

KHAREEF TO SHOWCASE 65 CULTURAL SPORTS, YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth completed preparations for the 2023 Dhofar Khareef season's activities. Musa Abdullah Al Kasabi, Director General for Culture, Sports and Youth at Dhofar Governorate said that the event covers a total of 65 activities catering to all segments of society. **>A4**



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HIS MAJESTY GREETES PRESIDENT OF USA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Joe Biden of the United States of America on his country's Independence Anniversary. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Joe Biden. His Majesty also wished the bilateral relations and cooperation further development and growth. **-ONA**



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KHAZAEN ECONOMIC CITY

HM the Sultan issues two Royal decrees



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday issued two Royal decrees, reading as follows:

Royal Decree No. 44/2023 establishes Khazaen Economic City and promulgates its Bylaw (articles of association).

Article (1) stipulates that an economic city shall be set up in the Governorate of South Al Batinah, to be named "Khazaen Economic City" and to be established on the land area demarcated in accordance with the layout attached to this decree. The city shall be under the supervision of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones and it shall be governed by the attached Bylaw.

Article (2) states that two free zones shall be established within Khazaen Economic City on the specific land area demarcated in accordance with the attached layout, which is specified in the Development Agreement defined in the attached Bylaw.

Article (3) endorses the Development Agreement and the Usufruct Agreement for Khazaen Economic City stated in the attached Bylaw.

Article (4) states that Oman Logistics Company LLC shall be the operating party of Khazaen Economic City and the two free zones set up therein. Khazaen Economic City Company LLC shall be the developer of Khazaen Economic City and the two free

zones set up therein.

Article (5) states that the Chairman of Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones shall issue the regulations and decisions necessary for the implementation of the provisions of the attached Bylaw.

Article (6) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No. 45/2023 endorses the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 21 November 1947.

Article (1) endorses the Sultanate of Oman's joining the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, in accordance with the version attached to this decree while at the same time observing the reservation of section (32) of article 9 of the convention.

Article (2) instructs the departments concerned to deposit the official document for joining the aforementioned convention in accordance with its provisions while at the same time observing the above-mentioned reservation.

Article (3) says that this decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. **-ONA**

FIRST-EVER FINANCIAL STABILITY INDICATOR LAUNCHED IN OMAN

The CFSI serves as a comprehensive measure to capture the essence of financial stability in Oman, providing policymakers with valuable insights



MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) announced the publication of a working paper for the first-ever Composite Financial Stability Indicator (CFSI) for the Sultanate of Oman.

The CFSI serves as a comprehensive measure to capture the essence of financial stability in the Sultanate of Oman, providing stakeholders and policymakers with valuable insights into the current state and evolution of financial stability over time.

The CFSI aggregates five essential sub-indicators that effectively reflect the financial stability landscape in Oman, with the aggregate CFSI rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing lower stability and 5

higher stability.

These sub-indicators include banking stability, systemic risk, debt sustainability, currency stability and capital market certainty.

The overall results of the CFSI from 2008 to 2021, demonstrate strong stability. However, during the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, the CFSI of Oman saw a drop primarily attributed to deteriorating debt sustain-

ability, capital market deterioration, and increased systemic risk resulting from the contraction of economic activity via a vis bank lending and higher lending premiums during the pandemic period.

The CFSI will be updated annually and made available to the public through the annually published Financial Stability Report, with the objective of enhancing transparency and ensuring that

vital information reaches a wide range of stakeholders.

With the introduction of the CFSI, the CBO reiterates its commitment to transparency, open communication with stakeholders, and evidence-based policy making. The central bank is responsible for maintaining financial stability in Oman, as well as fostering a sound and progressive banking and financial system in the country. **-ONA**

TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN

Hotel revenues up by 34.7% in March 2023

1 The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in Oman recorded a rise by 34.7 percent at the end of May 2023 to reach OMR98.426 million compared to OMR73.058 million during the corresponding period in 2022, according to the NCSI. **>A2**



WORLD

78 people arrested across France

2 At least 78 people were arrested across France, including 20 in Paris, following unrest after the death of Nahel Merzouk, a 17-year-old of Algerian descent, who was fatally shot by a police officer in a Paris suburb. **>A7**

MARKET Industrial units urged to submit data

3 The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion called upon industrial establishments to speed up the submission of their data for the past three years of 2020, 2021 and 2022 before July end. **>B1**

LOGOS HOPE

World's largest floating book fair to dock in Muscat

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Nearly ten years since their last visit, Logos Hope, the world's largest floating book fair, will arrive in the Sultanate of Oman on July 13 from Manama, Bahrain.

The ship will dock in Muscat from July 13-24 before departing for their next port of call in Salalah, where it would be stationed from July 27-August 3.

The previous visit to Muscat of Logos Hope was in October 2013 while the ship had made its maiden visit to Muscat in January 2011. During that visit, it had also visited Salalah in January 2011.

After the conclusion of its visit to Oman on August 3 in Salalah, Logos Hope will depart for Victoria in Seychelles, where it will be from August 10-17 before heading to Mombasa in Kenya.

The world's largest floating book fair usually remains at each port for about two weeks and opens the gangways to thousands of visitors each day. On average, one million visitors have been welcomed on board the ships every year.

The ship is free to board and



houses books spanning different genres and subjects, including science, sports, cookery, arts, medicine, languages and faith, along with children's titles, academic texts, dictionaries and atlases.

The floating book fair offers over 5,000 titles, providing many visitors their first-ever opportunity to purchase quality literature.

Visitors can learn about the history of the Logos Hope through a short video and interactive displays in the welcome area, and

visit the cafe on board.

The seafaring book fair launched in 1970 with the purchase of the original Logos, is operated by the German non-profit group Good Books for All (GBA).

They have since visited 480 different ports in more than 150 countries, welcoming 49 million people. The crew, which will be visiting Oman, is made up of nearly 350 volunteers from more than 65 different nationalities.

With so many different nation-



alities represented on board, the Logos Hope community is regarded as a genuine expression of international goodwill and understanding.

The crew and staff are all non-salaried volunteers, including many serving in their professional capacity, such as seafarers, engineers, electricians, nurses, teachers and cooks. Sponsorship from friends, family members and civic organisations enables crew members to serve on board.

Teams go from the ship into surrounding areas to visit hospitals, schools, orphanages or prisons, supply aid and provide community care. In each port, the ship's crew and staff partner with community groups to share hope and show love to people whatever their circumstance, culture or background.

Although the main aim of the ship is to serve the port communities, those on board also benefit personally during their term of service. A structured training programme, combined with work experience and cross-cultural encounters, provides crew members with valuable opportunities to learn new skills and develop character.

The unique living situation presents many challenges, and life on board is a constant exercise in adjusting, adapting and learning to appreciate the differences of others with people from so many different cultures living and working together peacefully in such a small space. Crew members are unified by their vision to bring knowledge, help and hope to the port communities they serve around the world.

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Asr.....	3:35pm
Maghrib.....	7:03pm
Isha.....	8:25pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	3:58am

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SURGE: The number of GCC guests increased by 17 percent to reach 54,571 and the number of European guests surged by 47.2 percent to stand at 239,686. -ONA

Hotel revenues rise by 34.7% in March 2023

The revenues went up in line with a 27.3 percent increase in the number of guests by the end of May 2023 to reach 800,952 compared to 629,143 guests during the corresponding period in 2022

MUSCAT: The revenues of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman recorded a rise by 34.7 percent at the end of May 2023 to reach OMR98.426 million compared to OMR73.058 million during the corresponding period in 2022, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The revenues went up in line with a 27.3 percent increase in the number of guests by the end of

May 2023 to reach 800,952 compared to 629,143 guests during the corresponding period in 2022. Occupancy rate grew by 13.6 percent.

To breakdown the figures, the number of Omani guests stood at 274,729, going up by 0.7 percent. Meanwhile, the number of GCC guests increased by 17 percent to reach 54,571 and the number of European guests surged by 47.2 percent to stand at 239,686.

African guests

American guests stood at 26,166, up by 4.1 percent. Guests from the African continent also increased by 39.7 percent to reach 4,542. Asian guests reached 110,324 (46 percent rise) and the number of Oceania guests also surged by 255.2 percent to reach 19,007. -ONA

OMAN CHARITABLE ORGANISATION

Over OMR557,000 received for quake-hit in Syria, Turkiye

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Oman Charitable Organisation received a donation of OMR557,758.809 during the campaign 'Pain and Hope' carried out between 7 February and-23 March for assisting those impacted by earthquakes in North Syria and south-east Turkiye.

The earthquake of magnitude 7.5 on the Richter scale had occurred on 6 February 2023 which led to the destruction of property and loss of thousands of lives.

The founder and board member of Dar Al Atta'a association Maryam bint Essa Al Zadjali, expressed her appreciation for everyone who contributed to the campaign through donations, in addition to praising the natural disasters management team of volunteers, and friends of the charity.

The donation scheme is designed to execute sustainable pro-

jects in collaboration with Oman Charitable Organisation.

"As we are a charitable organisation, we study humanitarian situations closely. The charity had previously launched several humanitarian campaigns for the people in Yemen, Palestine, Lebanon, and Sudan and delivered assistance to Rohingya Muslims, she said, adding the organisation had delivered aid in the Sultanate

of Oman during climatic conditions and also during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moreover, the charity would like to assure everyone that all donations collected are directly given to the needy.

A number of buildings, including schools will be repaired and hospitals will be replenished with medical necessities, equipment, and devices.

TAKATUF OMAN

Leadership programme for outstanding students starts

LONDON: Tasks of the 4th edition of Duqm Refinery's Leadership Programme for Outstanding Students began in the United Kingdom (UK) on Monday.

The programme is conducted by Takatuf Oman in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Company.

The programme targets 20 outstanding male and female students in the tenth grade from various educational directorates, and it lasts for 6 weeks.

The programme seeks to encourage students to learn about other cultures and develop their

English language and leadership skills.

The students undergo an advanced English language course at one of the most world's pres-

tigious institutions, which is the Oxford International Study Centre. They also participate in many sports, tourism and entertainment activities. -ONA

BLOOD BANKS SERVICES

Call to donate blood, platelets

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Department of Blood Banks Services (DBBS) has invited people to donate blood and platelets at the Central Blood Bank in Bausher.

"The Department of Blood Bank Services extends its gratitude and applauds all community members who believe in the importance of blood donation. Despite concerted efforts, blood stock levels have begun to decline as a result of a decrease in the

number of blood donors," DBBS said in a statement.

DBBS calls everyone to ensure the availability of safe blood and requests the honourable donors to continue their generosity and make a regular donation.

"Blood can be donated at the Central Blood Bank in Bausher from Saturday to Thursday between 8am to 8pm and on Friday from 8am to 2pm. Please book your appointment to donate blood via WhatsApp at 94555648," DBBS added.

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OBITUARY

The Board of Directors, Management
and Employees of OHI Group are
deeply saddened to announce that
our beloved Chairman

Maqbool Hameed Al Saleh
passed away on 1 July 2023

We pray to the Almighty to rest his
soul in peace and give his family the
strength to overcome such a
profound and irreplaceable loss.

Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Ilayhi Raji'un

OHI

Dhofar Khareef to showcase 65 cultural, sports, youth activities



SALALAH: The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth completed preparations to carry out the cultural and sports activities for the 2023 Dhofar Khareef (monsoon) season.

Musa Abdullah Al Kasabi, Director General for Culture, Sports and Youth in Dhofar Governorate told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the event covers 65 activities catering to all segments of society, including citizens, residents and tourists.

"The activities include: workshops on travel literature and cultural management, a cultural economy symposium, a number of cultural lectures and poetry evenings, and a singing competition. In addition to implementing the second edition of the Dhofar Theatre Festival," Al Kasabi added.

He added that the activities of this season will include programmes and events for various segments of society, especially the youth, which is the target group of the activities of the Khareef Dhofar Cultural and Sports Season.

