NEW Surief

Bill hints Hillary could run for president

PTI, Washington

Hillary Clinton, the former secretary of State, could run for the 2016 presidential elections, her husband Bill Clinton has hinted.



Bill Clinton, one of the most popular American presidents

in recent past, added fuel to the speculation when at an event on Saturday night he said that the country would have some good choices in the 2016 presidential elections.

This drew wide applause from the audience in St Louis, who presumed that he was referring to Hillary.

"I think America will have some very good choices for president," he said in response to a question.

Musharraf summoned in treason case

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's top court summoned former dictator Pervez Musharraf to appear on Tuesday to answer allegations of high treason and barred him from leaving the country. The orders were issued after the Supreme

Court heard demands from lawyers for the former military ruler to go on trial for imposing emergency rule and arresting judges in 2007, actions which paved the way for his downfall. Musharraf was authorised to stand as a candidate

in the May 11 general election in the remote northern area of Chitral on Sunday but has been rejected in three other seats, due to the charges against him. Lawyers want the ex-general, who returned to

Pakistan last month from four years of selfimposed exile to run for parliament, tried under Article Six of the High Treason Act 1973.

Chile exhumes Neruda's remains

BBC ONLINE

Forensic experts in Chile are exhuming the remains of the poet, Pablo Neruda, who died in 1973.

The Chilean authorities want to establish whether he died of cancer or was poisoned

on the orders of Chile's military ruler, Gen Augusto Pinochet. Pablo Neruda, a Nobel Prize winner, was a mem-

ber of the Communist Party and a staunch supporter of ousted Chilean president Salvador Allende. He died aged 69 just 12 days after Gen

Pinochet's coup against Allende.

The poet's family maintains that he died of advanced prostate cancer.

In 2011, Chile started investigating allegations by his former driver and personal assistant, Manuel Araya, that Neruda had been poisoned.

Bomb hits Afghan bus, kills 9

AFP, Ghazni

A roadside bomb exploded under an Afghan bus southwest of Kabul yesterday, killing nine people and wounding at least 22 others in an attack blamed on Taliban militants, officials said. The bus bombing in the flashpoint province of

Wardak came as Afghanistan endures a bloody few days at a time of year that often sees a surge in violence as the cold winter recedes and the socalled "fighting season" begins.

A woman was among the dead and children among the wounded, officials said.

The bus was a government service making daily trips between the capital Kabul and Ghazni, the neighbouring province further to the southwest.

Britain's Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher dies

AP, London

Love her or loathe her, one thing's beyond dispute: Margaret Thatcher transformed Britain.

The Iron Lady, who ruled for 11 remarkable years, imposed her will on a fractious, rundown nation - breaking the unions, triumphing in a far-off war, and selling off state industries at a record pace. She left behind a leaner government and more prosperous nation by the time a mutiny ousted her from No 10 Downing Street.

Thatcher's spokesman, Tim Bell, said the former prime minister died from a stroke yesterday morning at the Ritz hotel in London. Flags were flown at half-staff at Buckingham Palace, Parliament and Downing Street for the 87 year old. Queen Elizabeth II authorized Thatcher to have a ceremonial funeral - a step short of a state funeral - to be held at St Paul's Cathedral in London with military honors.

Prime Minister David Cameron cut short a trip to Madrid and Paris to return to Britain following news of Thatcher's death, and his office confirmed that Thatcher would be cremated following the ceremonial funeral. It did not provide further details, saying only the arrangements were in line with the wishes of Thatcher's family.

For admirers, Thatcher was a savior who rescued Britain from ruin and laid the groundwork for an extraordinary economic renaissance. For critics, she was a heartless tyrant who ushered in an era of greed that kicked the weak out onto the streets and let the rich become filthy rich.

Thatcher was the first - and still only female prime minister in Britain's history. But she often found feminists tiresome and was not above using her handbag as a prop to underline her swagger and power. A grocer's daughter, she rose to the top of Britain's snobbish hierarchy the hard way, and envisioned a classless society that rewarded hard work and determination.

