

HM SENDS GREETINGS TO RWANDA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda on his country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to President Kagame and the people of his country. **-ONA**



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HM SENDS GREETINGS TO CANADA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Governor-General Mary Simon of Canada on her country's National Day. In the cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments to Governor-General Simon, wishing her good health and happiness and the friendly people of Canada further progress and prosperity. **-ONA**



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TOP THREE INSIDE STORIES

OMAN SalamAir launches direct flights to Rize

1 SalamAir launched direct flights to the Turkish city of Rize using its latest Airbus aircraft. **>A2**

WORLD 1,000 held as France protests continue

2 The French police arrested nearly 1,000 people as the government struggled to restore order. **>A7**

SPORTS West Indies fail to qualify for World Cup

3 Windies failed to qualify for the Cricket World Cup for the first time. **>A8**

DHOFAR

CDAA teams save man from drowning



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Despite the warning given by the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA), an incident of drowning was reported from a tourist site in the Dhofar Governorate on Friday.

A statement issued by the CDAA said that its rescue teams in Dhofar Governorate responded to a drowning incident in Wadi Darbat, where they were able to pull out a person and provide emergency medicare. He was transferred to the hospital in a critical condition.

This is the first drowning case reported with the arrival of Khareef season in the Dhofar Governorate.



HIS MAJESTY OFFERS EID AL ADHA PRAYERS

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik offered the Eid Al Adha prayers at Sayyid Tarik bin Taimour Mosque in the Wilayat of Seeb, Governorate of Muscat. The prayers were led by Dr. Mohammed Said Al Ma'amari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, who delivered the Eid sermon, starting it with gratitude to the Almighty Allah's bounties and prayers for His messenger, Prophet Mohammed(PBUH). After the prayers, His Majesty received greetings from some Royal family members, ministers, advisers, military commanders.

See also >A4

OMAN'S GDP AT CONSTANT PRICES RISES 4.7% TO OMR8.70 BILLION

The gross domestic product at constant price was OMR8.36 billion in the first quarter of 2022, according to the NCSI

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's gross domestic product (GDP) at constant prices recorded an increase of 4.7 per cent to reach OMR8.70 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2023.

The GDP at constant price was OMR8.36 billion in the first quarter of 2022, according to the initial data issued by the National Centre of Statistics and Information (NCSI).

This increase has been mainly attributed to the growth of the non-oil activities which increased by 4.6 percent to reach OMR6.76 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2023 compared

to OMR5.80 billion in the corresponding period of 2022.

Service activities

The total service activities has recorded a growth of 4.5 percent to reach OMR4.12 billion at the end first quarter of 2023 compared to OMR3.94 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2022. Also, the agriculture, forestry, fishing and industrial activities increased by 10.1 percent and 4.4 percent respectively.

Oil activities at the end of the first quarter of 2023 recorded a growth of 3.5 percent to reach OMR2.82 billion compared to OMR2.73 billion at the end of the first quarter of 2022. **-ONA**



FIVE-DAY HOLIDAYS

It's back to work after Eid Al Adha holidays



Times News Service

MUSCAT: Alarms were set for Sunday morning and it will be back to work mode for most citizens and residents in Oman after enjoying the long five-day Eid Al Adha holidays.

The blessed Eid Al Adha was celebrated across the Sultanate with gaiety and fervour as citizens held family get-togethers and exchanged Eid greetings.

The Eid Al Adha holidays began on June 27 and continued till July 1. The famous Omani dish Shuwa was the most sought during the holidays as families and friends enjoyed the feast.

A large rush was witnessed at the Muscat International Airport on Saturday as people returned from a short break from neighbouring countries and home coun-

tries. Cooler destinations up the mountains of Jabal Akhdar and Jabal Shams and neighbouring areas of Al Hamra had a good footfall while Salalah, where the Khareef season has begun, also saw a good number of visitors from Oman and neighbouring UAE.

"It was a nice break to enjoy with family. Eid Al Adha is the biggest festival for us and we caught up with our extended family members in our farm in Barka," said Mohammed Al Balushi, a government sector employee.

During the Eid Al Adha holidays, ROP stepped up monitoring on the Muscat-Salalah highway where a tragic car accident was reported that led to the death of six, which included a family of four from India and two from Yemen.

As the holidays end, it is time

to return to work for K Abhishek, a sales executive, who spent his holidays by spending a couple of nights at Jabal Akhdar. "We thoroughly enjoyed the cooler climate up there. It was quite busy as a lot of people decided to enjoy the pleasant weather in Jabal Akhdar," said Abhishek.

Vehicular traffic witnessed a significant increase on Saturday evening hours as citizens and residents started arriving in the capital city after spending Eid Al Adha holidays.

Shopping malls and hypermarkets were also packed as people purchased essentials to prepare themselves for work from Sunday. The rush of people resonated with the exchange of Eid greetings - a sign that the festival zest was still present.

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PRAYER TIMINGS



Dhuhr.....	12:16pm
Asr.....	3:34pm
Maghrib.....	7:03pm
Isha.....	8:25pm
Fajr (Tomorrow).....	3:57am

ROYAL OMAN POLICE

ROP warns of low visibility on Haima-Thumrait road

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has warned motorists of low visibility on the Haima-Thumrait road.

In a statement, the ROP said: "Users of the Haima-Thumrait

road are urged to be aware of low visibility because of the rising dust due to active winds, and the accumulation of sand on both sides of the road.”



— Times News Service

Direct flights to Rize launched by SalamAir

Flying every
Saturday and
Tuesday, SalamAir
is one of the first
international airlines
to operate direct
flights to Rize



Times News Service

MUSCAT: SalamAir, the first low-cost carrier of the Sultanate of Oman, launched direct flights to the Turkish city of Rize using its latest Airbus aircraft. Flying every Saturday and Tuesday, it is one of the first international airlines to operate direct flights to Rize.

Captain Mohamed Ahmed, CEO of SalamAir, said that by operating direct flights from Muscat to Rize, SalamAir wants to connect with many local and international markets in the Middle East.

He explained that this brings the total number of flights operated by the company to the Republic of Türkiye to 18 weekly flights, including: Istanbul, Trabzon and Rize.

He added to Oman News Agency (ONA) that this new destination comes within the framework of the operational vision of SalamAir, which aims to reach new tourist destinations that were not previously available for travellers.

and to expand the scope of its operations. Noting that by adding this destination to the company's list of destinations, it gives passengers on board SalamAir more travel options at the best prices, while focusing on the quality of service.

On his part, Mehmet Hakimoğlu, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye accredited to the Sultanate of Oman, said: "The launch of flights between Muscat and Rize will add to Turkish tourism that has been going on for years, and maintain its diversity and contribute to the development of the economy of the two friendly countries. The development of tourism activities will have a direct financial impact on many commercial sectors, such as airlines, car rental companies, travel agencies, hotels and restaurants, while providing job opportunities for citizens of both countries."

He explained to Oman News Agency (ONA) that the increase in flight frequency between the two countries will continuously enhance bilateral trade relations, and increase the proportion of

tourism and commercial visits from Türkiye to the Sultanate of Oman. This will provide many investment opportunities and joint business in the future.

SalamAir was the first to operate direct flights between the Sultanate of Oman and Trabzon, to follow the example of many other airlines to operate to this destination, providing connectivity to new destinations, thus enhancing regional interdependence in the region.

It is noteworthy that the total local, regional and international destinations to which SalamAir operates direct flights reached 39 destinations, including: Muscat, Salalah, Sohar, Duqm, and Masirah, in addition to its international destinations to: Dubai, Fujairah, Doha, Bahrain, Kuwait, Dammam, Riyadh, Jeddah, Medina, Shiraz, Tehran, Mashhad, Istanbul, Rize, Trabzon, Alexandria, Beirut, Almaty, Baku, Kuala Lumpur, Prague, Sarajevo, Bangkok, Phuket, Chattogram, Dhaka, Colombo, Jaipur, Karachi, Kathmandu, Lucknow, Multan, Sialkot, and Trivandrum.



FROM THE HOLY LAND



Military pilgrimage mission returns after performing Hajj

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The military pilgrimage mission returned to the country on Saturday from the Holy Land after performing Hajj this year.

Upon arrival at Seeb Air Base, the mission was received by Major General Hamed bin Ahmed Sakroun, President of the Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies, and Brigadier General Hassan bin Ali Al Mujaini, Head of Moral Guidance and Military Ceremonies, and a number of senior officers of the Sultan's Armed Forces and other authorities.

Major General and President of the Academy of Strategic and Defence Studies congratulated the members of the military Hajj mission upon their return to the country after performing the blessed Hajj.



He praised the efforts made by the commander and administrators of the military mission for performing the rituals of Hajj and providing all support to the pilgrims from Oman.