He said that preparations have been made for an integrated programme for public libraries and children's libraries represented in cultural meetings.

In addition to youth programmes that include workshops

in information technology, montage, marketing, there will be a Toastmaster competition, which is a contest for showcasing communication skills. There will also be courses in the field of fashion design, dialogue sessions, and a youth exhibition for creativity and innovation.

Regarding the sporting events that will be held during the Khareef Dhofar season, Director General for Culture, Sports and Youth in Dhofar Governorate, said: "A swimming, bowling, snooker, billiards and tennis tournament will be organised, and a football tournament will be held in several wilayats, public and the private sector institutions."

"Karate, chess, athletics and table tennis tournaments will be held. Workshops on sports injuries, in addition to a number of women's activities in bowling, chess, electronic sports, team and individual games for clubs, and the celebration of Omani Women's Day will be organised," he added.

He confirmed that the various facilities of the Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah will hold most of the cultural, sports and youth events that have been carefully selected to meet the desires of different age groups. -ONA



We express our heartfelt condolences to
Dr Lamya Al-Haj and her family
on the sad loss of her beloved brother

Loai

We stand with the bereaved family in this time of grief and
pray to Allah to grant the departed soul eternal peace.

إِنَّا لِلَّهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ.

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GCC stresses concern over negative impacts of climate change

The Climate Conference provided an ideal opportunity to address this global phenomenon that poses challenges prompting shared responsibilities

GENEVA: Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have urged the international community to give priority to climate change due to its wide and complex impacts. They voiced their concern for the phenomenon's negative implications to the security and safety of all humanity, in-

cluding its right to food. This was unveiled in a statement delivered by Idris Abdulrahman Al Khanjari, Permanent Representative of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations (UN) and International Organisations in Geneva, on behalf of GCC states. The statement was delivered within the framework of a panel discussion on climate change as part of the 53rd session of the Hu-

man Rights Council. Al Khanjari pointed out that GCC countries were keen to constructively participate in global and regional conferences and initiatives in addressing the negative effects of climate change. He said that the Climate Conference provided an ideal opportunity to address this global phenomenon that poses challenges prompting shared responsibilities. He affirmed that GCC states, through their initiatives and plans, seek to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change. The GCC action includes the Saudi Green initiative and Green Middle East initiatives, as well as the United Arab Emirates' hosting the 28th Climate Summit (COP28) towards the end of this year (2023). The GCC states look forward to provide the first positive global output, based on collective action, towards implementing the goals of the Paris Agreement within the context of the COP28 summit.

FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT

Oman condemns Israeli attacks on Jenin, West Bank

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman has condemned the repeated Israeli attacks on the city of Jenin and the Palestinian camps in the West Bank. In a statement issued on Monday, the Foreign Ministry expressed its firm position and support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and the establishment of their independent state on the 1967 borders, in accordance with the two-state solution, relevant Security Council resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. The Sultanate of Oman also reaffirms the importance of the international community assuming its responsibilities in this regard in accordance with international law, and in order to achieve a just and comprehensive peace.



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Tender Title	PR 1000006510: SUPPLY OF CRUSHED GYPSUM POWER QUALITY OF 50,000 MT
Collection Start date	04.07.2023
Collection End date	11.07.2023
Submit Date	11.07.2023
Tender Brief	SUPPLY OF CRUSHED GYPSUM POWER QUALITY OF 50,000 MT (MONTHLY QTY OF 10,000 MT) AS PER SPECIFICATIONS TENDER FEE: NIL Material specification & Scope (Ref: RCC-IMS-QC-FF-61) Chemical & Physical Specifications: Humidity : 2.00% (EN 1097-5) LOI : 20% (EN 196-2) CaO : 30-32% (EN 196-2) Purity : 85-90% (EN 196-2) SO3 : 40% (EN 196-2) MgO : 2% (EN 196-2) Particle Size : 0 to 5.0mm > 90% (EN 933-1) Delivery quantity: Monthly 10,000MT or Daily 500MT as per plant requirements Contract period: 5 Months Commercial Terms & Conditions: 1. Price: Prices be quoted on delivery at our site DDP basis. 2. Payment: 30 days credit. Note: Sealed Tenders are invited by Raysut Cement Company (S.A.O.G.), Salalah, Sultanate of Oman. Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by bid bond will not be considered. Any tenders received beyond the above closing time and date or not being supported by bid bond will not be considered.
Contact Details	Email: PURCHASING@RAYSUTCEMENT.COM.OM Tel: (968) 23220600 -Extn 509 Raysut Cement Company, Salalah, Raysut Industrial Area, Post Box: 1020., Postal Code: 211. Salalah – Sultanate of Oman Procurement Department: Office hours 7:00-15:00 hours.



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Tender Announcement

(LV2023/SSC/SA/T/01)

June 20, 2023

Tender Invitation

The House of Expertise for Integrated Projects & Trading extends an invitation to Experienced, Excellent, and First Grade Contractors to participate in the tender process for the construction of Staff Accommodation at AlKhoud. The project encompasses a full built-up area of approximately 4,000 square meters, and the selected bidder will assume the role of the main contractor.

The following are the tender purchase details:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Deadline for last day Tender Documents Purchase	Deadline for Tender Documents Submission	Tender Fee
LV2023/SSC/SA/T/01	Construction of Staff Accommodation	Thursday July 06, 2023 Not later than 4 pm	Sunday July 30, 2023 Not later than 12 pm	500 OMR

Interested bidders are to submit an official "Expression of Interest" letter to the following email addresses, indicating their willingness to participate in the said tender:

To: Tender@linesandvisions.com

Cc: rashid@sapsoman.edu.om

Interested bidders shall transfer the tender fee to the following bank account and must attach the fee transfer receipt with the EOI letter and NO CASH will be accepted:

MEETHAQ Islamic Banking -Bank Account Number: 0614-50020449-000-1

HOUSE EXPERTISE AND INTEGRATED TRD PROJ

Full Tender Documents will be issued to the interested bidders via email as a link (digital copy) and the bidder must acknowledge the receipt of the same.

Interested bidders will be requested to sign an NDA after purchasing the tender

Treasury Secretary Yellen to visit China to stabilise ties

Yellen will meet with representatives of the government but not China's President Xi Jinping



WASHINGTON: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen will travel to China this week to restore ties, the Treasury Department announced on Sunday.

She would discuss “the importance for our countries — as the world’s two largest economies — to responsibly manage our relationship, communicate directly about areas of concern, and work together to address global challenges,” the statement said.

Yellen, who will be in Beijing

from July 6-9, will meet with high-ranking representatives of the Chinese government but not China's President Xi Jinping.

Why Yellen is visiting China

The trip comes as part of a push by US President Joe Biden to deepen communications between the world’s two largest economies.

“We seek a healthy economic relationship with China, one that

fosters growth and innovation in both countries,” a senior Treasury official said. “We do not seek to decouple our economies. A full cessation of trade and investment would be destabilising for both our countries and the global economy.”

Yellen would, however underscore Washington’s determination to strengthen its own competitiveness while responding with allies to what Washington calls “eco-

nom ic coercion” and unfair economic practices by China.

Officials added the US was not expecting a “significant breakthrough” from the trip.

US making strides for better ties with China

Relations between the two countries took a nosedive this year when the US shot down a Chinese balloon it said was used for surveillance — a claim China strongly denied.

Yellen's trip to China comes just weeks after Secretary of State Antony Blinken visited China and met Xi and Foreign Minister Qin Gang in Beijing in June.

Blinken was the highest-ranking US official to visit Beijing in the past five years and his meeting in Beijing was seen as emblematic of lowering of tensions between the two countries.

During Blinken's visit, Xi had said that he saw headway in the strained relationship between Washington and Beijing. — **DW**



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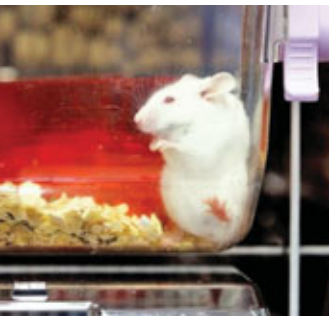
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OUTLAWING THE PRACTICE

Cosmetic animal testing officially banned in Canada

OTTAWA: Canada has moved to prohibit animal testing for cosmetics, joining a number of other countries and American states in doing so, according to media report.



The decision was revealed by the Canadian government in a news release on Tuesday this week. According to the news release, Bill C-47 changes the Food and Drugs Act to prohibit both animal testing of cosmetic items and the sale of products based on animal testing data.

With this new development, Canada will join the European Union, Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), and South Korea in outlawing the cruel practice of animal testing for cosmetics.

Citing Humane Society International, an organisation that promotes the human-animal bond across the globe, CNN reported that a total of 44 countries have passed laws banning cosmetic animal testing.

Furthermore, the practice is prohibited in ten states in the United States: New York, Virginia, California, Louisiana, New Jersey, Maine, Hawaii, Nevada, Illinois, and Maryland.

“Protecting animals, now and in the future, is something that many Canadians have been call-

ing for, and something we can all celebrate,” CNN quoted Canadian Minister of Health Jean-Yves Duclos as saying in the release.

“We are proud to move forward with this measure and to assure Canadians that the products they buy are cruelty-free. We will keep working with experts and international partners to explore safe, cruelty-free alternatives so no more animals suffer and die due to cosmetic testing.”

According to the announcement, Health Canada is also attempting to identify “effective alternatives to animal testing” outside of the cosmetic industry.

Notably, cosmetic testing included “toxicity tests” in which animals were trained to swallow or inhale specific chemicals, or to have the chemicals applied to their skin or eyes. — **ANI**

RADICAL EXTREMISTS

Requested partner countries not to give space to Khalistanis: Indian Minister

NEW DELHI: Indian External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar, on Monday, said that India has requested partner countries like Canada, the UK, and Australia not to give space to the Khalistanis as these radical extremist ideologies are not good for their relationship.

On names of Indian diplomats in Khalistani posters in Canada, Jaishankar said, “We have requested our partner countries, like Canada, UK, Australia, US that they should not give space to these Khalistanis. These radical extremist ideologies aren’t good for us, them, or our ties. Will raise the issue of these posters.” The EAM’s remarks came



after the reports of posters being circulated in Canada informing pro-Khalistan residents of a rally.

In March this year, Khalistan supporters protested outside the Indian Embassy in Canada. They raised pro-Khalistan slogans and allegedly assaulted Indian-origin

journalists present on the spot.

Khalistan supporters in March, protested outside the Indian Embassy in Canada. They raised pro-Khalistan slogans and allegedly assaulted Indian-origin journalists present on the spot.

Earlier this month, a tableau parade was organised in Ontario celebrating the assassination of former PM Indira Gandhi, which drew severe criticism from New Delhi.

Last month also, Jaishankar reacted to the rise of Khalistanis activities in Canada. While speaking at a town hall meeting at the India International Centre, here in the national capital, the minister said

that Ottawa seems to be driven by “vote-bank politics” and this has also impacted the ties between the two countries lately.

Speaking to the reporters, Jaishankar said, “How Canada has dealt with the Khalistani issue is a longstanding issue for us, because very frankly, they seem to be driven by vote bank politics. Their responses have been constrained by what they regard as vote bank compulsions. We made it very clear that if there are activities which are permitted from Canada that impinge on our sovereignty, territorial integrity and our security, then we will have to respond.”

— **ANI**





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Nearly 80 arrested in France protests

The situation seemed calmer on Sunday with 45,000 gendarmes and police mobilised in the country

PARIS: At least 78 people were arrested across France, including 20 in Paris, following unrest after the death of the teenager, who was fatally shot by a police officer in a Paris suburb, BFMTV reported.

BFM TV is a 24-hour rolling news and weather channel based in France and available globally via digital, cable and satellite television. The situation seemed calmer on Sunday with 45,000 gendarmes and police mobilised in the country after five consecutive nights of riots.

