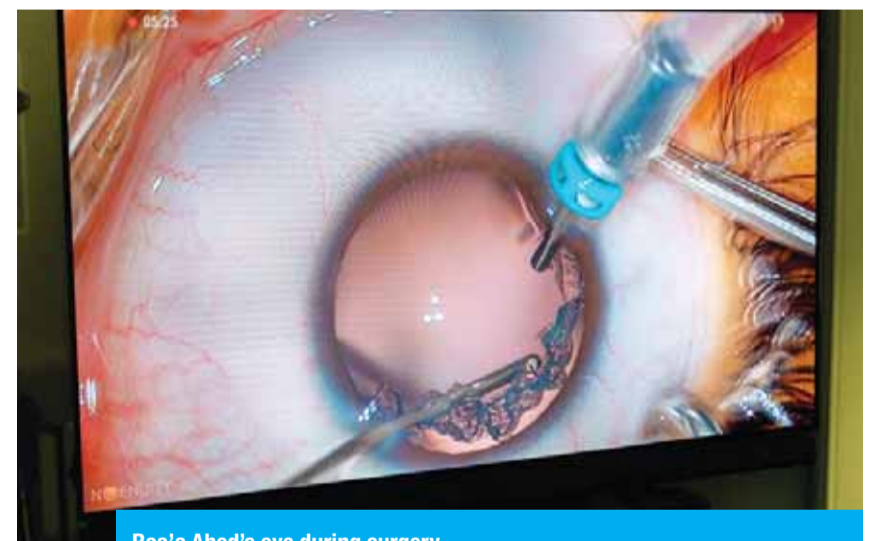
KUWAIT: Kuwaiti ophthalmologist Dr Khaled Al-Sabti performs the surgery. —KUNA photos

Movement, what we do is part of our work and part of helping people internally and externally," she said. The child's case required hosting her in Kuwait, and we hope for the success of the surgery so Roa'a

can return to her normal life and study, she added. As for Roa'a Ahd, and her father, Ahd Abdullah, they expressed sincere thanks to State of Kuwait for its humanitarian work. —KUNA

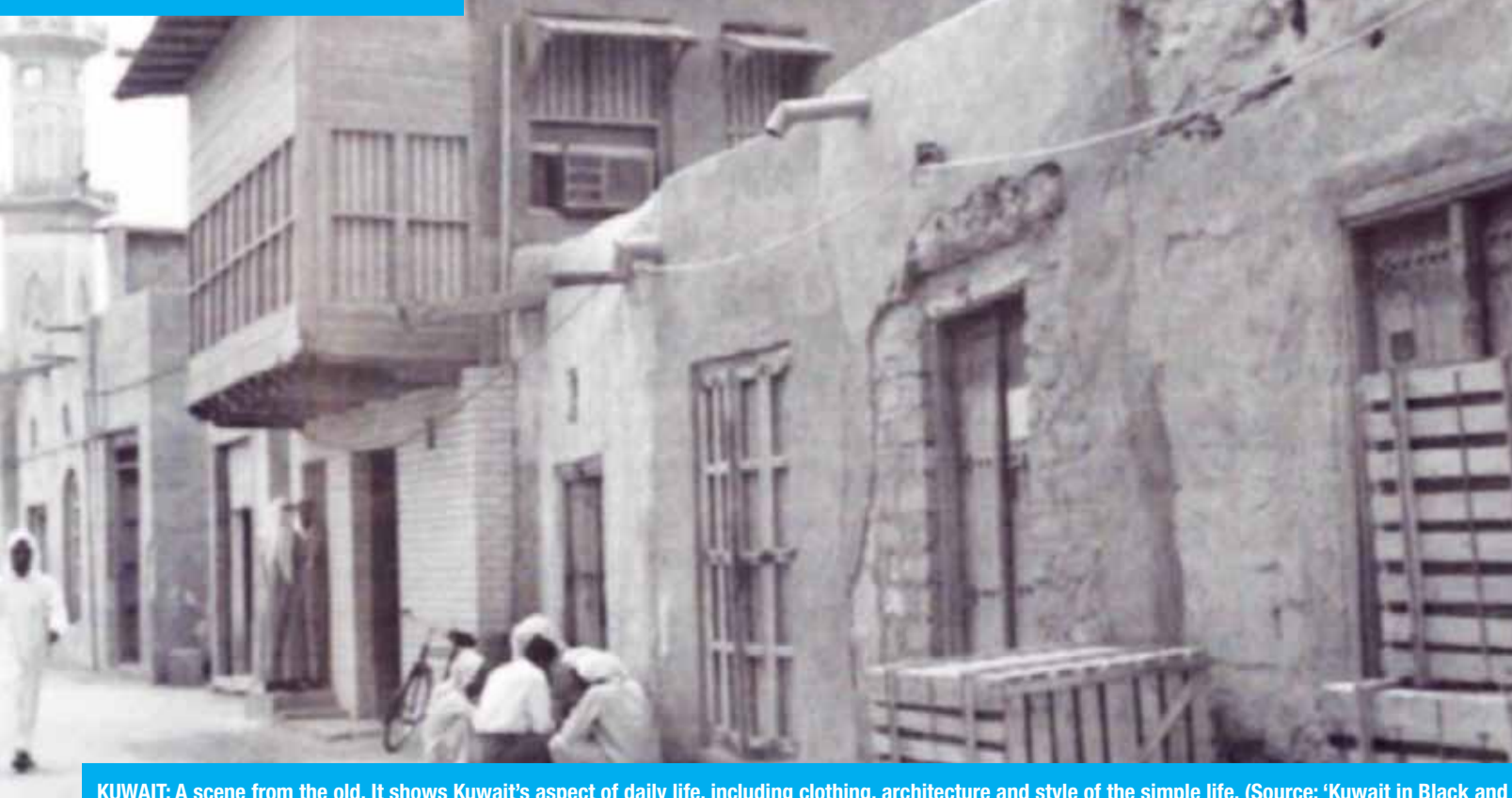


Roa'a Ahd and her father Ahd Abdullah.



Roa'a Ahd's eye during surgery.

KUWAIT HERITAGE



KUWAIT: A scene from the old. It shows Kuwait's aspect of daily life, including clothing, architecture and style of the simple life. (Source: 'Kuwait in Black and White' by Basem Al-Loughani. Prepared by Mahmoud Zakaria Abu Alella, heritage researcher at the Ministry of Information)

Yemeni consultations continue under GCC auspices

RIYADH: The Yemeni consultations, held under the auspices of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC), continued on Sunday in closed meetings, discussing, exploring and defining the challenges facing each of the six planned axes. For his part, the GCC Ambassador Sarhan Al-Munikher said on the sidelines of the meetings that today's meeting was devoted to exploring the challenges facing the current situation in all fields in Yemen, to reach the proper solutions for these challenges. He also indicated that the meetings were in parallel, as there was a political group, an economic and development group, a humanitarian, social and security group, the fight against terrorism, and a group specializing in the media aspect. The Yemeni-Yemeni discussions started on Wednesday, under the sponsorship of the GCC, with broad Yemeni participation. The talks are scheduled to proceed until April 7. —KUNA



GCC Ambassador Sarhan Al-Munikher

Local

Ghabqas make cautious return after two-year absence in Kuwait

Kuwait's favorite Ramadan nighttime social activity



KUWAIT: Workers prepare sweets for customers at a shop in Kuwait on the second day of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan on April 3, 2022. Various types of Arabic sweets including Qatayef and Kunafa are usually presented to guests during ghabqas. —Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

By Nawara Fattahova

KUWAIT: After almost two years of disrupted social activities due to the coronavirus pandemic that included two Ramadans, Kuwait is back to normal, and this year is the first Ramadan when gatherings are permitted again. The ghabqa, which is a Kuwaiti tradition where people gather for a meal that is after iftar and before the suhour, is one of the activities that was abandoned or very limited due to the pandemic for the past two years.

Now that people can gather again in large numbers, ghabqas are back on people's schedule. Unfortunately, most companies suffered losses due to the pandemic, which has affected their budget to organize social events. So there are fewer ghabqas at restaurants, hotels and ballrooms, or limited to smaller number of guests.

People's fear of getting infected has also

affected ghabqas, as the virus hasn't disappeared completely. So even people who used to organize ghabqas for their family and relatives in big numbers, now prefer to keep it simple and limited to a few people. Conversely, a sales manager at a five-star hotel in Kuwait said even though Ramadan has just started, they already have most of their ballrooms booked.

A beauty salon that used to hold ghabqas for their employees told Kuwait Times this year they won't organize a ghabqa. "We suffered a great loss during the pandemic, as we were closed for many months and many of our staff left the company. We can't afford additional expenses. Hopefully, next year we will organize it again," Fatma, the owner, told Kuwait Times.

Tharwat, marketing manager at a popular perfume company, said their company is excited to hold the ghabqa gathering again after two years. "We will hold the ghabqa this year for our



employees as an appreciation for their hard work during the entire year. It will also be with the same numbers - the only difference will be respecting health conditions and precautions required by the hotel where the ghabqa will take place," he explained.

Um Hamad complained that before the pandemic, she used to receive three or four invitations for ghabqas by her friends, but this year she hasn't received even one. "We miss the old gatherings, but it seems people are still affected by the fear of the coronavirus. Ramadan is still in the early stages, and I hope this will change," she said.



Health precautions present at companies' ghabqas

Faten Omar joins Kuwait Times

KUWAIT: Faten Omar has recently joined the editorial staff of Kuwait Times as a reporter. Omar has been working in the field of Journalism for more than 11 years. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in journalism and a master's degree in media from Jordan and began her career as a journalist in local and international news outlets.

Previously she was a reporter at Kuwait-based daily English newspaper Kuwait Times, reporter and video journalist at the daily Arabic newspaper Al-Kuwaitiyah, senior editor at Al-Mustagbal newspaper, local news editor

at Araa an online newspaper, translator for Kuwaiti blogs, editor at Al-Madenah news, an online newspaper based in Jordan, a reporter at the Jordanian-based daily newspaper Al-Ghad, and a public relations manager at Al-Hajes company.

Faten was also a freelance contributor with Xinhua - a Chinese news agency, Raseef22 in Lebanon, Rai Al-Youm in the UK, and translator for New York Times.



Faten Omar

A day in the life of a household cook

By Ben Garcia

KUWAIT: Ramadan is a busy month for domestic workers in Kuwait, including housemaids, drivers and cooks. Kuwait Times spoke to Ameck Solangon, a Filipino cook for a Kuwaiti family in Dasman. She knew the entire month of Ramadan will be as busy, so she made sure she got her day off last Friday. "I met some of my Facebook friends whom I got to know through Pinoy Arabia ME, an online radio station," she said.

Solangon cooks for a family of retired government employees. "My employers are both retired Kuwaiti government workers. The husband was a former police general and his wife was a teacher. They are kind-hearted people and pay our salaries on time," she said. Solangon joined the household in 2014.

"I was hired directly from the Philippines to be their family cook. When I joined, there were four children in the household. One by one, the children got married and had families of their own. Only the retired couple remain, and once a week their children visit, so now I have a very less work compared to five years back. I now help my colleagues in household chores. I also clean the bathrooms, iron clothes and wash dishes," Solangon said.