The conduct of the annual military pilgrimage mission is supervised by the moral guidance and military ceremonies headed by the Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces.



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WILAYAT OF SEEB

A march to show love and loyalty for His Majesty



Times News Service

SEEB : A march for the love of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik was organised in the Wilayat of Seeb on the occasion of His Majesty performing the Eid Al Adha prayers in the wilayat.

The march was held at Soor Al Hadid beach under the auspices of HH Sayyid Malik bin Shihab Al Said with the participation of a number of their highnesses and excellencies, sheikhs, and people of Wilayat of Seeb.

The participants carried the flags of the Sultanate with their sincere expressions of loyalty and gratitude to the leader for the renewed renaissance in Oman. The march was accompanied by Omani folk arts bands.

The event included a marine parade, in which marine boats decorated with the flags of the Sultanate of Oman and pictures of His Majesty the Sultan were displayed.

The event also saw the participation of a traditional ship with the presentation of traditional marine arts for which the Wilayat of Seeb is famous.

In the march, placards with titles "A March in the love of the leader" were on display. A number of Omani artists participated in the march that also involved recital of a number of poems.

Citizens congratulated His Majesty the Sultan on the occasion of Eid Al-Adha expressing their happiness, praying to the Almighty to repeat this occasion on His Majesty with progress for Oman in every field under the renewed renaissance. **With OMA inputs**



'Right to claim will lapse if delayed by over a year'

Despite the clarity in Oman's Labour Law, many workers and employers end up fighting legal wrangles that could cost thousands of Omani rials and this could be avoided if proper legal advice is sought, according to Shaima Al Mahrouqi, a legal expert on labour law

Times News Service

MUSCAT: Oman's Ministry of Labour is committed to protecting the rights of employees and safeguarding the interests of the employers.

Despite the clarity in Oman's Labour Law, many workers and employers end up fighting legal wrangles that could cost thousands of Omani rials and this could be avoided if proper legal advice is sought, according to Shaima Al Mahrouqi, a legal expert on labour law.

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Labour for 2021, the number of individual labour complaints received were 24,220. The majority of labour complaints



were around non-payment of salary, final settlement, non-issuance of travel ticket to home country, compensation for unfair dismissal, not honouring end-of-service benefits and unfair dismissal. There were also complaints of non-payment of overtime wages, trouble in transferring sponsorship and holding passports.

According to the report from the ministry, it was able to settle 50 percent of the complaints amicably while 32 percent were referred to the labour court.

Detailing further on the prominent issues, Shaima said: "From my experience, I would like to point out some key observations that the employer and the employee must pay attention to. The employee is given special protection by the Labour Law and he must abide by the duties according to Article (27) of the Omani Labor Law. It is important that the employee is acquainted with the labour law and the internal company regulations, which may define the duties and rights of the worker and the company in a clear and simplified manner as stipulated by the Labour Law."

Shaima added: "Before signing the work contract, it is necessary for the employee to review the contract and, if needed, seek advice from the lawyer to go through the terms of the contract. The employee should have a copy of his

contract, whether it is registered with the Ministry of Labour or an unregistered contract, in order to preserve his right in the event of any claim arising against the employer."

She said that any claims of the employee should be through official means while documenting the claim, like an official e-mail.

Shaima said: "It is necessary for the employee to realise that if there is any claim against the employer, then it should be done within a year from the date the employee becomes entitled. The right to claim will lapse if delayed by statute of limitations."

Shaima, who works as a lawyer at Al-Qalhati and Al-Masrouri Law Firm and Legal Consultations, suggested that "if any employee is accused of any crime at workplace, then it is important to seek support of legal help through a lawyer to avoid any arbitrary decision taken against the employee."

She said that companies who have more than 50 employees, it is mandatory to put in a bylaw that regulates the workflow and clarifies the company's duties and rights. "The bylaw should be approved by the concerned authorities and put up on the notice board," said Shaima.

The legal expert said: "Due to the tough economic conditions, which has affected all sectors, there has

been an increase in termination of employees. If the employer decides to terminate the service of an employee, a legitimate reason for the termination must be presented and the worker should be given an advance notice of at least one month, depending on the nature of the contract."

She added: "For the success of any institution, it is necessary to appoint either an efficient human resources employee or to establish a legal department that is aware of all developments of Oman Labour Law and the Omanisation percentage needed for the respective company."

She said: "There are a lot of mistakes employers make despite the clarity of the law. In the event a worker commits one of the crimes punishable in the Omani Penal Code, the procedures stipulated in Article (32) of the Labour Law must be followed, and in the event the employer does not follow and terminates the worker, it would be considered an arbitrary dismissal."

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Labour for 2021, the number of terminated workers in the private sector reached 7,112 workers.

Shaima said: "In complex cases, a legal department in a company can seek legal consultations from established law firms for justice to prevail and the rights of company safeguarded and employee's welfare also taken care."

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HM THE SULTAN OFFERS EID AL ADHA PRAYERS

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman celebrated the first day of Eid Al Adha (1444 AH) on June 28.

Meanwhile, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik offered the Eid prayers at Sayyid Tarik bin Taimour Mosque in the Wilayat of Seeb, Governorate of Muscat.

The prayers were led by Dr. Mohammed Said Al Ma'amari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, who delivered the Eid sermon, starting it with gratitude to the Almighty Allah's bounties and prayers for His messenger, Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

The sermon laid emphasis on the concept of security and development. Quoting verses of the Holy Quran, the sermon stressed that the greatest sought-after goals in life are the safety of homelands and tranquility of souls. It pointed out that pilgrimage during the sacred months of the year constitutes a symbolic resorting to safety and denotes that the development of the homeland rests on the pillar of security and stability.

The sermon affirmed that, as per the Holy Quran, security takes precedence over economic prosperity, though both are significant and both are required; thus achieving stability as a public interest takes precedence over the interests of individuals. It also observed that by achieving safety, hearts are united and social harmony strengthened, with people seeking means of livelihood in an orderly manner.

The sermon underlined the fact that the days of Hajj pilgrimage are an enactment of renewal of gratitude to Allah for the bounties and an embodiment of unity and rejection of division and disagreement. It argued that with this adherence to the cord of faith in God, the individuals' care focuses on building and reconstruction.

The Eid sermon arrived at the conclusion that, since social life is



based on authorities and partnerships, then a nation's stability and prosperity can only be achieved by obeying the ruler and rallying around the leadership.

After the prayers, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received greetings and welcomed blessings on the occasion of Eid Al Adha from some Royal Family members, ministers, advisers, military commanders and officials. His Majesty wished them a happy Eid.

Upon the departure of His Majesty the Sultan from Sayyid Tarik bin Taimour Mosque, the artillery fired a 21-gun salute.



Eid Al Adha events showcase Oman’s rich cultural heritage



Al Awabi



Sadah



Al Buraimi



Liwa



Many activities were organised across Oman to celebrate blessed Eid Al Adha

Times News Service

AL MUDHAIBI: Many functions and activities were organised to celebrate the blessed Eid Al-Adha in various governorates of the Sultanate Oman. Huge turnout of people and their wholehearted participation were witnessed at the events.

In Al Mudhaibi, the events included various competitions, horseback riding, games with cartoon characters for children's entertainment. In addition the 'Eid Joy' corners included face painting and photography corners, and food and products corners for families.

The activities of 'Eid Joy' are held every year under the supervision of the Municipality Department in Al-Mudhaibi with the participation of a number of institutions in the public and private sectors and members of the local community.

Sadah: The Social Development Committee in the Wilayat of Sadah in Dhofar Governorate organised an entertainment forum for families.

The forum was held in coopera-

tion with the Municipality of Sadah, the Sadah Charity Team, and the Omani Women's Association. The events contained a number of corners, including a corner for recreational activities of families and a place for the display of handicrafts.

The opening ceremony included performances by a number of folk artists.

The family and child forum is an entertainment and marketing window that aims to provide cultural and social interactions and an economic return to people. It is a place where families can relax and enjoy the activities that are presented during the Eid Al-Adha holidays.

Liwa: The Department of Municipal Affairs in the Wilayat of Liwa in the Governorate of North Al Batinah organised at the Liwa Centre for Science and Innovation an event called Al-Ayud, which included various performances by the folklore bands for which the wilayat is famous.

Various recreational activities for children were also held, which varied between sports and cultural competitions, drawing and others.

This event was part of the entertainment programme organised by the North Al Batinah Municipality during Eid Al-Adha.

Al Awabi: The Wilayat of Al-Awabi in the South Al Batinah Governorate celebrated the opening of the entertainment festival, which was organised by the Wali of Al-Awabi office under the supervision of the Governor's office. The opening of the festival was sponsored by Sheikh Mohammed bin Ahmed Al Junaibi, Wali of Al

Awabi, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Festival, in the presence of Badr bin Nasser Al Shuraiki, member of the Shura Council, representative of the wilayat, and a number of sheikhs and officials.