France has been rocked by a wave of protests following the death of Nahel Merzouk, a 17-year-old of Algerian descent

who was shot by a police officer in Nanterre earlier in the week.

Earlier on Sunday, the grandmother of the teenager appealed to protesters to end the violence and said that they should not damage schools or buses, CNN reported.

While talking with CNN's affiliate BFMTV, the victim's grandmother requested the protesters on Sunday and said, "They should not damage the schools, not break the buses, it was the moms who take the buses."

"I'm tired," the grandmother said, adding that Nahel's mother, "doesn't have a life anymore."

On Sunday, the mayor of a Paris suburb said his home was attacked, calling it "an assassination attempt" on his family, as per reported by CNN.

"At 1:30 am, while I was at the city hall like the past three nights, individuals rammed their car upon my residence before setting fire to it to burn my house, inside which my wife and my two young children slept," said Mayor Vincent Jeanbrun of L'Hay-les-Roses, a commune in the southern suburbs of Paris, in a statement.

"While trying to protect the children and escape the attackers, my wife and one of my children were injured." — **ANI**

JAPAN

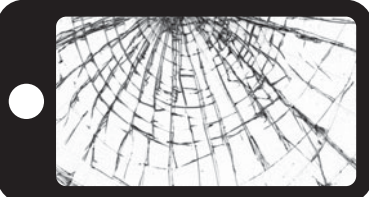
Several injured in downtown Tokyo blast

TOKYO: An explosion at a building in Tokyo's Shimbashi commercial district on Monday left four people injured, Japan's state media NHK reported.

The explosion scattered debris across the streets, shattered windows and spewed smoke into the air. The fire broke out in a building in a busy restaurant area around 3:20am local time. Shimbashi is known as a business and entertainment district in central Tokyo. Police rushed to the site after receiving an emergency call, local media reported.

"The sound was deafening. It was as if something huge was dropped from the top of the building — it was an incredible bang," an eyewitness told NHK.

He further added that, "Pieces of paper were scattered all over at the nearby intersection. From the way they were scattered, I immediately knew it was an explosion." — **dw**



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Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Health

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tenders: -

Tender Ref.	Description	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 10:00 am Wednesday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
MOH/HQ-150/2021/RECALL-1	Provision of Landscaping and Maintenance of Irrigation System for Khoula Hospital, Residential Complex and The Obstetrics & Gynecology Clinic Garden	13/7/2023	9/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-273/2022/RECALL-1	Design and Build for Expansion and Modification of Nizwa Hospital in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate	6/7/2023	2/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in The Excellent Grade	180/= Per set
MOH/HQ-181/2023/RECALL-1	Supply of Surgical Consumables Items	2/7/2023	5/7/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-204/2023	Maintenance Works at Dibba Hospital in Musandam Governorate	6/7/2023	2/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in The Excellent Grade	25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-205/2023	Supply and Installation of Medical Equipment for AL Mazyona New Hospital	6/7/2023	2/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-206/2023	Supply and Installation of Medical Equipment for School Health for Various Health Facilities	6/7/2023	2/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	60/= Per set
MOH/HQ-207/2023	SUPPLY OF SURGICAL CONSUMABLES-RESPIRATORY CARE ITEMS	13/7/2023	26/7/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	35/= Per set
MOH/HQ-208/2023	Supply and Installation of Medical Equipment for Sinaw Hospital, Alsharqiyah North Governorate	6/7/2023	2/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-209/2023	Supply and Installation of Medical Equipment for Central Blood Bank	6/7/2023	2/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-210/2023	Construction of Nizwa Medical Store at Dakhliya Governorate	13/7/2023	9/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in The Excellent Grade	112/700 Per set
MOH/HQ-211/2023	Renting a warehouse for the Directorate General of Medical Supplies in Muscat Governorate	13/7/2023	9/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	27/= Per set
MOH/HQ-212/2023	Supply and Installation of Associated Equipment for MRI Machine at Khoula Hospital	10/7/2023	9/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board	25/= Per set
MOH/HQ-214/2023	Consultancy Engineering Services (Design Validation and Supervision) for Construction of Various Health Centers at various Governorates	6/7/2023	9/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in The First Grade	60/= Per set
MOH/HQ-215/2023	Consultancy Engineering Services (Design and Supervision) for Barka Renal Dialysis Unit at South Al Batinah Governorates	6/7/2023	9/8/2023	Specialized Companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in The First Grade	25/= Per set

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200 , Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

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T

SPORTS

WIMBLEDON



Djokovic, Swiatek off to a flier on day one

LONDON: Defending men's champion Novak Djokovic and women's top seed Iga Swiatek began their campaign at the Wimbledon with easy victories on Monday.

Djokovic beat Argentina's Pedro Cachin 6-3 6-3 7-6 (7-4) on Centre Court during a match which had a 'farciical' rain delay.

But after the first set there was no play for 80 minutes, despite the closed roof, with Djokovic dabbing the grass before ground staff used leaf blowers.

When play resumed, the Serb broke Cachin's serve twice in the second set and won the tie-break in the third.

Djokovic, will now play American Brandon Nakashima, 55th in the world, following his five-set win over Australia's Jordan Thompson, ranked 70th.

Speaking after the win, Djokovic told BBC: "For me, the opening match is a little bit tricky, I've not played any warm-up match and grass is a little different to clay. I've managed to adapt pretty well over the years and hope-

fully I manage to do it again."

Earlier, Swiatek laid down a marker on day one at Wimbledon with a dominant performance over China's Zhu Lin. Swiatek won 6-1 6-3 against the world number 34, who was one of the highest-ranked players she could have faced.

Poland's Swiatek, 22, is considered one of the favourites for the women's title but has never managed to go beyond the fourth round on the grass in SW19.

Swiatek is joined in the second round by fourth seed Jessica Pegula, who beat fellow American Lauren Davis 6-2 6-7 (8-10) 6-3.

Belarusian 19th seed Victoria Azarenka, a two-time Grand Slam champion and former Wimbledon semi-finalist, also progressed with a 6-4 5-7 6-4 win over China's Yue Yuan.

But one seed has already fallen on the opening day of the Championships.

Russian Liudmila Samsonova, seeded 15th, was beaten 7-6 (7-1) 7-6 (7-4) by Romania's Ana Bogdan. - **Agencies**

Ayaan's ton goes in vain as Dutch remain in hunt

Chasing a mammoth target of 362, Oman were at 246/6 when match was halted by bad light with four overs remaining

Times News Service

MUSCAT: An unbeaten maiden century from Oman's Ayaan Khan (105 off 92 balls) went in vain as the Netherlands recorded an easy 74-run win (under DLS method) in a rain-shortened Super Six match of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier at the Harare Sports Club in Zimbabwe on Monday.

Ayaan was at the crease when bad light brought play to an early close with Oman on 246/6, 44 overs into the chase. Having elected to bat and scored 362/7 in a 48-over game, the Dutch had needed to restrict Oman to 242 to ensure their net run-rate (NRR) went above that of Scotland. This would have been crucial in the event of three-way tie for second place.

With this win the Dutch kept their World Cup qualification chances alive despite not going directly above Scotland or Zimbabwe's NRR. Scotland and Zimbabwe face each other on Tuesday with a win for Zimbabwe securing



their ticket to the World Cup.

If Scotland win, then the qualifiers will be decided with the Netherlands-Scotland game on July 6.

Faced with a daunting target of 364, Oman got off to a secure yet unthreatening start. Jatinder Singh (17) and Kashyap Prajapati added 34 off 41 balls for the first wicket, before the former was run out. Ryan Klein had the stand-in captain Aqib Ilyas soon after for 4.

Oman were lucky to have lost only Prajapati (25), by the time they reached the 100-run mark in the 19th over. Netherlands had their fourth success when Aryan Dutt cleaned up Mohammad Nadeem in the 20th over.

It was the 112-run fifth wicket stand between Ayaan and Shoaib Khan which finally brought some energy to the Oman innings. Their stand reached its 50-run mark off 48 deliveries. Ayaan reached his half-century with a six in the 27th over.

The team reached its 200 run-

mark in the 34th over. The duo added 112 runs off 107 balls in what was Oman's best stand in the tournament so far. Shoaib's (46) fall to an excellent stumping by Scott Edwards ended the partnership in the 38th over.

Ayaan achieved the personal landmark of a maiden ODI hundred in the 41st over. The game was eventually called off in the 44th over due to bad light.

In the first innings, a stupendous century from Vikramjit Singh (110) and an aggressive 97 off 65 from Wesley Barresi along with cameos from Bas de Leede (39) and Saqib Zulfiqar (33), helped Netherlands to a commanding position.

Oman pacers Bilal Khan and Kaleemullah enjoyed bowling in overcast conditions and got the ball to zip around. The Dutch openers were tested in trying conditions but held their own till play was disrupted due to rain.

On resumption, Netherlands

went into all-out attack mode. Vikramjit Singh smashed three boundaries in Kaleemullah's third over, whereas Max O'Dowd hit a six and four in his fourth. By the 10th over mark, the duo had gotten Netherlands to 52/0. Hereafter, Vikramjit kept his foot on the pedal and ensured that he got to his half-century in the 18th over. The century stand between the duo was also brought up with this run.

O'Dowd, however, was troubled by the turn of Ayaan Khan. The opener eventually fell for 35 from 64 to the left-arm spinner. Vikramjit was then joined by Wesley Barresi and the duo kept going at over six runs an over. They added 80 runs from 72 balls. Vikramjit ended up getting to his maiden ODI hundred in the 31st over.

The southpaw finally fell to an expansive loft which he played off Mohammad Nadeem. The ball was grasped by Fayyaz Butt at long-on.

The 39-year-old Barresi remained impressive and led the Netherlands charge with a brisk fifty. It came off merely 43 balls and included four fours and two sixes. Along with the fiery Bas de Leede (39 off 19), he added 55 runs from 27 balls for the fourth wicket. Barresi didn't relent even after de Leede was dismissed and scored runs all around the ground.

He added 57 from 26 with Saqib Zulfiqar (33 off 17), before falling short of a deserving hundred on 97.

Oman will face West Indies in their last game on Wednesday.

Brief scores: Netherlands 362/7 in 48 overs (Vikramjit 110, Barresi 97, Bilal Khan 3/75, Mohammad Nadeem 2/36) beat Oman 246/6 in 44 overs (Ayaan Khan 105 not out, Shoaib Khan 46; Aryan Dutt 3/31).

ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP QUALIFIER

Would love to take few tips from Dhoni: Oman captain

HARARE: Cricket team captains face more than often a lot of challenging match situations. One of the coolest captains in recent history has been former India captain and wicketkeeper MS Dhoni. It was no wonder that Oman cricket team captain Zeeshan Maqsood expressed his desire to learn a few tips from the legendary World Cup-winning skipper Dhoni on how to remain calm in difficult situations.

In an interview with Indian news agency ANI, Maqsood said: "I would love to ask Mahendra Singh Dhoni on how he stays calm in difficult situations during a match. He is just amazing. Whether he wins or loses a match, what stands out is



his calmness. Even after losing or winning the match, he stays calm. I would like to learn a few tips from him if I get an opportunity."

Speaking about Indian stars, Maqsood was all praise for former

India captain and star batter Virat Kohli, whom he called "a legend in the world of cricket."

Maqsood, whose ancestors migrated to Pakistan from Hoshiarpur, a city in the western Indian state of Punjab, said: "I like the way the current Indian captain Rohit Sharma bats and it would be great to get a chance to learn from both Kohli and Rohit."

The long-serving Oman captain rose to career-best World No.3 ODI all-rounder rank last month and is currently ranked sixth. A left-arm spinner, Maqsood said that he would love to meet Indian all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja, who is the World No.1 all-rounder in the Tests.

"Looking at both things, his plus point is bowling. He performs with the bat as well in crucial matches. He is also a left-handed batter like me and a left-arm spinner. I would ask him about some of his batting shots and take bowling tips from him," added Maqsood.

