

THE PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

Florida a factor as the GOP turns

■ A soap opera-like drama unfolded in South Carolina, where Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich are now tied in the polls.

BY MARC CAPUTO
AND ADAM C. SMITH
Herald/Times Staff Writers

CHARLESTON, S.C. — Mitt Romney's aura of inevitability took a hit Thursday, just as the biggest threat to his campaign, Newt Gingrich, suddenly faced unwelcome questions about once asking his ex-wife for

permission to have an "open marriage."

To call Thursday the most turbulent day of an already volatile presidential primary would be an understatement. South Carolina suddenly is a neck-and-neck race between the two. And, as a result, Florida's Jan. 31 primary looks like less of a

cakewalk for Romney.

The morning began with Texas Gov. Rick Perry ending his struggling campaign and endorsing Gingrich. About the same time, Iowa certified results from its Jan. 3 caucuses, showing that — contrary to early reports about Romney barely winning — Rick Santorum



finished with 34 more votes.

But Gingrich's ability to capitalize on the one-two blow to Romney was buried by a sensational ABC News interview with Gingrich's second wife, Marianne, who said he wanted an "open marriage" so he could continue an affair with his aide at the time, who eventually became his third wife.



SANTORUM ROMNEY GINGRICH PAUL

Debate: GOP survivors spar before South Carolina primary, 3A
Personal life: Gingrich surges, then faces a scandal, 3A
Politics blog: Keep up to date with the latest in local and national politics at MiamiHerald.typepad.com/nakedpolitics/
Voters guide: Learn more about the candidates and election at MiamiHerald.com/voters-guide

• TURN TO REPUBLICANS, 13A

With the opening of the luxurious St. Regis, a village famous for its shopping center is poised to become a high-end hotel destination.



THE BUTLERS DID IT: St. Regis staff members rehearse for the hotel's opening, right, and Ewen Anderson, a hotel butler, strolls through the Grand Foyer after a run-through of the ribbon-cutting.



MONEY'S ON NEW HOTEL

BY HANNAH SAMPSON
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The tiny village of Bal Harbour, best known for its luxury shopping mall, has sought for years to be recognized as more than an afternoon stop for upscale shoppers — a task made more challenging by the lack of a well-known hotel.

Enter luxury hotel brand St. Regis Hotels & Resorts, which is in the midst of a worldwide expansion that includes Latin America, Asia, Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

On Thursday, Bal Harbour joined that growing list as the 28th

St. Regis hotel, cousin to the 1904 Manhattan classic.

"It was clear to us and the research we did that this was a very special location — very affluent local suburb, attracts a very affluent international audience," said Paul James, global brand leader for St. Regis, part of Starwood Hotels & Resorts. "It was among the best beachfront locations we had in our portfolio anywhere."

The \$1 billion development, which includes a 243-room hotel and two residential towers, opened Thursday after about six years of planning, de-

• TURN TO HOTEL, 2A

MIAMIHERALD.COM/PHOTOS: SEE MORE IMAGES OF THE ST. REGIS IN BAL HARBOUR

PHOTOS BY EMILY HICHDJ/MIAMI HERALD STAFF

THE INTERNET

Hackers' revenge: Federal websites attacked

■ The Department of Justice and FBI websites were taken down after Megaupload.com was shut down and executives arrested.

Miami Herald Staff and Wire Services

McLEAN, Va. — A hacker collective known as Anonymous took down several websites Thursday — including the Department of Justice's — in retaliation for the federal government's arrest of several Internet executives and the shutdown of the world's largest file-sharing site.

Justice's website was still down late Thursday night. The cyber-hackers also paralyzed the websites of the FBI, U.S. Copyright Office, the Motion Picture Association of America and the Recording Industry Association of America.

"The department is working to ensure the website is available while we investigate the origins of this activity, which is being treated as a malicious act until we can fully identify the root cause of the disruption," the Justice Department commented on Twitter.

"Get some popcorn ... it's going to be a long ... night," reads a tweet posted Thursday night by Your AnonNews, which claims to be associated with Anonymous.

