



4 Kuwait mostly positive on US policy push, but some splits



6 Iran displays missile, calls Trump 'crazy' in marking 1979 takeover



10 How Russian hackers pried into Clinton campaign emails



14 James pours in 57 as Cavs topple Wizards



Lebanon PM Hariri resigns, attacks Iran and Hezbollah

Arabiya claims premier was target of assassination plot

BEIRUT: Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced his resignation yesterday, citing Iran's "grip" on the country and threats to his life. The surprise move risks plunging the small and already fragile Middle Eastern country deeper into turmoil. "I announce my resignation from the post of prime minister," Hariri said in a speech broadcast from Saudi Arabia by the Al-Arabiya news network. "I felt what was being covertly plotted to target my life," he said.

Hariri's personal security concerns appeared to gain little traction among the public. Social media were flooded with messages deriding him for choosing to resign from abroad and on a foreign channel. The two-time premier, whose father Rafik held the same position for years and was assassinated in 2005, accused Iran and its powerful Lebanese Shiite ally Hezbollah of seeking hegemony in the region.

The Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya Al-Hadath television channel reported that an assassination plot against Saad Al-Hariri was foiled in Beirut days ago, citing an unnamed source. Lebanon's Internal Security Forces (ISF), responding to reports that one of its branches had foiled an assassination attempt on Hariri, denied that it was the source of the reports and said it "had no information on this". "Those who planned to assassinate

prime minister Hariri deactivated the observation towers while his motorcade was passing by," Arabiya cited the source as saying.

The 47-year-old Sunni politician's resignation comes less than a year after his government, to which Hezbollah's political wing belongs, was formed. "Iran has a grip on the fate of the region's countries... Hezbollah is Iran's arm not just in Lebanon but in other Arab countries too," Hariri said. He accused Tehran of "sowing discord among the children of the same nation and creating a state within the state... to the extent that it gets the final say on how Lebanon's affairs are run". Iran dismissed his accusations as "unfounded". Hariri's "repetition of unreal and baseless accusations... against Iran show that the resignation is designed to create tensions in Lebanon and in the region", Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Ghassemi said.

Hariri also had harsh words for Hezbollah. "In recent years, Hezbollah has used the power of its weapons to impose a fait accompli," he said, reading a speech from behind a desk. Hezbollah is a vital ally of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad in the war the Damascus regime is waging against the Islamic State group and armed opposition movements.

Continued on Page 11



BEIRUT: A handout picture shows Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri (right) meeting Iran's Supreme Leader's advisor Ali Akbar Velayati (second right) at the Government Palace on Friday. — AFP

News in brief

No military moves against Kuwait

KUWAIT: Contrary to what has been circulating on social media, there are no military movements in the region heading towards Kuwait, the defense ministry said yesterday. The ministry's public relations department said rumors regarding military action against Kuwait are false. False news and rumors will only threaten Kuwait's stability and security, said the department, adding that those spreading lies will be subjected to legal procedures and questioning.

Curbs on expat graduates

KUWAIT: The manpower authority has issued an administrative decision that will take effect in 2018 banning the recruitment of expatriate holders of diplomas and higher degrees who are under 30 years of age. The decision also bans amending degrees to higher levels except after a worker has left Kuwait, Al-Anbaa reported. Furthermore, the authority announced setting limits to the total number of expat laborers in some marginal professions, to be replaced with modern technology. The authority also contacted various ministries requesting the reduction of current and future security, cleaning and handling contracts by 25 percent, as total government contracts currently number 2,274 and the total number of workers hired by these contracts is 447,077.

Trump: List Aramco on NYSE

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump yesterday urged Saudi Arabia to choose Wall Street as a venue for the initial public offerings of shares of oil giant Aramco in 2018. "Would very much appreciate Saudi Arabia doing their IPO of Aramco with the New York Stock Exchange. Important to the United States!" Trump tweeted from Hawaii, ahead of a trip to Asia. The Aramco IPO is expected to be the largest in history, raising around \$100 billion in much-needed revenue for the kingdom. Aramco, which controls Saudi Arabia's massive energy assets, plans to list nearly five percent of its shares in the stock market. Plans are to list the offering in the second half of 2018 on the Saudi stock market as well as an international exchange, with markets in New York and London vying for the offering.

Saudis intercept ballistic missile

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's air defense intercepted a missile, fired from Yemen, close to the capital Riyadh yesterday, Al Arabiya TV reported. State-owned Al Ekhbariya TV said it was brought down north of King Khaled Airport and there were no casualties reported. "The missile was of limited size (and) no injuries or damage" were reported, it said. Earlier, a Saudi-led military coalition said yesterday an air strike that hit a market in Yemen's northern Saadah province was a legitimate military target. On Wednesday, medics and a Reuters witness said an air strike carried out by the coalition killed 26 people at a hotel and an adjoining market.

Spacey dumped by Netflix, police home in on Weinstein

NEW YORK: Netflix late Friday dropped Kevin Spacey, whose career is in free-fall over spiraling sexual assault accusations as police gather evidence for a possible arrest warrant against Harvey Weinstein for alleged rape. The two-time Oscar winner Spacey, for years considered one of the most gifted actors of his generation, and whose collaboration with Netflix put the streaming giant on the map, has in just days gone

from esteemed actor to entertainment pariah.

Reportedly being investigated by British police for assaulting a man in London in 2008, he has been publicly accused of attempting to rape a 15-year-old boy in New York and of making advances on a 14-year-old. Already dropped by his publicist and agent, Netflix became the latest entity to cut ties with Spacey, saying it would be involved in no further production of its hit series "House of Cards" that includes the 58-year-old. Production of the last and final season, which had been due to air in 2018, has already been suspended.