Maqsood said that he was impressed by Indian youngsters - Shubham Gill, Ishan Kishan and Yashasvi Jaiswal. "They have aggressive playing styles. Rinku Singh is another aggressive player."

On the teams who will be favourites for the ICC ODI Cricket World Cup that will be played in India in October-November, Maqsood replied: "Hosts India, Australia, England and Pakistan

are among the favourite teams to win the ICC World Cup."

'Disappointed' in Zimbabwe

Maqsood, who sat out of Monday's Super Six match against the Netherlands due to an injury, said: "It was disappointing not to have qualified for the World Cup."

"It's sad not being able to come to India. Playing in the World Cup is a dream for us but we made it to the Super Six stage with wins over Test-playing nation Ireland and the UAE. We have learnt from our defeats and gained experience."

"It would have been great to visit India as I wanted to visit my village in Punjab. We did qualify for the T20 World Cup in India in 2016

and I was a member of that squad. Since our qualification Oman Cricket has strongly supported us over the years and that is the reason we have reached this stage."

Maqsood added: "Over the past four years, we have made great progress in ODI and T20 cricket. Qualifying for the ICC World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe as No. 2 in the World Cricket League 2 was a step forward."

"To make it to the Super Six gave us a great opportunity. Our success has been appreciated in Oman and people have started liking the game. We have world-class facilities and Oman Cricket is taking all steps to develop the game in the Sultanate." - **ANI**

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FOOTBALL EVENT

Oman hold Algeria in Pan Arab Games

MUSCAT: Oman Olympic side held hosts Algeria to a goalless draw in their opening Group A match of the Pan Arab Games football competition at 19 May 1956 Stadium in Annaba on Sunday night.

The eight-team football competition began on Sunday ahead of the official opening ceremony of the Pan Arab Games on July 5.

In the other Group A match, Sudan outplayed Lebanon 3-0 to go top of the group.

Oman, coached by Akram Habreesh, will next play Lebanon on July 5 while Algeria will face Sudan on the same day. Oman will conclude their league engagements on July 8 with a match against Sudan.

In Group B, all four teams - Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine and Mauritania- have one point each after playing out draws in

their respective opening fixtures. Saudi Arabia were held 1-1 by Syria while Palestine drew 1-1 with Mauritania.

The top-two teams will advance to the semi-finals with the final to be played in Annabi on July 14.

Football is making a comeback to the Pan Arab Games after a long hiatus of 11 years. Bahrain were the champions when it was last held in 2011.

Meanwhile, the Oman delegation for the Games arrived in Algeria on Monday. Besides football, Oman will take part in athletics, sailing, weightlifting and para-athletics. Ahmed al Jhdhamy is the chef-de-mission of the Oman delegation while Ibrahim al Miqbali, chairman of the Oman Volleyball Association (OVA) is the head of the Sultanate's delegation.

OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by September 2023 reaching \$75.36, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 3 cents. - **ONA**

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



MSX INDEX ENDS HIGHER
The MSX index closed at 4,792.00 points, up by 0.37 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.38 per cent at 479.55 points. United Finance, up 6.78 per cent, was the top gainer while The Pearl REIF, down 2.40 per cent, was the top loser.

Treasury bills worth OMR35mn issued

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR35 million by way of allotting treasury bills.

The value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR20



million, for a maturity period of 28 days. The average accepted price reached OMR99.665 for every OMR100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at OMR99.665 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.36696 per cent and 4.38164 per cent, respectively.

Whereas, the value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to OMR15 million, for a maturity period of 91 days. The average accepted price reached OMR98.767 for every OMR100, and the mini-

mum accepted price arrived at OMR89.765 per OMR100. The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.94689 per cent and 5.00866 per cent, respectively.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and

repurchase facilities (Repo).

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 5.75 per cent while the discount rate on the Treasury Bills Discounting Facility with CBO is 6.25 per cent.

Furthermore, treasury bills promote the local money market by creating a benchmark yield curve for short-term interest rates. Additionally, the government may also resort to this instrument whenever felt necessary for financing its recurrent expenditures. -**ONA**

MINISTRY OF COMMERCE

Ministry urges industrial establishments to submit data before end of July

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion called upon industrial establishments to speed up the submission of their data for the past three years of 2020, 2021 and 2022 before the end of July 2023, the end of the date set for the Industrial Survey.

The periodic industrial survey, which this year targets 969 industrial establishments, seeks to provide an updated, comprehensive and accurate database of industrial establishments in the Sultanate of Oman to find advanced indicators to monitor and measure the performance of the industrial sector in a way that enhances transparency.

The survey also aims to identify investment opportunities and



raise the percentage of the local content of the sector. Its data is used in devising plans, policies, development programmes and other objectives that serve the development and meet the public interest.

Eng. Sami Salim Al Sahib, Director General of Industry at the Min-

istry, said that 186 establishments and factories submitted their data by the middle of June 2023. He urged target companies and factories to submit their data as scheduled to avoid legal action.

Al Sahib pointed out that annual surveys of industrial estab-

lishments are an essential part of an integrated system for national industrial statistics. It provides data about each licensed industrial establishment whose investment cost exceeds OMR5,000 and employs more than nine workers, he explained. -**ONA**

STOCK MARKET

Foreign investors remain net buyers in Indian stocks for fourth month in row

NEW DELHI: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have remained net buyers in Indian stock markets for the fourth straight month, according to data from the National Securities Depository (NSDL).

FPIs bought Indian stocks worth Rs 7,936 crore, Rs 11,631 crore, Rs 43,838 crore, and Rs 47,148 crore in March, April, May, and June, respectively, data showed.

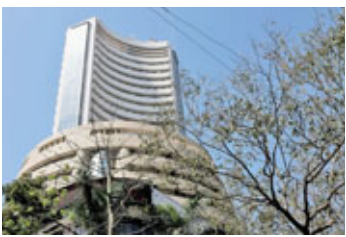
So far in 2023, foreign investors have put in Rs 76,407 crore in the Indian stock markets.

The foreign funds making their way into Indian stocks buoyed the broader market as the indices touched fresh peaks every now and then. Notably, Sensex today crossed 65,000 markets for the first time.

The latest fund inflows started after the recent banking crisis in the US, leading to the Silicon Valley Bank's closure, among others, in March. Also, India's strong economic outlook seemed to have a renewed appetite for domestic stocks.

One of the most prominent lenders in the world of technology startups, Silicon Valley Bank, which had been struggling, collapsed on March 10, after a run on the bank by the depositors. Its closure led to a contagion effect and the subsequent shutting down of other banks.

"FPI money is chasing performance and prospects. FPIs continued to invest in financials, automobiles, capital goods and construction-related stocks," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Invest-



ment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services. "Valuations in India are rich, from a short-term perspective. Therefore, even while continuing to invest in India, FPIs are likely to turn a bit cautious, going forward," Vijayakumar added.

Notably, in January and February, FPIs sold equities worth Rs 28,852 crore and Rs 5,294 crore, respectively. NSDL data showed. Foreign investors were apparently cautious amid risks from the then-volatile markets. Barring some exceptions, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had been selling equities in the Indian markets for over a year, which started in October 2021 for various reasons.

In 2022, foreign portfolio investors sold Rs 121,439 crore worth of stocks in India on a cumulative basis, the historical data available on the NSDL website showed.

Tightening monetary policy in advanced economies including rising demand for dollar-denominated commodities, and strength in the US dollar had then triggered a consistent outflow of funds from Indian markets. Investors typically prefer stable markets in times of high market uncertainty. -**ANI**

FACTORY ACTIVITY

Global factory output slumps as weak demand weighs

LONDON: Global factory activity slumped in June, business surveys showed on Monday, as sluggish demand in China and in Europe clouded the outlook for exporters.

Across the eurozone, manufacturing contracted faster than initially thought, as persistent policy tightening by the European Central Bank squeezed finances, and in Britain, the pace of decline steepened as optimism faded.

In Asia, while factory activity expanded marginally in China, it contracted in Japan and South Korea as Asia's economic recovery struggled to maintain momentum, Reuters reported.

Data due later Monday are expected to show a further contraction in the United States.

"There are no real signs we are going to get any rebound in the manufacturing sector this year, overall, we are still talking about a negative assessment," said Rory Fennessy, European economist at Oxford Economics on the eurozone release.

Compiled by S&P Global, HCOB's final euro zone manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) fell to 43.4 from May's 44.8, its lowest since the COVID pandemic was cementing its grip on the world, below a preliminary reading and further from the 50-mark separating growth from contraction.

June's downturn was broad-based with surveys published earlier on Monday showing factory activity in all four of the euro



zone's biggest economies contracted last month.

The S&P Global/CIPS UK Manufacturing PMI fell to 46.5 from 47.1 in May, its lowest reading this year and one of the weakest since the 2008-09 financial crisis.

Asia's surveys underscore the toll China's weaker-than-expected rebound from COVID lockdowns is inflicting on the region, where manufacturers are also bracing for the fallout from aggressive US and European interest rate hikes.

"The worst may have passed for Asian factories but activity lacks momentum because of diminishing prospects for a strong recovery in China's economy," said Toru Nishihama, chief emerging market economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute.

"China is dragging its feet in delivering stimulus. The US economy will likely feel the pain from big rate hikes. These factors all make Asian manufacturers

gloomy about the outlook."

China's Caixin/S&P Global manufacturing PMI eased to 50.5 in June from 50.9 in May, the private survey showed.

The figure, combined with Friday's official survey that showed factory activity extending declines, adds to evidence the world's No. 2 economy lost steam in the second quarter.

The impact is being felt in Japan where the final au Jibun Bank PMI fell to 49.8 in June, returning to a contraction after expanding in May for the first time in seven months.

New orders from overseas customers decreased at the fastest rate in four months reflecting feeble demand from China.

South Korea's PMI fell to 47.8 in June, extending its downturn to a record 12th consecutive month on weak demand in Asia and Europe.

Factory activity also contracted in Taiwan, Vietnam, and Malaysia, the PMI surveys showed. -**BNA**

CHIP SUPPLY CHAIN

EU, Japan to deepen chip cooperation

TOKYO: The European Union (EU) will deepen cooperation with Japan on semiconductors, its industry chief said on Monday, as countries move to strengthen control over a technology vital for defence, electronic and automotive industries.

The EU and Japan will work together to monitor the chip supply chain and facilitate exchange of researchers and engineers, Thierry Breton said. The EU will also be supportive of Japanese semiconductor companies considering operating there, including through access to subsidies.

"We believe that it's extremely important to secure the supply chain of semiconductors," Thierry Breton told Reuters in Tokyo, where he is discussing cooperation on chips and artificial intelligence with the government and companies.

Japan is also offering subsidies to revitalise its chip industry, which retains an edge in materials and equipment but has lost overall global market share, and is backing chip foundry venture Rapidus.

Breton is scheduled to meet Rapidus on Tuesday.

"I think it's really an important initiative and going in the right direction," he said of the foundry venture.

Plans by Rapidus to produce cutting edge chips rely on support from Leuven, Belgium-based research company imec and IBM. -**BNA**

OPAZ



Workshop on environmental procedures and legislation in special economic zones and free zones organised

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (Opaz), represented by the Compliance and Environmental Affairs Department, organised a workshop on general environmental procedures for specialists from Opaz and the affiliated zones. A number of other stakeholders from different parties concerned about environmental permit issuance also took part in the workshop.

The workshop highlighted the experiences of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm and the free zones in Sohar, Salalah and Al Mazunah with regard to developing environmental legislation and regulations in the compliance and environmental affairs sector and the procedures followed in line with the expected expansion of projects and activities in these zones, in addition to discussing the best and latest practices and experiences in this field.

Organising this workshop comes as part of Opaz's efforts to bring the highest standards of compliance with environmental requirements in all operations and unify environmental procedures in all special economic zones and free zones that are overseen by Opaz to facilitate the procedures for investors, save time and effort, improve work efficiency, and manage roles and responsibilities between Opaz and the zones. Accordingly, this will contribute to creating an attractive investment environment.