The Wali of Al-Awabi, Chairman of the Organising Committee of the Festival, said that the festival was held at several locations and aimed to introduce and promote the heritage and tourism components of the wilayat, and support business owners, and social security families.

He added that as part of the festival many events were held such as entertainment games, corners for environment, technology, poet competition, in addition to organising traditional games tournaments.

Al Buraimi: In Al Buraimi Public Park in the Wilayat of Al Buraimi, Eid Al-Adha activities were organised by the Governor's Office.

The events include activities for different age groups, including programmes on a designated stage, competitions and prizes for children and adults.

The events also include a number of theatrical performances and performances by cartoon characters, in addition to a musical performance.

The Director of the Awareness and Events Department at the Buraimi Governor's Office, explained that the organisation and preparation for these events took place through communication with various private entities to achieve community participation.

-With ONA inputs



Sadah



Al Buraimi



Al Mudhaibi



Al Awabi



State Department report criticises US withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021



The decisions of both President Trump and President Biden to end the US military mission in Afghanistan had serious consequences for the viability of the Afghan government and its security

WASHINGTON: Former President Donald Trump and President Joe Biden's administrations made mistakes before and after the withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan in 2021, the US State Department found in a report released on Friday.

"The decisions of both President Trump and President Biden to end the US military mission in Afghanistan had serious conse-

quences for the viability of the Afghan government and its security," the review said.

The so-called Afghanistan After Action Review report, requested by Secretary of State Antony Blinken, found their decision "presented significant challenges" to the State Department.

The review said that "during both administrations there was insufficient senior-level considera-

tion of worst-case scenarios and how quickly those might follow."

State department wasn't prepared

Only 24 pages of a 85-page report were made public, the rest remained classified.

The were a lack of clear decision-making, an absence of centralised crisis management and confusing public messaging, it found.

It said there were shortcomings in the management plan concerning the Taliban.

It mentioned the department's failure to expand its crisis-management task force to combat the Taliban forces and to appoint a senior diplomat to "oversee all elements of the crisis response."

Without naming, the report also criticised Secretary of State Antony Blinken and said, "Naming a 7th floor principal ... would have improved coordination across dif-

ferent lines of effort."

White House report skipped critical viewpoint

Biden was defiant when asked on Friday if he would admit to mistakes.

"Remember what I said about Afghanistan? I said al-Qaida would not be there," Biden said. "I said we'd get help from the Taliban. What's happening now? What's going on? Read your press. I was right."

In April, the White House had released a report summarising the 2021 US withdrawal from Afghanistan based on the State Department's review and a similar study by the Pentagon.

The White House report had defended the conduct of the rapid exit of US troops from Afghanistan and had blamed the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan on Trump.

- DW



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Chairman / Editor-in-Chief: Mohamed Issa Al Zedjali
Deputy Editor-in-Chief: Anees bin Essa Al Zedjali
Chief Executive Officer: Ahmed Essa Al Zedjali

EDITORIAL: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24813153, E-mail: editor@timesofoman.com
ADVERTISING: Telephone: 24726666, Fax: 24812624, E-mail: advertising@timesofoman.com
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MEDIA REPORT

209 Covid vaccine damage claims in German courts

BERLIN: The German state could be held liable to pay out compensation to plaintiffs over coronavirus vaccines if their claims are backed by courts, Germany's Welt am Sonntag reported on Saturday.

"There are currently 209 cases of claims for damages against COVID-19 vaccine producers pending in courts," the Health Ministry told the paper.

State-provided compensation is part of vaccine procurement contracts that were signed by the European Commission during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this will not apply if unexpected side-effects are found to be caused by gross negligence or failure to comply with manufacturing standards.

In June, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) reaffirmed the benefit of approved COVID-19 vaccines, adding that the were estimated to have saved almost 20 million lives across the world in the first year of the pandemic.

It also said that there was a minor risk of heart inflammation issues following vaccination with Pfizer/BioNTech's jab.

In January, a regional court in Bavaria dismissed a woman's



lawsuit against British firm AstraZeneca. The woman had suffered various health problems which she claimed were caused by the COVID-19 vaccine.

On Monday, the Rottweil Regional Court will hear the case of a man who claims to have suffered damage to his vision after having taken the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine.

BioNTech has called the accusations baseless

The state's position is putting plaintiffs at a disadvantage, their lawyers claim.

"The state is taking on a double role in the COVID-19 proceedings which is problematic," lawyer Joachim Cäsar-Preller, who is representing the man in the Rottweil Regional Court, was cited by Welt am Sonntag as saying. -DW



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NEW DELHI MEETING

India's dominance in digital transactions is our new identity, says PM Modi



NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that India's dominance in digital transactions has become a new identity of the country in the world and that it needs to be incorporated into the Cooperative sector as well.

"The government has promoted Digital India, enabling direct benefits to reach beneficiaries directly. The aim is also to eliminate the dependency on cash transactions. India's dominance in digital transactions has become our new identity in the world. This also needs to be incorporated in our Cooperative sector," PM Modi said. PM Modi was addressing the 17th Indian Cooperative Congress at International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre (IECC) in the national capital.

He said that in the last 4 years, a direct transfer of Rs 2.5 lakh crore has been made into farmers' bank accounts under the PM-KISAN scheme without any middlemen interference.

"Now, crores of small farmers are receiving benefits under the PM-KISAN scheme without any interference from middlemen. In the last 4 years, a direct trans-

fer of Rs 2.5 lakh crore has been made into the bank accounts of farmers under this scheme," Modi added.

The PM further said that the country has moved from less than Rs 90,000 crore spent in five years for the agriculture sector before 2014 to having a single scheme, PM KISAN Samman Nidhi, spending three times the amount.

"Milk powder to butter to ghee, our Indian produce is in demand across the world. A new market is being formed for our millets. Our Shree Anna can be a great opportunity to earn for our small farmers," PM said, adding that it's only because of the Indian government's initiatives, this year is being celebrated as the 'International Year of Millets'.

The 17th Indian Cooperative Congress is being organised on July 1-2, 2023.

Its objective is to discuss various trends in the cooperative movement, showcase best practices being adopted, deliberate challenges being faced and chalk out future policy direction for the growth of India's cooperative movement.

- ANI

WESTERN KENYA



48 people killed in Kenya road crash: Report

NAIROBI: A total of 48 people were killed when a truck apparently lost control and rammed into other vehicles and pedestrians at a busy junction in western Kenya, according to media report.

"So far, we can confirm 48 dead and we are suspecting one or two are still trapped under the truck," local police commander Geoffrey Mayek said after the accident on the highway between the towns of Kericho and Nakuru on Friday night.

"Thirty people have been seriously injured and rushed to various hospitals. The numbers could be more but as of now we are sure about 30," he said.

Regional police commander Tom Odera confirmed the death toll stood at 48. Local media reports said that heavy rains are hindering rescue operations.

"We are suspecting a truck which was being driven ... towards Kericho lost control and rammed into matatus [local minibuses] that were packed at a bus stop, running over those matatus and injuring passengers and pedestrians who were standing by the bus stop," Mayek said, as per Al Jazeera.

Peter Otieno, a driver, who witnessed the accident said: "I saw a speeding oncoming trailer. I swerved and escaped hitting him head-on. The person who was behind me thought I wanted to buy something. He overtook me and that is when he was hit. The trailer went off the road and hit other vehicles."