Ramadan, however, is different. "Ramadan is very busy in the kitchen. I also do the shopping most of the time. I know what they like to eat and have a monthly budget. But the budget rises up to fivefold during Ramadan. They also hand out food in charity, so I have to cook extra food," she said.

Since Solangon sleeps late in Ramadan, she also wakes up late in the morning. "On regular days, I wake up at 7 am. In Ramadan



Ameck Solangon

however, I wake up at 9 am or 10 am. But I always make sure all dishes will be ready by 6 pm before iftar," she said. Her next day off will be on Eid. "A day off is not a problem when it comes to my boss. I just need to ask permission, and they allow me to go out and meet my friends. But the best day for me is Eid Al-Fitr, because it means getting gifts in cash and kind," she concluded.

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Local

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KUWAIT: Hussein Abdulrahman (center) with Kuwait Times Deputy Editor-in-Chief Abdullah Bofitan (left) and Kuwait Times Managing Editor Mustafa Qamhiya. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Hussein Abdulrahman: Losing reputation and morals cannot be recovered

By Mustafa Qamhiya

KUWAIT: Hussein Abdulrahman is a seasoned journalist with long years of experience in this field. Abdulrahman worked with Kuwait Times, one of the many media houses where he left his mark. He has seen the ups and downs of journalism in Kuwait, and has been a part of many of these journeys. He spoke to Kuwait Times in an exclusive interview. Some excerpts:

Kuwait Times: How did you start with journalism?

Hussein Abdulrahman: When I was young, in the late 60s early 70s, Chinese ships used to come to Kuwait. The Chinese had a philosophy of spreading Mao's principles and used to bring little booklets written in immaculate Arabic. I was influenced by Mao's philosophy, and from here my Arabic developed as I read those booklets.

I was also good in composition at Al-Mubarakiya School. Once when my teacher read what I had written, he beat me, demanding to know who wrote the piece for me. I told him my mother and father are illiterate, so he asked me how I had learnt the language. I told him about the books, so he told me not to go deep into the Chinese booklets as there are better books available, promising to bring them to me.



Hussein Abdulrahman speaks with the late Prince Talal bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Also, whenever I got a page of Al-Rai Al-Aam newspaper, I used to fold it and put it in my desk. During composition class, when the teacher was speaking, I used to read the stories on the page, and from there was my start towards journalism.

In 1975, when I was studying in Cairo, I received a call from Mohammad Al-Barjes. He told me to become a student reporter with a weekly page of news about students, which I accepted. When I came to Kuwait a week later, I met him and we went to the paper. My first picture was published in Al-Rai Al-Aam, and I remained with them for nearly a year. My first salary there was KD 50, but I was embarrassed to go to the cashier to collect KD 50, so I waited for three months and collected KD 150.

At the start of 1976, our late colleague Olfat Fareed told me Al-Qabas' editor-in-chief wanted to see me and gave me his number. When I didn't call him, she insisted I should do so and see what he wanted, so I called his secretary, who informed me to come at any time. When I went and met

him, he said he had read my work, praising that I had interviewed Egypt's army chief of staff and other dignitaries when I was still a university student. He told me to work with him, but said he cannot set my salary. He then took me to Editor-in-Chief Jassem Al-Nisf, who decided to give me a salary of KD 120.

So, I started in 1976 with Al-Qabas. I decided to be different and not imitate anyone, and have my own style. For example, every year high school results are announced, and the usual thing to do is to interview the top students. But I asked my colleagues to interview the bottom 10 students to find out why they had failed, because the number of failed students was

large, and this indicated that there was a problem. We had a page with the headline "The failed dedicate their failure to the education minister" and demanded his resignation.

I published the pictures of the failed students with their statements and certificates with the failing marks. I then received a call from Mohammad Al-Saqer, who questioned me about what I had published. I told him the results show many students have failed and we must correct the problem, so he told me from now on he must see any material I write beforehand. An hour later, he called and told me that it was a good story, wondering how it came to my mind. I asked him "Why were you angry earlier?" He said "Minister Al-Rubei came to the paper and complained against you."

When I used to submit any story, I used to go to the proofreaders after they finished to find the mistakes and learn from them. I developed myself in journalism and this gave me a personality in front of people. I did not want to ask questions that are

expected or ordinary. When Dr Al-Adwani became health minister, I went to meet him two hours after he took the oath of office. My question to him was: 'If you do not achieve your goals, will you resign?' His answer was yes. In journalism, you should be different and look at things from a different angle.

KT: If you can go back in time, will you take up journalism again?

Abdulrahman: No! The title of the book I am writing is 'Then I regret it'. It is true that I made a name for myself, but I worked hard for it. I made friendships and contacts inside and outside Kuwait. I was not looking for a position; rather I sought to have a good reputation. Any journalist who wants to have a good reputation must realize that this will cost him a lot. I tried to be different without taking anything away from my colleagues.

KT: Did you want your children to become journalists?

Abdulrahman: My son Ali is a broadcaster, and many people are talking about him. We instill etiquette in our children, as manners are priceless. Money comes and goes, but if you lose your reputation and morals, you cannot recover them, and no one can mend your credibility in front of people. We are a family that discusses politics and elections around the table.

KT: What was the role of your wife?

Abdulrahman: I owe her a lot, as she carried a lot of burdens with me. She worked at a bank, then worked at the university with Dr Modhi Al-Humoud. When she used to bring exam papers to correct, she always turned the papers over so we couldn't see the grades. Dr Al-Humoud told me that my wife once refused a reward, saying she did not deserve it because she did not do extra work.

I worked at the university as an associate professor, but I was later let go because I wrote a series about many people who had forged degrees in 1985. There were those who claimed to have studied in the US, but could not speak English. I did my master's in the US and started a PhD, but did not finish it because I got preoccupied with journalism. Although I did not really need it, I later discovered I had made a strategic mistake.

Journalism is not a stable job, and one stays out a long time, but my wife coped and took care of our three children while I

was away. For example, I covered the hijacked Al-Jabriya aircraft in Algeria and remained away for 16 days, but I was reassured because my late wife took good care of the children. If it was not for her, I would not be able to achieve what I did. I also covered the coup that took place in Sharjah. No other paper was present on both these incidents.

I am proud of my wife, and when she died on Friday, Aug 28, 2020 at dawn, I screamed, saying 'my back is broken now'. I thank God that she raised three children whom I am proud of and who have a good reputation.

KT: Did you speak to the liberated hostages?

Abdulrahman: Yes. I remained with them all the way from Algeria to Kuwait on the nine-hour flight. I have pictures with the hostages and another with Sheikh Abdulaziz Al-Qasimi, who assumed power in Sharjah following the coup. I asked to go and cover the coup and my request was approved.

When I arrived at a hotel in Dubai, I called the Sharjah governor's palace and requested an interview, which was granted. I took pictures of the governor as well as the troops around him, then sent the films by Kuwait Airways personnel to Mohammad Al-Saqer in Kuwait to be developed.

KT: Do you regret doing something in your journalistic career?

Abdulrahman: I haven't done anything that I regret, because I have certain values and principles. There is no way I will do something that will hurt a human being. An example: An MP submitted a parliamentary question about a secretary at a public company. He also sent the question to newspapers, but I thought it is not right for an MP to present a question to embarrass someone, so I called my colleagues and told them not to print the MP's question, because it is not a parliamentary question but made in revenge, and it was not published.

KT: Do you have anything to say to budding journalists?

Abdulrahman: Journalism nowadays is different from that in the '60s and '70s. Some journalists do not want to learn or take courses. Journalism has now become the profession of those who do not have a job. I organized some courses at KJA, and

- 'Reading Chinese booklets in immaculate Arabic improved my Arabic'
- 'I decided to be different and have my own style'
- 'My first salary with Al-Rai Al-Aam was KD 50'
- 'If you lose your reputation and morals, you cannot recover them'
- 'I owe my wife a lot as she carried a lot of burdens with me'
- Journalism nowadays is different from that in the '60s and '70s



realized that the majority joined to collect a certificate.

There is no paper in the world that has two pages of columnists except in Kuwait. They write about the housing problem for instance, but there will be no numbers or statistics.

I was with the Managing Editor at Al-Qabas Raouf Shahrouri when a young man came to meet him. The man told him he wanted to write columns. Shahrouri told him 'Welcome!'. The young man asked, 'Can I write now?', so he replied 'Sure!'

The young man spent around 20 minutes away and returned. He gave Shahrouri a column, telling him this is for today, then another for tomorrow and a third one for later. Raouf became very angry and trashed the three columns. The young man demanded why he had discarded his work and ideas. He told him these are not ideas. He said if you want to write one column, go to the archives and read for hours, then sit and write. If you want to write about an issue, go and read about it. Nowadays, everyone wants to be a columnist, but does not want to work hard or develop themselves.

Another thing is that I do not like the word expatriates. We are a country that depends on residents in all aspects of life. Nowadays I am building a house, and since the start from the foundation all the way up, I did not meet a Kuwaiti. Even at companies that I visit to get offers and prices, I haven't met a Kuwaiti. They are serving the country, so why are we giving them a hard time!

If you have a business project, you should have a media project next to it to succeed.

KT: Do you read?

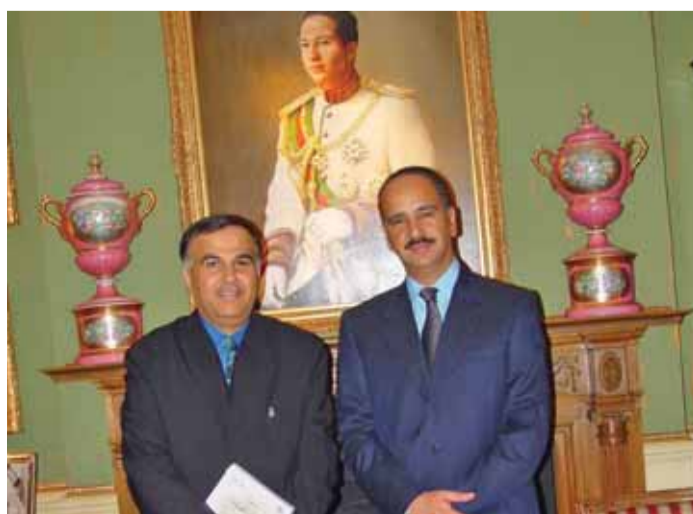
Abdulrahman: I read every day. When I wake up, I check the news on TV, then start reading. When I hear about a ruling, I read about its details, because it shows the way it's written and its vocabulary, and it educates you legally.

KT: A final word?

Abdulrahman: I thank you for this opportunity. I spend time with my grandchildren on Saturdays and buy things of benefit for them. I am very comfortable when I spend time with my family. When my wife passed away, I went through hardship and was advised to preoccupy myself with certain activities. I am now involved in some projects with Al-Qabas and am building a house.



Hussein Abdulrahman speaks with then Algerian foreign minister Al-Hadi Khudhairy over the Kuwait Airways Flight 422 (Al-Jabriya) hijacking.



Hussein Abdulrahman with Sarif Ali bin Al-Hussein, an Iraqi politician who led a campaign to restore monarchy in Iraq.



Hussein Abdulrahman participates in a seminar with late MP Hamad Al-Jouan.



