



**5** Syrians lose children, jobs and homes in Beirut blast



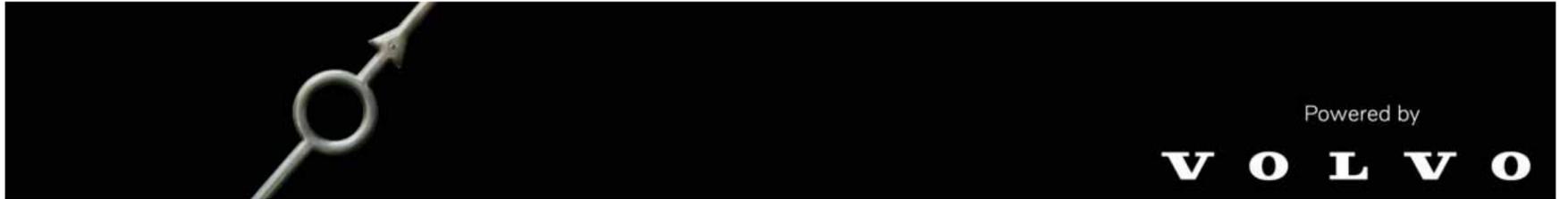
**13** Egypt's blossoming trade in fragrant jasmine flowers



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**16** Ronaldo released from detention after five months



# Interior minister expected to survive no-confidence vote

## Unconfirmed: MoI may extend residencies, visas for 3 more months

By B Izzak

**KUWAIT:** Interior Minister Anas Al-Saleh is expected to survive a no-confidence motion against him in the National Assembly today following a grilling last week in which he was accused of violating the law and benefiting from his post. Ten opposition lawmakers filed the motion after MP Shuaib Al-Muwaizri charged that the minister's company won more government contracts after he joined the Cabinet. The minister categorically denied the allegations. Votes of at least 25 elected MPs are needed to unseat the minister.

Following the grilling, Kuwait was rocked by a

leak of sensitive videos allegedly taken in the offices of the secret service in 2018. The videos show top officials plotting to spy on people's social media accounts. The government yesterday referred the entire case to the public prosecution for investigation. The interior minister has suspended the state security agency chief along with seven secret service officers pending the completion of investigations.

Meanwhile, Al-Rai newspaper, quoting unnamed interior ministry sources, has reported that the interior ministry may extend residencies and visit visas of expats for three more months from Sept 1. Kuwait Times spoke with interior ministry officials

who could not confirm the information as of time of publication. The interior ministry had earlier extended residencies and visas until Aug 31 amid speculation that no further extensions will be made.

Opposition MP Mohammad Al-Mutair yesterday asked the interior minister if top former officials were involved in the so-called interior ministry's hospitality scandal in which the criminal court last week sentenced a number of top officials to lengthy jail terms and fined them tens of millions of dinars. Mutair asked the minister if the state security agency submitted a report to him showing that a number of top former officials and former ministers were involved in the scandal but were not among

those who were tried in court. He asked the minister about the legal measures he adopted if he had received the report.

MP Riyadh Al-Adasani yesterday said the Cabinet has withdrawn the so-called economic document which proposed a series of measures to raise public charges on citizens and impose taxes on them. Adasani, who grilled the finance minister twice over the proposed measures, welcomed the Cabinet's decision and its intention to restudy the economic conditions and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The lawmaker insisted that he will oppose any government plan if it is based on taxing citizens to raise government revenues.

## US city burns over shooting of black man

**KENOSHA, United States:** Arsonists set buildings ablaze and torched much of the black business district during a second night of unrest in Kenosha, Wisconsin, triggered by the wounding of a black man shot in the back by police as his three young sons looked on. Smoke billowed over central Kenosha after police in riot gear clashed with protesters as they defied a dusk-to-dawn curfew on Monday night and yesterday morning, blocks away from where police gunned down Jacob Blake on Sunday.

Blake, 29, survived the shooting, which was captured on video, and was in stable condition following surgery, his father said.

Blake had been attempting to break up a fight between two women and was shot in front of his three young sons, civil rights attorney Ben Crump said. Video shows Blake walking toward the driver's side door of his car, away from two officers who were pointing guns to his back. After he opens the door, seven shots ring out with one of the officers tugging at his shirt. It remains unknown what the officers may have seen inside Blake's car.

But the incident, the latest in a litany of cases to focus attention on police treatment of African Americans, unleashed outrage in the lakefront city of Kenosha, located north of Chicago and south of Milwaukee. The shooting occurred three months after the death of George Floyd, a black man in Minneapolis who was pinned to the street under the knee of a white police officer, sparking nationwide protests against police brutality and racism.