- ANI



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Police arrest 1,000 people as protests continue in France

France's Interior Ministry said that 2,560 fires had been reported on public roads, with 1,350 cars burned, and there had been 234 incidents of damage or fire in buildings

PARIS: The protesters erected barricades, lit fires and shot fireworks at police in French streets as tensions grew over the fatal police shooting of a teenager that has shocked the nation. The police arrested nearly 1,000 people as the government struggled to restore order on the fourth day of unrest, according to media report. France's Interior Ministry, on Saturday, said that 994 people have been detained. It also said that 2,560 fires had been reported on public roads, with 1,350 cars burned, and there had been 234 incidents of damage or fire in buildings. Seventy-nine police and gendarmes were injured over Friday night and there had been 58 attacks on police and gen-

darme stations, it added. There was an explosion in the Old Port of Marseille on Friday evening, according to BFMTV, but no casualties had been reported. It also shared a video showing damage to the Alcazar library in Marseille which it said had been vandalised during the night. These developments take place after the death of the teenager, 17, identified as Nal after being stopped for a traffic violation in the Paris suburb town of Nanterre on Tuesday. The officer who is accused of shooting him was taken to jail. Footage of the incident filmed by a bystander showed two officers standing on the driver's side of the car, one of whom fired his gun at the driver despite not appearing to be in any immediate danger, according to CNN. The officer has said he fired his gun out of fear that the boy would run someone over with the car, according to Nanterre prosecutor Pascal Prache. The officer currently faces a formal investigation for voluntary homicide and has been placed in preliminary detention. On Friday, French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin announced the "exceptional" mobilization of 45,000 police and gendarmes to avoid a fourth consecutive night of riots, CNN reported. Amid burning debris, "vengeance pour Nael" which translates to "revenge for Nael" appeared to be spray painted on a wall in Nanterre with regards to the slain teenager and using an alternative spelling of his name, the report said. A bank was set on fire in Nanterre and 15 people were taken in by police for questioning after a march was carried out in memory of the teenager became violent. Protesters threw fireworks at police officers in Marseille, CNN reported citing BFMTV. Six people were taken by police for questioning after they took part in a protest barred by authorities in Lille, the regional authority in a Facebook post, CNN reported. —ANI

REPORT

Singapore records highest number of suicides in 20 years

SINGAPORE: Singapore recorded the highest number of suicide cases in over 20 years, Channel News Asia reported citing the Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) said on Saturday. A total of 476 suicides were reported last year. In 2022, the number of suicides was a "concerning rise" of 25.9 per cent from the 378 reported in 2021, SOS said in a release, citing data from the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority. Family problems, employment and financial difficulties, as well as romantic relationships were the most frequently presented problems by people who contacted their services. An increase in suicides across most age groups was reported, particularly among the youth and the elderly. As per CNA, the leading cause of death for youths aged 10 to 29 for the fourth consecutive year - about a third of all deaths in this age group were suicides. —ANI



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بيت الخبرة للمشاريع المتكاملة

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

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SPORTS

West Indies fail to qualify for the World Cup for first time

The 13th edition of the tournament will be the first without the two-time champions after their seven-wicket loss to Scotland on Saturday

HARARE: Scotland stunned two-time champions West Indies by seven wickets in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier Super Six match on Saturday to deny the former heavyweights a chance to compete in the forthcoming World Cup in India in October-November.

West Indies won the first two editions of the men's 50-over World Cup in 1975 and 1979, and were runners-up in 1983. The 13th edition of the competition in India will be the first without the team from the Caribbean.

On Saturday, West Indies were bundled out for 181 in 43.5 overs before Scotland knocked off their target with seven wickets and 39 balls to spare.

They slumped to 81-6 inside 21 overs against Scotland with opener Johnson Charles and No. 3 Shamarh Brooks dismissed for ducks by Brandon McMullen (3-32) and Kyle Mayers sent back by Chris Sole (2-43) after being bowled for just five.

Jason Holder (45) and Romario Shepherd (36) revived the innings with a seventh-wicket stand of 77 from 96 balls before the Caribbean team lost their final four wickets for 23 once Shepherd fell to a superb one-handed catch from Safyaan Sharif.

A superb 69 from Brandon McMullen helped Scotland recover from the loss of opener Chris McBride off the very first ball of the innings, with an unbeaten 74 from Matthew Cross, his 10th half-century in one-day international



cricket, seeing the Scots home in cruise control. It was their first win over the Windies in ODI history. Scotland now have two matches to play, against Netherlands and Zimbabwe, in a bid to secure a top-two spot in the Super Six group.

The Windies debacle

West Indies had to play the World Cup Qualifier because they finished ninth in the ODI Super League, and only the top eight teams gain direct entry to the

ten-team tournament.

West Indies were grouped with Zimbabwe, Netherlands, USA and Nepal in Group A of the Qualifier, and the format of the tournament was such that the top three teams from each of the two groups made it to the Super Six stage.

However, the teams that progressed would carry forward points earned from their results against the other teams that also qualified from their group.

West Indies began the Qualifier

with victories against USA and Nepal but then lost to Zimbabwe and Netherlands. So while they qualified for the Super Six, it meant they took zero points into that round, while Zimbabwe carried forward four points and Netherlands two.

From Group B, Sri Lanka qualified for the Super Six with four points, Scotland with two, and Oman with none. Oman had defeated Ireland and the UAE in the group stage but both failed to advance. Zimbabwe and Sri

Lanka then won their first Super Six matches, taking their tally to six points each. It left West Indies needing to win all three of their games - against Scotland, Sri Lanka and Oman - to have a chance of catching up to Zimbabwe or Sri Lanka.

But with the defeat to Scotland on Saturday, the maximum West Indies can get to is four points - not enough for the top-two finish needed for a World Cup ticket to India. They will now be a notable absentee in the subcontinent later this year.

This setback is a continuation of West Indies' decline in the limited-overs format.

They only just made it to the 2019 ODI World Cup in England, via the World Cup Qualifiers, where they sneaked into the final at the expense of, coincidentally, Scotland in a rain-hit game. They then did not qualify for the Super 12 stage of the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia, after winning just one (against Zimbabwe) and losing two (to Scotland and Ireland) of their group matches.

Two unbeaten sides go head-to-head

A blockbuster battle in Bulawayo headlines Sunday's action as the two sides currently occupying the two qualification spots, Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka, face off.

A public viewing and gathering site has been set up in Harare where fans can experience the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Qualifier 2023 euphoria when Zimbabwe face Sri Lanka in a Super Six match on Sunday.

Both sides are yet to lose a match in the Qualifier to date and the victor can take a big step towards sealing their spot at the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023.

In Harare, Nepal take on United Arab Emirates in the second play-off semi-final. The winner will play Ireland in the 7th-place play-off, with the beaten side to take on USA in the 9th-place play-off.

Brief scores: West Indies 181 in 43.5 overs (Jason Holder 45, Romario Shepherd 36; Brandon McMullen 3-32, Mark Watt 2-25) **lost to Scotland 185/3 in 43.3 overs** (Matthew Cross 74*, McMullen 69).

(With inputs from [icc-cricket.com](https://www.icc-cricket.com))



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COFINANCE PROJECTS

Asian Development Bank's (ADB) financing partners committed \$11.4 billion to cofinance projects in 2022 that boosted the resilience of developing member countries in Asia and the Pacific, according to the Partnership Report 2022: Driving Growth, Boosting Resilience.

MARKET

BUSINESS & FINANCE



AGREEMENT FOR MINING

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals signed a concession agreement in the mining sector for the exploration and mining of potash ore in concession area No. 53-A in the swamp area of Umm Assameem.

Renewed optimism witnessed on Muscat Stock Exchange

The benchmark MSX index recorded its best monthly rise during the current year, rising 86 points to end its trading at 4,768 points, its best level since April 17

MUSCAT: The initiatives announced by the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) in cooperation with the National Financial Sustainability Programme and the Omani Investment Authority (OIA) have restored optimism on the MSX which witnessed a consecutive rise in the last five days of June trading.

The benchmark MSX index recorded its best monthly rise during the current year, rising 86 points to end its trading at 4,768 points, its best level since April 17.

On June 21, the MSX, in cooperation



tion with the National Programme for Financial Sustainability, announced six major initiatives. The initiatives aim to improve public finances, prepare for industry transformations, and support the private financial sector.

These initiatives include market

representation, securities lending, pooled trading accounts, company market creation and governance enhancements, in addition to the OIA's announcement of allocating OMR100 million to support liquidity in the stock exchange through the Liquidity Fund Initiative.

The OIA said that the Liquidity Fund initiative includes a portfolio valued at 100 million Omani riyals to support the initiatives of the market maker and liquidity provider on the Muscat Stock Exchange, explaining that the portfolio will constitute a percentage

of the daily trading volume on the stock exchange, and the agency also affirmed its readiness to cooperate with companies that will operate in Market making in the field of attracting new investments and liquidity to the Stock Exchange.

It is expected that this positive atmosphere will be reflected in the trading of the Muscat Stock Exchange in July, at a time when public joint stock companies will announce their financial results for the first half of this year.

These initiatives came at a time when the national economy is witnessing good growth with high government revenues and increased government spending, which is expected to reflect positively on the public shareholding companies listed on the stock exchange.

During June, the Muscat Stock Exchange also benefited from the positive disclosures regarding the expected mergers and the entry of strategic investors in some listed companies, so the stock market witnessed an increase in the prices of 43 securities compared to 26 securities whose prices fell and 25 securities that stabilised at their previous levels.

The sectoral indices recorded an increase, except for the service sector index, which declined by 6 points, while the financial sector

index recorded the highest rise, up 271 points, the industrial sector index rose 155 points, and the Sharia index rose to 478 points, up 12 points.

The trading value decreased in June to OMR52.8 million compared to OMR59.6 million in May and OMR122.4 million in April. The number of deals executed decreased to 8,308 compared to about 14,000 in May and 11,000 in April.

This decline is due to the decline in the number of trading days in June to 18 days, compared to 23 days in May.

