

NEWS IN brief

Truck bomb kills 18 in Turkey

Eighteen people were killed yesterday when a van packed with five tonnes of explosives blew up in Turkey's restive southeast in an attack blamed on Kurdish militants, the prime minister said. The bombing was one of the single deadliest attacks on the Turkish security forces since the attempted coup of July 15.

IS-claimed bombing kills five in Baghdad

A bombing targeting Shias in Baghdad killed at least five people and wounded 21 others yesterday, Iraqi officials said, an attack claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group. The attack struck the Baghdad Jadida area near a tent where Shia Muslims provide refreshments to passersby as part of annual commemorations of the death of Imam Hussein.

Suspected radioactive leak at Indian airport

Emergency workers sealed off a portion of New Delhi's international airport yesterday after officials suspected a consignment containing radioactive material had leaked. Fifteen cartons containing nuclear medicine material were isolated to investigate the suspected leak after the shipment arrived at the cargo area in an Air France plane.

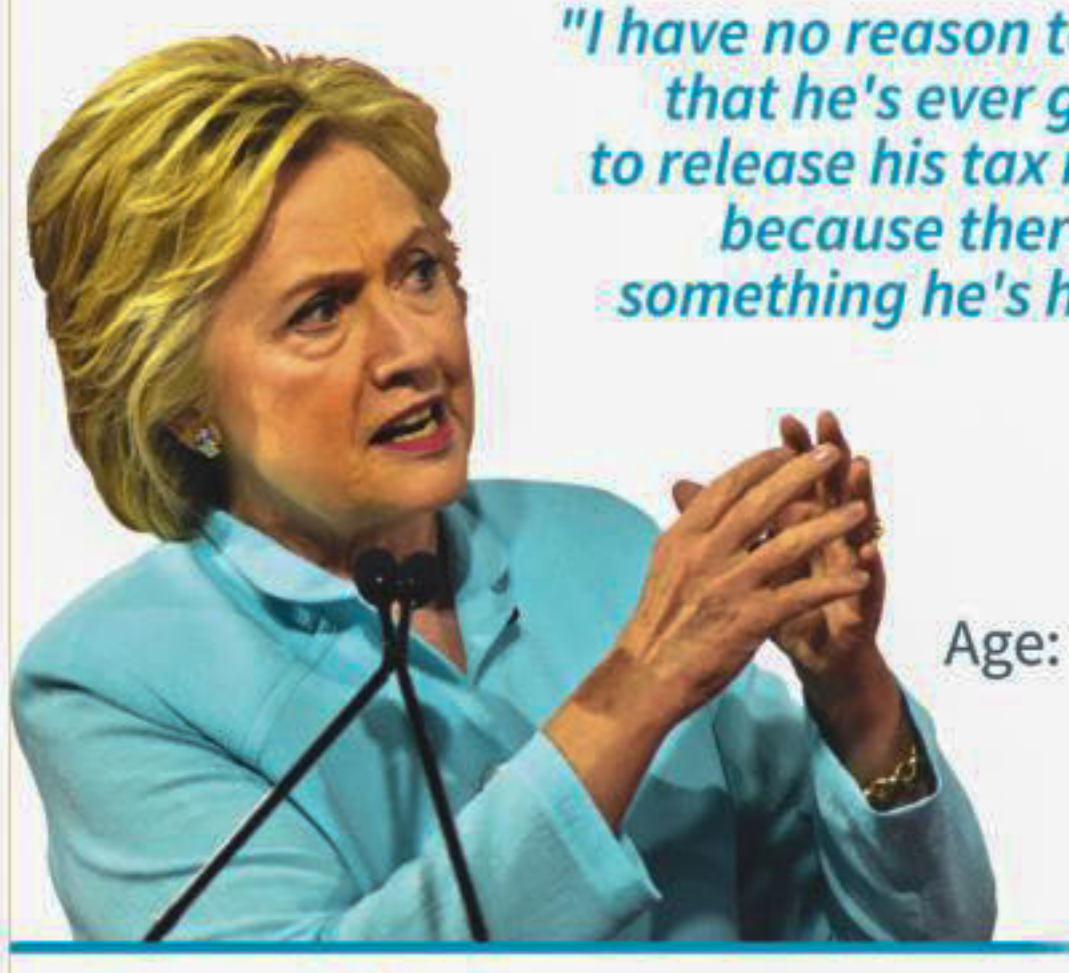
Seven dead as Afghan army copter crashes

An Afghan army helicopter crashed in northern Afghanistan yesterday, killing all people on board, the defence ministry said, citing technical failure. But the Taliban claimed they shot down the M-17 chopper in Baghlan province, as the insurgents step up attacks on government forces.