Hong Kong's leader to leave office, ending a divisive term

Pakistan sewage workers hope for better future

Page 6

Page 7



COLOMBO: Protestors hold banners and placards during a demonstration against the surge in prices and shortage of fuel and other essential commodities in Colombo on April 3, 2022. Armed troops in Sri Lanka had a tense confrontation with a crowd protesting a worsening economic crisis on April 3, after a social media blackout failed to halt another day of anti-government demonstrations. — AFP

S Lanka leader offers to share power

Other cabinet vacancies will be filled after talks with opposition

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's embattled president offered to share power with the opposition on Monday as protests demanding his resignation grew over the worsening shortages of food, fuel and medicines. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's invitation to legislators came as heavily armed security forces looked to quell more demonstrations over what the government itself has acknowledged as the worst shortages of essentials since independence from Britain in 1948.

"The president invites all political parties in parliament to accept cabinet posts and join the effort to seek solutions to the national crisis," Rajapaksa's office said in a statement. It stressed that solutions to the deepening crisis should be found "within a democratic framework", as thousands joined spontaneous demonstrations in cities, towns and villages.

The invitation came after 26 cabinet members—every minister except Rajapaksa and his elder brother Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa—submitted letters of resignation at a late-night meeting on

Sunday. The country's central bank governor Ajith Cabraal—who has long opposed an International Monetary Fund bailout for the country—also stepped down on Monday.



Thousands took to the streets

The departures cleared the way for the country's ruling political clan to seek to shore up its weakening position. The first nominations to the new cabinet saw the president re-appoint four of the outgoing

ministers, three of them to their old jobs, while he replaced his brother Basil as finance minister with the previous justice chief.

Other cabinet vacancies will be filled after talks with the opposition, the president said. But there was no immediate response from the opposition, which would not join any Rajapaksa-led government, according to comments Sunday by its main leader Sajith Premadasa.

Political analysts said the offer of a unity government did not go far enough to address the economic crisis or restore confidence in the Rajapaksa administration. "This is like re-arranging the deck chairs on the Titanic," Bhavani Fonseka, political analyst and human rights lawyer, told AFP. "This is a joke."

Political columnist Victor Ivan added that a cabinet reshuffle in the guise of a national government would not be acceptable to people demanding the Rajapaksa's departure. "What is needed is a serious reform programme, not just to revive the economy

but address issues of governance," Ivan told AFP.

Power base protest

The South Asian island nation is in the grip of unprecedented food and fuel shortages along with record inflation and crippling power cuts, with no sign of an end to the economic woes. Trading was halted on the country's stock exchange seconds after it opened Monday as shares fell by more than the five percent threshold needed to trigger an automatic stop.

The government has announced it will seek a bailout from the International Monetary Fund, but talks are yet to begin. Troops and police were placed on high alert as a 36-hour curfew ended at dawn despite intelligence reports warning of more unrest, a top security official told AFP. Thousands took to the streets in the Rajapaksa bastion of Tangalle in the island's deep south demanding the resignation of the family, police said. Anti-Rajapaksa rallies would have been unthinkable in the region in recent years. — AFP

Pakistan's top court meets as crisis rages

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Supreme Court was hearing arguments Monday around Prime Minister Imran Khan's shock decision to call an early election, sidestepping a no-confidence vote that would have seen him booted from office.

The opposition had expected to take power on Sunday after mustering enough votes to oust the cricketer-turned-politician, but the national assembly deputy speaker refused to allow the motion to proceed because of "foreign interference". Simultaneously, Khan asked the presidency—a largely ceremonial office held by a loyalist—to dissolve the assembly, meaning an election must be held within 90 days.

On paper, and pending any court decision, Khan will remain in charge until an interim government is formed to oversee elections. A notice Monday from President Arif Alvi to Khan and opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif said they should agree on a new interim prime minister, but Sharif declined to cooperate.

"How can we respond to a letter written by a person who has abrogated the constitution?" he

told a press conference Monday. According to the constitution, the prime minister cannot ask for the assembly to be dissolved while he is facing a no-confidence vote.

"Khan's 'surprise' triggers constitutional crisis," thundered The Nation newspaper Monday, while its rival Dawn called it "A travesty of democracy" above a front-page editorial. An alliance of usually feuding dynastic parties had plotted for weeks to unravel the tenuous coalition that made Khan premier in 2018, but he claimed they went too far by colluding with the United States for "regime change".

Washington denial

Khan insists he has evidence—which he has declined to disclose publicly—of Washington's involvement, although local media have reported it was merely a letter from Pakistan's ambassador following a briefing with a senior US official. Western powers want him removed because he won't stand with them on global issues against Russia and China, Khan said. Washington has denied involvement. Pakistan's Supreme Court has now received a slew of suits and petitions from the government and opposition regarding the crisis, but has also taken up the case "suo moto"—on its own merit. "This is an urgent matter," chief justice Umar Atta Bandial said late Sunday.

The current court is ostensibly independent, but rights activists say previous benches have been



ISLAMABAD: A resident stands beside a picture of Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan as he looks at the morning newspapers displayed for sale at a roadside stall in Islamabad on April 4, 2022, a day after Khan foiled an attempt to boot him from office. — AFP

used by civilian and military administrations to do their bidding throughout Pakistan's history. It is unclear when the court may rule on the issue—or if Khan would even accept its decision—but there is precedent.

In 1988 Muhammad Khan Junejo appealed to the Supreme Court after the assembly was dissolved by President General Zia-ul-Haq, who had taken power in a military coup years earlier. The court agreed his government had been dissolved unconstitutionally, but ruled that since elections had been announced anyway it was best to move on. — AFP

'There was no pity'

Further along the road, a mobile anti-aircraft battery lay destroyed. "It's terrible. There was no pity for anyone," Koshmak said as he looked at what remained of the school which he attended for nine years. The nearby city of Mykolaiv hosts around 1,000 inhabitants of surrounding villages, the mayor, Oleksandr Senkevych said last week.

While the situation in Mykolaiv remains precarious, with several air raid alerts per day, the situation in the villages around "is worse," he said. Further south, on the road to Kherson, the village of Shevchenkove lies almost abandoned. The police said the mayor of Shevchenkove is officially missing after being arrested by the Russian army during a humanitarian aid delivery. Ivan Bolyakov, a 25-year-old with a ginger beard and a black hat, said he was the only one of 25 residents on his street who stayed behind. "We arrested two looters in recent days. I have to watch out for what is happening in my village," said Bolyakov, as the wind shook the ruins of a nearby home that had recently been hit by a strike. — AFP

Indonesian teacher sentenced to death for raping students

JAKARTA: An Indonesian teacher found guilty of raping 13 students at an Islamic boarding school, and who impregnated at least eight of the victims, was sentenced to death on Monday. Herry Wirawan, 36, had been sentenced to life in prison in February, in a case that drew national attention to sexual abuse in the country's religious schools.

But prosecutors, who had requested the death penalty and chemical castration, filed an appeal. "We accept the appeal of the prosecutors," read the judge's statement, published Monday on the website of the High Court in Bandung, West Java province.

"We hereby punish the defendant to a death sentence," Wirawan was not in court for the appeal, a spokesperson told AFP. Indonesia has held off conducting executions for several years and the last known executions took place in 2016. Wirawan's pattern of abuse at the school, also in Bandung, came to light when the family of a female student reported him to police for raping and impregnating their teenage daughter last year.

During his previous trial, it was revealed Wirawan had raped the female students—many from poor families and attending the school on scholarships—over a period of five years. He also impregnated at least eight of them.

Before the lower court, the defendant asked the judge for leniency, saying he wanted to be around to raise his children. A relative of one of the victims told AFP that Monday's sentence brought justice for the victims.

"We initially wanted punishments of life in prison and chemical castration so that he would feel the pain from his crime," said Hidmat Djajaja, uncle of one of the victims. "But, we still feel the death sentence represents justice."

The case drew national outrage and increased pressure on parliament to approve a long-delayed bill on the "elimination of sexual violence", that seeks to combat sex crimes and provide justice to victims, including in cases of marital rape. — AFP

Trail of destruction in Ukraine villages

ZELENY GAI: Devastated by intensive Russian bombardment, the village of Zeleny Gai near the frontline in southern Ukraine looks empty—except for a group of local men gathering to await an aid delivery. The expected delivery "is the only reason why there are so many people out. Normally, this would be a ghost village," said Yury Seka, 33, a farmer like many in this fertile agricultural region. Another villager, Alexander Zlydar, 38, said: "I can't remember the last time I slept in my own bed".

Previously caught up in the midst of the fighting, the village has had some respite since the frontline moved a little further to the southeast closer to the Russian-occupied city of Kherson. But Grad rockets continue to fall intermittently as

Russia focuses its war effort on the south and east of the country after retreating from the northern cities of Kyiv and Cherniviv.

During a particularly heavy bombardment on March 13, a 250-kilogram bomb dropped by parachute landed on the roof of Andriy Koshmak's house. He pointed out the device, as well as the black streaks left by recent rocket attacks. The 29-year-old said the bomb had likely drifted from its intended target because of strong winds. Further along the road, the local school was turned into a pile of rubble by the bombing that day.

Lego pieces and textbooks could be seen in the ruins along with a parachute—likely one of the ones used to drop the bombs on Zeleny Gai. Women and children had already been evacuated from the village, but the head of the local council was killed at the school and the headmaster suffered serious injuries to his legs. "Many people had come to seek shelter inside the school," Koshmak said. "The Russians thought that some soldiers were hiding there, but it was only civilians".

Business

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022

Zain Global Connect to link Jeddah to Marseille through J2M undersea cable

The investment marks ZGC's first subsea cable ownership

- Ready for service in Q1 2023, ZGC collaborates with PCCW Global in PEACE 15,000 km state-of-the-art cable between the Middle East and Europe
- Zain Saudi Arabia to be the Cable Landing Party in the Kingdom
- Investment by ZGC in latest fiber optic technology to improve regional connectivity and foster digital transformation to Zain markets and beyond

KUWAIT/HONG KONG: Zain Group, a leading telecom innovator in seven markets across the Middle East and Africa, announced that Zain Global Connect (ZGC), its wholly owned subsidiary in charge of consolidating Group's initiatives into the Wholesale Carrier domain, is connecting the Middle East with Europe through the J2M (Jeddah, Saudi Arabia to Marseille, France) submarine cable system.

The investment marks ZGC's first subsea cable ownership, in a portion of the state-of-the-art Pakistan and East Africa Connecting Europe (PEACE) cable system, that will offer Zain full operational independence, a genuine critical factor capable to foster digital transformation initiatives in the region, particularly for cloud and IoT services.

Through the investment in J2M, that will be ready for service in early 2023 with Zain Saudi Arabia as the cable landing party, Zain achieves a higher degree of diversity when it comes to its international infrastructure while making available to global carriers and enterprises a brand-new entry point in Saudi Arabia for their connectivity requirements in the Kingdom and beyond.

Eng Sultan Bin Abdulaziz Al-Deghaither, CEO of Zain Saudi Arabia, said, "This historic achievement marks another milestone in the journey of Zain KSA.