The workshop concluded with several recommendations, most of which is the establishment of a unified guideline for general environmental requirements for all projects and their various



categories. The guideline will be implemented in all the zones as it will contribute effectively to strengthening performance governance and procedures in regard to environmental compliance and legislation. Further, it will measure the compliance of projects and companies with the environmental requirements, facilitate procedures for investors, ensure quality and integration, and save time and effort for the specialists in the environmental affairs and compliance departments of Opaz, the affiliated zones and other beneficiaries.

It is noteworthy that the Opaz issued earlier this year a decision regulating the environmental procedures for the zones supervised by Opaz. The decision included several articles such as permits, environmental studies and oversight, environmental monitoring procedures, collection of reports, data and information, and compliance procedures in all zones. Decision No. (37/2023) also included several procedures for issuing permits and environmental studies and determining the commitment of the zones to issue and renew environmental permits and licenses for all projects therein, and to review environmental studies and environmental impact studies.

MARKET

MSX index ends higher

United Finance, up 6.78 per cent, was the top gainer while The Pearl REIF, down 2.40 per cent, was the top loser



MUSCAT: The MSX index closed at 4,792.00 points, up by 0.37 per cent from the previous close. The Sharia Index ended up by 0.38 per cent at 479.55 points. United Finance, up 6.78 per cent, was the top gainer while The Pearl REIF, down 2.40 per cent, was the top loser. Shares of Bank Muscat were the most active in terms of the number of shares traded while Shell Oman Marketing were the most active in terms of turnover.

A total number of 592 trades were executed during the day's trading session, generating a turnover of OMR4.4 million, with more than 15.03 million shares changing hands. Out of 41 traded securities, 11 advanced, 10 declined, and 20 remained unchanged. At the session close, domestic investors were net buyers for OMR189,000 while GCC & Arab investors were net sellers for OMR132,000, followed by foreign investors for OMR57,000 worth of shares.

Financial Index closed at

7,861.82 points, up 0.59 per cent. Prices of United Finance, Bank Nizwa, National Bank Oman, Muscat Finance, and Al Madina Takaful were up by 6.78 per cent, 2.11 per cent, 1.79 per cent, 1.70 per cent, and 1.18 per cent respectively. Prices of Al Anwar Investment, and Ominvest were up by 2.33 per cent, and 1.55 per cent respectively.

Industrial Index closed at 6,165.76 points, down 0.15 per cent. Prices of Raysut Cement were up by 5.68 per cent respectively. Prices of Oman Cement, Galfar Engineering, and Al Anwar Ceramics were up by 0.55 per cent, 0.54 per cent, and 0.38 per cent respectively.

Services Index was down by 0.02 per cent before closing at 1,702.19 points. Prices of Ooredoo and Renaissance Services were up by 0.54 per cent, and 0.52 per cent respectively. Prices of Abraj Energy, and Musandam Power were up by 0.96 per cent, and 0.36 per cent respectively. –

United Securities

OMAN STOCKS

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE

INDICES

Index	High	Low	Value	Prev. Value	Diff	Diff %
MSX 30 INDEX	4,801.17	4,768.61	4,792.00	4,774.43	17.57	0.37
FINANCIAL INDEX	7,880.89	7,812.00	7,861.82	7,815.95	45.87	0.59
Industry Index	6,171.80	6,160.55	6,165.76	6,174.85	-9.09	-0.15
Services Index	1,702.47	1,699.53	1,702.19	1,702.47	-0.29	-0.02
MSX Shariah Index	479.55	477.24	479.55	477.75	1.80	0.38
MSX TR INDEX	6,314.18	6,271.36	6,302.12	6,279.01	23.11	0.37
FINANCIAL TR IDX	8,599.50	8,524.33	8,578.69	8,528.63	50.05	0.59
SERVICES TR IDX	1,871.56	1,868.33	1,871.25	1,871.56	-0.31	-0.02
INDUSTRIAL TR IDX	6,593.02	6,581.00	6,586.57	6,596.28	-9.71	-0.15

Trading Summary

Volume	Turnover	Trades	Market Cap	Up	Down	Equal	Sec. Traded
15,030,815	4,404,460	592	23,983,326,414	11	10	20	41

SHARE PRICE BULLETIN FOR MONDAY, JULY 3

ISIN	SECURITY NAME	VOLUME	TURNOVER	TRADES	OPEN PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE PR.	PREV. CLOSE	DIFF (RD)	DIFF %	LAST PR	LAST BID	LAST OFFER	PDA VALUE	MARKET CAP
REGULAR MARKET																
OM0000002374	UNITED FINANCE	669,353	41,502	24	0.060	0.063	0.060	0.063	0.059	0.004	6.780	0.063	0.063	0.062	0.100	22,436,020
OM0000001483	NATIONAL BANK OMAN	1,495,900	430,321	23	0.285	0.288	0.285	0.285	0.280	0.005	1.786	0.285	0.285	0.285	0.100	463,394,711
OM0000004768	MADINA TAKAFUL	18,420	1,582	8	0.086	0.087	0.085	0.086	0.085	0.001	1.176	0.087	0.087	0.087	0.100	15,050,000
OM0000003398	SOHAR INTERNATIONAL BANK	581,489	62,935	17	0.108	0.109	0.108	0.109	0.108	0.001	0.926	0.109	0.108	0.109	0.100	500,316,790
OM0000003968	OOREDOO	1,095,648	402,895	35	0.368	0.370	0.364	0.370	0.368	0.002	0.543	0.370	0.370	0.370	0.100	240,849,365
OM0000003224	RENAISSANCE SERVICES	100,000	38,400	3	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.382	0.002	0.524	0.384	0.384	0.384	0.100	90,781,440
OM0000002796	BANK MUSCAT	2,460,507	686,066	96	0.278	0.280	0.278	0.279	0.278	0.001	0.360	0.279	0.279	0.279	0.100	100,024,284,780
OM0000001087	OMAN UNITED INSURANCE	113,676	29,556	15	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.260	0.257	0.270	0.100	26,000,000
OM0000001681	OMAN EMIRATES HO.	1,000	75	1	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.000	0.000	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.100	9,140,625
OM0000003026	OMAN TELECOM	416,194	412,032	7	0.990	0.990	0.990	0.990	0.990	0.000	0.000	0.990	0.985	0.995	0.100	742,500,000
OM0000003125	GLOBAL FINANCIAL INVESTMENT HO.	105,598	6,547	7	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.000	0.000	0.062	0.062	0.062	0.100	12,400,000
OM0000000268	AL ANWAR CERAMIC	399,713	105,933	5	0.266	0.266	0.265	0.265	0.266	-0.001	-0.376	0.265	0.264	0.265	0.100	58,300,000
OM0000001749	OMAN CEMENT	5,000	1,900	1	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.390	0.389	0.002	-0.552	0.390	0.390	0.379	0.100	119,114,175
OM0000004248	SMN POWER HOLDING	75,000	6,125	4	0.082	0.082	0.081	0.081	0.082	-0.001	-1.220	0.081	0.081	0.082	0.100	16,170,484
OM0000001533	OMINVEST	572,000	221,293	17	0.386	0.388	0.380	0.380	0.386	-0.006	-1.554	0.380	0.380	0.380	0.100	253,978,862
Total	15	8,109,498	2,447,062	263												
Parallel Market																
OM0000001418	RAYSUT CEMENT	318,187	58,345	31	0.179	0.186	0.176	0.186	0.176	0.010	5.682	0.186	0.186	0.185	0.100	37,200,000
OM0000000420	BANK NIZWA	1,557,327	149,782	41	0.095	0.097	0.095	0.097	0.095	0.002	2.105	0.097	0.095	0.097	0.100	216,984,444
OM0000001590	MUSCAT FINANCE	448,724	26,559	26	0.058	0.060	0.058	0.060	0.059	0.001	1.695	0.060	0.060	0.060	0.100	18,428,780
OM0000001160	NATIONAL GAS	19,583	1,983	5	0.100	0.102	0.100	0.101	0.101	0.000	0.000	0.101	0.100	0.103	0.100	8,585,000
OM0000001426	OMAN REFRESHMENT	301	482	1	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	1.600	0.000	0.000	1.600	1.600	0.000	0.100	800,000,000
OM0000001962	AL MADINA INVESTMENT HOLDING	108,695	5,652	10	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.052	0.000	0.000	0.052	0.051	0.055	0.100	4,420,000
OM0000003200	AHLI BANK	10,000	1,920	2	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.192	0.000	0.000	0.192	0.190	0.194	0.100	374,334,233
OM0000002275	SHELL OMAN MARKETING	914,851	878,257	3	0.960	0.960	0.960	0.960	0.960	0.000	0.000	0.960	0.880	0.960	0.100	91,200,000
OM0000002804	ASAFFA FOODS	91,364	27,910	23	0.306	0.310	0.304	0.306	0.306	0.000	0.000	0.306	0.304	0.306	0.100	36,720,000
OM0000003141	BAKRA WATER AND POWER	10,500	378	2	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.036	0.000	0.000	0.036	0.034	0.036	0.100	5,760,000
OM0000003661	VOLTAM ENERGY	25,000	2,823	3	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.000	0.000	0.105	0.105	0.110	0.100	8,547,289
OM0000004925	ALBATINAH POWER	1,100	32	3	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.027	0.029	0.100	19,571,735
OM0000004933	AL SUWADI POWER	1,900	55	3	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.000	0.000	0.029	0.028	0.029	0.100	20,717,784
OM0000005290	OMAN ARAB BANK	38,415	5,570	1	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.000	0.000	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.100	242,064,450
OM0000005963	PHOENIX POWER	870	58	1	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.067	0.000	0.000	0.067	0.063	0.067	0.100	97,994,298
OM0000008447	OMAN REIT FUND	13,020	1,211	3	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.093	0.000	0.000	0.093	0.089	0.099	0.100	43,820,334
OM0000007811	MUSANDAM POWER	16,300	4,572	3	0.282	0.282	0.280	0.280	0.281	-0.001	-0.356	0.280	0.254	0.290	0.100	19,709,200
OM0000003521	GALFAR ENGINEERING & CONTRACTING	278,407	50,813	27	0.183	0.183	0.182	0.183	0.184	-0.001	-0.543	0.183	0.182	0.183	0.100	37,146,520
OM0000008934	ABRAJ ENERGY SERVICES	1,730,428	536,623	96	0.312	0.312	0.309	0.309	0.312	-0.003	-0.962	0.309	0.309	0.310	0.100	237,991,800
OM0000001772	ALANWAR INVESTMENT	446,451	37,992	18	0.085	0.086	0.084	0.084	0.086	-0.002	-2.326	0.084	0.084	0.084	0.100	17,304,000
OM0000008968	THE PEARL REIF	6,540	907	2	0.128	0.128	0.122	0.122	0.125	-0.003	-2.400	0.122	0.122	0.125	0.100	51,821,966
Total	21	6,038,963	1,791,627	304												

ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

Oil prices ease on fears of weaker demand

SINGAPORE: Oil prices fell on Monday as concerns about a global economic slowdown and possible further interest rate hikes from the US Federal Reserve weighed on prices, offsetting forecasts of tighter supplies amid Opec+ cuts.

Brent crude futures were last down 0.4 per cent, or 27 cents, to \$75.14 a barrel by 0630 GMT after settling up 0.8 per cent on Friday. US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$70.36 a barrel, down 0.4 per cent or 28 cents, after closing 1.1 per cent higher in the previous session.

Brent fell for the fourth straight quarter by the end of June while WTI notched a second quarterly drop as the world's top two economies, the US and China, lost speed in the second quarter.

Fears of a further slowdown hurting fuel demand grew after data on Friday showed US inflation still outpacing the central bank's 2 per cent target and stoked expectations it would hike interest rates again.

"Hawkish commentary on rates



continues to raise concerns of the demand outlook weighing on prices," National Australia Bank analysts said in a note.