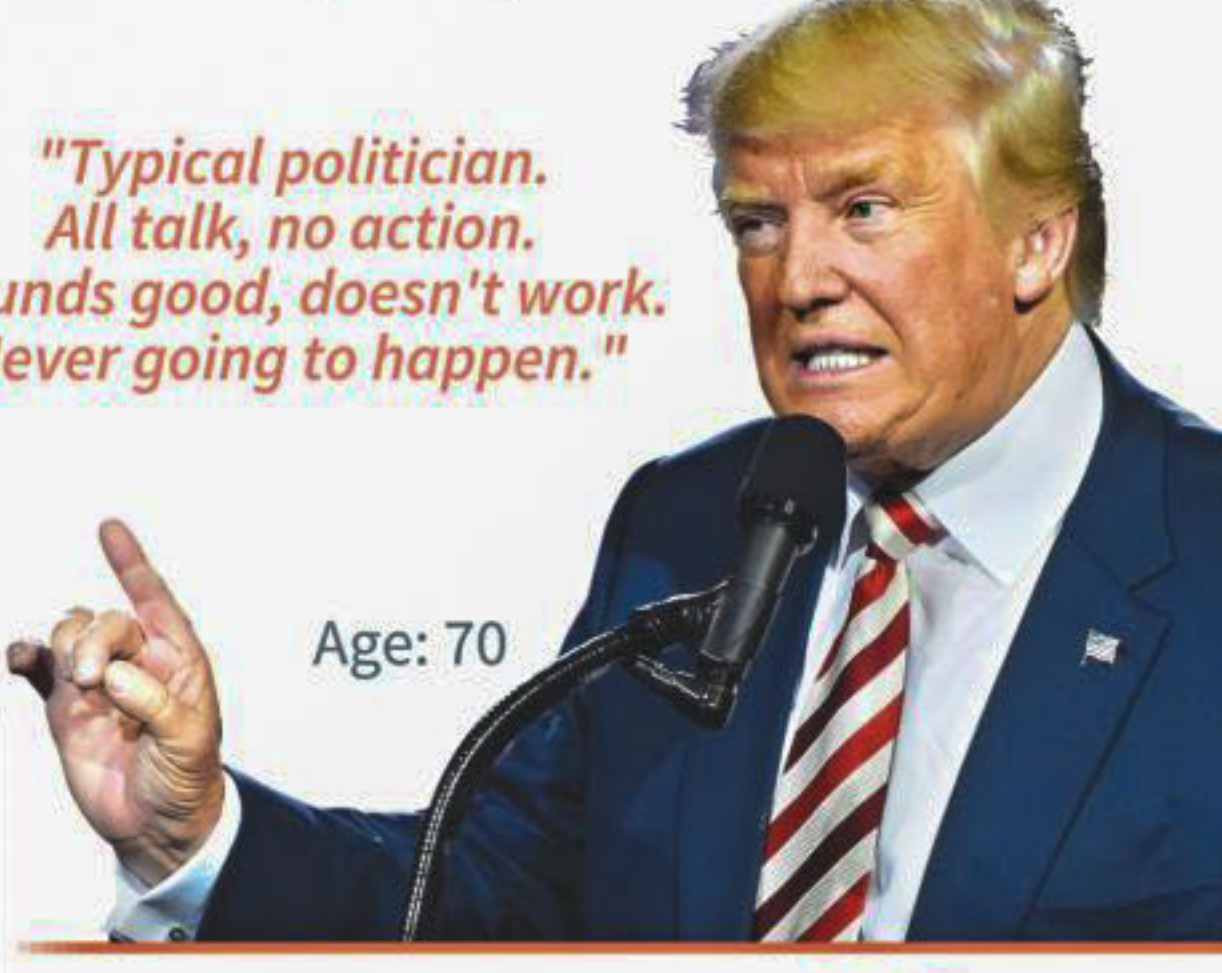
Trump v Clinton: the second TV debate

Presidential candidates to take questions from the US public

Sunday Oct 9, 9pm local time (0100 GMT)

