

NEWS ANALYSIS

Hillary survives for yet another day

AP, Washington

Hillary Clinton should savour the moment. Soon enough, she must face the reality of time and money running out on her once-invincible campaign.

Her win Tuesday in the important swing state of Pennsylvania was hard-fought and decisive. Barack Obama's well-funded effort to shut her down did not come close to an upset.

But despite her victory, the dynamics of the race are the same as they've been for more than two months. Obama remains the front-runner, and that gets more important the closer the campaign comes to the end of the primary season.

"He's content to essentially run out the clock with his narrow lead, while she needs something dramatic to happen," said California-based Democratic consultant Dan Newman. "A one-run advantage in the first inning isn't a big deal, but a one-run lead in the ninth looms large."

Hillary Clinton now faces a dwindling number of contests, and she's at a steep financial disadvantage.

Obama already is spending

twice as much on ads airing in North Carolina and Indiana, the two states that come up next, with primaries on May 6. He's even advertising in Oregon, a state that he should win, where voting by mail begins in the first week of May.

Obama can afford to shower every contest with campaign dollars from the \$42 million he had at the beginning of April, while Clinton is in debt. She'll have to either persuade donors to give her more money to sustain her long-shot bid or float herself another multimillion-dollar loan.

Then she'll face the uphill battle of convincing the party's elected officials and leaders the superdelegates to reject the front-runner Obama in favor of her.

"She has to convince superdelegates that her survival as a candidate doesn't come at the cost of jeopardising the long-term survival of the party in the fall and in the future," said Democratic consultant Jenny Backus. "And that is a tough argument to make."

In Pennsylvania, Clinton won with the support of whites, women and older voters, according to exit

polls conducted for The Associated Press and the television networks.

Underscoring the race's excitement, more than one in 10 voters Tuesday had registered with the state's Democratic party since the beginning of the year. And about six in 10 of them were voting for Obama.

Some voters had a hard time making up their minds. About a quarter of the day's voters reported having decided within the past week, and about six in 10 of them backed Clinton.

She found reason for optimism in the victory that came even though Obama outspent her 3-to-1 in the state.

"He broke every spending record in this state trying to knock us out of this race," Clinton told her cheering supporters. "Well, the people of Pennsylvania had other ideas tonight."

But Clinton also went into Pennsylvania with a big advantage the demographics matched her strengths and she started with a steep lead in the polls. She won't have that kind of advantage in the coming contests.



PHOTO: AFP

US Democratic presidential hopeful New York Senator Hillary Clinton is joined by her husband, former US president Bill Clinton, at a celebration of her Pennsylvania primary election victory on Tuesday at the Park Hyatt Philadelphia at the Bellevue in Philadelphia, PA.

19 people killed in Iraq fighting

Five US troops killed

AFP, Baghdad

Another 19 people were killed in fighting between militiamen and security forces in Shia areas of Baghdad, officials said on Wednesday, as the death toll from weeks of street battles passed 360.

The US military said troops had killed 15 people in overnight clashes in areas of east Baghdad controlled by Mahdi Army militiamen loyal to radical anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

American forces used ground troops and air strikes during the clashes, which began in the late afternoon, a US military statement said.

In one incident, soldiers were attacked with a roadside bomb and rocket propelled grenades (RPGs) while on patrol in east Baghdad around 9:45 pm (1845 GMT), the statement said. Six militiamen were killed in the ensuing gun battle.

In a separate incident at about the same time, US troops were attacked with RPGs, also in east Baghdad, the statement said.

Soldiers identified two separate RPG teams and returned fire, killing five criminals.

Iraqi officials said that the fighting which has been focused in Sadr City, a sprawling Mahdi Army bastion, has spread to the adjoining district of Hussainiyah.

An interior ministry official said at least four people were killed there

on Tuesday. The defence ministry put the toll in the fighting at seven dead, including two women, and 20 wounded, among them women and children.

The latest deaths have pushed the toll from fighting in east Baghdad since late March to more than 360, according to an AFP tally based on reports from Iraqi and US military officials.

The fighting began when Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki ordered a crackdown on Shia militiamen in the southern city of Basra on March 25.

Clashes quickly spread to other Shia areas of Iraq, and the fighting since April 6 has focused mainly on Sadr City.