The streaming service also said it was abandoning the release of an upcoming film "Gore" that had also starred the actor, whose glittering career is now collapsing around him.

Continued on Page 11



WASHINGTON: This file photo taken on Feb 23, 2016 shows actor Kevin Spacey arriving at the season 4 premiere screening of the Netflix show "House of Cards". — AFP

Scarred by Trump, challengers eyeing 2020 election run

WASHINGTON: One year on from Donald Trump's shock election, US Democrats are still struggling to heal the wounds of Hillary Clinton's calamitous defeat and identify a champion to challenge a deeply unpopular president in 2020. For Democrats it has been a sobering first 10 months under Donald Trump. Republicans control the White House and Congress. With Trump's upset wins in once-liberal bastions Wisconsin and Michigan, the

heartland is trending more conservative.

But with Trump's approval ratings in quicksand, frustration has also grown among divided Republicans. If presidential tumult persists and the investigation into possible collusion between Trump's campaign and Russia gets legs, Democrats may not be the only ones eyeing a White House run. As the Democratic Party of Barack Obama and Bill Clinton struggles to return to relevance, some lawmakers see the political glass half full.

The party is "more united and more energized today than it was a year ago," Democratic Senator Chris Coons told AFP, referring to the Hillary Clinton-Bernie Sanders divide which consumed Democrats. Nearly 1,100 days before the next presidential election, a Democratic shadow campaign is in full swing, with several hopefuls already visiting early-voting Iowa and New Hampshire.

"There's really no heir apparent, no figure who dominates the field," said political science professor Chris Galdieri of Saint Anselm College in New Hampshire.

For Democrats seeking their political savior, another hurdle lies in the way: Reclaiming lost congressional seats in next year's midterm elections. "What happens in 2018 is important for what happens in 2020," Senator Chris Van Hollen said. The potential presidential candidates stretch into the dozens. With Clinton acknowledging she is "done" being a candidate, here are the top likely contenders:

Veterans

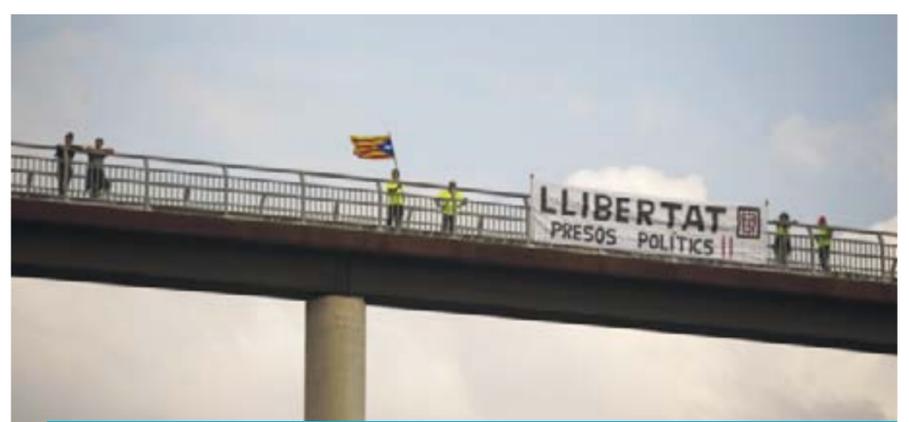
Senator Bernie Sanders, the 2016 also-ran against Clinton, is still a player. He attends political rallies, debates Republicans on television, and maintains a vast grassroots army.

Continued on Page 11

Catalan leader urges 'unity' as Spain issues arrest warrant

BARCELONA: Catalonia's deposed leader Carles Puigdemont called yesterday for separatists to unite in a December election called by Spain to quell the region's push for independence. Puigdemont's rallying cry came a day after a Spanish judge issued an arrest warrant against him, with prosecutors seeking to charge him with rebellion, sedition and misuse of public funds over his secessionist drive. "The time has come for all democrats to unite. For Catalonia, for the release of political prisoners and for the republic," he said on Twitter.

The 54-year-old has been holed up in Belgium since Monday and ignored a summons to appear before the judge in Madrid, saying he wants guarantees he will receive a fair trial. The judge issued the European arrest warrants late Friday for Puigdemont and four of his allies who are also in Belgium, to force them to return to Spain. The Belgian public prosecutor's office confirmed yesterday it had received the warrants, saying a decision would happen within 24 hours of them appearing before a judge. But the authorities said any appeals process could last for up to three months. "The EU Framework Decision provides that the final decision must be taken within 60 days, with an extension to 90



BARCELONA: A man waves an independence flag next to a banner reading in Catalan "freedom for political prisoners" on top of a bridge on the outskirts of Barcelona yesterday. — AP

days under exceptional circumstances," the Belgian justice ministry said in a statement.

The warrants have further fuelled separatists' anger and frustration after deposed members of Puigdemont's government who did not flee to Belgium, including his deputy, appeared before a Spanish judge on Thursday and were detained pending a possible trial. Protesters in the wealthy northeastern Catalonia region have held frequent demonstrations, chanting and waving Catalan flags, calling for their release and a big pro-independ-

dence march is planned for Nov 11.

Spain's worst political crisis in decades flared up after the regional parliament in Catalonia voted to proclaim an independent republic following a referendum on Oct 1 that was declared illegal by the country's Constitutional Court. The central government responded by dismissing Puigdemont's executive, imposing direct rule on the region and calling fresh elections in Catalonia on Dec 21.

Continued on Page 11