WORLD IN BRIEF IS claims New Year's attack on Istanbul nightclub

ISTANBUL — The Islamic State group on Monday claimed responsibility for the New Year's attack at a popular Istanbul nightclub that killed 39 people and wounded scores of others.

The IS-linked Aamaq News Agency said the attack was carried by a "heroic soldier of the caliphate who attacked the most famous nightclub where Christians were celebrating their pagan feast."

It said the man opened fire from an automatic rifle and also detonated hand grenades in "revenge for God's religion and in response to the orders" of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.

The group described Turkey as "the servant of the cross" and also suggested it was in retaliation for Turkish military offensives against the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq.

"We let infidel Turkey know that the blood of Muslims that is being shed by its airstrikes and artillery shelling will turn into fire on its territories," the statement said.

For Trump, the 1980s still hold cultural relevance

NEW YORK — Bobby Knight. Don King. Sylvester Stallone.

Many of President-elect Donald Trump's cultural touchstones, which he'd frequently name-drop at campaign rallies and on Twitter, were at their peak in the 1980s — the decade Trump's celebrity status rose in New York, Trump Tower was built, "The Art of the Deal" was published and he first flirted with running for public office.

The "Go Go 1980s" of New York were spurred by Wall Street's rise. It was a brash decade in which excess was the norm and ostentatious displays of wealth and power were celebrated in pop culture and among Manhattan's elite. And while much of what defined the 1980s has since gone out of style, Trump has seemingly internalized its ethos, which is reflected in the decor of the Trump Tower lobby and the celebrities he stood alongside during the campaign.

An outer-borough New York developer trying to prove himself across the East River, Trump always sought approval of Manhattan's ruling class and was eager to make a name for himself, according to those who tangled with him during that formative decade.

"He would relentlessly promote himself in the newspapers or on TV. He knew how to get press and squash his enemies," said George Arzt, press secretary for former New York City Mayor Ed Koch, who served from 1978 to 1989. The me-first attitude that defined the 1980s "has long been a part of who Trump is," Arzt added.

Under 3 weeks left: Obama in closing stretch of presidency

HONOLULU — His last presidential vacation behind him, Barack Obama is entering the closing stretch of his presidency, an eleventh-hour push to tie up loose ends and put finishing touches on his legacy before handing the reins to President-elect Donald Trump.

Obama returns to Washington midday Monday from Hawaii with about two-dozen work days left. His final days will largely be consumed by a bid to protect his endangered health care law, a major farewell speech and the ongoing handover of power to Trump.

In an email to supporters on Monday, Obama said he'll deliver a valedictory speech on Jan. 10, following a tradition set in 1796 when the first president, George Washington, spoke to the American people for the last time in office. The speech will take place at McCormick Place, a giant convention center in Obama's hometown of Chicago.

"I'm thinking about them as a chance to say thank you for this amazing journey, to celebrate the ways you've changed this country for the better these past eight years, and to offer some thoughts on where we all go from here," Obama said. Obama's chief speechwriter, Cody Keenan, traveled with Obama to Hawaii and spent much of the trip working on the speech. The Chicago trip will likely be Obama's last outside Washington as president and will be include a "family reunion" for Obama's former campaign staffers.



AP Photo/Halit Onur Sandal

A police officer looks at the photographs of the victims as two others stand guard a day after an attack at a popular nightclub in Istanbul. A manhunt is on in Turkey as authorities work to identify the assailant who killed at dozens of people in a crowded Istanbul nightclub during New Year's celebrations Sunday.

Hospitals and doctors in dozens of communities selected for large-scale experiments on this front are already gearing up. The goal is to test the notion that better coordination among clinicians, hospitals, and rehab centers can head off complications, prevent avoidable hospital re-admissions and help patients achieve more stable and enduring recoveries. If results back that up, Medicare can adopt the changes nationwide.

The cardiac and hip fracture experiments are the latest development in a big push under the Obama administration to reinvent Medicare, steering the program away from paying piecemeal for services, regardless of quality and cost. It's unclear whether Donald Trump as president will continue the pace of change, slow down or even hit pause.

Trump's Health and Human Services nominee, orthopedic-surgeon-turned-congressman Tom Price, has expressed general concern that the doctor-patient relationship could be harmed by Medicare payment changes seeking to contain costs. And the Medicare division that designed the experiments — the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation is itself under threat of being abolished because it was created by President Barack Obama's 2010 health care law.

Some outside groups, including AARP, worry that Medicare may be moving too fast and that focusing on cost containment could lead to beneficiaries being shortchanged on rehab care.

Yemen's children starve as bloody civil war drags on

ABS, Yemen — As the first light of dawn trickles in through the hospital window, 19-year-old Mohammed Ali learns that his 2-year-old cousin has died of hunger. But he has to remain strong for his little brother Mohannad, who could be next.

He holds his brother's hand as the 5-year-old struggles to breathe, his skin stretched tight over tiny ribs. "I have already lost a cousin to malnutrition today, I can't lose my little brother," he says.