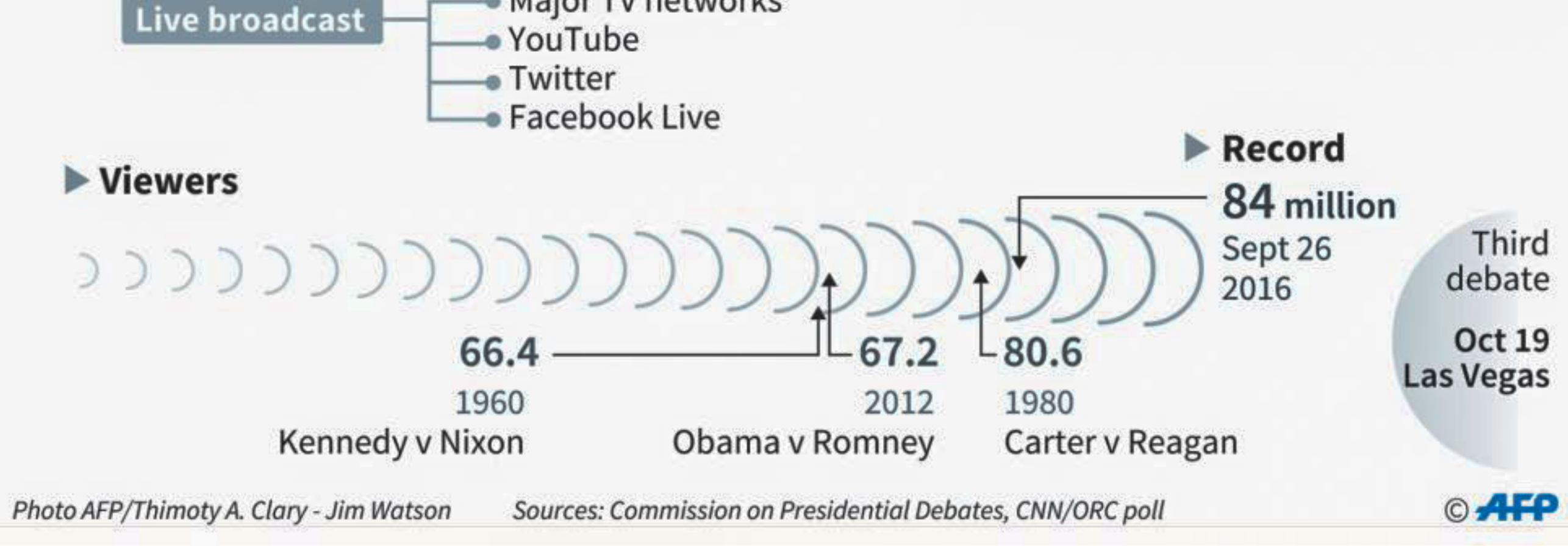
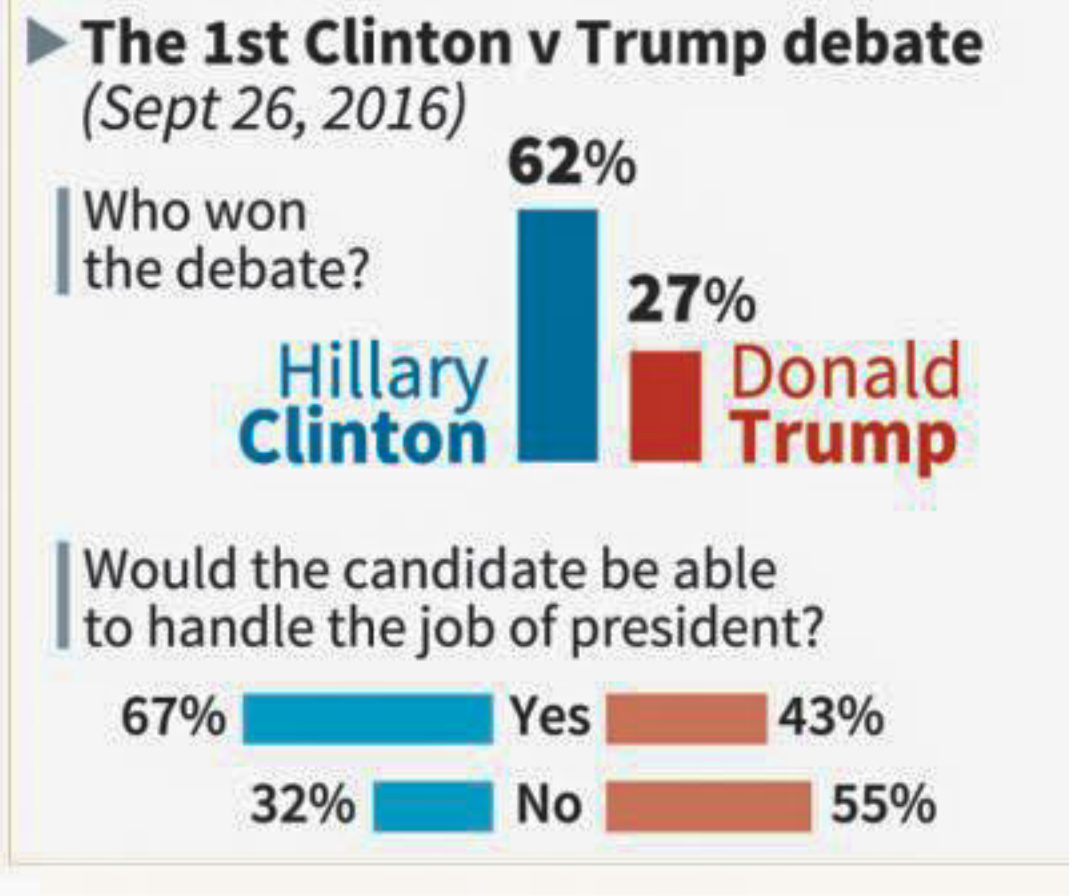