Higher interest rates could strengthen the greenback, making commodities more expensive for holders of other currencies, and also dampen oil demand.

Economists and analysts have lowered their Brent price forecasts to average at \$83.03 a barrel in

2023, in the June Reuters oil poll.

Factory activity growth in China, the world's largest crude importer, also slowed in June as sentiment and recruitment cooled on the back of sluggish market conditions, according to the Caixin/S&P Global private sector survey.

Still, some analysts expect supplies to tighten and push prices higher in the second half after top exporter Saudi Arabia pledged

an extra 1 million barrels per day output cut in July, while the US is gradually replenishing its Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

"Opec+’s multi-output-cuts have kept oil prices above key levels, which may see a further production reduction by the cartel to keep the crude market’s stability," said Tina Teng, an analyst at CMC Markets.

However, the latest Reuters survey showed Opec oil output has fallen only slightly in June as increases in Iraq and Nigeria limited the impact of cutbacks by others.

Investors are looking ahead to a conference later this week hosted by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) for supply cues.

US oil rigs fell by one to 545 last week, their lowest level since April 2022, while gas rigs fell six to 124, their lowest since February 2022, Baker Hughes data showed.

US crude output fell in April to 12.615 million barrels per day (bpd), its lowest since February, the US Energy Information Administration said on Friday. -BNA

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KASPERSKY REPORT

Study shows 58% of malware families sold as a service are ransomware

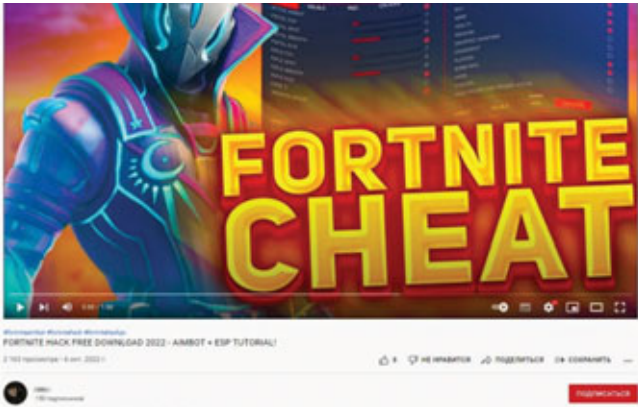
Times News Service

MUSCAT: Nearly 58 percent of malware families sold as a service are ransomware according to a new study.

The Kaspersky Digital Footprint Intelligence team presented a new study that reveals ransomware as the most widespread Malware-as-a-Service (MaaS) over the past seven years. The study is based on research conducted on 97 malware families distributed on the dark web and other resources. Additionally, the researchers found that cybercriminals often lease info stealers, botnets, loaders, and backdoors to carry out their attacks.

Malware-as-a-Service (MaaS) is an illicit model of business involving the leasing of software to carry out cyberattacks. Typically, clients of such services are offered a personal account through which they can control the attack, as well as technical support. It lowers the initial threshold of expertise needed by would-be cybercriminals.

Cybercriminals can 'subscribe' to Ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) for free. Once they become partners in the program, they pay for the service after the attack happens. The payment amount is determined by a percentage of the ransom paid by the victim, typically ranging from 10 percent to 40 percent of each transaction. However, entering the program is



no simple task, as it entails meeting rigorous requirements.

Nearly 18 percent of malware families being sold as a service proved to be botnets, loaders, and backdoors. These threats are combined into one group since they often have a common goal: to upload and run other malware on the victim's device.

"For instance, the price of loader Matanbuchus tends to vary over time. The price in June of the current year



STUDY REVEALS BABIES TALK MORE AROUND MAN-MADE OBJECTS THAN NATURAL ONES

According to research, babies are much more likely to engage in “baby talk” while interacting with artificial things than when interacting with natural ones

Infants often communicate with protophones, which are sounds resembling squeals, growls or short word-like noises such as “da”, “aga” and “ba”. These are considered the foundations of speech, as they eventually evolve into full language. Objects play an important role in this process, as the more vocalisation an object encourages, the closer a young child is to talking.

A new study, led by the University of Portsmouth, has looked at the relationship between protophones and things typically found at home to assess their importance for developing language skills.

To do this, the team observed how often children aged 4 to 18 months who live in Zambia vocalised when using toys and household items, and then compared it to how they interacted with natural objects.

They discovered the amount

of protophones produced by the younger infants was significantly higher when engaging with man-made objects, compared to sticks, leaves, rocks and bird feathers.

They also found the children were more interested in household items - such as mugs, shoes, and pens - when given the choice between them and natural objects.

Lead author, Dr Violet Gibson from the University of Portsmouth's Department of Psychology, said: “Our findings suggest that object features have an impact on the way in which young children communicate.

“Here, we observed that natural objects were less likely to encourage infants to produce protophones, and as a consequence they may not promote language skill development as much as artificial objects.

“Preverbal infants seem to favour household items, possibly because their features are designed for specific functional purposes, or in the case of toys,

they're designed to get a child's attention and spark their interest.

“This supports existing evidence that the use of complex tools in social interactions may have contributed to establishing the groundwork required for the emergence of human language.”

The paper, published in Nature's Scientific Reports, says that the ways in which parents engage with children when they interact with objects differs across cultures, but the researchers found no indication that the examined behaviour of the mothers' affected the amount of protophones produced.

Co-author, Developmental Psychologist Dr Eszter Somogyi, added: “It is important to understand to what extent protophones are promoted in a natural environment from an evolutionary perspective, because of their ties to language skills and development.

“Some argue that vocal language about man-made tools may have led to a number of important

advancements for our ancestors, including speech evolution and a surge in manufacturing more sophisticated objects.”

The study also examined whether children show more social gazing when using natural or artificial objects, as it's one of the first avenues of early communication. The researchers found differences in the infants' looking behaviours between the two object types, suggesting that object features also shape nonvocal communication.

“The infants in this study gazed at the mothers significantly more often when using natural objects compared to the household items, particularly at a young age”, explained Dr Gibson.

“It might be because they're far less interested in natural objects, and look to their parents to assess their value.”

Co-author, Developmental Psychologist and Linguist Dr Iris Nomikou, added: “Just like protophones, social gazing supports

learning as it gives an infant an opportunity to flag to a parent or carer that they're not sure about something they see.”

There is some evidence suggesting that object-based communication is not limited to humans, and that object-based signals may be more significant than first thought.

The University of Portsmouth team also observed similar behaviours in chimpanzees. A new study, published in Animal Cognition, found evidence they use objects in diverse ways to communicate with each other, and this may be shaped by social factors.

The authors observed that chimpanzees not only use objects in their broader social interactions but also use them in targeted ways to communicate with one another.

Co-author, Dr Marina Davila-Ross, Reader in Comparative Psychology at the University of Portsmouth, said: “There is a lot in common in terms of how indi-

viduals, both human and animal, make use of the physical world to communicate.

“Both studies have contributed to the theory that objects have a significant impact in how communication skills are developed - but what is unique about them is the analysis of interactions with natural objects.

“This opens an interesting new door in language evolution research, and hopefully what we learned will contribute to future research on communication across different species and human cultures.”

The team recommends a more detailed analysis of facial changes to further explore the relationship between objects and infant behaviour, as well as classifying objects based on colour, size and shape rather than just natural and artificial.

They also suggest it would be interesting to further compare this behaviour with less social species than chimpanzees. **ANI**

SPORTS

I wouldn't want to win a game in that manner, says Stokes

England skipper said that he would have withdrawn the appeal if his side had dismissed a player in the way Jonny Bairstow was stumped on the final day of Lord's Test

LONDON: England skipper Ben Stokes said on Sunday that he would have withdrawn the appeal if his side had dismissed a player in the manner that Alex Carey stumped Jonny Bairstow on the final day of a thrilling Test at Lord's. Australia won a see-sawing Test by 43 runs, surviving a Stokes scare along the way, but a pivotal moment came when Bairstow was dismissed shortly before lunch.

England were settled, having only lost Ben Duckett in the morning session when Bairstow ducked a Cameron Green bouncer, the last ball of the 52nd over. He walked out of the crease, without having checked with either umpire whether the over had been called, as Carey collected the ball and without pause, under-armed a throw to the stumps. He hit and though Chris Gaffaney at square leg called for a TV review, Bairstow was well out of his crease at impact.

The dismissal riled up the Lord's crowd - leading to a brief fracas between Australian players and members in the Long Room - and turned up the heat on the field,



with the incoming batter Stuart Broad immediately getting involved in ongoing chatter with a number of Australian players.

After the game, Stokes pointed to the grey area between the time the ball went to Carey and both the umpires motioning as if to end the over, though not calling it.

"When is it justified that the umpires have called over?" he said on BBC's Test Match Special. "Is the on-field umpires making movement, is that signifying over? I'm not sure. Jonny was in his crease then out of his crease. I am not disputing the fact it is out because it is out.

"If the shoe was on the other foot I would have put more pressure on the umpires and asked whether they had called over and had a deep think about the whole spirit of the game and would I want to do something like that. For Australia it

was the match-winning moment. Would I want to win a game in that manner? The answer for me is no."

Asked whether he would have withdrawn the appeal, Stokes said, "Yeah."

Pat Cummins, the Australian captain, said the attempt was premeditated, as Carey had noticed Bairstow walk out of his crease and up the pitch several times during the over.

"I think Carey saw it happen a few balls previously, three or four balls previously, and there's no pause, catch it, straightaway and throw at the stumps," Cummins told Sky TV during the post-match presentation, comments that prompted more boos from the remaining crowd. "I thought it was totally fair play. That's how the rule is. Some people might disagree. That's how I saw it."

Cummins also suggested in his

post-match press conference that Bairstow had attempted the same move when keeping himself.

"You see Jonny do it all the time," Cummins said. "He did it on day one to Davey Warner. He did it in 2019 to Steve [Smith]. It's a really common thing for keepers to do if they see about a batter keep leaving their crease. So Kez [Carey], full credit to him. He saw the opportunity. I think Jonny did it a few balls beforehand. Rolled it at the stumps. Jonny left his crease. You leave the rest to the umpires."

Brendon McCullum, England's coach, was not happy with the dismissal either, arguing that it goes against the spirit of the game. McCullum is no stranger to such dismissals, straddling the line between the laws of the game and its spirit. He was, famously, the wicketkeeper who whipped off the bails as Muttiah Muralidaran



completed a run and wandered off to celebrate Kumar Sangakkara's hundred in a Test in Christchurch in December 2006.

Reacting to Bairstow's dismissal, he again called for players to protect the spirit of the game. "I think firstly, it was probably more of a thing in terms of spirit of the game that developed as you become a little bit mature and you've been around the game for a long period of time, and you realise that the game itself is something you need to protect, and the spirit is such an important part of that," he said on BBC's Test Match Special.

"You've got to make decisions in the moment. They're not easy to make and sometimes they can have pretty big effects on not just games but also on people's characters as well.

"It's a tough one. To the letter of the law it was out. From our point

of view, Jonny felt he was certainly not trying to take a run and he felt that as far as the umpires were concerned, they had effectively called over so therefore they thought the ball was dead.

"It's one of those really difficult ones to swallow. And when you look at a small margin at the end of the day, and you think of a player like Jonny Bairstow so many times in chases, has stood up. It's incredibly disappointing, but in the end, lots of people will have their opinion on it. They'll sit on both sides of the fence and then probably the most disappointing aspect is probably going to be the most talked about part of what was a great Test match, and that's pretty disappointing to have two teams who have played in front of full houses and millions around the world and it would have been great if it was for the cricket."

ASHES SERIES

Lyon ruled out of remainder of series

LONDON: Nathan Lyon has been ruled out of the remainder of the Ashes series due to his torn right calf and no replacement has been added to Australia's squad yet.

Fellow off-spinner Todd Murphy is almost certain to replace him for the third Test against England at Headingley starting on Thursday, with Australia 2-0 up in the series.