They are among countless Yemenis who are struggling to feed themselves amid a grinding civil war that has pushed the Arab world's poorest nation to the brink of famine. The family lives in a mud hut in northern Yemen, territory controlled by Shiite Houthi rebels, who are at war with government forces and a Saudi-led and U.S.-backed coalition.

The coalition has been waging a fierce air campaign against the rebels since March 2015, trying unsuccessfully to dislodge them from the capital, Sanaa, and much of the country's north. A coalition blockade aimed at preventing the Houthis from re-arming has contributed to a 60-percent spike in food prices, according to an estimate used by international aid groups. that also killed three of his siblings.

But as the 11-year-old Syrian boy looks to another year in his adopted home, he says his dream is to be reunited with his mother and four surviving siblings, who are living in Istanbul.

"I want my mom to come here," he said on a recent Saturday as he kicked around a soccer ball in a park. "I feel like I'm losing her. It's been too long. I can't take it anymore."

US Sen. Warren seeks to pull pot shops out of banking limbo

BOSTON — As marijuana shops sprout in states that have legalized the drug, they face a critical stumbling block — lack of access to the kind of routine banking services other businesses take for granted.

U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat, is leading an effort to make sure vendors working with legal marijuana businesses, from chemists who test marijuana for harmful substances to firms that provide security, don't have their banking services taken away.

It's part of a wider effort by Warren and others to bring the burgeoning \$7 billion marijuana industry in from a fiscal limbo she said forces many shops to rely solely on cash, making them tempting targets for criminals.

After voters in Warren's home state approved a November ballot question to legalize the recreational use of pot, she joined nine other senators in sending a letter to a key federal regulator, the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, calling on it to issue additional guidance to help banks provide services to marijuana shop vendors.

Twenty-eight states have legalized marijuana for medicinal or recreational use.

Daughter of woman in South Korea scandal arrested

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean prosecutors said Monday that the daughter of the confidante of impeached President Park Geun-hye has been arrested in Denmark, and that authorities were working to get her returned home in connection with a huge corruption scandal.

Park was impeached last month by lawmakers amid public fury over prosecutors' allegations that she conspired to allow her longtime friend, Choi Soon-sil, to extort companies and control the government.

Denmark police arrested Choi's daughter, Chung Yoo-ra, over the weekend on charges of staying there illegally.

South Korea had asked Interpol to search for Chung because she didn't return home to answer questions about the scandal.

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency reported that Chung, a former member of the national equestrian team, allegedly took advantage of her mother's relationship with Park to get unwarranted favors from Seoul's Ewha Womans University.

Dude ranch owner asked chef for 'black people food'

RENO, Nev. — Madeleine Pickens wanted the African-American chef she recruited from the country club she owns in Southern California to cook "black people food" not "white people food" — at her rural Nevada dude ranch and wild horse sanctuary, according to a federal lawsuit accusing her of racial discrimination.

Armand Appling says the wealthy philanthropist and ex-wife of Oklahoma energy tycoon T. Boone Pickens told him fried chicken, BBQ ribs and corn bread would be perfect for the tourists who pay nearly \$2,000 a night to stay in plush cottages, ride horses and take Wild West "safaris" on ATVs at her Mustang Monument Wild Horse Eco-Resort. Appling alleges he was fired 2014 in retaliation for complaining about a hostile work environment. He says Pickens' stereotypical references were commonplace at the Elko County ranch stretching across 900 square miles on the edge of the Ruby Mountains about 50 miles west of the Utah line. Among other things, he says Pickens, who is white, instructed him to terminate two other black kitchen staffers — one she referred to as her "bull" or "ox" and another who had "too much personality." He says she told him they didn't "look like people we have working at the country club" and didn't "fit the image" of the staff she wanted at the ranch. Pickens' lawyers argue that even if all the allegations are true, none of her comments were racially motivated. At worst, Pickens' remarks "reflect a non-racial personality conflict and amount to discourtesy, rudeness or lack of sensitivity," they wrote in recent court filings.

Medicare launches revamp for heart attacks, hip fractures

WASHINGTON — Heart attacks and broken hips cause much suffering and worry as people grow older. This year, Medicare wants to start changing how it pays for treatment of these life-threatening conditions, to promote quality and contain costs. Beneficiaries and family members may notice a new approach. During the best of times, many Yemenis struggled to make ends meet. Now they can barely feed themselves.

Armless Syrian boy thrives in US, hopes family can join him

SHARON, Mass. — Ahmad Alkhalaf has had a busy year. He attended Democratic President Barack Obama's final State of the Union address as a special guest of a congressman. He learned to bike and rollerblade, took martial arts and gymnastics classes and spent his summer playing soccer and swimming in a lake at a day camp in the Boston suburbs.

And he received his first pair of prosthetic arms after his were blown off three years ago in a refugee camp bomb blast

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