Age: 68



Age: 70

"Typical politician. All talk, no action. Sounds good, doesn't work. Never going to happen."



SYRIA REGIME OFFENSIVE ON ALEPPO

Violence rages after UN impasse

Syrian government forces yesterday kept up their blistering assault on rebel-held eastern Aleppo after a divided UN Security Council failed to agree on a truce to "save" the war-battered city.

Regime forces and their allies were advancing street by street in the eastern sector which has been out of government hands since 2012.

"Clashes on the ground as well as fierce air strikes went on all night and are continuing Sunday, especially in the Sheikh Said district" of eastern Aleppo, said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

It said regime forces took control of the Jandul crossroads in the northeast of the city.

The latest advances aim to clear the way for "a crucial and decisive land offensive", said the Damascus daily Al-Watan which is close to the government.

The army launched its assault on the besieged sector of Aleppo more than two weeks ago with the backing of Russian air strikes, aiming to reunite the city which was Syria's economic hub before its conflict erupted in 2011.

According to the Observatory, air strikes by the regime and its Russian ally have claimed 273 lives, mostly civilians and including 53 children, since the September 22 launch of operations to reunite the government-held west and the east of Aleppo.

Another 17 civilians have died in artillery bombardment of eastern districts, says the Britain-based monitoring group.

The Observatory, which compiles its information from sources on the ground, said 50 civilians, including nine children, have also died in rebel bombardment of regime-controlled western districts.

On Saturday at the United Nations, Russia vetoed a French-drafted resolution demanding an end to the bombing of Aleppo, but its own rival mea-

India faces major Pak terror attack

Pakistan's NSA, Nasir Janjua talked "de-escalation" with Ajit Doval last week, but at the top levels of the Indian government there is a growing belief Pakistan could retaliate against last week's surgical strikes with a big terror attack in India in the coming weeks.

According to reports, India will watch out for two things - first, whether Pakistan will cross the Uri threshold or will they stay in a low-flight zone of a continuous low intensity attacks with casualties in single digits, true to the death-by-thousand-cuts strategy.

Another key development the Indian side will watch out for is whether Pakistan army chief Gen Raheel Sharif stays on for November or retires. According to India's assessment, if the Pak general's term is extended, it would signal that Pakistan is preparing for a sustained military conflict with India, reports TNN.

What is clear is that after the September 29 surgical strikes inside PoK, the LoC is no longer sacrosanct for India. The strikes were intended to ensure that terrorists in their launch pads across the LoC in PoK, watched over by the Pakistan army, would no longer feel comfortable. That was the immediate aim.

According to the assessment reports carried out by Indian army, Pakistan-based terror outfit Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT) suffered the maximum damage in the cross-LoC surgical strikes on terror launch pads.

Israel moves to calm US over settlement plan

Netanyahu speaks to Kerry over phone; Palestinian gunman kills two as upsurge feared

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has spoken by phone to US Secretary of State John Kerry in a bid to calm Washington's anger over new Israeli settlement plans, an official said yesterday.

The plan to construct what activists say amounts to a new settlement in the heart of the occupied West Bank provoked an unusually harsh response last week from the White House, which accused Israel of betraying its trust.

US President Barack Obama's administration has accelerated its criticism of Israeli settlement building in the West Bank in recent months, warning it is destroying hopes for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Israeli official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Netanyahu told Kerry the new settlement plan was intended only as an alternative "if no other solution is found" to house residents of a nearby Jewish outpost that is under a court order to be demolished.

The official said the two men also discussed regional issues but could provide no further details on their phone call. Israeli media reported that the conversation took place on Saturday.

The plan that provoked US anger involves 300 units in the heart of the West Bank, roughly halfway between the Palestinian cities of Ramallah and Nablus.

