



Hillary inducted into Women's Hall of Fame

AP, Seneca Falls

Inspired by Alan Shepard, the first American to journey into space, a 14-year-old from suburban Chicago wrote a letter to Nasa in 1961 asking what she needed to do to become an astronaut. She got a curt reply: Girls are not being recruited by the nation's space programme.

"It had never crossed my mind up until that point that there might be doors closed to me simply because I was a girl," recalled the letter writer, better known today as Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, as she was enshrined Saturday in the National Women's Hall of Fame, along with nine other inductees.

Iraq warns of chaos if charter rejected

Sunni groups urge voters to reject draft constitution

AFP, Baghdad

Sunni Arab groups have urged Iraqi voters to reject a draft constitution in a landmark referendum but Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari warned that such a move could plunge the country into chaos.

"If the constitution is approved we can have elections in December and elect a government that is fully representative of the Iraqi people. The alternative would be complete chaos," Zebari told The Sunday Telegraph in London.

The campaign for Iraq's draft constitution suffered a blow Saturday when Sunni Arab groups urged voters in the October 15 referendum to reject the charter, which they warned would lead to the country's break-up.

"This constitution bears in it the

germs of Iraq's division, the loss of its Arab identity and the plundering of its national wealth," 21 Sunni organisations said in a joint statement.

"As a result, we call for all Iraqis to reject this constitution by all legitimate means," said the groups, which included the influential Committee of Muslim Scholars and the main Iraqi Islamic party.

Zebari, who was in London last week with Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, argued that implementing the constitution would allow US-led coalition forces, which invaded in March 2003, to start planning for their eventual withdrawal.

Britain currently has 8,500 troops deployed mainly in southern Iraq, around the city of Basra.

The Iraqi foreign minister said:

"The new government will be in a far better position to defeat the insurgency, which is still being orchestrated mainly by the Baathist remnants of the old regime.

"But with a new constitution and a new government, all Iraqis will have to reassess their relationship with the government. No-one will be able to question its legitimacy in the future."

Many Sunni Arabs, who make up a fifth of Iraq's population, oppose the draft because of federal provisions they fear will weaken the country and lead to an unfair distribution of oil wealth.

The document will have to be rewritten if more than two-thirds of voters in at least three of Iraq's 18 provinces vote 'No', something Sunni Arabs might be able to achieve.

'Mount Everest 3.7 metres shorter now'

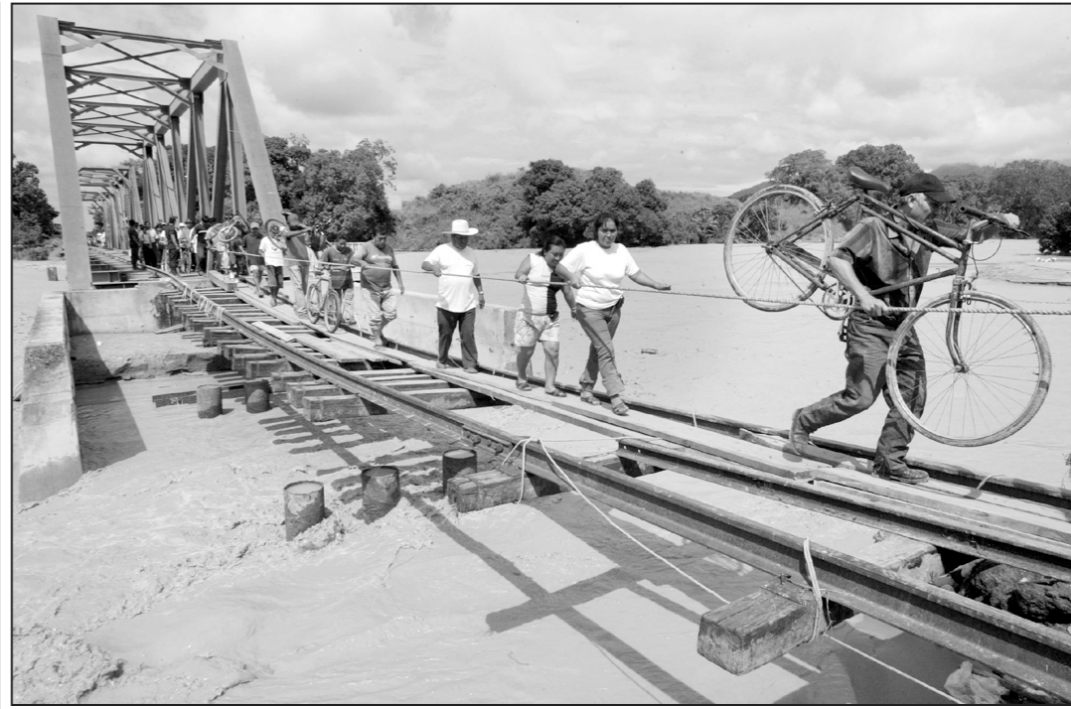
PTI, Beijing

Is the world's tallest mountain peak growing shorter by the years?

The latest measured height of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain, is 3.7 metres shorter than in 1975 when it was measured last.

The recently measured height of Mt Everest is 8844.43 metres, Director General of the Chinese State Bureau of Surveying and Mapping, Chen Bangzhu said.