By investing in the J2M submarine cable, Zain reaffirms its commitment to the Kingdom's digital-savvy consumer and business community by making available a robust, fault-tolerant international connectivity platform that will support the ambitious digital transformation objectives of Saudi Vision 2030, while contributing to position the Kingdom as a global ICT and digital services hub."

Kamil Hilali, CEO, ZGC, said, "J2M represents a major breakthrough for Zain and ZGC as we look to develop our wholesale capabilities further while ensuring an even better quality of service to all Zain operations offering international connectivity services. We are excited indeed to be a relevant partner of such a successful project and believe its positive economic impact will be greatly appreciated by communities and enterprises across the region."

ZGC was created by Zain Group as a wholesale division for the purpose of executing the Group's strategic plan to enter the wholesale data and voice services space. With an eye on the present as well as the future, ZGC proactively looks for and implements state-of-the-art equipment functionalities significantly supporting the growing needs of Zain operating markets and other global carriers for high-quality international connectivity.



Sultan Al-Deghaither and Kamil Hilali with PCCW Global executives

Frederick Chui, Chief Commercial Officer, PCCW Global, said, "The collaboration with Zain Global Connect has been strategic and is transformative for the region. The undersea cable is set to contribute to greater capacity availability in the Middle East. In an era when low-latency data access is a key differentiator, we believe this is the right time to be expanding investment in undersea infrastructure."

The PEACE cable system is a 15,000 km-long, privately owned cable system that provides open,

flexible and carrier-neutral services for its customers. It is designed with the latest 200G transmission and WSS ROADM BU technologies, which provide the capability to transmit over 16Tbps per fiber pair servicing growing regional capacity needs.

The PEACE cable system substantially reduces network latency by adopting shortest direct route connectivity, providing cost-effective capacity in an economically growing region and enhancing route diversity between Asia, Africa and Europe.

VPN use spikes in Sri Lanka after social media ban

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's attempt to contain spiraling protests by blocking popular social media platforms led to an extraordinary spike in the use of censorship-dodging virtual private networks, a tracking firm said Monday. Demand for VPNs went up by a staggering 17,000 percent on Sunday when the ban came into effect. TopIOVPN.com said after tracking downloads by Sri Lankan users.

"There were 27,815 searches for VPN compared to a daily average of 321 over the previous 28 days," Simon Migliano, the firm's head of research, told AFP in an email.

"This is a huge increase in interest in what's essentially a very niche tool for most people," Sunday's ban blocked access to WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube and a host of other popular platforms but it was lifted after 15 hours, following a ruling by the country's Human Rights Council deeming the blackout illegal.

The head of the country's internet regulator resigned after the ban order went into effect and technology minister Namal Rajapaksa, the nephew of Sri Lanka's president, also publicly criticised the policy. "The availability of VPN, just like I'm using now, makes such bans completely useless," Rajapaksa said on Twitter.

"I urge the authorities to think more progressively and reconsider this decision." He resigned that evening, along with all other ministers in Sri Lanka's 28-member cabinet, excluding his uncle president and father, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa. Sri Lanka is in the grips of what the government concedes is the island nation's worst economic crisis since independence from Britain in 1948.

The anti-government hashtags "#GollomeRajapaksa" and "#GotaGoHome" have been trending locally for days on social media after severe shortages of essentials, sharp price rises and crippling power cuts. —AFP

Stocks up, oil steady on easing inflation fears

LONDON: Stock markets climbed and oil prices steadied Monday on easing concerns over tight crude supplies and decades-high inflation, traders said. Turkey's lira was stable against the dollar and euro after official data showed the country's inflation had soared to a fresh record high.

Elsewhere, trading was halted on Sri Lanka's stock exchange seconds after opening Monday as the island nation's president offered to share power with the opposition.

Protests demanding the resignation of Gotabaya Rajapaksa grew over unprecedented food and fuel shortages along with record inflation and crippling power cuts in the South Asian country. —AFP

Turkish inflation hits fresh record at 61.1%

ISTANBUL: Turkey's inflation has soared to a new record, official data showed Monday, as analysts see an impact from Russia's invasion of Ukraine and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's unorthodox interest rate policy. Exacerbating a cost of living crisis, consumer prices accelerated to 61.14 percent at an annual rate, up from 54.4 percent in February, according to the statistics agency.

The weakening lira and runaway inflation have become major sources of public discontent in Turkey as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan faces an election next year. Turkey has recorded double digit inflation since early 2017 but the latest figure is the highest since the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002.

The currency was stable following the latest inflation data, trading at 14.7 lira against the dollar and 16.2 lira against euro. The war in Turkey's Black Sea neighborhood has had a major impact on the country as Russia is a key supplier of energy while Ukraine ships wheat. Turkish tourism industry also mainly relies on Russian tourists. On Friday, S&P global rating agency kept a negative outlook on Turkey and cut its credit rating.

Drivers queue for hours as Kenya reels from fuel shortage

NAIROBI: Kenyan motorists endured another day of major fuel shortages on Monday, with hours-long queues and strict rationing at petrol stations as pumps across the country ran dry.

The government blamed hoarding and panic buying for the snaking lines at bowsers that worsened over the weekend, but oil dealers said they were owed outstanding subsidy payments from the state.

"If you know any gas station in your area that has fuel, comment with name, location, available fuel," the Motorist Association of Kenya said on Twitter in a public appeal to ease congestion at pumps.

"Help spread this message, help a stuck motorist." At many locations in Nairobi and elsewhere, motorists able to find petrol after many hours in line with cars, motorcycles and minibuses were limited to a rationed amount. The crunch began last week in Kenya's west following a row between oil marketing companies and the government over subsidy payments, sources said. The government pays oil providers to subsidize costs at the pump for motorists, but these companies said they were waiting on four months of outstanding payments.

The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) said at the weekend that the government was working to settle all arrears owed to dealers. But the government blamed hoarders for the shortfall and insisted it had sufficient reserves to supply the East African nation of nearly 50 million.

"The fallout of the Russia-Ukraine military conflict, including rising food and energy prices, will further weaken Turkey's already tenuous balance of payments and exacerbate inflation," it said.

The biggest price increases in March were in transportation and food prices, according to the statistics agency.

'Be patient'

While countries around the world are facing rising inflation as energy prices have soared while economies emerge COVID restrictions, Turkey's problems have also been affected by Erdogan's unorthodox economic approach. The Turkish leader rejects the idea that inflation should be fought by hiking the main interest rate, which he believes causes prices to grow even higher—the exact opposite of conventional economic thinking.

Turkish central bank "policies are just not working in countering inflation," said Timothy Ash, emerging markets strategist at BlueBay Asset Management. "Indeed, I think the overwhelming consensus is that the unorthodox policy settings of the CBRT (central bank) are a major cause of inflation," he said in a note to clients. "The war in Ukraine is just making things that much worse."

On Saturday, Erdogan said increase in food and energy prices triggered by the war in Ukraine "is affecting us too." "We are fighting against those who are charging unreasonably high prices," he said.

"There are problems we need to address ... I ask



ISTANBUL: Turkey's inflation has soared to a new record on Monday, exacerbating a cost of living crisis, according to the statistics agency.

you to be patient and trust us," in reference to people squeezed by the biting inflation. In January, Erdogan changed the head of the state statistics agency.

Turkish media reported that he was unhappy with the inflation figures it published while the opposition believes that the official figures grossly underestimate the reality.

Jason Tuvey, senior emerging markets economist at the London-based Capital Economics, said inflation was likely to rise further over the coming months and stay close to the current high rates for much of this year. "But there is still little sign that the central bank and, crucially, President Erdogan are about to shift tack and hike interest rates," he said. —AFP



NAIROBI: Boda Boda motorcycle taxis queue for fuel at a gas station in Nairobi on April 4, 2022. Kenyan motorists endured another day of major fuel shortages on April 4, 2022 with hours-long queues and strict rationing at petrol stations as pumps across the country ran dry. —AFP

State depots were in possession of more than 69 million liters of petrol and 94 million liters of diesel as of Saturday, the Kenya Pipeline Company said. Kenya consumes nearly 400 million liters of petrol and diesel every month, according to government data. "Our global stock holding is adequate to serve the region, with more ships queued in Mombasa for discharge," the state-run company said in a statement.

EPRA said the shortage was also exacerbated by

"changing supply dynamics" on international markets worsened by the invasion of Ukraine. Under an agreement with the government, retailers capped the price for petrol this month at 135 Kenyan shillings (\$1.17, 1 euro) per liter. Blackmarket operators, however, have reportedly been selling at 160 shillings as the shortage bites. There are fears the fuel crunch could see public service providers jack the cost of fares and add to cost of living pressures. —AFP

Business

KFH receives ‘World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution 2022’ award

Global Finance also honors KFH with the Best Islamic Takaful award

Al-Rushood: The award represents world’s recognition of KFH’s pioneering position in Islamic finance industry and its excellence in providing innovative services

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) received the “World’s Best Islamic Financial Institution 2022” award from Global Finance Group within its fifteenth annual awards ceremony for the World’s Best Islamic Financial Institutions. The award came in appreciation of KFH contributions in the growth of Islamic Finance, fulfilling customers’ needs of Sharia-compliant innovative products through highly effective and advanced service channels, and distinction in achieving sustainability and continued growth.

Global Finance has also awarded KFH the award of the “Best Islamic Financial Institution in the Middle East” and the Best Islamic Takaful award.

On this occasion, KFH Group Acting CEO, AbdulWahab Essa Al-Rushood expressed his pride and happiness to win these awards from the reputable Global Finance magazine. He indicated that these awards represent world’s recognition of KFH’s leading position in the Islamic finance industry and affirm the bank’s performance efficiency in providing highly advanced innovative services while moving forward in the digitalization strategy and continuing the methodology in adopting technology and innovation in advance and focusing on the enhancement of customer’s experience.

Al-Rushood indicated that KFH has always been an icon in Islamic banking. It has a long record of innovation of banking and financial products and services, development of several financial products and finance alternatives applied currently in international markets which fulfill the aspirations of all segments of customers (retail and corporate).

Al-Rushood said that KFH is focusing on supporting the financial inclusion which is considered one of the basic elements for sustainable growth. He emphasized that KFH was established as the first Islamic bank in the State of Kuwait, indicating the bank enjoys a large market share in the local market and enjoys a wide geographical spread in several regions worldwide through 526 branches, 1,750 ATMs and more than 13 thousand employees.

Global Finance makes its rating of Islamic Financial Institutions based on extensive consultations with bankers, analysts, and specialized financial experts from all over the world. Performance rating is conducted based on certain criteria and professional methodologies including growth in assets, profitability, geographic reach, strategic relationships, new business development, innovation in products, ability to fulfill the needs of customers in



AbdulWahab Al-Rushood

various sectors, usage of technology in providing qualitative products and services, customer satisfaction, reputation, compliance with ethical standards and strategic relations. Global Finance Magazine was founded in 1987 and takes New York as its chosen domicile. Global Finance is a trusted and reliable source of financial information in more than 190 countries worldwide. The magazine enjoys more than 35 years of experience in the global financial markets. Winners will be honored at an awards ceremony to be held during the IMF/World Bank Annual Meetings in Washington, DC at the National Press Club on the morning of October 15, 2022.