It is also because most of the subscribers from the category of small shareholders in Abraj Energy Services Company sold their shares, in addition to the fluctuation in the trading value during the month witnessed on June 14. The highest trading value was recorded at OMR7.3 million while June 12 saw the lowest trading value at OMR1.1 million.

Omantel topped the most traded companies in terms of turnover at OMR7.2 million, representing 13.6 per cent of the total trading value.

The market value of the companies listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange rose at the end of June's trading to OMR23.9 billion, recording monthly gains of OMR276.9 million. - **ONA**

BANKING

Broad money supply in Oman tops OMR21 billion year-on-year



MUSCAT: The broad money supply in Oman witnessed a growth of 1.8 percent on an annual basis to reach OMR21.1 billion at the end of April 2023.

While narrow money supply decreased by 0.9 percent, the increase in cash in the broad money was attributed to the increase in quasi-cash by 2.8 percent, which consists of the sum of savings deposits and time deposits in Omani

Rials plus certificates of deposit issued by banks, in addition to margin accounts and all deposits in foreign currency with the banking sector.

During the same period, cash with the public decreased by 5.3 percent, while demand deposits increased by 0.4 percent.

With regard to the interest rate structure of conventional commercial banks, the weighted av-

Assets of Islamic banking sector reach OMR6.7 billion

MUSCAT: The total assets of Islamic banks and windows in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 9.8 percent to about OMR 6.7 billion at the end of April 2023.

Data issued by the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) indicated that the total balance of financing granted by the Sha-

ria-compliant banking entities in Oman engaged in this activity increased by 13.3 percent to reach about OMR5.6 billion.

Deposits with Islamic banks and windows increased by 11 percent to reach about OMR5 billion at the end of April 2023. - **ONA**

erage interest rate on deposits in Omani rials increased from 1.891 percent in April 2022 to 2.192 percent in April 2023. The weighted average interest rate on loans in Omani rials decreased from 5.366 percent to 5.469 percent during the same period.

As for the average interest rates in the interbank lending market for one night, it recorded an in-

crease of 5.147 percent in April 2023, compared to 0.630 percent in April 2022.

This came as a result of the increase in the weighted average interest rate on repurchase operations to reach 5,500 percent, compared to 0.5 percent during the same period last year, in line with the policies of the US Federal Reserve. - **ONA**

CENTRAL BANK OF OMAN



CBO issues treasury bills worth OMR6mn

MUSCAT: The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) raised OMR6 million by way of allotting treasury bills 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 percent and 4.38164 percent, 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**

TRACKING PROGRESS

UNCTAD measures progress on sustainable development goals, shows impact of global crises

GENEVA: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) released the fifth edition of its annual SDG Pulse, a global reference for tracking progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The data and analysis cover a wide range of SDG indicators and others relevant to trade, investment, financing for development, debt, transport and technology.

This year, the report's "In-Focus" section looks into the costs of achieving the SDGs to identify where financing is most needed and to help better target efforts.

An online version allows people to interact with the statistics, charts and graphs.

The data shows that the COVID-19 pandemic, the crisis in Ukraine and the climate crises are having a devastating effect on progress towards the SDGs.

"We've reached the halfway

mark of the 2030 Agenda, and multiple global crises are battering our economies, societies and the planet," said Anu Peltola, who leads UNCTAD's statistics work.

"It's more important than ever for policymakers to have timely and reliable data and analysis to guide their decisions."

About one in three countries worldwide faces a high risk of a fiscal crisis, with developing countries bearing the heaviest debt burden. The total external debt for these nations was 15 percent higher in 2022 than in 2019, before the pandemic hit. During the past decade, their external debt stocks have more than doubled to an alarming \$11.4 trillion.

Mounting public debt poses a significant obstacle to development and achieving the SDGs because it undermines governments' ability to invest in basic services, such as health care and education. - **WAM**

PARTNERSHIP

CMA signs MoU with Kazakhstan's Astana Financial Services Authority

Times News Service

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority (CMA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Astana Financial Services Authority (AFSA) of the Republic of Kazakhstan; which stems from the CMA's endeavours to enhance cooperation frameworks with international authorities to join the efforts and exchange information.

This MoU is the basis of cooperation in the processes of regulation and information exchange; which enhances transparency and supports efficiency of the financial markets sectors in both countries.

The MoU was signed online by Sheikh Abdullah bin Salim Al Salmi, Executive President of the CMA and Nurkhat Kushimov, Chief Executive Officer of AFSA with the attendance of several directors and officials from both parties.



This MoU represents a distinctive partnership between CMA and AFSA and sets a new direction for cooperation that accomplishes an important mutual benefit in the fields of fintech, Islamic finance,

asset management, capital markets and financial culture.

The MoU also aims to consolidate efforts to enhance transparency level and sound transactions in the financial markets through

cooperation in the fields of markets' regulation, enforcement of laws and regulations by regulated entities and prohibition of illegal practices, to support the efficiency of the securities sector to be in promising prospects in both countries.

Moreover, the MoU aims at coordinating the positions of both parties in terms of their membership in related international organisations and participation in activities and events of such organisations in addition to specifying the fields of technical support to enhance the legal and regulatory infrastructure of both countries such as exchange of regulatory expertise, experts visits, exchange of capital market-related research and publications, qualification of licensed persons which meets the best standards and global directions and professional development while ensuring the integrity of transactions.

Obese employees

might have a greater loss of productivity at work: Study

ACCORDING TO AN INDUSTRY-SUPPORTED STUDY AT ENDO 2023, THE ENDOCRINE SOCIETY'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN CHICAGO, PEOPLE WITH OBESITY MAY BE LESS PRODUCTIVE AT WORK OWING TO AN INCREASED RISK OF SICKNESS, WHICH WOULD RAISE EXPENDITURES FOR COMPANIES.



Obesity is a significant public health issue affecting approximately 42% of people in the United States. Employees with overweight or obesity are more likely to develop weight-related comorbidities such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, sleep apnea, cardiovascular disease, and cancer, which all contribute to lower work productivity. “Employees with overweight and obesity may have a higher loss of work productivity as measured by absenteeism, short and long-term disability, and worker’s compensation compared to employees with normal weight,” said Clare J. Lee, M.D., of Eli Lilly & Company in Indianapolis, Ind.

Co-author Shraddha Shinde M.B.A, also of Eli Lilly & Company, added that, “Given the substantial burden of overweight and obesity on employee health and function that was demonstrated by this study, employers should focus on building tailored interventions that could be beneficial in improving the health of these individuals.”

The researchers evaluated 719,482 employees with and without obesity in the MarketScan databases. They determined the percentage of employees with work loss, the number of hours/days lost from work, and costs associated with productivity loss were higher among people with overweight or obesity. The loss of work productivity was greater with each higher Body Mass Index (BMI) category.

The researchers found costs associated with absenteeism, short and long-term disability, and worker’s compensation were \$891, \$623, \$41, and \$112 higher per year (respectively) for people with obesity compared to those with normal weight. -ANI

719,482

employees with and without obesity in the MarketScan databases.



Employees with overweight and obesity may have a higher loss of work productivity as measured by absenteeism, short and long-term disability, and worker’s compensation compared to employees with normal weight,” said Clare J. Lee, M.D., of Eli Lilly & Company in Indianapolis, Ind.



SPORTS

Verstappen clinches enthralling Austrian Grand Prix sprint race

Double world champion raced away to a Red Bull one-two at the team's home circuit

SPIELBERG: Double world champion Max Verstappen ran away with a Saturday sprint race in a Red Bull one-two at the Austrian Grand Prix to increase his Formula One lead over Mexican team-mate Sergio Perez to 70 points.

Verstappen took the chequered flag 21.048 seconds clear of Perez in the 24 lap, 100km, standalone race with Ferrari's Carlos Sainz finishing third. Aston Martin's Lance Stroll and Fernando Alonso finished fourth and fifth with Nico Hulkenberg sixth for Haas, Esteban Ocon seventh for Alpine and George Russell bagging the final point for Mercedes.

Verstappen took the win after a first-lap squabble with team-mate Perez. In wet conditions, Perez took the lead from Verstappen at the first corner and then edged the world champion onto the grass after the corner. But Verstappen made a pass stick out of Turn Four and proceed to motor away to another win.

There were frantic battles down the field in a race that started on a wet track and proceeded to dry throughout. Verstappen expressed his annoyance with Perez to the team after the race, saying his move out of Turn One was "really not OK" and they "had to have a chat about it".

Stroll led home Aston Martin team-mate Alonso for fourth place, after saying over the radio to the team that they "shouldn't lose too much time fighting".

Haas driver Hulkenberg benefited from the fight between the



Red Bulls on the first lap to move into second for the first few laps of the race and then drove well after switching to intermediates at two-thirds distance and charged back up to finish sixth.