The previous measurement done by the Chinese in 1975 reported the height of Mt Everest (Qomolangma in Chinese) was 8,848.13 metres above sea level, Bangzhu said.



Residents of Torrecilla cross the railway bridge to Huixtla, 42km far from Tapachula, state of Chiapas Saturday after Tropical Storm Stan hit the city. Mudslides and floods sparked by Stan have killed 508 people in Guatemala, 71 in El Salvador, 28 in Mexico and 11 in Nicaragua, bringing the overall death toll to 618 in Central America and Mexico.

'Anti-Americanism' simmers on liberal US West Coast

AFP, Seattle

A T-shirt with a Warholian likeness of US President George W. Bush sports the incendiary legend "International Terrorist." Another shows the World Trade Centre towers with the words, "What Goes Up Must Come Down."

These are just some of the provocative -- some would say anti-American -- items for sale at Left Bank Books Collective, in the liberal and frequently outspoken US West Coast city of Seattle.

While a lot has been said and written about anti-Americanism around the world following the US invasion of Iraq, little has been said about a vein of the same sentiment that exists in the United States.

If home-grown "anti-Americanism" has a region it calls home, it might well be the left-leaning West Coast, where vehement opposition to Bush and his policies is overt.

If it has a capital, it could be Seattle, site of the explosive anti-World Trade Organisation demonstrations in 1999 and a politics so left-

leaning that just two voting precincts went for Bush last year.

Left Bank Books Collective has dedicated to spread radical ideas from its spot in one of the prime tourist attractions, Pike Place Market, since 1973.

Collin Coyne, 33, has been a member of the bookstore collective for a year. He quit his job writing marketing copy when his company would not give him time off to attend an activist training camp.

He dislikes the term "anti-Americanism," citing one of his heroes, the radical intellectual Noam Chomsky, who argues the very term "anti-Americanism" is a totalitarian propaganda tool used to stifle dissent.

He may not embrace the label "anti-American," but Coyne, whose hat is emblazoned with "Solidarity Forever," opposes what he believes is the country's militaristic foreign policy and abusive capitalist system.

Coyne and Americans like him also don't share their fellow citizens' romantic notions of US history.

Presidential hopefuls campaign on peace and prices in Lanka

AFP, Colombo

Sri Lanka's two main candidates for the presidency launched their campaigns at the weekend promising peace at last for the shattered island and lower consumer prices.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse was kicking off his campaign from the historic town of Anuradhapura on Sunday, a day after his main rival, former premier Ranil Wickremesinghe addressed supporters at another historic city.

"The prime minister is offering peace with dignity," a spokesman for his office said even as his campaign managers were trying to put together an election manifesto incorporating pre-poll deals with two nationalist groups.

He is also promising to lower the cost of living with more Marxist-oriented economic policies.

Opposition leader Wickremesinghe addressed his first meeting in the central town of Kandy, 112km east of here, on Saturday evening also promised to tackle the cost of living and establish peace.

"First we need to douse the flames of hunger," Wickremesinghe, a market friendly right-winger, told a packed rally in Kandy. "Then we can start addressing the ethnic conflict and for that I seek the support of all."

As nominations closed Friday for the November 17 vote, minority parties had aligned either with leftist Rajapakse or right-wing Wickremesinghe hoping to be kingmakers.

Senior Buddhist monk Narampanawe Ananda said the country's efforts to establish peace with Tamil Tiger rebels had emerged a key issue and the clergy wanted a permanent end to three decades of ethnic bloodshed.

"Ending the conflict is the main challenge before the next president," Ananda told AFP when Wickremesinghe visited Kandy to seek the blessings of the Buddhist hierarchy.

Wickremesinghe asked the influential Buddhist clergy to help unite the majority Sinhalese community, who mainly follow Buddhism.

Gaza border security accord nears

AP, Jerusalem

Israel and the Palestinians were moving toward agreement on new security arrangements for Gaza's border with Egypt, officials from both sides said Saturday, a deal that could allow Palestinian residents of the coastal strip relatively free movement for the first time.

The signs of progress came days before Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas were to meet for the first time since Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Also Saturday, the Palestinians broke ground on their first major development project in Gaza since the withdrawal a \$100 million complex that will provide housing for 25,000 people. The development, funded by the United Arab Emirates, was being built on the former Jewish settlement of Morag and was expected to take two years to complete.

A border deal would mark a significant breakthrough. Before complet-

ing its withdrawal last month, Israel closed the Rafah border terminal, Gaza's main gateway to the outside world. The Palestinians say reopening the border is vital for Gaza's devastated economy.

A deal to reopen the terminal will have to address the security concerns of Israel, which fears militants and weapons will reach Gaza more easily without the Israeli inspectors who once operated Rafah.

This concern was underscored in the days following the Israeli withdrawal. Border control broke down and thousands of Palestinians crossed freely in and out of Egypt without any security checks. With few exceptions, Palestinians have been barred from traveling to Egypt since order was restored.

Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom also said Saturday that Egypt is not doing enough to stop the flow of weapons into Gaza and that anti-tank rockets and shoulder-held missiles have reached the area.