‘KFH has always been an icon in Islamic banking with a long record of innovation’

بيت التمويل الكويتي
Kuwait Finance House



Kuwait Finance House
WORLD’S BEST ISLAMIC FINANCIAL INSTITUTION 2022



Business

Ukraine war sows more turmoil for UK farms amid COVID, Brexit

Fertilizer prices skyrocket after Russian invasion of Ukraine

ITCHINGFIELD, United Kingdom: Hungry cows at Westons Farm jostle for position at the feeding trough, blissfully unaware that Ukraine's war has sowed more turmoil for UK farms ploughing through COVID and Brexit fallout.

Westons-based in the picturesque village of Itchingfield in southern England—uses excrement from the farm's cattle, chickens, pigs and sheep to fertilize arable crops like carrots, pumpkins, spinach and wheat. The agriculture sector, like large swathes of the UK economy, is grappling with sky-high energy prices following pandemic lockdowns and labor shortages in the wake of Britain's exit from the European Union.

Now, Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has fuelled rocketing prices for fertilizer because Russia is a major producer. Farms like Westons have therefore become more and more reliant on animal slurry to grow crops and cut costs.

"The thing that's really concerning us as farmers are the multiple issues that are coming our way all at once," the farm's owner David Exwood told AFP as he fed the cattle. There is the "high fertilizer price, we have a high fuel price, we've got a shortage of labour, and we've got regulatory change", said Exwood, who is also vice-president of the National Farmers' Union (NFU).

Fertiliser prices in the UK have soared almost fourfold over the past year, sector data show.

The nutrient-rich material was already in short supply after surging gas prices forced leading UK manufacturer, CF Fertilizers, to pause production in September. Six months later, the Ukraine war sent

fertilizer prices hurtling even higher. Wheat hit recent record peaks because sanctions-hit Russia is a key producer alongside Ukraine.

Staff shortages

Meanwhile, worsening labor shortages, sparked by Brexit and exacerbated by COVID, are particularly acute in Britain's agricultural sector. The industry had 500,000 job vacancies in September, according to NFU data. Visa issues and COVID restrictions have caused many farm workers to return abroad, notably including many European lorry drivers. Britain's departure from the European Union at the start of last year formalized Brexit.

"The lack of labor has meant that crops... have gone unpicked and are rotting away in fields," said Jack Ward, chief executive of the British Growers' Association. The British Meat Packing Association has expressed similar troubles. "Our main concerns are the lack of staff able to process (carcasses) in the UK," it noted. Thousands of pigs have been culled because of a chronic lack of butchers in abattoirs.

"UK pigs are being killed, incinerated and not entering the food chain," said farmer Andrew Ward, who grows wheat in Leadenham in central England.

"We have pig farmers going out of business, but imports of pig meat have gone up 20 percent in the last six months (to meet demand) and the government is standing by and letting it happen."

Birds, bees and trees

At the same time, the rollout of its Environmental



ITCHINGFIELD, UK: National Farmers' Union of England and Wales Vice President and owner of Westons Farm Dave Exwood, walks among his cows in their feeding area at the Westons Farm, in Itchingfield, south England, on March 28, 2022. — AFP

Land Management Scheme (ELMS) will replace the UK's participation in the EU Common Agricultural Policy. The proposed scheme places greater emphasis on the environment and is expected to ramp up costs for farmers.

"All they are interested in is birds, bees and trees... we can't go green if our bank balance is in the red," said farmer Ward. Following Brexit, the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson has agreed a number of new trade deals, including for

Australian beef and lamb.

Britain's livestock farmers are concerned they will be undercut, complaining that overseas meat may not be held to the same quality or environmental standards as domestic producers.

Back on the farm in Itchingfield, the turmoil is palpable. "Farmers are uncertain, they're scared, and I've never known them so afraid of the future (and) not sure what it means to them," said Exwood. — AFP

IMF must condition Egypt loan to protect poorest, HRW warns

CAIRO: Rights groups on Monday said an Egyptian request for a loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) must require Cairo to expand social protection, tackle corruption and ensure judicial independence.

Seven rights groups, including Human Rights Watch (HRW), also demanded the Washington-based crisis lender tie cash to ensure transparency on the military's powerful grip on the economy. "The IMF and Egyptian authorities should not agree to any loan program that further raises the cost of living without dramatically increasing investment in universal social protection programs," the statement read.

Since 2016, the IMF has approved three loans to Cairo totaling \$20 billion, with Egyptians struggling amid soaring inflation, devaluation of the Egyptian pound by half, and tough austerity measures slashing subsidies on essential food.

Last month, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine caused inflation to surge, Cairo said it would apply for another loan. Egypt is heavily reliant on wheat imports from Russia and Ukraine, and its inflation rate hit 10 percent in February amid a wider spike in global commodity prices caused by the war.

A third of Egypt's 103 million people live in poverty, and nearly the same number are vulnerable to falling into poverty amid soaring prices of basic food, according to the World Bank. Last week, Qatar and Saudi Arabia pledged a combined \$15 billion in investments, with Riyadh directly depositing another \$5 billion in central bank. Despite pressure following previous IMF loans, the rights groups warned that "progress on badly needed reforms remains elusive," adding that "millions of Egyptians have been left increasingly vulnerable." — AFP



EasyJet cancels flights as COVID hits staff in Europe

LONDON: EasyJet on Monday said it was cancelling flights to and from the UK after high COVID rates in Europe left the British airline with a lack of staff. "As a result of the current high rates of COVID infections across Europe, like all businesses EasyJet is experiencing higher than usual levels of employee sickness," the carrier said.

After cancelling more than 200 flights over the weekend, EasyJet said it had preemptively cancelled 60 for Monday. The airline noted that it was a "small proportion" of the more than 1,645 flights planned for the day. "We have taken action to mitigate this through the rostering of additional standby crew, however, with the current levels of sickness we have also decided to make some cancellations in advance," EasyJet said in a statement.

In the UK, rates of COVID infection have hit a record high, according to official data Friday. Some 4.9 million people in the UK are estimated to have had COVID-19 in the week ending March 26, or 600,000 more than the previous week, the Office for National Statistics said. — AFP

Mazda vehicles earn top award for third consecutive year

KUWAIT: The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) announced the winners of its highest award in safety, the 2022 Top Safety Pick+. Every tested Mazda vehicle made a list for the third consecutive year. These vehicles include the Mazda3 Sedan, Mazda3 Hatchback, CX-30, CX-5, and CX-9.

To qualify for the 2022 Top Safety Pick+ award, Mazda vehicles earned good ratings in each of the Institute's six crashworthiness evaluations:

- Moderate overlap front
- Driver-side small overlap front
- Passenger-side small overlap front
- Side
- Roof strength
- Head restraint tests

Mazda vehicles earned advanced or superior ratings for front crash prevention in vehicle-to-vehicle and vehicle-to-pedestrian evaluations and good or acceptable headlight ratings.



Mazda's CX-5 was the first vehicle to earn a Good rating in IIHS's new, stricter side impact test, which will be added to the award criteria in 2023. Mazda was proud to add that top achievement to our list of accolades from IIHS and commends the Institute for continuously raising the bar in safety.

Ashish Tandon, General Manager of (Al-Shaya & Al-Sagar) stated, "Achieving the IIHS TOP Safety Pick + Award is a reflection of Mazda's commitment

to providing advanced safety technologies that our owners expect, our wide range of safety technologies are designed to support, not replace the driver, which results in a more confident and enjoyable driving experience." Waleed Alqahtani, Mazda Brand Manager, stated, "It makes us proud to be associated with a brand that places safety as a priority. We are certain our customers appreciate this award as much as we do."

India's HDFC Bank to absorb parent, making behemoth

MUMBAI: India's largest private bank will merge with its largest mortgage lender to form a \$237 billion financial giant, both companies said Monday, as low interest rates send demand for home loans soaring. HDFC Bank will absorb its parent company, the Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), in what will be one of the country's biggest-ever merger deals.

The twin firms together manage assets worth 25.61 trillion rupees (\$339 billion) and had a combined balance sheet of 17.87 trillion rupees at the end of last year. "As the son grows older, he acquires his father's business. That's all (that is) happening here," HDFC Chairman Deepak Parekh told a media briefing.

He said the merger would help low- and middle-income homebuyers outside India's cities access "affordable" housing loans.

India is enjoying a post-pandemic economic rebound and is growing faster than any other major



MUMBAI: (Left-right) Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) MD and CEO Sasidharan Jagdishan, HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh, HDFC Bank chairman Atanu Chakraborty and HDFC vice chairman and CEO, Keki Mistry pose for pictures during a media briefing in Mumbai on April 4, 2022. — AFP

economy. Sustained low interest rates have led to a boom in home-loan demand among the country's 1.4 billion people.

Shareholders will receive 42 shares of HDFC Bank for every 25 shares held in HDFC following the merger, which is pending shareholder and regulatory

approval. HDFC Bank is currently India's largest private bank, with 68 million customers and 6,342 branches. Shares in HDFC and its namesake banking subsidiary jumped 16.5 and 12.5 percent respectively on the Bombay exchange after the merger announcement. — AFP

German exports rise but Ukraine clouds gather

FRANKFURT: German exports bounded higher in February, the official statistics agency said Monday, cautioning that the Ukraine conflict and sanctions against Russia were likely to cloud the picture in the months ahead.

Exports rose by a higher-than-expected 6.4 percent on the previous month to reach a value of 124.7 billion euros (\$137.5 billion), Destatis said, powered by strong demand from European Union countries. Analysts surveyed by FactSet had predicted a two-percent increase.

Imports jumped 4.5 percent month-on-month, totaling 113.1 billion euros. But trade with Russia was "markedly down", Destatis said, with exports falling by 6.3 percent and imports by 7.3 percent, revealing the first impact of sweeping Western sanctions imposed on Russia after its February 24 invasion of Ukraine. "It is expected that, as of reference month March, foreign trade figures will show in detail in how far the sanctions, further measures



FRANKFURT: German exports rose by a higher-than-expected 6.4 percent on the previous month to reach a value of 124.7 billion euros (\$137.5 billion). — AFP

to restrict exports and unsanctioned behavior of market participants will further impact German trade with the Russian Federation," said Destatis.

The German economy, Europe's biggest, is bracing for a downturn as a result of the Ukraine war, which has added further strain to global supply chains and sent energy prices surging higher.

German auto giants Volkswagen, BMW and Mercedes-Benz have already been forced to curtail production at some plants in the wait for key car parts from Ukrainian factories.

Several major German companies have also suspended business activities in Russia or halted exports to the country. — AFP

Lifestyle | Features



This combination of photographs shows plates with traditional food for Muslim devotees to break their fast during the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. — AFP photos



Vendors sell bread to customers at a market on the first day of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Kabul.



A man arranges vermicelli to sell at a market on the first day of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in the old quarters of Delhi.



A shopkeeper selling a sweet dish waits for customers at a market on the first day of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in the old quarters of Delhi.

SWEET SMELL OF RAMADAN TEMPTS AS SOUTH ASIA'S MUSLIMS FAST

Mosques and market streets teem with evening crowds tempted by the scent of syrupy sweets and hefty rice plates, as more than half a billion Muslims across southern Asia break the day's Ramadan fast. The Islamic holy month began over the weekend and during that time believers abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual relations between sunrise and sunset. The fast is conceived as a spiritual struggle against the seduction of earthly pleasures-but for the nightly "iftar" meal, festive meals traditionally bring families together and there is intense social activity.