Ocon held on with his fading intermediate tyres on the Alpine ahead of a Russell, who had switched to slicks on his Mercedes a lap before Hulkenberg and flew back up from the back of the field to take the final point in eighth.

Hulkenberg impressed throughout the race, initially building a lead over Perez when the track was at its wettest before the Red Bull came back at him. But after Russell had switched to slicks, Hulkenberg followed him in a lap later and set about recovering positions, climbing back up from 10th after his stop to a strong sixth-place finish.

Lando Norris finished ninth in the McLaren. Lewis Hamilton switched to slicks, but could fight back up only to 10th place. -Agencies

Verstappen takes pole in qualifying

SPIELBERG: Red Bull F1 team driver Max Verstappen took pole position in the Austrian Grand Prix qualifying on Friday.

In the qualifying, Max Verstappen defeated Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc to take the first position. Leclerc gave Max Verstappen a tough fight, but in the end, the Red Bull driver prevailed.

Two-time world champion Max Verstappen finished the qualifying with a timing of 1:04.391 to hold the provisional pole.

Leclerc kept the pressure on Verstappen as he finished the

qualifying just 0.048s short of Max Verstappen's timing.

Leclerc's teammate, Carlos Sainz finished third behind his team-mate, with the Italian squad showing signs of overcoming their early-season struggles.

Lando Norris produced a brilliant display to take fourth in his upgraded McLaren, finishing a place ahead of Lewis Hamilton, who appeared to maximise his Mercedes' performance as team-mate George Russell also made a surprise Q2 exit.

Lance Stroll out-qualified team-mate Fernando Alonso

for just the second time this season as the Aston Martin duo finished sixth and seventh respectively.

Nico Hulkenberg made it through to Q3 for a third successive race as he took eighth for Haas, while Alpine's Pierre Gasly and Williams' Alex Albon rounded out the top 10.

Red Bull's Sergio Perez failed to make the top 10 for a fourth straight race.

The Mexican repeatedly fell foul of restrictions on track limits and had a series of laps deleted for running too wide at Turns Nine and 10 and will line up 15th. - Agencies



LAUSANNE DIAMOND LEAGUE

Neeraj wins gold with 87.66m throw

LAUSANNE: Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra clinched the Lausanne Diamond League 2023 title with the best throw of 87.66 metres on Friday.

Neeraj was making a return from an injury that had caused him to miss some competitions after his win at Diamond League 2023 event in Doha in May.

Neeraj looked a little rusty in his first attempt, which was deemed to be invalid. Germany's Julian Weber took the lead with an 86.20m throw. At the end of round one, Neeraj was not even among the top three athletes.

In his second attempt, Neeraj achieved a throw of 83.52m. However, Julian was still in the lead at the end of round two. Neeraj showed improvement in his ranking, climbing to number three.

Neeraj's third attempt was 85.02m. With this throw, he climbed to number two. At the end of round three, he was at number two. Julian still had the lead with an 86.20m throw.

The Indian's fourth attempt was deemed to be invalid. However, at



the end of round four, Neeraj was still placed at number two.

Neeraj's 'golden arm' did its magic in the fifth attempt, achieving a throw of 87.66m. With this, he climbed to the number one position.

In the sixth attempt and final

one, Neeraj achieved a throw of 84.15m.

Neeraj won the title as Julian slid to second with a best throw of 87.03m. At third was Jakub Valdec of the Czech Republic with an 86.13m throw.

Union Sports Minister Anurag

Thakur congratulated Neeraj on his title win at the Lausanne Diamond League.

He also lauded the efforts of long jump athlete Sreeshankar who finished fifth in the event with a leap of 7.88m.

Thakur on his Twitter handle wrote, "Neeraj is back with a bang With a massive throw of 87.66m in his 5th attempt, @Neeraj_chopra1 dominates yet another Diamond League event finishing on position in Men's Javelin Throw event at #LausanneDL Phenomenal effort by our #TOPScheme athlete to make a blockbuster comeback after a muscle injury and make proud again Congratulations, Champion!"

Thakur wrote for Sreeshankar, "Kudos to #TOPScheme athlete @SreeshankarM on an impressive 5th place finish in the men's long jump event at #LausanneDL showcasing the best leap of 7.88m! Your incredible effort speaks volumes about your talent and determination. Keep shining and blazing new trails; the best is yet to come!" -ANI

FRENCH INTERNATIONAL

Inter Milan sign Marcus Thuram

MILAN: Inter Milan have signed France winger Marcus Thuram on a free transfer after his contract with Bundesliga side Borussia Monchengladbach expired, BBC Sport reported on Saturday.

Thuram, 25, is the son of former Barcelona and Juventus defender Lillian, who won the 1998 World Cup with France.

The younger Thuram played 134 games for Monchengladbach, scoring 44 goals in four seasons with the German club.

Thuram moved to the Bundesliga from Ligue 1 side Guingamp in 2019.

Thuram has made 10 international appearances for France, after making his senior debut for Les Bleus against Finland in November 2020. - Agencies

ASIAN KABADDI CHAMPIONSHIP

India beat Iran to lift 8th title

BUSAN: India put up a stunning performance to defeat Iran 42-32 in the final of the Asian Kabaddi Championship 2023 at the Dong-Eui Institute of Technology Seokdang Cultural Center in Busan, Republic of Korea, on Friday. This was India's eighth title in nine editions.

Indian captain Pawan Sehrawat led from the front with a super 10. In the opening five minutes of the match, the Indian men's kabaddi team was down to Iran. However, in the 10th minute of play, Iran was forced to go all-out after a few tackle points by the defence and successful raids by Pawan Sehrawat and Aslam Inamdar.

As they gained momentum, the Indian kabaddi team swiftly increased their advantage while putting up an outstanding all-around performance. Iran received a few



easy bonus points against India, the reigning champions, but in the 19th minute India inflicted a second all-out on Iran.

India held a 23-11 advantage going into the second half. However, Mohammadreza Shadlouei Chiyaneh, the captain of Iran, assisted in inflicting the first all-out on India in the 29th minute with a two-

point raid and a super raid.

With two minutes remaining, Iran cut the lead to 38-31, causing the game to get tense, but India held on to scrape out a 42-32 victory.

Earlier in the day, India had beaten Hong Kong 64-20 to end the league stage of the tournament undefeated. - ANI

SECOND ASHES TEST: DAY THREE

Australia in command against England



LONDON: Opener Usman Khawaja continued his purple patch and stitched valuable partnerships with David Warner and Marnus Labuschagne to take Australia's lead beyond 200 runs at the end of rain-affected day three of the second Ashes Test against England at Lord's on Friday.

At the end of day three, Australia were at 130/2, with Khawaja (58*) and Steve Smith (6*) unbeaten after the visitors reached the 100-run mark in 35.3 overs.

Spanking Stuart Broad to the fence, Khawaja also brought up his 23rd Test fifty in 105 balls. This was also his second fifty of the series, besides a century.

Labuschagne and Khawaja took Australia's lead past 200 runs.

James Anderson got his first wicket, sending back Labuschagne for 30 off 51 balls, bringing an end to the 60-run stand. Rain delayed action after a while, with Australia at 130/2, with Khawaja and Smith standing unbeaten. The session ended without any further play.

Earlier, a half-century partnership between Warner and Khawaja helped Australia extend their lead beyond 150 runs at the end of the second session on Day 3.

Warner and Khawaja gave Australia a great start, with the visitors at 50/0 in the 21st over.

In the 24th over, Josh Tongue got a breakthrough for the hosts, sending back Warner for 25 runs off 75. With Australia at 63/1 at that point, the hosts sensed an opportunity to squeeze the hosts and prise out more wickets.

Earlier, outstanding bowling

by Australian speedsters, led by Mitchell Starc's 3/88, hurt England's chances of overhauling the visitors' score. Regular loss of wickets saw England collapse from a commanding position as they trailed the visitors by over 100 runs at the end of the first session on Friday.

England started the first session at 278/4, with Harry Brook (45*) and skipper Ben Stokes (17*). The hosts did not have a good start as they lost their skipper for 17 on the day's second ball. England were 279/5 at that point.

Jonny Bairstow was next up on the crease and declared his intentions with a boundary. Harry Brook also reached his fourth Test fifty in 63 balls.

Starc once again struck for Australia. This time, he trapped Brook for 50 runs off 68 balls. Skipper Pat Cummins caught him at deep extra cover.

England needed Bairstow to stick around if they wanted a chance at getting a lead. But he was dismissed for 16 off 36 balls by Josh Hazlewood.

The lower order consisting of Ollie Robinson, and Stuart Broad tried to cut the deficit with some solid hits. But they could not last long either as they fell to Travis Head's part-time spin for nine and 12 respectively. England was bundled out for 325 in 76.2 overs.