Meanwhile, the US military on Tuesday announced the deaths of five troops in a series of bombings as blasts in Baghdad killed 10 people and a female suicide bomber slaughtered six Iraqis north of the capital.

Two US marines were killed and three others wounded when a bomber slammed his explosives-laden car into a checkpoint near the western Iraqi city of Ramadi at around 7:30 am (0430 GMT), the American military said.

Two Iraqi policemen and 24 civilians were also wounded in the attack near Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, which was once the symbol of Sunni Arab insurgency against US forces.



PHOTO: AFP

A rare 141-carat diamond bow brooch is shown here in a 2001 file photo which was made in 1855 by Parisian jeweller Francois Kramer for Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III.

French crown jewel to return to France

AFP, Paris

A rare 141-carat diamond bow brooch made for Empress Eugenie, the wife of Napoleon III, is to return to France, more than 100 years after it was sold by the government, the Louvre Museum said Tuesday.

The historic jewel made in 1855 by Parisian jeweller Francois Kramer was purchased from Christie's in New York for 6.72 million euros (10.8 million dollars) on April 18, a museum statement said.

The Louvre was able to make the purchase with a five-million-euro private donation and other museum funds.



PHOTO: AFP

Zimbabwean Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) president Morgan Tsvangirai (R) and Mozambican former president Joaquim Chissano (L) talk to the press yesterday outside the Chissano foundation in Maputo. The trip to Mozambique is the latest leg in a series of diplomatic visits by Tsvangirai designed to build up pressure on his arch-rival President Robert Mugabe in the aftermath of Zimbabwe's March 29 general elections.

Mugabe party wins in first recount result

AFP, Harare

President Robert Mugabe's party won in the first of 23 constituencies to complete a recount of votes from last month's general elections, Zimbabwe's state media said yesterday.

Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) was confirmed as the winner of both the election for a seat in parliament and the largely

symbolic senate in the Goromonzi West constituency, a rural district near the capital, The Herald newspaper reported.

While recounts in 21 of the constituencies were ordered in seats won by the opposition Movement for Democratic Change following complaints of irregularities by ZANU-PF, Goromonzi West was one of only two districts to hold a recount in a seat won by Mugabe's party.

Denmark evacuates embassies in Algeria, Afghanistan

AP, Copenhagen

The Danish Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that it has evacuated its staff from embassies in Algeria and Afghanistan because of threats after newspapers reprinted a cartoon depicting the Muslim prophet Muhammad.

Embassy employees have been moved to secret locations in both countries' capitals but continue to work, Foreign Ministry spokesman Erik Laursen said.

The announcement comes after Danish intelligence officials warned of an "aggravated" terror threat against Denmark since newspapers in the country in February of a cartoon depicting the Prophet Muhammad.

The warning specifically singled out North Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The threat "is so concrete that we had to take this decision," Laursen told The Associated Press. "The decision is based on intelligence," he said, declining to elaborate.

The staff in Algiers was relocated "some days ago" and employees in Kabul were moved Wednesday, he said. Laursen stressed that the embassies have not been closed and can still be reached by telephone and e-mail.

"Right now, we are in places that we consider safe," he said.

Biodiversity loss will lead to sick world: Experts

AFP, Singapore

The world risks wiping out a new generation of antibiotics and cures for diseases if it fails to reverse the extinction of thousands of plant and animal species, experts warned yesterday.

Biodiversity loss has reached alarming levels, and disappearing with it are the secrets to finding treatments for pain, infections and a wide array of ailments such as cancer, they said, citing the findings of a coming book.

Achim Steiner, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), said more than 16,000 known species are threatened with extinction, but the number could be more.

"We must do something about what is happening to biodiversity," he said at a news conference on the sidelines of the UN-backed Business for the Environment conference.

"Societies depend on nature for treating diseases. Health systems over human history have their foundation on animal and plant products that are used for treatment."

Technological revolution in the 19th and 20th centuries took the focus on finding cures away

from nature as pharmaceutical companies relied on technical components to make medicines, he said.

These companies are increasingly turning back to nature as they run out of chemical combinations, he said.

But the world is "losing the intellectual patents of nature before we even have the chance to understand or unravel them," Steiner said.

"This is the tragedy of not understanding biodiversity," he said, adding it would be a "big fallacy" to think that biodiversity is not linked to the phenomenon of climate change.