The centuries-old Chawkbazar market in Bangladesh is a traditional centre for evening meet-ups during Ramadan, with hundreds of makeshift food stalls selling traditional grilled meats and delicacies. Huge crowds returned to the neighborhood on Sunday for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic put a pin in large public gatherings. "I am so happy to see people here," said Ramzan Ali, who has sold barbecued quail at the market for around four decades. "The last two years were painful." Traditional dishes of pakoras and lentil soup were on offer alongside more esoteric fare, like kebabs made from the meat of bull genitalia and



A Vendor selling snacks at a market on the first day of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in Karachi.

the ever-popular fried goat brain served to accompany roast meats and vegetables. "It felt so good to come here again," said businessman Mohammad Ashrafuddin. "Without Chawkbazar's iftar items, I feel like my Ramadan isn't complete."

Pakistan's Muslims are also basking in the opportunity to again break fast in company and out from under a COVID crowd, with the government lifting restric-



Food plates are placed for Muslim devotees to break their fast at the Jama Masjid mosque on the first day of the holy fasting month of Ramadan in the old quarters of Delhi.

tions on public gatherings weeks earlier. Mosques have been lit up with lanterns and nearby markets are bustling as crowds stop for fried sweet pastries and stock up on meals to distribute to the poor. In India, crowds flock to stalls which line a street in the shadow of New Delhi's resplendent Jama Masjid, one of the country's largest houses of worship, snacking on wrinkled dates and seasonal

sweet buns baked with infusions of coconut or cherries.

Subdued celebrations

More subdued evening gatherings are underway in Afghanistan, where people are still reckoning with an acute humanitarian crisis in the wake of last year's US withdrawal and the Taliban's return to power. The most popular fast-breaking

local dish is Kabuli pulao-rice sprinkled with saffron and mixed with dry fruits, especially black raisins. Special spicy pickles and jalebis-a caloric sphere of deep-fried batter soaked in sugary syrup-are also relished by families during their evening meals after breaking the dawn-to-dusk fast.

But many have been forced to keep their purchases to a bare minimum this year on account of the country's food shortage. "For the first time I'm seeing that food prices have risen so much in Ramadan," Kabul resident Shahbuddin told AFP on the weekend. "People were expecting that in an Islamic country prices would drop during Ramadan, but that has not happened."

Islam is the second-largest religion in South Asia after Hinduism, and the region is home to around a third of the faith's adherents. Ramadan is sacred to Muslims because tradition says the Koran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed during that month. The global observance draws to a close with the Eid al-Fitr festival, a celebration marked with prayers and feasts. — AFP

Libyan artisans restore old Qurans for Ramadan

With the arrival of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan in war-torn Libya, a group of volunteers work around the clock to restore old or damaged copies of the Quran. Khaled Al-Drebi, one of Libya's best-known restorers of Islam's holy book, is among the artisans who arrive at a Tripoli workshop daily to meet the needs of the influx of customers during Ramadan. For Muslims, Ramadan is a month of spirituality, where a daily dawn-to-dusk fast is accompanied with prayer and acts of charity-often translating into a surge in sales of Qurans.

"The purchase of new Qurans traditionally increases before the month of Ramadan, but this has recently changed in Libya," Drebi told AFP. For many, tradition has been interrupted by an increase in the cost of Qurans, especially "since the state stopped printing" them in Libya,



A woman binds with glue a hardcover for a volume of the Holy Quran.

he added. The North African nation has endured more than a decade of conflict, leaving many of its institutions in disarray and dealing a major blow to the oil-rich country's economy. "The cost of buying (Qurans) has increased, and so the turnout for restoring old Qurans has gained unprecedented popularity," Drebi said. Compared to the cost of a new Quran-at more than \$20 depending on the binding-Drebi's workshop charges just a few dollars to restore one.

'Indescribable joy'

But cost is not the only factor-for many, the older copies also have a sentimental value. "There is a spiritual connection for some customers," Drebi

said, adding that many choose to preserve Qurans passed on from relatives. "Some say this Quran has the smell of my grandfather or parents." At the back of the room, Abdel Razzaq Al-Aroussi works on sorting through thousands of Qurans based on their level of deterioration.

"The restoration of Qurans with limited damage takes no more than an hour, but for those that are very damaged, they could require two or more hours," Aroussi said. They "must be undone, restored and then bound", he said-a meticulous process that requires a great deal of "time and concentration". Mabrouk Al-Amin, a supervisor at the workshop, said the restoration process "requires a good



A woman places glue with a brush on the hardcover binding for a volume of the Holy Quran.

number of artisans". "Working with the book of God is very enjoyable and we don't get bored... there is an indescribable joy in this work," he said. Restorers say they have repaired a staggering half a million Qurans since the workshop opened in 2008, and more than 1,500 trainees have graduated from 150 restoration workshops.

Women restorers

In recent years, more and more women have been joining the ranks of the volunteer restorers. "A large number of women were trained on restoring the holy Quran and today they have their own workshops," Drebi said. One female restorer, Khadija Mahmoud, has even

held training sessions for blind women.

"We would not have been able to think of doing this... were it not for this capable woman," Drebi added. For Mahmoud, who trains women at a workshop in Zawiya, 45 kilometers (28 miles) west of Tripoli, restoring Qurans in a women's workshop allows them to work comfortably and at a faster pace. She added that the restoration work has given many women a meaningful way to fill their "spare time". "A large segment of trainees and restorers are retirees," she said. "For them, there is nothing better than spending their spare time in the service of the Quran." — AFP



A member of staff stands before volumes that require restoration during a workshop on the restoration of copies of the Holy Quran, Islam's holy book, in Libya's capital Tripoli. — AFP photos



Libyan restorer of the Holy Quran Khaled Al-Drebi (right), assembles pages together to be glued into a volume during a workshop on the restoration of copies of Islam's holy book.



US singer Jon Batiste poses in the press room with his Grammys during the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. — AFP photos



US singer Olivia Rodrigo poses with her awards for Best New Artist, Best Pop Solo Performance and Pop Vocal Album in the press room.



US rapper Doja Cat poses with the award for Best Pop Duo/Group Performance "Kiss Me More" featuring SZA in the press room.

JON BATISTE CROWNED KING WITH FIVE WINS INCLUDING BEST ALBUM

Industry watchers had tipped pop superstars as the likely big winners at Sunday's Grammys-but jazzman Jon Batiste instead was crowned king, taking home five awards including the prestigious Album of the Year prize. At the star-studded gala, held for the first time in Las Vegas, Silk Sonic-the 70s revival project of Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak-won all four of their potential prizes, including both Record and Song of the Year for their single "Leave The Door Open."

Olivia Rodrigo didn't win as many awards as predicted-but the Filipino-American pop phenom did scoop the coveted prize for Best New Artist, and two trophies in the pop category. That meant the winners of all four top Grammys were people of color-a milestone for the Recording Academy, which for years has faced criticism that it disproportionately honored white men. "I just put my head down and work on the craft every day," Batiste, born into a prominent New Orleans musical dynasty, told the audience as he accepted the night's final prize.

"It's more than entertainment for me-it's a spiritual practice." The night was heavy on performances but also held a number of somber moments-most notably when Ukrainian President

Volodymyr Zelensky delivered a pre-taped plea for support. Zelensky's message led into a performance by John Legend of the song "Free," with the help of Ukrainian singer Mika Newton, musician Siuzanna Iglidan and poet Lyuba Yakimchuk. "On our land, we are fighting Russia, which brings horrible silence with its bombs. The dead silence," Zelensky said. "Fill the silence with your music, fill it today to tell our story."

Bieber, Eilish, Lil Nas X shut out

Despite being among the night's most nominated artists, pop juggernauts Billie Eilish, Justin Bieber and Lil Nas X were shut out completely. But they all staged impressive performances: Eilish belted out "Happier Than Ever" in a lightning-backed downpour, Bieber delivered a crooned-up version of "Peaches," and Lil Nas X hosted an unabashed celebration of sexuality and queerness set to a medley of his songs including "MONTERO (Call Me By Your Name)." Rodrigo also gave a searing rendition of her viral teen breakup hit "drivers license," showcasing her impressive vocals against a set mimicking a gloomy night in suburbia.

"This is my biggest dream come true," the 19-year-old said as she accepted the gramophone for Best New



US singer-songwriter Chris Stapleton (second left) poses with the award of Best Country Album for "Starting Over".

Artist. Lady Gaga performed a few zippy standards from "Love for Sale," her hit duet album with Tony Bennett, who introduced her in a brief video message. Big winner Batiste also performed, showcasing his elasticity as an artist by

starting at the piano for a classical piece before transitioning to a rhythmic dance number. The night's leading nominee with 11 nods, Batiste had already scooped four ahead of his big sleeper win for the year's best album. But he

looked shocked when presenter Lenny Kravitz declared him the night's big hit. "I really don't do it for the awards," the 35-year-old Batiste told journalists backstage. "Music is something that's so subjective."



US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga performs onstage during the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.



US singer Jon Batiste performs onstage.



US singer-songwriter Lady Gaga performs onstage.



Bruno Mars of Silk Sonic performs onstage.



US singer-songwriter Chris Stapleton poses with his 3 awards for Best Country Solo Performance, Best Country Album, Best Country Song "You Should Probably Leave".



Angeliqe Kidjo poses in the winners photo room.

Lifestyle | Grammys



(From left) Bruno Mars, Dernst Emile II, and Anderson .Paak of Silk Sonic accept Song Of The Year for 'Leave The Door Open' onstage.



Baby Keem accepts the Best Rap Performance award for 'Family Ties' onstage.



In this file photo Justin Vernon of Bon Iver poses with the Best Alternative Music Album "Bon Iver" award and the Best New Artist award.

Key winners at the 2022 Grammy Awards

Here is a list of winners in the major categories for the 64th annual Grammy Awards, which were handed out on Sunday in Las Vegas. Jazzman and bandleader Jon Batiste led the night with five awards including Album of the Year. Retro act Silk Sonic-the group project of Bruno Mars and Anderson .Paak-won four awards including Record and Song of the Year. Pop sensation Olivia Rodrigo was named Best New Artist.

- Album of the Year:** Jon Batiste, "We Are"
- Record of the Year (overall song performance):** Silk Sonic, "Leave The Door Open"
- Song of the Year (best songwriting):** "Leave The Door Open" - Brandon Anderson, Christopher Brody Brown, Dernst Emile II and Bruno Mars, songwriters (Silk Sonic)
- Best New Artist:** Olivia Rodrigo
- Best Music Video:** Jon Batiste, "Freedom"
- Best Rap Album:** Tyler, The Creator, "Call Me If You Get Lost" -
- Best Rap Performance:** Baby Keem featuring Kendrick Lamar, "Family Ties"
- Best Rock Album:** Foo Fighters, "Medicine At Midnight"
- Best Pop Vocal Album:** Olivia Rodrigo, "Sour"
- Best Pop Solo Performance:** Olivia Rodrigo, "drivers license"
- Best Pop Duo/Group Performance:** Doja Cat featuring SZA, "Kiss Me More"
- Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album:** Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga, "Love for Sale"
- Best Country Album:** Chris Stapleton, "Starting Over"
- Best Global Music Album:** Angélique Kidjo, "Mother Nature"
- Best Music Video:** Jon Batiste, "Freedom"—AFP

Diverse field

The timing of the Grammys just one week after Will Smith stunned the world by slapping Chris Rock on stage at the Oscars added an extra layer of unpredictability to what is already usually one of the edgier nights on the showbiz awards circuit. That fiasco prompted some gentle zings over the course of the night Sunday, but antics were virtually non-existent at what ultimately proved to be a heavily scripted show. Music's chaos agent Kanye West stayed home even as he won two Grammys, one of which he shared with Jay Z.

