



3 Zain kicks off 5th edition of Zain Great Idea accelerator program



11 Aramco prepared for foreign float alongside main domestic listing



24 Largest flying animal in history identified



27 Australia beat Kuwait 3-0 in World Cup qualifiers



Netanyahu vows to annex West Bank Jordan Valley if reelected

Annexation bid 'destroys chances of peace': Palestinian official

Amir sends letter to Saudi king



JEDDAH: Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah delivers a letter from HH the Amir to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz yesterday. — KUNA

JEDDAH: Representative of HH the Amir, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, delivered a letter to Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz yesterday. During a meeting in Jeddah, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled handed the Saudi monarch the letter. During the talks, attended by a bevy of officials and diplomats from the two Gulf countries, the Kuwaiti foreign minister conveyed HH the Amir's warmest greetings to the Saudi king.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also met Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister Mohammad bin Salman. During the meeting, held at Al-Salam Palace, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled reassured the Saudi prince of the health of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. The two reviewed fraternal relations between the two countries and discussed number of issues of common interest. — KUNA

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a deeply controversial pledge yesterday to annex the Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank if reelected in Sept 17 polls. "There is one place where we can apply Israeli sovereignty immediately after the elections," Netanyahu said in a televised speech. "If I receive from you, citizens of Israel, a clear mandate to do so ... today I announce my intention to apply with the formation of the next government Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and northern Dead Sea."

The prime minister also reiterated his intention to annex Israeli settlements throughout the West Bank if reelected, though in coordination with US President Donald Trump, whose long-awaited peace plan is expected to be unveiled sometime after the vote. Those moves could effectively kill any remaining hopes for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, long the focus of international diplomacy. Senior Palestinian official Hanan Ashrawi said Netanyahu was "not only destroying the two-state solution, he is destroying all chances of peace". "This is a total game changer," she told AFP.

The Jordan Valley accounts for around one-third of the West Bank and Israeli rightwing politicians have long viewed the strategic area as a part of the territory they would never retreat from. Israeli settlements are located in what is known as Area C of the West Bank, which accounts for some 60 per-



RAMAT GAN: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu points at a map of the Jordan Valley as he gives a statement near Tel Aviv yesterday. — AFP

cent of the territory, including the vast majority of the Jordan Valley. Netanyahu said his annexation plans would not include Palestinian cities, such as the Jordan Valley's Jericho.

Netanyahu, who used a map of the Jordan Valley to illustrate his plans, said Trump's peace parameters "will place before us a great challenge and also a great opportunity". "This is a historic, onetime opportunity to apply Israeli sovereignty on our settlements... and other places of importance to our security, our heritage and our future."

Trump has thrown US support overwhelmingly in favor of Israel since taking office, including by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and cutting hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to the Palestinians. Ahead of April elections, Trump recognized Israeli sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights, seized from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War. It is unclear if Trump, who made clear before April's vote that he would like to see Netanyahu win, will follow up with any further expressions of support before next week's election.

Continued on Page 24

News in brief

KD 8 airport tax mullied

KUWAIT: The ministry of services is reconsidering a decision that had been frozen by Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, to add KD 8 as service fees on every air ticket for flights departing from Kuwait, said informed sources. The sources added that in view of passenger traffic at Kuwait airport, where 7.38 million flight tickets were sold in 2018, the new fee will annually bring in around KD 60 million. "The new fee will most likely take effect next April with the beginning of the 2020-2021 fiscal year," the sources stressed. — A Saleh (See Page 5)

31 killed in Karbala stampede

BAGHDAD: More than 30 pilgrims died and dozens were injured yesterday in a stampede at a major shrine in the Iraqi city of Karbala on the Shiite holy day of Ashoura. As the massive crowds pressed forward on their way to Imam Hussein's gold-domed shrine, a stampede broke out that left at least 31 people dead and another 100 wounded, 10 critically, according to Iraq's health ministry. No Kuwaitis have been harmed in the stampede, Kuwait's Embassy in Baghdad confirmed. — Agencies

Diabetes risk higher for short people

PARIS: Shorter people are at greater risk of developing type 2 diabetes, according to a study published yesterday. Each additional 10 cm in height translates into a 41 percent smaller chance of contracting the disease in men and a 33 percent smaller chance in women, according to the research in medical journal Diabetologia. The greater health risk in shorter individuals is likely linked to higher liver fat content, and a larger number of risk factors for heart disease, stroke and diabetes, the authors speculated. It has also been reported that insulin sensitivity and the functioning of special cells in the pancreas that secrete the hormone are better in taller people. — AFP