Spare batter Matt Renshaw, who fielded for Lyon on the final day of the Lord's Test, has been released from the squad but will remain in the UK on standby, meaning Australia's squad has been reduced to 16 with seam bowler Michael Neser remaining with the group having been a late addition for the World Test Championship final and the first two Ashes Tests.

Lyon suffered what he described as a "decent tear" of his right calf on the second day of the Lord's Test while fielding.

He did not field or bowl again in the match but bravely batted on one leg to help Australia add 15 more runs to their second-innings total, which proved quite valuable to the end result.

Lyon met with Australia's medi-



cal staff on Sunday to confirm that his tour was over, as he had already suspected. It brought to an end his remarkable streak of 100 consecutive Tests. Lord's was his 100th Test in a row and his 122nd overall. He is just the sixth man in Test history to play 100 Tests in a row and the only bowler to do it.

Lyon has also never missed a Test through injury until now. The only other time he did not play for Australia since his Test debut in 2011 was when he was omitted

for the first two Tests of the 2013 Ashes series.

Lyon's absence means that Murphy, 22, will almost certainly play in the remaining three Tests. The Victoria off-spinner played all four Tests on Australia's tour of India earlier this year and took 14 wickets at 25.21, including 7 for 124 on debut in Nagpur.

But it will be the first time Murphy has played as the sole spinner in a Test as he played alongside Lyon in all four matches in India,

and as part of a three-pronged spin attack in three of them when Matthew Kuhnemann was called into the side after the first Test loss in Nagpur.

The release of Renshaw from the squad is a sign Australia's selectors are comfortable with the form and fitness of the batting group after the first two Tests. Renshaw will remain in the UK but any doubts about David Warner's place at the top of the order have been dismissed following his vital 66 on day one in tricky batting conditions at Lord's. Warner also made a valuable 76-ball 25 in the second, under floodlights against the swinging ball, and he and Usman Khawaja became the first Australian opening pair in five years to post half-century partnerships in both innings of a Test.

Australia squad for third Test: Pat Cummins (capt), Steven Smith (vice-capt), David Warner, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Travis Head, Cameron Green, Alex Carey (wk), Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Todd Murphy, Scott Boland, Michael Neser, Marcus Harris, Mitchell Marsh, Jimmy Peirson (wk).

THIRD ASHES TEST

Pope holds place in England squad

LONDON: Ollie Pope has been retained in England's squad for the third men's Ashes Test at Headingley on Thursday despite sustaining shoulder injuries in both of Australia's innings at Lord's.

Pope will undergo scans on his right shoulder on Monday after England's 43-run defeat in the second Test, ESPNcricinfo reported on Sunday. England are due to travel to Leeds on Monday and Pope's status ahead of the third Test will become clearer after his scans.

He jarred the shoulder on the first day of the match, leaving the field for the rest of Australia's first innings, and appeared to worsen it in their second innings after England were told that they would not be permitted to use a substitute fielder.

Dan Lawrence remains the only spare batter in England's squad and, in the event that Pope is not deemed fit to play in Leeds, he would be expected to replace Pope in a like-for-like switch



at No. 3. Ben Foakes, the Surrey wicketkeeper, is again overlooked.

England hope that Moeen Ali will be able to play a full part in the third Test after resting his finger and Rehan Ahmed, who was added to the squad for the Lord's Test as cover, has dropped out of the squad.

England squad for third Test: Ben Stokes (captain), Moeen Ali, James Anderson, Jonny Bairstow, Stuart Broad, Harry Brook, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Dan Lawrence, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Joe Root, Josh Tongue, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood.

LONG ROOM CONFRONTATION AT LORD'S

MCC issues unreserved apology to Australia, suspends three members

LONDON: Marylebone Cricket Club [MCC] has issued an unreserved apology to Australia after some of their players were abused when walking through the Long Room on day five of the second Ashes Test at Lord's, following the controversial dismissal of Jonny Bairstow, with Usman Khawaja describing what was said as "pretty disrespectful".

"MCC can confirm it has suspended three members identified from earlier today," a spokesperson said on Sunday. "They will not be permitted back to Lord's whilst the investigation takes place and were informed of this by MCC Chief Executive, Guy Lavender, on Sunday evening.

"We maintain that the behaviour of a small number of members was completely unacceptable and

whilst there was no suggestion by Pat Cummins in the post-match press conference that there was any physical altercation, it remains wholly unacceptable to behave in such a way, which goes against the values of the Club. MCC condemns the behaviour witnessed and once again we reiterate our apology to Cricket Australia.

Speaking afterwards to Channel Nine, Khawaja said that it was "really disappointing" and that he "wasn't just going to stand by and cop" abuse. "It was really disappointing," he said. "Lord's is one of my favourite places to come. There's always respect shown at Lord's, particularly in the Members Pavilion in the Long Room, but there wasn't today. It was very disappointing.

"If anyone asked me where the



best place is to play I always say Lord's," Khawaja added. "The crowd is great, particularly the members are great, and some of the stuff that was coming out of the members' mouths is really disappointing and I wasn't just going

stand by and cop it. So I just talked to a few of them.

"A few of them were throwing out some pretty big allegations and I just called them up on it and they kept going, and I was like, well, this is your membership here. So

I'm just pointing them out. But it's pretty disrespectful, to be honest. I just expect a lot better from the members."

"MCC came and apologised for the behaviour of some of the members," Cummins added in his post-match press conference. "I think some of them might lose their memberships over the way they behaved. Other than that one time, they were fantastic all week. I think they were just quite aggressive and abusive towards some of our players, which I know the MCC weren't too happy with."

Both Cricket Australia and MCC released statements in response to events in the Long Room. A Cricket Australia spokesperson said: "Australian management has requested the Marylebone Cricket Club [MCC] investigate several

incidents involving spectators in the members' area during lunch on day five of the Lord's Test.

MCC's initial statement said: "The Long Room is unique in world cricket and the great privilege of players passing through the pavilion is very special. After this morning's play, emotions were running high, and words were unfortunately exchanged with some of the Australian team, by a small number of members.

"We have unreservedly apologised to the Australian team and will deal with any member who has not maintained the standard we expect through our disciplinary processes. It was not necessary to eject anyone from the ground and I am pleased to say that there was no repeat of this as the players resumed the field for this afternoon's session."

Take your business to new heights with Bank Muscat’s Merchant Payment Solutions

The bank provides different solutions depending on their unique requirements and has invited business partners to check out the full range of payment solutions available to them depending on their unique requirements

MUSCAT: Business payment solutions, which enable customers to make payments effortlessly are an essential step in the success of modern businesses.

As the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, Bank Muscat partners with thousands of businesses, institutions and organisations of all types and sizes ranging from government entities and large corporates to micro, small and medium-sized businesses, educational institutions, and non-governmental organisations. The bank provides different solutions depending on their unique requirements and has invited business partners to check out the full range of payment solutions available to them depending



on their unique requirements.

Today, the bank’s payment solutions include POS (point-of-sale) terminals, payment links, QR-code-based payments, Dynamic Currency Conversions, Self-checkout Terminals, Integrated POS solutions and Payment Gateways.

Speaking on the occasion Abdullah Hamood Al Jufaili, Assistant General Manager, Digital Banking Bank Muscat, Bank Muscat, said, “Bank Muscat is committed to empowering our merchant partners with innovative digital solutions that bring efficiency and scale in their respective businesses. We are very happy to note that our partners are quickly adopting the bank’s state-of-the-art digital banking solutions to speed up transactions, optimise the efficiency of their employees, minimise data-entry-related risks in payment processes and improve overall security and cash management.

“We encourage all our partners to explore Bank Muscat’s full range of digital offerings that can help further supercharge their customer transactions experience. The bank will continue to launch and offer the latest financial services and solutions in line with global financial trends to its customers.”

Digital options to supercharge retail businesses

Bank Muscat offers the best-in-class payment products to help businesses to expand and reach newer heights. The payment acceptance solutions offered by the bank include Point of Sale (POS) Terminals as well as online payment options.

The features of the payment-acceptance solutions include universal compliance with up-to-date security features, acceptance of all domestic and international debit, credit and prepaid cards, prompt

payment settlements, on-site support and round-the-clock help desk as well as access to payment reports for ease of reconciliation.

The different options available to merchant partners include the following:

POS terminals

These allow merchants to accept card payments from Visa, Mastercard and American Express amongst others. Customers can easily make purchases in line with the latest payment security standards in the market using Tap and Pay, EMV Chip and PIN as well as magnetic stripe cards.

Integrated POS terminals

Integration of POS terminals with the checkout counters helps in the quick processing of customers’ purchases and provides all the necessary information about their purchases. On the business side, duplicate entries of the sales

transaction with the POS and cash register are eliminated. The integration solution can also handle management reports to aid sales, analysis and inventory to suit demanding retail needs.

QR codes

Customers can use their mobile phone and their mBanking app to scan a dynamic or static QR code and make payments to a merchant. Dynamic QR codes are displayed on the POS device and a customer can scan it using their Bank Muscat mBanking app. The dynamic QR code generated on the POS device is individual for each transaction and the payment details are prefilled to avoid data input errors. The customer only needs to accept and complete the payment.

A static QR code on the other hand only displays the merchant’s (recipient’s) details. The customer has to then manually enter the amount to be paid and complete the transaction.

Dynamic currency conversion (DCC)

This is a credit card feature that allows a customer to make a POS credit card purchase in a foreign country using the currency of the home country.

Payment links

An online payment method where the merchant requests instant payments by generating a request (creating a payment link) and sharing it with a customer through SMS or email.

Self-checkout machines

They provide a mechanism for customers to complete their transactions at a retail outlet without needing a cashier.

Payment kiosk

They can be used to receive a bill payment and the backend system can be either a POS or a payment gateway.

Payment gateways

These enable a merchant to accept online and offline card payments.

Bank Muscat’s payment solutions enable merchant partners to offer an array of payment options to their customers. The bank has deployed experts to guide partners through the options available and make the right choice regarding their needs. Also available is a support team that works 24/7 to provide customer support and a straightforward onboarding process. Whether large or small, Bank Muscat has the right payment solution available for all types of businesses, depending on their unique needs. What is more, the bank’s payment solutions offer a customised user experience for both merchants and customers.

The bank’s ongoing digitalisation drive is in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and will further enhance financial inclusion in Oman. Digitalisation addresses the entire value chain of institutions and corporates by providing sophisticated analysis of data sets and real-time insights to ensure transparency and greater control for customers to make better-informed decisions. The bank’s efforts in customer centricity and digitalisation have been well recognised by local and international media with the bank winning multiple awards including the Best Digital Bank in Oman in the Consumer and Corporate categories from Global Finance as well as being listed by Forbes Middle East in its rankings of the Top 50 Banks in the Middle East.

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ROUND-UP

FRIENDi mobile Oman launches Eid special raffle draw campaign

This engaging initiative aims to reward and show appreciation to our valued customers for their loyalty and support over the past 14 years

MUSCAT: FRIENDi mobile Oman, one of the leading telecommunication service providers, announced the launch of the Eid Al Adha raffle draw campaign.

This engaging initiative aims to reward and show appreciation to our valued customers for their loyalty and support over the past 14 years.

The campaign, titled "Recharge OMR3 & Win," offers valuable prizes such as televisions, electric

scooters, and smartphones. The raffle draw is open to all customers who recharge their FRIENDi mobile number with OMR3 or more credit, before July 22.

"We are excited to present our customers with the opportunity to win fantastic prizes through our Eid Special Raffle Draw," said Shadli Thabit Zahran Al Abdul Salam, Director of Marketing & Customer Care at FRIENDi mobile Oman. "This campaign is our

way of expressing gratitude to our customers for their continued trust. We strive to enhance their journey by offering not only exceptional telecommunication services but also exciting experiences. We hope to make this Eid celebration even more memorable for our customers."

