



7 Great Green Wall brings life back to Niger desert



8 Zain presents digital program for accelerating tech startups



12 Dad making medicine to treat his dying son



16 Al Hilal win Asian Champions League



Caretaker PM asked to form new Cabinet

Ex-MP Muslim to return next week



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



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah



Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah

KUWAIT: An Amiri decree was issued yesterday asking caretaker HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah to form the new Cabinet. The decree was signed by HH the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah who had been entrusted with some of the Amir's constitutional powers. HH Sheikh Sabah resigned about two weeks ago after several sessions of a national dialogue that resulted in HH the Amir pardoning several opposition figures who were living in exile in Turkey.

There is no timeframe for the Prime Minister-designate to submit the new Cabinet line-up to the Amir. National Assembly sessions

have been suspended due to the resignation of the Cabinet. Under Kuwaiti law, the presence of (at least) one minister is essential to convene an Assembly session.

A majority of the opposition figures who were pardoned have returned to the country with the exception of ex-MP Faisal Al-Muslim and activist Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah. Muslim's lawyer announced yesterday that he is scheduled to return to Kuwait next Monday on the 29th of this month. Muslim confirmed his lawyer's announcement by re-tweeting it. Jarallah, however, cannot return now because he is facing other cases in court.

UK apologizes over 'Gulf War human shields'

LONDON: The UK government yesterday apologized for not warning British Airways that Iraq was about to invade Kuwait before one of its flights was caught up in a hostage drama in 1990. Passengers on BA flight 149 were taken off the Kuala Lumpur-bound plane when it landed in the Gulf state on August 2 that year, hours after Saddam Hussein's troops swept in.

Some of the 367 passengers and crew spent more than four months in captivity, including as human shields at the hands of the Iraqi dictator. The former hostages have long sought answers about what the government in London knew and when, as well as whether special forces were on the flight, putting them at risk. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss told parliament that the UK ambassador to Kuwait informed London about reports of an Iraqi incursion at about midnight on August 2, 1990.

BA 149 was already in the air when the message was passed to departments including the foreign and defense ministries, Downing Street and the MI6 intelligence service. But it was not circulated to BA, Truss said in a written answer, as she released files on the events to Britain's national archives. "The call made (by the ambassador) has never been publicly disclosed or acknowledged until today," she added.

"These files show that the existence of the call was not revealed to parliament and the public. This failure was unacceptable. "As the current secretary of state, I apologize to the House for this, and I express my deepest sympathy to those who were detained and mistreated." BA 149 was late taking off, officially for "technical problems", and landed in Kuwait City at 0113 GMT. About 45 minutes later the city's airport was closed.

Truss said the files indicated that the ambassador was uncertain about the scale of the Iraqi incursion, and no procedure existed at the time to warn airlines or at-risk flights. She also reaffirmed the government's previously stated position that UK special forces were not on board and "did not attempt in any way to exploit the flight". BA has always denied accusations of negligence, conspiracy and a cover-up. "These records confirm British Airways was not warned about the invasion," the company said yesterday. — AFP

Kuwait seeks to attract regional, foreign capital

KUWAIT: Kuwait is seeking to attract regional and foreign capital to invest in its economic development projects through its 'Vision 2035'. Part of the vision is the development of Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway's southern and northern banks and two artificial Islands, which will be transformed to hubs of commerce, work, leisure activities, and tourism.

Development of the southern bank of the causeway (Shuwaikh area) will be at an area 635,913 square meters with a construction capacity of 30 per-

cent of the allocated region. The commercial activities will cover 12 percent with the ability to build eight-storey buildings, housing offices, cafes, and restaurants. The southern Island project of the causeway (at an area of 282,355 square meters) would have 20 percent used for four-storey buildings and 10 percent for commercial purposes.

The northern Island project, at 283,358 square meters, will utilize 20 percent of its total area, while the northern bank of the causeway in Subiya area, covering 565,504 square meters will utilize 30 percent of space. The public and private sectors will be welcomed to invest in the development project.

A member of the Municipal Council Dr Hassen Kamal told KUNA that Kuwait is eyeing ventures providing

Continued on Page 2

46 killed in Bulgaria as bus crashes

BOSNEK: Forty-six people, including a dozen minors, were killed after their tourist bus caught fire on a Bulgarian highway yesterday in Europe's deadliest road accident in the past decade. A cause has yet to be determined but officials believe the bus crashed into the guardrails and caught fire while travelling from Istanbul in Turkey to Skopje in North Macedonia.

There were no other vehicles

involved in the accident, which occurred around 2:00 am on a highway about 40 kilometers from Sofia, near the village of Bosnek. Seven people - five men and two women - survived. "Unfortunately, there are many victims, 46, including 12 minors," North Macedonian Health Minister Venko Filipce told public BNT television after visiting the survivors in a Sofia hospital.

The survivors include a 16-year-old girl and are all from the same family and in stable condition, official said. The dead were mostly from North Macedonia and from different ethnic groups and also included a Belgian and a Serbian national, officials said. Local media in Macedonia

Continued on Page 2

Europe battles COVID surge

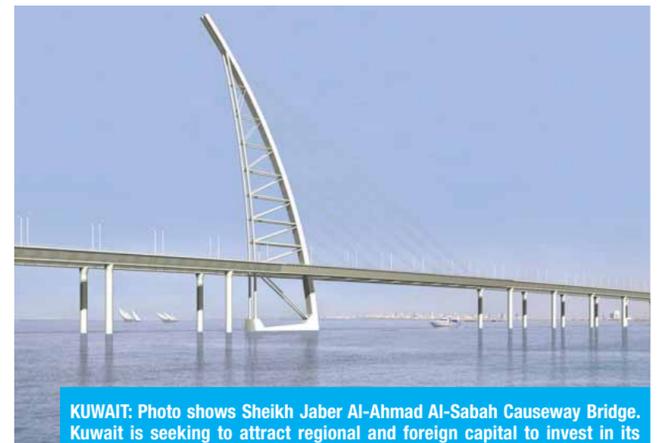
COPENHAGEN: Europe remains "in the firm grip" of COVID and the continent's death toll could top 2.2 million this winter if current trends continue, the World Health Organization warned yesterday. Europe is battling an upsurge in the pandemic that saw Austria return to lockdown this week while Germany and the Netherlands are poised to announce new restrictions.

Another 700,000 Europeans could die by March

1, the WHO said, in addition to the 1.5 million who have already succumbed to the virus. It expects "high or extreme stress in intensive care units (ICUs) in 49 out of 53 countries between now and March 1, 2022". Europe's return to the pandemic's epicenter has been blamed on sluggish vaccine uptake in some nations, the highly contagious Delta variant, colder weather moving people indoors again and the easing of restrictions.

In the European Union, 67.7 percent of the population is fully vaccinated. But rates vary widely between countries, with low levels in many eastern countries. Only 24.2 percent of Bulgarians are fully vaccinated, compared to 86.7 percent in Portugal.

Continued on Page 2



KUWAIT: Photo shows Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway Bridge. Kuwait is seeking to attract regional and foreign capital to invest in its economic development projects through its 'Vision 2035'.



BOSNEK: Officials work at the site of a bus accident, in which at least 46 people were killed, on a highway near the village of Bosnek, south of Sofia yesterday. — AFP



FRANKFURT: A medical worker fills a syringe with a vaccine against the novel coronavirus COVID-19 in Frankfurt am Main yesterday. — AFP