Brief scores: Australia 416 and 130/2 (Usman Khawaja 58*, Marnus Labuschagne 30, Josh Tongue 1/21) **vs England 1st innings 325** (Ben Duckett 98, Harry Brook 50; Mitchell Starc 3/88). -ANI

Uruguay drought: Capital hit by water shortages

Montevideo is experiencing its worst drought in over 70 years. The situation is being worsened by locals hoarding water supplies.

URUGUAY was the first country in the world to enshrine the right to clean drinking water in its constitution in 2004. Now, it seems, it's reliant on divine intervention to fulfill this pledge. Montevideo archbishop Daniel Sturla recently tweeted: "Our God, we pray that You grant us the necessary rain."

While many in Uruguay's capital Montevideo, a metropolis of 1.3 million people, thanked the Church for its efforts, others said they doubted that God even follows Twitter. In any case, only a few raindrops fell from the sky in recent days because the La Nina weather phenomenon is increasingly turning Uruguay, and the capital especially, into a desert.

Empty reservoir
"We had a two-year drought, which was superseded by an extreme drought in the last few months," biologist and environmental expert Mariana Meerhoff told DW. "It is an absolutely exceptional situation for Uruguay."
She says the country is seeing a record drop in precipitation. "We've never had so little rain," Meerhoff says. "The situation in Montevideo is so dramatic because, of course, a lot of people depend on drinking water."
Montevideo and the greater metropolitan area, where more than half of Uruguay's population live, is slowly running out of

precious drinking water. Its most important water source, the Paso Severino reservoir located north of Montevideo, is nearly completely empty and currently only holds 3% of its normal capacity.
Uruguay's President Luis Lacalle Pou has declared a water emergency for Montevideo and the wider metropolitan area. For the time being, bottled water is now exempt from taxes. Uruguay's poor, who are especially hard-hit in these tough times, will receive two liters of water (about half a gallon) per day free of charge.
Six-litre canisters of drinking water sold in supermarkets have become highly sought-after and are also being carted in from other parts of the country. Three times more water bottles are being sold in Uruguay than usual. This is partly due to hoarding, not dissimilar to the early days of the pandemic around the globe.

Politicians slow to act
"Politicians have reacted far too late to this situation, even though the scientific community has been warning of Uruguay's drinking water problem for almost three decades," says Meerhoff. "They refuse to acknowledge how dramatic the drinking water situation really is." Meerhoff says "water crises like this will increase in the future and become even more severe."
In Montevideo, which once boasted some of the best municipal



pal water in South America, not even 50% of households open their taps anymore, surveys show. The reason is that anyone who takes a sip will likely feel like they are drinking water from the Atlantic Ocean. The pitiful remains from the reservoir have been

mixed with water from the pesticide-contaminated River Plate. River and seawater mix in the estuary of the Rio Parana and Rio Uruguay streams, leading to an increased chlorine and salt content in Montevideo's municipal water, far exceeding World Health

Organization thresholds.
Uruguay's water emergency has therefore escalated into a political crisis, sparking street protests. Environmental protection group Redes - Amigos de la Tierra blames the dire situation on "plundering." It says that cellulose factories, rice-growing companies and soy farmers consume vast amounts of water without having to pay a single peso.

Agriculture and industry to blame?
"Almost 80% of our freshwater goes to the agricultural and forestry sector, so we can certainly say water resource exploitation is very high in Uruguay," says Meerhoff. "Because so much water is used in industry, the amount for water for personal use and nature is obviously very limited."
Montevideo hospitals and schools now receive drinking

water from two wells in the city center, which were rapidly built because of the water shortage. Another reservoir near Montevideo has been in the works for six months. And the repair of the city's old leaky pipes, which often lose a significant amount of water, should soon be on politicians' to-do list.
Unfortunately, many of these measures are only a drop in the ocean. What Uruguay needs - along with many countries and cities around the world - is water long-term strategy. "What is happening here in Montevideo can happen in any city in the world," says environmental expert Meerhoff. "It has happened before a few years ago in Cape Town, South Africa, and Curitiba, Brazil when extreme drought left people without drinking water - with climate change, such scenarios are becoming more and more likely around the world." -DW

PAYMENTS MADE BY STATE

What are reparations?

ACCORDING TO international law, reparations are payments made by a state to compensate for a violation of said legislation, for instance when illegal attacks or war crimes are committed. For centuries, parties who emerged victorious from wars were often in a position to assign blame to those who had caused the war in the first place - regardless of whether it had been fought to fend off an aggressor, or waged as a war of aggression.

UN charter
All that changed after World War II, when wars of aggression were outlawed by the charter of the newly established United Nations. It is only since then that a comprehensive ban on the use of force has been in effect. In the era that followed, many came to realise that it can often take years for the true causes of conflicts to emerge. And that injustices can never be remedied unless perpetrators take responsibility.
After World War I, the Versailles Peace Treaty obliged the German Reich to pay 20 billion gold marks in reparations, which today would be equivalent to about €100 billion (\$109.5 billion). In addition, the German Reich had to hand over 90% of its merchant fleet. Later, the victors demanded yet more money. Ultimately, an agreement was reached setting out 132 billion gold marks in reparations, which had to be repaid with interest. Germany made its final reparations payment in 2010.

World War II reparations
After World War II, Germany was again forced by the victors to pay reparations. Unlike World War I and the Treaty of Versailles, however, this time, there was no peace treaty. Above all, the US, France and England were interested in strengthening rather than weakening West Germany, which they needed as a buffer state against the Soviet sphere of influence. The Cold War had begun.
Instead of focusing on financial reparations from Germany, the victors dismantled key industrial plants, shipping them home. At the London Debt Conference of 1953,



The US state of California is considering paying reparations to descendants of slaves, thereby marking a turning point in American history. What other examples have there been of reparations in the past?

German negotiator Hermann Joseph Abs achieved a sustainable reduction of Germany's reparation debt. The initial sum of 29.3 billion marks was reduced to 14.8 billion, with the US in particular generously waiving repayments.
Poland and Greece, who were not involved in these negotiations, however, are still demanding considerable reparation payments from Germany to this day. Poland alone is seeking €1.3 trillion in reparations, which Germany rejects.
The Vietnam war
To this day, the US refuse to pay reparations, or any other form of compensation, relating to the Vietnam war. Worse still, in 1993, Vietnam's government was forced to assume the debt of the former South Vietnam to obtain loans and have a US embargo lifted.
Dioxin residue
In 2007, however, the US did grant \$400,000 to clean up dioxin

residue in the former war zone. In May 2009, former US President Barack Obama increased US aid to Vietnam from \$3 to \$6 million dollars. Claims submitted by Vietnamese cancer patients were, however, rejected by US courts.
Iraq and Kuwait
It took until February 2022 for Iraq to pay off its war debt from the 1990 Gulf War. The United Nations reported that Iraq had paid out a total of \$50 billion. On August 2, 1990, the Iraqi army had invaded neighboring Kuwait. Then-Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein declared Kuwait a province of his country. But an international force led by the US intervened and forced Iraq to retreat.
Germany's colonial legacy
Between 1884 and 1915, the German Empire ruled over what is present-day Namibia. Locals resisted the German colonizers and their human rights abuses, who in turn used immense brutality to suppress their subjects. Germany's campaign of cruelty culminated in the war against the Herero and Nama peoples between 1904 and 1908, which led to an estimated 100,000 deaths. Herero and Nama were murdered by German troops, dying of thirst in the desert or in concentration camps.
After long decades in which Germany did not want to accept blame for the deaths, an initial agreement was reached in 2021: Germany acknowledged the genocide, apologised and agreed to provide €1.1 billion in reconstruction aid. But to this day, neither government has signed the agreement. -DW

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ROUND-UP

be'ah takes proactive measures to address waste during Eid

The waste management plans focused on serving all governorates in the Sultanate of Oman

MUSCAT: be'ah, Oman Environmental Services Holding Company, said that the company had placed specific strategies to deal with the increasing amount of waste produced during the Eid holidays.

The waste management plans focused on serving all governorates in the Sultanate of Oman. In accordance with environmental, health and safety standards, be'ah safely disposed of slaughter waste by transferring it to engineering landfills.

To manage the expected significant amount of slaughter waste, be'ah provided large-sized bins for slaughter waste in specific areas that have a large population density. To raise awareness, the company shared the locations of these bins on its social media platforms. In addition, the company strengthened its efforts to transfer waste to engineering landfills daily during the Eid holidays.