Unrest flared again elsewhere in the US

with overnight clashes reported in Portland, Seattle and Minneapolis, while in New York City a group of marchers swarmed the Brooklyn Bridge, social media video showed. Portland, Oregon, has been the scene of weeks of protests following Floyd's death that have sometimes turned violent. Police there once again declared a riot late on Monday and arrested several demonstrators after fires were lit at the offices of a police union. Seattle police said demonstrators set multiple buildings on fire, resulting in at least one arrest and one officer injured.

In Minneapolis, protesters including one man armed with a long gun stopped an armored police vehicle in the street until officers cleared the way with tear gas. Basketball star LeBron James, who has emerged as a national leader on issues of race, lent his voice to the protests, telling reporters covering the NBA playoffs

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KENOSHA: A flag flies in front of a department of corrections building after it was set ablaze during a second night of rioting on Monday. — AFP

## Trump gets nod, claims election is being rigged



CHARLOTTE: US President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence give a thumbs up after speaking during the first day of the Republican National Convention on Monday. — AFP

**CHARLOTTE, United States:** US President Donald Trump opened his bid for a second term after securing the Republican nomination Monday in typically combative fashion by claiming Democrats want to "steal" the election that polls currently show him losing. Minutes after the party completed the nomination vote confirming Trump as the candidate on November 3, he appeared at the convention in Charlotte, North Carolina, to deliver a rambling, often dark speech lasting close to an hour.

From the opening words, he told Republicans to be on alert for what he claimed was a Democratic plan to rig the

contest through increased use of mail-in voting - a measure Democrats say is needed to protect people from catching COVID-19 in crowded polling stations. "They are trying to steal the election," he told party delegates. "The only way they can take this election away from us is if this is a rigged election."

Opponents say Trump's increasingly extreme resistance to expanded mail-in voting - a method already used widely in the United States - is an attempt to suppress voter turnout, while setting up an excuse to challenge the result if he is defeated.

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## Indian rescuers pull child from building rubble

**MAHAD, India:** Rescuers in India pulled a four-year-old boy from the rubble of a collapsed building to loud cheers yesterday, hours after the five-storey apartment block came down "like a house of cards", killing 11 and burying up to 60 others. The accident late Monday in the western town of Mahad led three disaster-response teams and sniffer dogs to work through the night, combing tin sheets, twisted metal and broken bricks.

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MAHAD, India: Rescue workers carry a four-year-old boy after he was pulled out from the rubble of a collapsed five-storey apartment building yesterday. — AFP

## Pompeo in Sudan on tour to boost Israel's Arab ties

**KHARTOUM:** US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Sudan yesterday on a tour urging more Arab countries to normalize ties with Israel, following the US-brokered Israel-UAE agreement. Pompeo, the first American top diplomat to visit Sudan since Condoleezza Rice went in 2005, arrived on a historic "first official non-stop flight" from Tel Aviv, he tweeted from the plane.

Israel remains technically at war and has no formal diplomatic relations with Sudan, an East African country which for years supported hardline Islamist forces under its former strongman Omar Al-Bashir. But its new joint civilian-military

transitional government has vowed to break with the Bashir era following his ouster last year amid enormous pro-democracy protests.

Pompeo met Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok and Sovereign Council chief General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan for talks the State Department had said would express US "support for deepening the Sudan-Israel relationship". Sudan, which has launched sweeping social and political reforms, hopes Washington will soon take it off its blacklist of state sponsors of terrorism as it seeks to fully re-integrate into the international community.

Hamdok wrote on Twitter that he and Pompeo had a "direct & transparent conversation regarding delisting Sudan" from the terror list, on bilateral relations and US government support. "I continue to look forward to positive tangible steps in supporting the glorious Sudanese revolution," Hamdok wrote.

Hamdok also told Pompeo his gov-

ernment had no mandate to normalize ties with Israel and that any such move would come after the transitional period, a spokesman said. "The Prime Minister clarified" to Pompeo "that the transitional period in Sudan is being led by a wide alliance with a specific agenda - to complete the transition, achieve peace and stability in the country and hold free elections." Sudan's government spokesman Faisal Saleh said in a statement.

"It does not have a mandate beyond these tasks or to decide on normalization with Israel," Hamdok was quoted as saying. The transitional government, which took power last year after Bashir was ousted by the army following mass protests, is set to remain in office until elections in 2022. Hamdok urged the US not to link "the subject of lifting Sudan from the State Sponsors of Terrorism list and the subject of normalization with Israel." — AFP