The book, previewed at the conference, cited the example of the southern gastric brooding frog discovered in the rainforests of Australia in the 1980s. It has since become extinct.

Research on those frogs could have led to new insights into preventing and treating human peptic ulcers which affect 25 million people in the United States alone, according to the authors of the book, "Sustaining Life".

Valuable medical secrets which the frogs held "are now gone forever," the book's key authors, Eric Chivian and Aaron Bernstein, were quoted as saying in a press statement.

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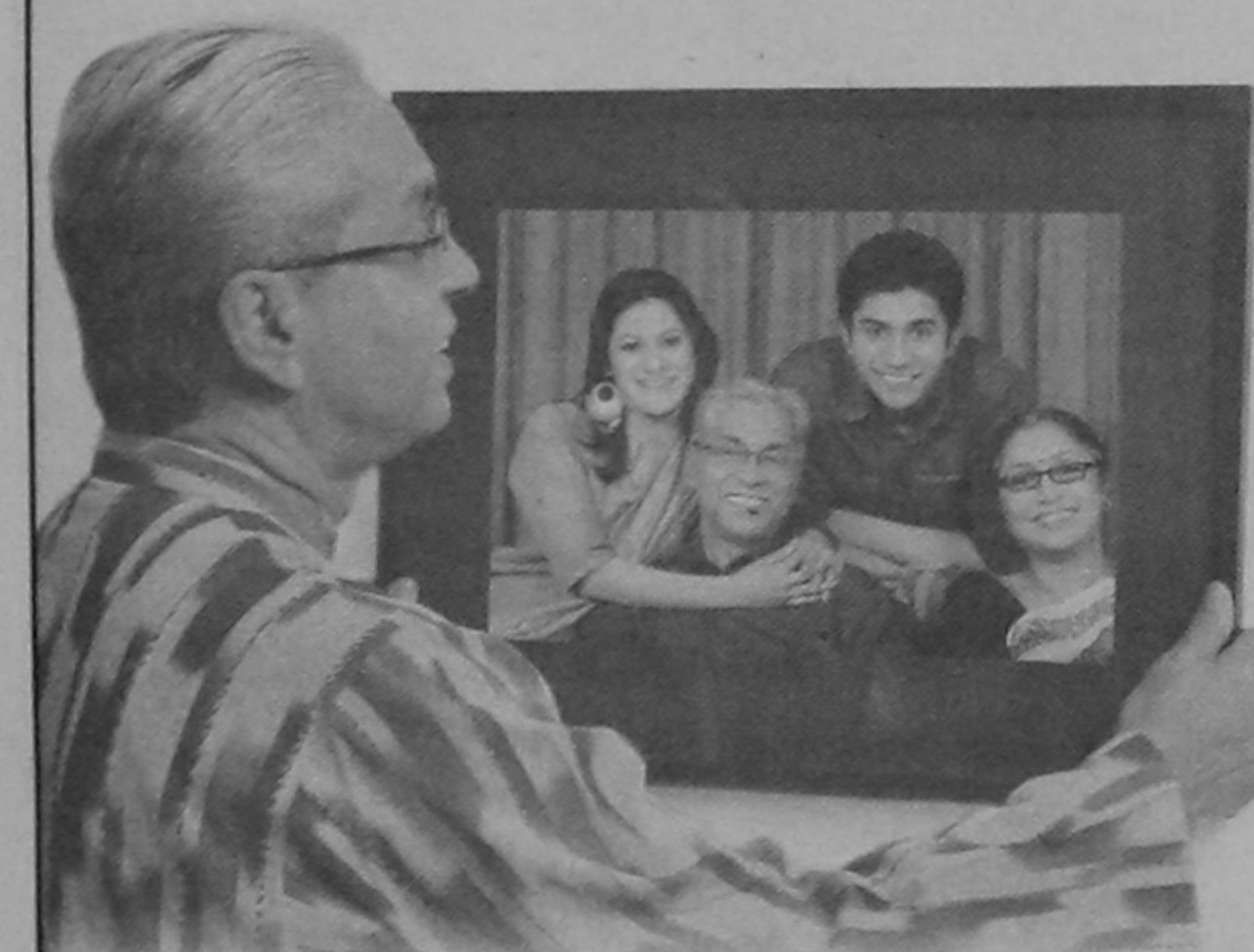


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