Among the diverse crop of winners was Doja Cat, who took home her first ever Grammy in the pop category-which she had to sprint back to accept

after dipping out of the gala for a bathroom break. The Brooklyn-based Pakistani vocalist Arooj Aftab, who won her first Grammy for Best Global Music Performance for "Mohabbat," and had also been in the running for Best New Artist, told journalists the win left her "beyond thrilled." And it was a special night for folk icon Joni Mitchell, who won the prize for Best Historical Album days after being honored at a moving tribute gala Friday. She made a rare public appearance onstage, looking fly in a red leather beret, sunglasses and floral pants, her long blonde hair in pigtailed. — AFP

MUSIC'S TOP STARS BURN UP THE GRAMMYS RED CARPET

Music's biggest night is the awards season event with the boldest looks, and moving the Grammys to Sin City certainly amped up the edginess-the industry's top names sizzled Sunday on the red carpet, showing lots of skin. Some of the most iconic fashion looks ever have emerged at the Grammy Awards, like Jennifer Lopez's dramatic plunging green Versace gown in 2000 or Cardi B's vintage Thierry Mugler "Venus" gown in 2019.

On Sunday, there was more Versace-and even Donatella herself on stage at the MGM Grand. The naked dress trend that emerged a week earlier at the Oscars was in full effect, and funky gowns in basic black had their place. For the men, the memo obviously called for brash statements and loads of bright colors. Here are some of the top looks from the Grammys red carpet:

(Not so) basic black

Olivia Rodrigo made her Grammys debut, and her arrival was memorable. The 19-year-old, who won three awards including Best New Artist, went for a body-conscious 90s look in a figure-hugging black Vivienne Westwood gown with pink accents and a choker, finished off with long gloves. Grammys darling Billie Eilish, who gave a stunning performance of her hit "Happier Than Ever," but didn't win a trophy, rocked a deconstructed black suit jacket fashioned into a cape to match her hair and square sunglasses.

On stage, she opted for baggy trousers-which are easier to jump around in-and wore a black tee-shirt bearing the likeness of late Foo Fighters drummer Taylor Hawkins. And then there were the matching dresses: Dua Lipa and Megan Thee Stallion came out to present an award, seemingly in the same black dress... until designer Donatella Versace stepped up



US singer/songwriter Billie Eilish arrives for the 64th Annual Grammy Awards at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas. — AFP photos

on stage to make a few changes. Bingo: two outfits.

Baring it all (almost)

Singer-rapper Doja Cat, who won her first ever Grammy for best pop duo/group performance with SZA on "Kiss Me More," embraced the current naked dress trend: her sheer sea-foam green Versace gown with a plunging neckline stunned fashionistas. Actress

Laverne Cox went for a goth lingerie look, in a filmy black gown from John Galliano with smoky plum makeup and bright purple hair.

And reality star socialite Paris Hilton was in eye-popping silver with strategically placed sequins and a gauzy flowing cape. On the red carpet, Megan Thee Stallion did not go for a see-through dress, but her slinky leopard print one-shoulder gown with a high leg slit certainly bared some skin.

Make it colorful

Rapper Saweetie, who was up for two awards, knows how to work a pop of color. She paid tribute to Madonna's "Material Girl" look in a bright fuchsia Valentino ensemble-a daring bikini top, full ball gown skirt and elbow-length gloves, accessorized with a huge diamond choker. But the men also brought some eye-popping color to their fashion game at the MGM Grand.

Jon Batiste-the big winner of the night with five awards-was a whirling catwalk show, changing outfits multiple times and bringing the swagger in Dolce & Gabbana. He wore a shiny suit with yellow checks at the pre-gala ceremony, a shimmering powder blue suit for his high-energy performance and a sweeping blinged-out cape to accept his awards.

Drummer Travis Barker, who performed with H.E.R. and Lenny Kravitz, arrived in a bright pink coat-the color of the night, for sure-over a black vest and trousers. Justin Bieber, one of the top nominees, arrived in a fuchsia knit hat that nearly matched Saweetie's dress. DJ Diplo and Colombian singer J Balvin both went for bright blue hair, while Australian rapper The Kid Laroi showed up with flowing pink locks. —AFP



US singer/songwriter Billie Eilish (right) and US singer-songwriter Finneas O'Connell perform onstage.



US socialite Paris Hilton



(From left) Kourtney Kardashian and Travis Barker



US DJ Diplo



Justin Bieber



Dua Lipa attends the 64th Annual GRAMMY Awards at MGM Grand Garden Arena.



US rapper Saweetie

Sports

Rampant Spurs go fourth, West Ham leave Everton in relegation danger

LONDON: Tottenham powered into fourth place in the Premier League with a 5-1 rout of Newcastle, while West Ham's 2-1 victory pushed Everton deeper into relegation trouble on Sunday. Antonio Conte's side staged a stirring comeback to make it five wins from their last six league games. Newcastle struck first through Fabian Schar, but Ben Davies equalized before the break in north London.

Matt Doherty, Son Heung-min, Emerson Royal and Steven Bergwijn netted after half-time as Tottenham climbed above bitter rivals Arsenal on goal difference. Arsenal, who have two games in hand on Tottenham, can regain fourth place if they avoid defeat at Crystal Palace on Monday. Regardless of that result, Tottenham are firmly in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League, despite Conte's claim that it would be a miracle to finish in the top four.

"It's very difficult to be in the race for the Champions League. We want to stay there until the end. We have to continue to play this way with intensity," Conte said. "I'm very happy. I was happy before the international break. I said it was a pity we had to stop. I asked my players today to start in the same way we left. We know we have eight final games. Arsenal has a good advantage but to play against us in this moment is not easy."

Newcastle snatched the lead against the run of play in the 39th minute when Schar's free-kick from the edge of the area caught Hugo Lloris unsuspected as it evaded the Tottenham keeper's weak attempted save. But Tottenham were level four minutes later as Son's teasing cross was glanced home by Davies from six yards for his first Premier League goal since 2017.

Harry Kane was the provider when Tottenham

moved ahead in the 48th minute, the England captain whipping over a fine cross that Doherty stooped to head in from close range. Needing another goal to overtake Arsenal, Conte's men struck again six minutes later as Kane's pass picked out Dejan Kulusevski and his cross was slotted in by Son for his 15th goal this season.

Emerson bagged his first Tottenham goal with a close-range finish from Doherty's cross in the 63rd minute before Bergwijn came off the bench to drill home with seven minutes left. In turmoil when Conte arrived in November to replace the sacked Nuno Espirito Santo, Tottenham have renewed hope of an uplifting end to the season.

At the London Stadium, David Moyes' side moved up to sixth place thanks to Jarrod Bowen's second-half winner on the forward's return from a month out with a foot injury. Aaron Cresswell had put West Ham ahead with a superb 32nd minute free-kick before Mason Holgate equalized with a deflected effort soon after the interval.

Everton angst

Everton were effectively out of the contest when Michael Keane was sent off midway through the second half. Everton's fifth defeat in their last six league games leaves them languishing just three points above the relegation zone. Frank Lampard's team have two games in hand on third-bottom Watford, but their proud record of playing in the top-flight every season since 1954-55 remains under serious threat. Lampard publicly questioned his players' character after their FA Cup quarter-final thrashing at Crystal Palace.

They were more committed in their first outing



LONDON: Tottenham Hotspur's English striker Harry Kane has this shot blocked by Newcastle United's Swiss defender Fabian Schar during their English Premier League match at Tottenham Hotspur Stadium on April 3, 2022. — AFP

since then, but there was no improvement in the worst away record in England's four professional divisions this term. A trip to second-bottom Burnley on Wednesday looms as a vital clash in Everton's fight for survival. "The reality is that we are in that kind of moment where everything is going against us, deci-

sions, moments in games, red cards," Lampard said. "I can't fault the players, their character. The performance was really positive and we have 10 games to perform like that again." Beaten in two of their previous three league matches, West Ham are just three points behind Tottenham and Arsenal. — AFP

Mbappe mum on PSG future after sparking Lorient rout

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe said he has still yet to make a decision on his future at Paris Saint-Germain after scoring twice in a sensational display in Sunday's 5-1 demolition of Lorient in Ligue 1. The France star was in unstoppable form, creating two goals for Neymar and another for Lionel Messi as the trio all scored in the same match for PSG for the first time.

However the post-match focus again quickly shifted to where Mbappe will be playing next season, with his PSG contract expiring in July. "I haven't made my choice. I haven't taken my decision, I'm thinking it over, there are new elements and there are loads of factors," Mbappe told Prime Video. "I don't want to be wrong," he added. "I know it's getting a bit late for people, we talk about it every day. If I'd taken my decision, I would say it. I don't have to explain myself to

anyone, it's a personal choice. If I'd made my decision I would come and announce it and stand by it."

After three defeats in four games before the international break and a traumatic Champions League exit, PSG began the end-of-season run-in with a crushing win at the Parc des Princes. They lead Marseille by 12 points and need just 13 more from their final eight games to be assured of a record-equaling 10th French title.

Messi and Mbappe combined to set up Neymar for the opening goal on 12 minutes as the Brazilian struck for just the sixth time in another injury-plagued campaign. Mbappe then doubled the advantage with a neat finish inside the near post, but Terem Moffi gave Lorient hope early in the second half after punishing a defensive mix-up. The Nigerian beat an uncertain Marquinhos to a loose pass from Achraf Hakimi, poking beyond Gianluigi Donnarumma.

With Lorient threatening to get back into the game, Mbappe restored PSG's two-goal cushion by drilling home from 20 metres to take his league goals tally to 17, one behind Monaco's Wissam Ben Yedder. Mbappe teed up Messi to crash in a fourth via the underside of the cross-



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe is tackled by Lorient's French defender Houboulang Mendes during their French L1 football match at the Parc des Princes stadium on April 3, 2022. — AFP

bar on 73 minutes, moments after Sergio Ramos came on for a first appearance since Jan 23.

Neymar and Messi were both whistled by supporters in PSG's last home game. This time it was Ramos who was jeered following a nightmare first season in Paris blighted by a calf problem. Mbappe nearly capped a

sensational performance with a hat-trick, his shot grazing the post after a scorching burst into the box. He instead turned provider in the final minute, exchanging passes with Neymar to send the Brazilian racing through to complete a 14th win in 15 home games for Mauricio Pochettino's side. — AFP

Inter sneak past Juve to stay on heels of Milan

MILAN: Inter Milan kept their title defence alive with Sunday's 1-0 win at Juventus thanks to a controversial retaken penalty which moved them three points behind leaders AC Milan and Napoli, 3-1 winners at Atalanta. The champions came away from the Allianz Stadium in Turin with a narrow win in a bad-tempered match decided by Hakan Calhanoglu's spot-kick which was scored at the second attempt five minutes into first-half stoppage time.