Meanwhile, a Palestinian opened fire from a car in Jerusalem yesterday and again as Israeli police chased him, killing an officer and a woman, officials said, as fears grew of a new spike in violence.

The gunman, reportedly scheduled to begin a prison term the same day, was killed soon after carrying out the attack near police headquarters, close to the line dividing mainly Palestinian east Jerusalem from the city's mostly Jewish western sector.



A woman washes her clothes in the middle of her home destroyed by Hurricane Matthew, in the small village of Casanette, Haiti, on Saturday. Nearly 900 people died in Haiti alone. At least 13 people on the Caribbean island have also died from outbreaks of cholera.

Matthew hits N Carolina, Virginia

Causes flooding, power outages along Atlantic coast

Matthew was downgraded to a post-tropical cyclone yesterday as it struck North Carolina and Virginia with a diminished yet still potent punch, causing flooding and widespread power outages along the US Atlantic coast after killing hundreds in Haiti.

The most powerful Atlantic storm since 2007 unleashed torrential rains and powerful winds as it churned slowly north after pummeling the southeastern coast of the United States, killing at least 11 people in Florida, Georgia and North Carolina since Thursday and leaving more than two million businesses and homes without power.

Damage in the United States, however, was much less than in Haiti, where Matthew took nearly 900 lives. At least 13 people on the Caribbean island have also died from outbreaks of cholera since the storm, and around 61,500 people were in shelters, officials said.

Matthew continued to threaten coastal communities in North Carolina and Virginia, where flash flood warnings were in effect and gusts of 75 miles per hour were recorded.

"The wind is bending the trees to a 90 degree angle in my backyard, I've lost electrical power in my home and the rain is blowing sideways," Frank Gianinni, a 59-year-old occupational therapist, said in an email from his home in Wilmington, North Carolina.

Forecasters said widespread flooding was possible from heavy rain - 20 inches was expected to fall in some areas - along with storm surges and high tides.

TRUMP'S OFFENSIVE COMMENTS ON WOMEN

Republican White House contender Donald Trump says "nobody respects women more than I do," but that claim has been called into question by his repeated blunders on that half of the population, including many sexist, salacious and misogynistic comments. Here are some of them:

- TRUMP ON HIS DAUGHTER**
"She's actually always been very voluptuous. She's tall, she's almost six feet tall and she's been, she's an amazing beauty."
 - TRUMP ON ROSIE O'DONNELL**
"She's a slob, she talks like a truck driver."
 - TRUMP ON MEGAN KELLY**
"You could see there was blood coming out of her eyes, blood coming out of her wherever."
 - TRUMP ON CARLY FIORINA**
"Look at that face. Would anyone vote for that?"
- Trump made those derogatory comments about his former Republican primary opponent Carly Fiorina. When a moderator probed Trump about the comments during a televised primary debate, Fiorina quipped: "I think women all over the country heard very clearly what Trump said."
- SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS, WEBSITES

IS loses a third of its territory in Syria, Iraq

IS has lost more than a quarter of the territory it once controlled in Iraq and Syria, new data shows.

Analysis by defence analysts IHS shows that the area under the terror group's control has shrunk by 28 percent since its peak in January 2015 as counter insurgents and air strikes push the jihadists back.

In the first nine months of this year, IS lost a chunk of territory roughly the size of Sri Lanka as the total area under its control fell from 30,115 sq miles to 25,290 sq miles.

But the rate of territory loss appears to have slowed as Russia begins scaling back the number of air strikes against IS targets.

No blank cheque to Saudi Arabia

Says US after condemning air strikes on Yemen funeral

The US said yesterday its security cooperation with Saudi Arabia is not a "blank cheque" as the Obama Administration strongly condemned its key ally's air strikes on a funeral in Yemen which killed over 140 people.

"US security cooperation with Saudi Arabia is not a blank cheque," said Ned Price, Spokesman of the National Security Council, the White House.

"Even as we assist Saudi Arabia regarding the defense of their territorial integrity, we have and will continue to express our serious concerns about the conflict in Yemen and how it has been waged," Price said.

"In light of this and other recent incidents, we have initiated an immediate review of our already significantly reduced support to the Saudi-led Coalition and are prepared to adjust our support so as to better align with US principles, values and interests, including achieving an immediate and durable end to Yemen's tragic conflict," he said.

"We call upon the Saudi-led Coalition, the Yemeni government, the Houthis and the Saleh-aligned forces to commit publicly to an immediate cessation of hostilities and implement this cessation based on the April 10th terms," Price said.