India locates missing Moon lander

NEW DELHI: Indian space scientists were desperately trying yesterday to establish communication with their broken Moon lander, having located the probe that went silent moments before it was due to make a historic soft landing. The lander, called Vikram, was due to touch down on the Moon in the early hours of Saturday, but contact was lost around 2.1 km above the surface. "#VikramLander has been located by the orbiter of #Chandrayaan2, but no communication with it yet." The Indian Space Research Organization tweeted. — AFP

Kuwait Shiites mark Ashoura



KUWAIT: Mourners are seen at Bu Hamad Husseiniya in Daiya as Shiites mark Ashoura yesterday. The religious commemoration of Ashoura, which includes a 10-day mourning period starting on the first day of Muharram in the Islamic calendar, commemorates the seventh-century slaying of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) grandson Imam Hussein in Karbala. — Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

Apple unveils iPhone 11, TV+, game service

CUPERTINO, California: Apple unveiled its iPhone 11 models yesterday, touting upgraded, ultra-wide cameras as it updated its popular smartphone lineup and cut its entry price to \$699. The newest handsets come as Apple seeks to spur new upgrades in a slumping global smartphone market. The new iPhones are "jam packed with new capabilities and an incredible new design," Apple chief executive Tim Cook told a launch event in Cupertino, California.

The surprise from Apple was the reduction in the entry-level price at \$699, down from the starting level of \$749 for the iPhone XR a year ago even as many premium devices are being priced around \$1,000. Apple additionally unveiled a more expensive "Pro" model of the iPhone 11. It also set launch dates for its original video offering, Apple TV+, and its game subscription service as part of efforts to reduce its dependence on the iPhone.

The TV+ service will launch Nov 1 in more than 100 countries at \$4.99 per month and will include a "powerful and inspiring lineup of original shows, movies and documentaries". Apple is featuring scripted dramas, comedies and movies as well as children's programs in



CUPERTINO, California: Apple CEO Tim Cook announces the new iPhone 11 Pro as he delivers the keynote address at the Steve Jobs Theater yesterday. — AFP

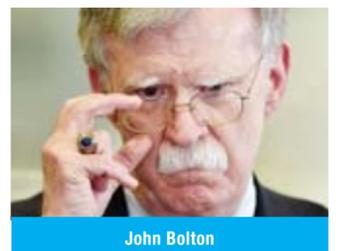
the service, which will compete against streaming giants like Netflix and Amazon.

The company's online gaming subscription service, Apple Arcade, will launch next week, offering exclusive titles for mobile and desktop users. The new service, which will also cost \$4.99 per month, will include more than 100 game titles made for Apple devices. Apple also unveiled updates to its iPad tablet and Apple Watch smartwatch. — AFP

Trump fires hawkish security chief Bolton

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump yesterday announced the firing of his hawkish national security advisor John Bolton, saying he disagreed "strongly" with his positions, in the latest upheaval for US foreign policy. "I asked John for his resignation, which was given to me this morning," Trump announced on Twitter, saying he would name a replacement next week. Bolton, who had been due to give a press conference at the White House less than two hours later, denied being fired and insisted instead that he'd resigned.

The news - coming days after Trump caused uproar by revealing he was canceling secret talks with Afghanistan's Taliban - stunned Washington. Bolton is a veteran and controversial figure close-



John Bolton

ly linked to the invasion of Iraq and other aggressive foreign policy decisions. He had been seen as one of the main driving forces in the White House's muscular approach to Iran, Venezuela and other trouble spots.

Famous for his moustache and ever-present yellow legal pad, the hardline former US ambassador to the United Nations had pushed back hard against Trump's dramatic, though so far stumbling attempts to negotiate with the Taliban and North Korea's Chairman Kim Jong Un.

Continued on Page 24

Iranian fan 'Blue Girl' dies after setting self on fire

TEHRAN: Iran is to probe the death of a woman football fan, state media said yesterday, after she reportedly set herself ablaze in fear of being jailed, triggering calls for an end to a ban on women attending matches. Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar had asked the judiciary to look into the case in a letter, the state-run Iran newspaper reported.

Sahar Khodayari, 30, was arrested early last year when she tried to enter a stadium dressed as a man to watch her favorite team, Esteghlal FC, the Varzesh 3 sports news outlet said, citing her sister. Dubbed "Blue Girl" because of Esteghlal's colors, she set herself on fire outside the court last week after hearing someone there say she would be going to prison for six months, it said. The semi-official Shafaqna news agency said the woman died in hospital on Monday.

Iran has barred Iranian women spectators from football and other stadiums since 1981, with clerics arguing they must be protected from the masculine atmosphere and sight of semi-clad men.

Continued on Page 24