To participate, customers simply need to recharge their mobile number with OMR3 or more credit. Each recharge will earn them a chance to win one of the exciting prizes. The more recharges made, the greater the chances of winning. Winners will be selected through a random and transparent process, ensuring fairness and equal opportunities for all participants.

For more information about the Eid Special Raffle Draw campaign, including terms and conditions, customers can visit FRIENDi mobile's official website or contact Customer Care at 98400000.



COOPERATION



ARA Petroleum inks MoU with National University of Science and Technology

MUSCAT: ARA Petroleum E&P (ARA), a dynamic energy company within The Zubair Corporation group recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National University of Science and Technology in Oman.

The MoU, which was signed by Dr Omar Al Jaidi, General Manager of ARA EP and Dr Salem Al Araimi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Provost, on behalf of the university, aims to enhance cooperation between the energy and the academic sectors in the fields of research and innovation.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Omar said, "We are aware of the role the National University plays in developing a working system of scientific research and innovation across several fields. The MoU with the National University of Science and Technology will enhance ties between the industrial and academic sectors through innovative solutions and applied research to meet challenges and raise efficiency within industrial and energy sectors."

The National University of Science and Technology believes that partnerships with other industrial organisations enable the university to lead in these sectors by utilising the most diverse, highest-attaining student bodies. These partnerships also have the potential to make an impact on curriculum development, collaborative teaching programmes and research networks.

Dr Ali Bin Saud Al Bimani, Vice

Chancellor of National University of Science and Technology added, "The collaboration aims to find solutions to the challenges faced by the two institutions, whether in the field of education or the field of energy."

He stressed that the memorandum would help contribute to the professional development of students and faculty members at the university as well as implement joint research projects in areas of interest to both the university and ARA. "Results and achievements will be monitored and evaluated over 6 months. We hope to evaluate our accomplishments after this period to continue our journey of technological advancements that aid both entities."

Established in 2014, ARA Petroleum is a dynamic member of the Exploration & Production industry in Oman. The company is a full cycle Exploration & Production company which explores, appraises, develops, and produces oil and gas resources both in Oman and internationally.

ARA operates on the doctrine of No Harm to People, No Harm to The Environment and is taking giant strides towards becoming a carbon-neutral operator. ARA operates several companies, namely ARA Petroleum E&P, ARA Petroleum B-44, ARA Petroleum B-31, and ARA Petroleum Tanzania.

The National University of Science and Technology, a private university in the Sultanate of Oman, was established in the year 2018.

RECOGNITION

Genetco honoured with 'Best Operations Award' at TCL 2023 MEA product launch conference

MUSCAT: Genetco, the leading consumer electronics and home appliances distributor has been bestowed with the prestigious 'Best Operations Award' by TCL for excellence in sales operations in the LED TV category for the year 2022. The award was presented during the 2023 MEA Product Launch Conference of TCL held at the prestigious Madinat Avenue Hotel in Dubai.

Bill Jiang, TCL Overseas Business Group (OBG) General Manager and Sunny Yang, TCL Middle East, and Africa General Manager, presented the prestigious award to Dr Muthanna Al Durrah, Acting CEO & Board Advisor of Genetco and Dr P.S.PadmaKumar, General Manager. This recognition reaffirms Genetco's dedication to excellence and its exceptional performance for the year 2022 in Oman.

The TCL MEA product launch and award function is a prominent event in the TCL calendar where they unveil the latest innovative products in various categories for the Middle East and Africa region. Further, it is the venue to recognize the outstanding contributions and achievements of TCL distribution partners operating in the Middle East and Africa region.



During the Event TCL, the world's #1 Google TV brand and #1 98-inch TV brand, unveiled its latest multi-category products for the Middle East and Africa (MEA). From stunning picture quality with its 2023 C Series

Mini LED and QLED TVs, TCL's latest product line-up underscores its commitment to bringing customers in the region the very best in technological innovation. TCL also announced its partnership with Arsenal Football Club as the Official Regional Consumer Electronics Partner of the Club, with the event being high-

lighted by a special appearance by Arsenal Legend Robert Pires.

Commenting on the new launch, Sunny Yang, General Manager of TCL MEA, said, "We are delighted to introduce TCL's latest generation of Mini LED and QLED TVs in the Middle East and Africa market. Our purpose is to serve our evolving consumers' needs and offer the latest cutting-edge technology to give a premium, exceptional entertainment experience for them. We also look forward to showcasing our latest offerings in home appliances that will make lives easier."

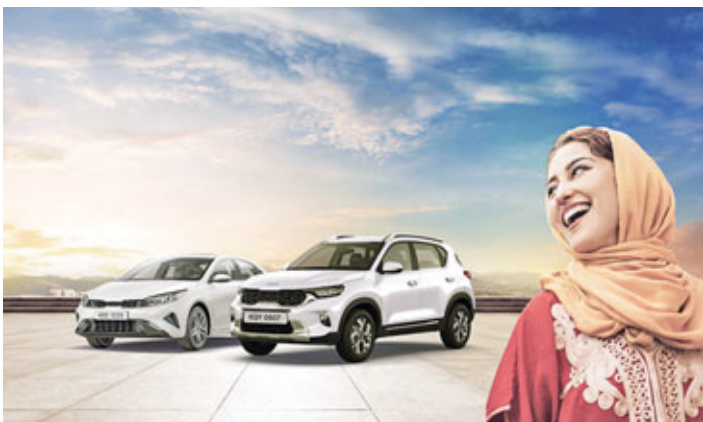
As a global technology brand with a presence in over 160 countries and regions, TCL has been providing products to approximately 300 million users globally. These fresh offerings align closely with TCL's brand signature 'Inspire Greatness', which not only conveys the brand's current corporate message but also embodies TCL's assurance and aspiration to offer global consumers values that motivate and enable them to strive for excellence in all aspects of their lives, surpassing mere product offerings.

ATTRACTIVE INSTALMENTS

Own Kia with exclusive benefits

MUSCAT: Kia customers looking forward to owning a Kia can now benefit from service up to 3 years/30,000km (whichever is earlier), 1 year comprehensive insurance and attractive instalments. Kia Oman has a range of vehicles to cater to every need which includes the Cerato, Sonet, Seltos and Sorento.

Kia Cerato is available in instalments starting from OMR93. The Cerato is designed to make an impression from any angle with full LED headlights which appear as slender lines with the radiator grille to underline the redesigning of the face of the model. Defining the car's sporty exterior. At the rear, strong horizontal lines add a bold appearance with depth to the fluid exterior design. The Cerato is available with a powerful 150 HP 2.0L Euro 4 engine that is paired with a 6-speed automatic transmission. The Cerato is also available with a 1.6L, 126 HP Euro 4 engine which is paired with a



6-speed automatic transmission.

Kia Sonet is available in instalments starting from OMR92. The Sonet is equipped with a powerful 1.5L engine that is paired with a CVT transmission. Offering comfortable space to passengers with its 5-seater capacity, this SUV goes the distance giving an impressive average of 17.5 kmpl. The interior of the Sonet is well laid-

out, taking into consideration the end user's experience and boasts intuitive infotainment and cluster interface. The Sonet is available with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay features, Audio Remote Control, Bluetooth and USB charger.

Kia Seltos is available in instalments starting from OMR108. The Seltos SUV has a stylish exterior with a long hood, a strong, charac-

ter line on the front bumper, and sharp lines pressed into the bodywork. The Seltos is equipped with a 1.6-litre gasoline engine producing 121 HP paired with a six-speed automatic transmission (6AT). To further elevate the driving experience, the Seltos is equipped with a Drive Mode Select system that lets drivers adapt the car to their preferred style or road conditions. Drivers can choose from 'Normal', 'Eco' and 'Sport' modes.

Kia Sorento is available in instalment starting from OMR166. The Sorento's redefined exterior and attractive cabin set it apart as much more than a work of engineering efficiency. Powering the all-new Sorento SUV are the 2.5L variant and the 3.5L variant. The 2.5L engine with 177 hp and 23.7 kg.m torque is paired with a 6-speed automatic transmission. The 3.5L Sorento has 268 hp and 33.8 kg.m torque. This is paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission for smooth driving experiences.



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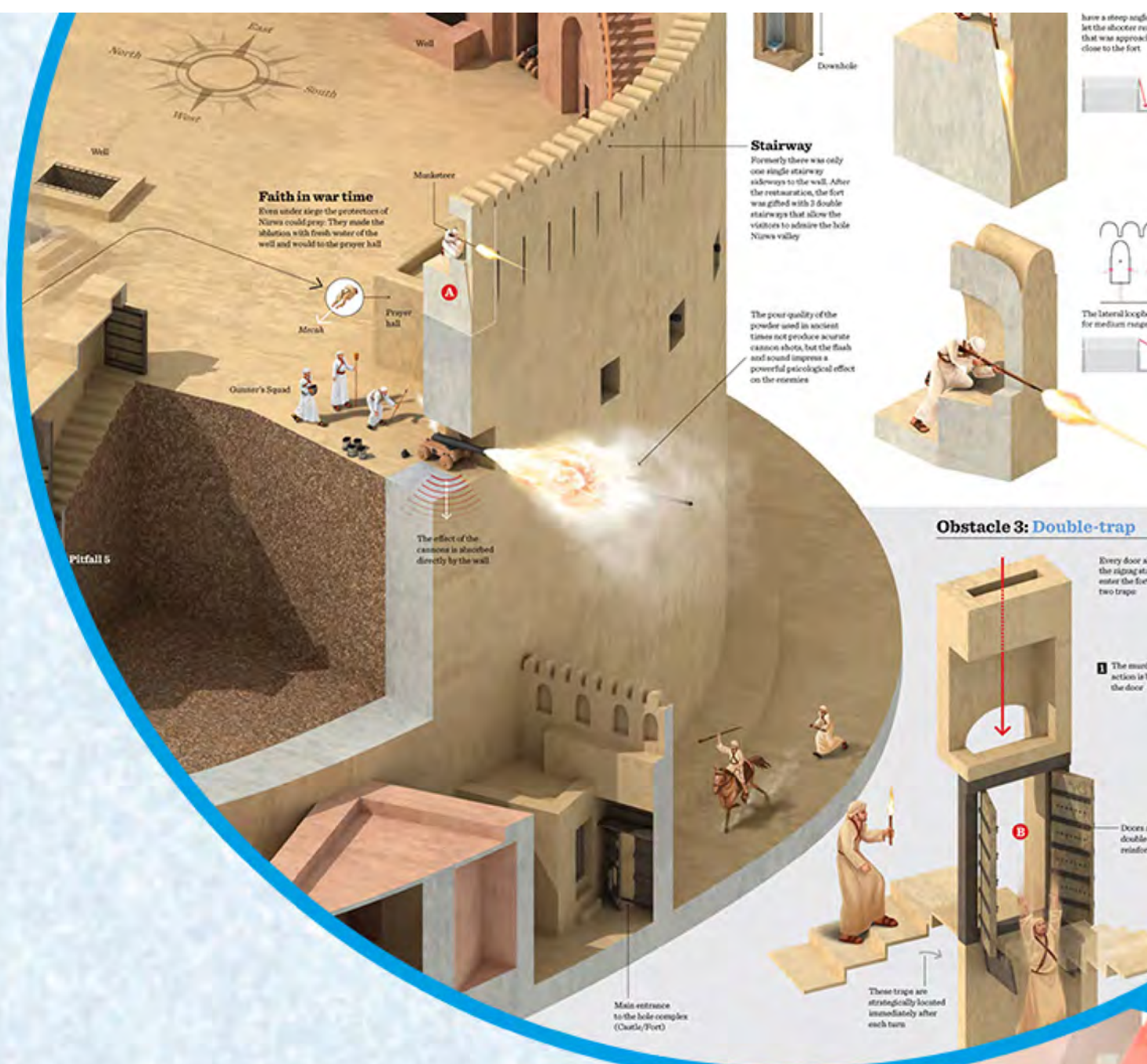
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