Inter stay third with a game in hand and extend to four points the gap between themselves and third-placed Juve, who will be 10 points off the pace with

seven games remaining if Milan beat Bologna on Monday after their unbeaten league run ended at 16 matches. "It's a huge step for us. We know that we've dropped points lately, but we're going to try to recover them over the remaining eight games," said coach Simone Inzaghi.

A game which started after an Italian and Ukrainian singer belted out a rendition of John Lennon's 'Imagine' to promote peace in Ukraine turned ugly almost immediately after kick-off, with rough tackles and niggly play which was dominated by the wasteful home side. Events turned on the final few minutes of the opening period, with bedlam breaking out after Inter were awarded their spot-kick for Alvaro Morata treading on Denzel Dumfries' foot. Calhanoglu's weak first effort was saved by Wojciech Szczesny and from there chaos ensued, with Inter's players celebrating after the ball was clumsily bundled in by Juve's defenders only for that goal to be ruled out for a foul. — AFP



TURIN: Juventus' Argentine forward Paulo Dybala and Inter Milan's Italian defender Matteo Darmian collide during the Italian Serie A football match on April 3, 2022 at the Juventus stadium. — AFP

Classifieds

Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000	Rawda	22517733
Amiri Hospital	22450005	Adaliya	22517144
Maternity Hospital	24843100	Khaldiya	24848075
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700	Kaifan	24849807
Chest Hospital	24849400	Shamiya	24848913
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010	Shuwaikh	24814507
Adan Hospital	23940620	Abdullah Salem	22549134
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300	Nuzha	22526804
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000	Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9	Qadsiya	22515088
		Dasmah	22532265
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LOS ANGELES: Anthony Davis #3 of the Los Angeles Lakers splits the defense of Davon Reed #9 and Nikola Jokic #15 of the Denver Nuggets during the second half of a game at Crypto.com Arena on April 3, 2022. —AFP

Lakers, LeBron on brink after Denver rout

LOS ANGELES: Nikola Jokic scored 38 points Sunday as the Denver Nuggets sent the Los Angeles Lakers spinning to a sixth straight defeat and closer to elimination from NBA postseason contention. With LeBron James looking on from the sidelines, a patched-up Lakers team was unable to contain Jokic down the stretch as the Nuggets powered to a 129-118 win at the Lakers' Crypto.com Arena.

The defeat leaves the Lakers needing a miracle to overtake the San Antonio Spurs for a place in the postseason play-in tournament. The Lakers are 11th in the Western Conference, with a 31-47 record. San Antonio occupy 10th place - and are on track for a spot in the play-in - with a 32-45 record.

With just four games remaining, the Lakers have precious little margin for error - and dauntingly face a trip to the league-leading Phoenix Suns on Tuesday. Defeat in Arizona could see them eliminated from playoff contention depending on results elsewhere. If

the Lakers fail to reach the postseason, it would mark only the fourth time since LeBron James entered the league in 2003 that he has not gone to the playoffs.

Lakers coach Frank Vogel could not hide his dejection after Sunday's damaging defeat. "What's it like? It sucks." Vogel responded to a reporter. "It sucks telling these guys every game 'Proud of you, good effort - we lost.' It's not fun but it could be worse, if things were untraveling. But our team has stayed together - they've put in fight, their attitude has been wonderful," Vogel said. "It's just disappointing to come in and keep saying we fell short. It sucks we can't get over the damn hump and put a 'W' on the board when we need it," he added. "But our guys' spirit is really pure. They're fighting a good fight but we just keep falling short."

Doncic wins Giannis duel

Vogel admitted the Lakers had been unable to

contain Jokic during a decisive fourth quarter. Jokic finished with 38 points, 18 rebounds and six assists. Will Barton added 25 points while Aaron Gordon had 24. "We didn't have enough answers for him down the stretch," Vogel said of Jokic. Anthony Davis, clearly struggling for full fitness, led the Lakers with 28 points, while Russell Westbrook finished with 27.

Elsewhere Sunday, Luka Doncic won his duel with Giannis Antetokounmpo as the Dallas Mavericks downed the Milwaukee Bucks. Mavs star Doncic finished with 32 points, 15 assists and eight rebounds as the Mavs highlighted their postseason credentials with a 118-112 road win over the NBA champions. Doncic spearheaded a balanced offensive performance by Dallas, who finished with six players in double figures.

Doncic was given scoring support from Dwight Powell with 22 points and Reggie Bullock with 16

points. Point guard Jalen Brunson added 15 points while Dorian Finney-Smith and Spencer Dinwiddie chipped in with 11 apiece for Dallas, who improved to 49-30 to remain fourth in the Western Conference standings. The Bucks fell to 48-30 after a defeat which followed their 153-119 mauling Friday by the Los Angeles Clippers.

The Bucks had led by 10 points early in the second quarter but were gradually reeled in by Miami, who pulled clear in the fourth after an 11-point burst from Doncic. Antetokounmpo led Bucks scorers with 28 points, with Jrue Holiday adding 20. In other NBA action Sunday, the Boston Celtics bullied the Washington Wizards en route to a 144-102 thrashing at the TD Garden. Jaylen Brown drained three of four three-point attempts to lead the Celtics scoring with 32 points while Jayson Tatum added 22 for Boston, who remain in second place in the Eastern Conference. —AFP

Defining days ahead for Liverpool, Man City's history bids

MANCHESTER: Liverpool's quest for a quadruple and Manchester City's bid to match Manchester United's historic treble of 1999 are on a collision course over the next two weeks. Premier League leaders City will host a potential title decider against second placed Liverpool on Sunday before the fierce rivals clash again in the FA Cup semifinal at Wembley on April 16.

However, the impact of the Champions League quarterfinals could have a big impact on who claims the domestic trophies. Liverpool on paper have the better draw in the last eight as they take on Benfica, while City face a grueling two legs against Spanish champions Atletico Madrid. Reds boss Jurgen Klopp declared the Premier League as "the most important" prize up for grabs for his team, who have already lifted the League Cup this season.

But that cannot be the case for City as they aim to end the club's long wait for Champions League glory. Anything other than a convincing win when Atletico visit the Etihad on Tuesday will give

Guardiola a difficult balancing act on his team selection for the title showdown against Liverpool.

"The next Premier League game we will play against Liverpool. We know they are going to win almost all the games - hopefully not the next one - but we will try to do the same," Guardiola said after City beat Burnley on Saturday to reestablish their one-point lead over Liverpool. "When you arrive in May challenging to lift the title it means you have had an incredible season. Being here is because we work a lot and we have done that every single season."

'Insane levels'

Liverpool are happy just to be in this position after finding themselves 14 points adrift of City at one point in January. A 10-game winning run has reeled in the English champions, setting up another titanic fight between the sides, reminiscent of their record-breaking battle in 2018/19. City emerged winners on that occasion by a single point despite Liverpool amassing 97 points, the fourth highest points tally in English top-flight history for a 38-game season.

The other two were also registered during an era marked by the excellence of Guardiola and Klopp's sides. City hold the record for the 100 points they recorded in 2017/18, while Liverpool responded in 2019/20 to end their 30-year wait to win the league with 99 points. "In the last few years we've pushed

round if they were to upset Liverpool, who, along with Manchester City, are surely this year's tournament favorites.

Benfica's impressive run in the Champions League has belied a tumultuous season domestically for the club, who parted ways with Jorge Jesus as coach in December following a 3-0 defeat by Porto and just seven wins out from their first 15 matches. But their form has not been much better under interim coach Nelson Verissimo, who began with only two wins from his first seven while a 3-2 defeat by Braga on Friday has the team sitting third in the Primeira Liga, 12 points adrift of leaders Porto and six behind Sporting Lisbon. Third place in Portugal is only enough to make the Champions League qualifiers. "We know it's Liverpool, but we have to fight, we can play better," Verissimo said on Friday.

"We always have to work. The Champions League game is different. We can't forget our game today because Liverpool will see it. We have to correct it." Better performances in Europe have kept Benfica's season alive, with the 3-2 aggregate victory over Ajax in the last 16 as welcome as it was sur-



Jurgen Klopp

Pep Guardiola

each other on insane levels," added Klopp.

This year, history will be marked in the number of trophies won. United's feat of winning the Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup is the only time that particular treble has been won by an English side. "The next Premier League game obviously is a big one, we do not hide from that. It's all good," said Klopp. "We are not favorite in one of the competitions we are in, but who cares? We will give it a try." —AFP



Nelson Verissimo

prising. They were outplayed by Ajax for large spells in Lisbon but managed to claim a 2-2 draw, before snatching a 1-0 win in Amsterdam to go through. Darwin Nunez headed in the winner at the Johan Cruyff Arena and the Uruguayan will be well-known to Liverpool given he reportedly has many admirers in the Premier League. —AFP

Louis van Gaal diagnosed with prostate cancer

THE HAGUE: Netherlands coach Louis van Gaal has received messages of support from his former clubs Manchester United, Barcelona and Bayern Munich after revealing he has prostate cancer. Van Gaal, 70, said on Sunday he had been receiving treatment since being diagnosed in 2020, but still plans to lead his team at the World Cup in Qatar in seven months' time.

United, where he was in charge in 2014-2016, were among those wishing the Dutchman a speedy recovery. "Everybody at Manchester United is fully behind our former manager, Louis van Gaal, in his battle against cancer. Sending you strength and courage, Louis," the English giants tweeted. Barcelona, where he was twice manager and twice won La Liga, said on Twitter: "Our thoughts and prayers go out to former Barca manager Louis van Gaal... Stay strong, Louis, and get well soon."

Another of his former clubs, Bayern Munich, which he managed between 2009 and 2011, said: "FC Bayern would like to wish former head coach Louis van Gaal all the best as he battles cancer. We all know how strong a person he is. Hoping for a full and speedy recovery!" Former England striker Gary Lineker, now a TV presenter in Britain, also tweeted a message of support. "Sending best wishes and hopes for a full recovery to Louis Van Gaal," he wrote.

Van Gaal told RTL television on Sunday that the players in the national squad "don't know" that he has cancer. He said he had undergone 25 bouts of radiotherapy, including during training camps with the national team. "In each period during my time as manager of the national team I had to leave in the night to go to the hospital without the players finding it out until now. While thinking I was in good health, but I'm not." —AFP



Louis van Gaal

Benfica target another scalp against Liverpool

LISBON: Benfica face a gargantuan task in the Champions League quarterfinals on Tuesday but after already knocking out Barcelona and Ajax, there is belief they can spring another surprise against Liverpool. Many circled Benfica as the kindest opponent available when the draw was made in Nyon last month, with this the furthest the Portuguese club have gone in the Champions League in six years.

The last time Benfica made the semis, they went on to reach the final, in 1990, when a team coached by Sven-Goran Eriksson lost 1-0 to AC Milan and missed out on lifting their third European Cup. That was the last time Benfica really belonged with Europe's elite and it would be the shock of the