It is worth noting that during the Eid period, in particular, the quantities of municipal waste increased. Exceeding the quantities produced during normal days. In addition, Eid waste also consists of slaughtered animals which must be disposed of quickly and properly to avoid harmful impacts on the environment. Unfortunately, the habit of random dumping of waste on roads and open areas is still prevalent and poses a great risk to the environment.

be'ah called on all citizens and



residents to take proper measures when disposing of slaughter waste. It is important to place slaughter waste in garbage bags, tightly closing them, and placing them in bins designated for slaughtered animals. Furthermore, it is recommended that barbecue and grill waste are placed in airtight bags after making sure that the coals are completely extinguished. Afterwards, the waste should be placed in bins nearby.

The company confirmed that it provides its services through be'ah's call centre on the number (1881) if there are any comments or services that fall under the be'ah's responsibilities.



FOR SIXTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR

Malabar Gold & Diamonds bags Bank Muscat award

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with a strong retail network of over 320 outlets spread across 11 countries received Bank Muscat Award for the sixth consecutive year.

The company got the award in the category 'Jewellery for the year 2022'. The company has received Bank Muscat Award in the years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 and 2021 as well. Najeeb K, Regional Head - Malabar Gold & Diamonds, received the award from Sheikh Waleed Al Hashar, Chief Executive Officer- Bank Muscat in the presence of Udes P T, Branch Manager -Malabar Gold & Diamonds and other officials from Bank Muscat during a ceremony held on June 20 at the Kempinski Hotel.

Bank Muscat hosts the event to honour, recognise and celebrate the success of their top merchants. "We are extremely happy to receive the 'Bank Muscat Award' for the 6th time in a row. At Malabar Gold & Diamonds, we have prioritized exquisitely crafted jewellery and unparalleled service to provide our customers with an immersive and enjoyable jewellery shopping experience. This award is a humble recognition from our loyal customers. We dedicate this inspiring triumph to our millions



of satisfied customers, team members and investors, for their unwavering and continued support over the years," said Najeeb K - Regional Head - Malabar Gold & Diamonds, speaking on the occasion.

Since its inception in 1993, Malabar Gold & Diamonds has developed a strong retail presence in India, the Middle East, the Far East, the USA and the UK, with a network of 320 outlets across 11 countries. With an annual turnover of \$5.2 billion, the company today ranks as the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has always kept customer-first as the principal attitude in all its steps taken and takes efforts at satisfying the discerning needs

of its multinational and multicultural customers by incorporating diverse tastes in the splendid jewellery designs that they showcase. Malabar Group offers exquisite and stunning jewellery as a part of various brands presented at Malabar Gold & Diamonds' namely Mine - Diamonds Unlimited, Ethnix - Handcrafted Designer Jewellery, Era - Uncut Diamond Jewellery, Divine- Indian Heritage Jewellery, Precia - Gem Jewellery and Starlet - Kids Jewellery.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds currently operates 16 showrooms across Oman at Ruwi, Baushar, Seeb, Barka, Salalah, Sohar, Muthara Souk, Nizwa, Ibri, Al Bandar and Al Khoud.

BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL GROUP

BIG organises session on special assays in immunology

MUSCAT: Business International Group (BIG), the leading provider of comprehensive diagnostic solutions, recently hosted a highly successful scientific session focused on special assays in immunology.

The event showcased cutting-edge technology and innovation in the field, further emphasising BIG's commitment to advancing clinical diagnostics, molecular testing, and genetic analysis.

The scientific session commenced with an introduction by Askar Ali, Senior Divisional Manager at BIG. In his opening speech, Askar Ali highlighted the company's dedication to delivering superior diagnostic solutions. He emphasised BIG's extensive proficiency and experience in partnering with healthcare providers to establish state-of-the-art laboratories. His address set the stage for an enlightening session focused on the advancements and opportunities in the field of immunology.

Askar Ali went on to highlight the strategic partnership between BIG and SNIBE, stressing its significance in strengthening BIG's immunology and biochemistry offerings. He mentioned that the collaboration with SNIBE will enhance the company's capabilities in CLIA technology and expand the product range available



for infectious disease testing, autoimmune disorders, fertility assessments, and other special immunology assays.

BIG is a total solutions provider for laboratory setup, offering services such as lab design, consultation, and supply of laboratory furniture as well as various end-to-end equipment solutions. Furthermore, BIG's expertise extends to software solutions for efficient laboratory management, ensuring seamless integration and data analysis. The company also provides comprehensive training programs and excellent after-sales support to assist healthcare providers in maximising the potential of their laboratory operations, Askar Ali explained.

As the session moderator, Gha-

dah Al Mahrooqi, Biomedical Engineer at BIG commenced the event by welcoming the audience and setting the tone for an engaging and informative gathering.

One of the key highlights of the event was the presentation by Shabeer Al Lawati, Business Development Consultant at SNIBE, who provided a comprehensive overview of the SNIBE product lines. He demonstrated how these cutting-edge solutions facilitate total lab automation, enabling laboratories to streamline their workflow and enhance efficiency. His presentation showcased the technological prowess of SNIBE's offerings and how they align with BIG's commitment to delivering innovative solutions to healthcare providers.



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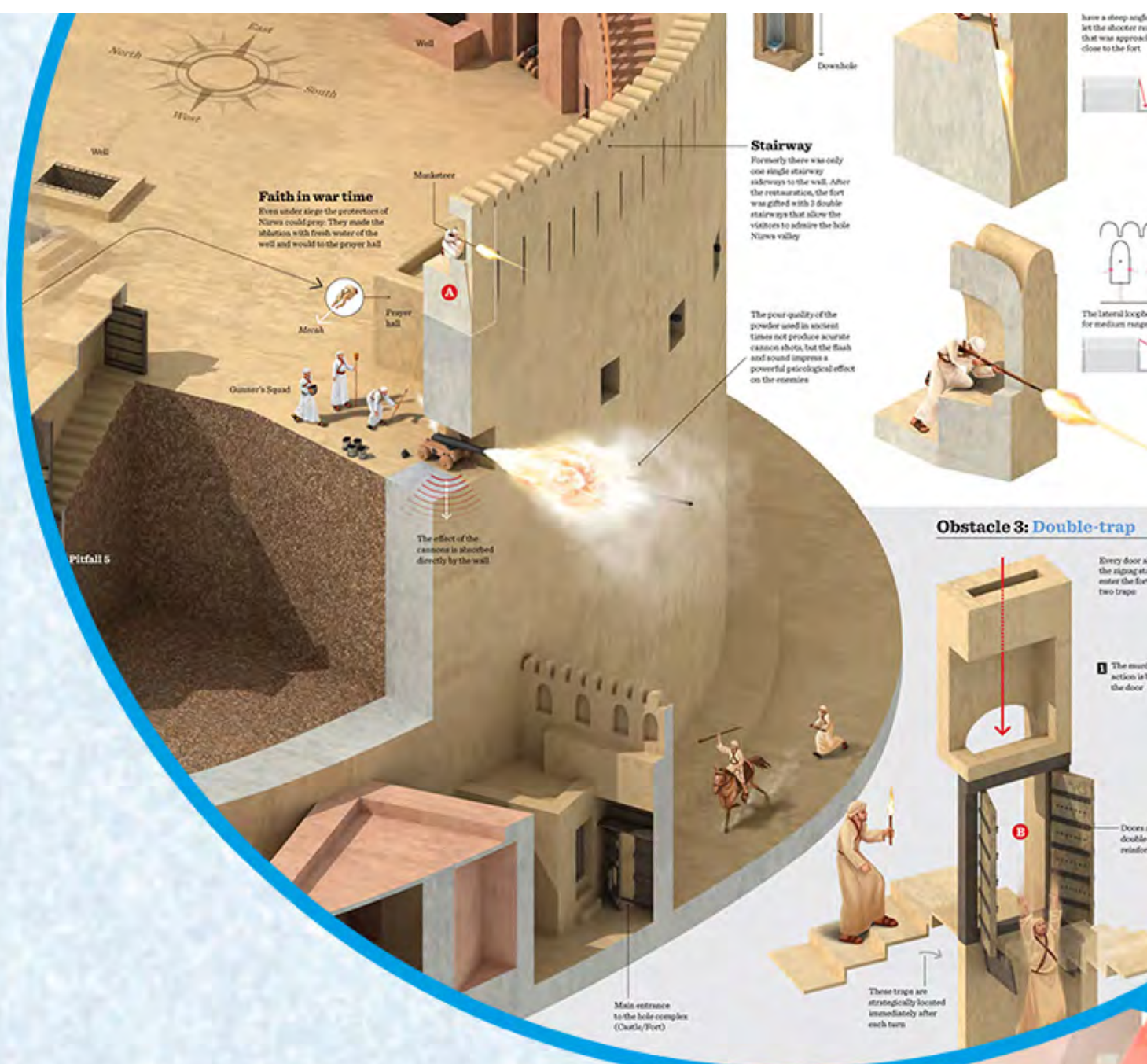
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