She was a trailblazer who at first believed trailblazing impossible: Thatcher told the Liverpool Daily Post in 1974 that she did not think a woman would serve as party leader or prime minister during her lifetime.

But once in power, she never showed an ounce of doubt.

Thatcher could be intimidating to those working for her: British diplomats sighed with relief on her first official visit to Washington, DC, as prime minister to find that she was relaxed enough to enjoy a glass of whiskey and a half-glass of wine during an embassy lunch, according to official documents.

Like her close friend and political ally Ronald Reagan, Thatcher seemed motivated by an unshakable belief that free markets would build a better country than reliance on a strong, central government. Another thing she shared with the American president: a tendency to reduce problems to their basics, choose a path, and follow it to the end, no matter what the opposition.

Thatcher was at her brashest when Britain was challenged. When Argentina's military junta seized the remote Falklands Islands from Britain in 1982, she did not hesitate, even though her senior military advisers said it might not be feasible to reclaim the islands.

In deciding on war, Thatcher overruled Foreign Office specialists who warned her about the dangers of striking back. She was infuriated by warnings about the dangers to British citizens in Argentina



Thatcher with her husband Denis at a party to celebrate her autobiography Path to Power at the Roof Gardens, Kensington, in June 1995. PHOTO: DAILY MAIL FILE

and the difficulty of getting support from the UN Security Council.

The relatively quick triumph of British forces revived Thatcher's political fortunes, which had been faltering along with the British economy. She won an overwhelming victory in 1983, tripling her majority in the House of Commons.

concluding early on that Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev represented a clear break in the Soviet tradition of autocratic rulers. She pronounced that the West could "do business" with him, a position that influenced Reagan's vital dealings with Gorbachev in the twilight of the Soviet era.

It was heady stuff for a woman who had little training in foreign affairs when she triumphed over a weak field of indecisive Conservative Party candidates to take over the party leadership in 1975 and ultimately run as the party's candidate for prime minister. Events seemed to be moving her way

when she led the Conservative Party to victory in 1979, with a commitment to reduce the state's role and champion private enterprise.

She was underestimated at first - by her own party, by the media, later by foreign adversaries. But they all soon learned to respect her. Thatcher's "Iron Lady" nickname was coined by Soviet journalists, a grudging testament to her ferocious will and determination. Thatcher set about upending decades

of liberal doctrine, successfully challenging Britain's welfare state and socialist traditions. She is perhaps best remembered for

her hardline position during the pivotal strike in 1984 and 1985 when she faced down coal miners in an ultimately successful bid to break the power of Britain's unions. It was a reshaping of the British economic and political landscape that ism." endures to this day.

boom that made London the rival of New York as a global financial center. The left demonized her as an implacably hostile union buster, with stone-cold indifference to the poor. But her economic philosophy eventually crossed party lines: Tony Blair led a revamped Labour Party to victory by adopting some of her ideas. Thatcher was the West's most outspo-

ken opponent of imposing economic sanctions on South Africa's minority government to end apartheid. She contended such sanctions cost jobs, including in Britain, hurt South Africa's black

majority most and harden white resistance to change.

In 1986, Britain's Cabinet unanimously supported her resistance to such sanctions. As a result, protests ensued and many accused her of supporting the

Margaret Hilda Roberts was born on

apartheid regime.

She trusted her gut instinct, famously October 13, 1925. She learned the values of thrift, discipline and industry as the dutiful daughter of Alfred Roberts, a grocer and Methodist lay preacher who eventually became the mayor of Grantham, a modest-sized town in Lincolnshire 110 miles north of London. Thatcher's personality, like that of so

many of her contemporaries, was shaped in part by the traumatic events during her childhood. When World War II broke out, her hometown was one of the early targets for Luftwaffe bombs. Her belief in the need to stand up to aggressors was rooted in the failure of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain's attempt to appease Adolf Hitler rather than confront him. Thatcher said she learned much about

the world simply by studying her father's business. She grew up in the family's apartment just above the shop.

"Before I read a line from the great liberal economists, I knew from my father's accounts that the free market was like a vast sensitive nervous system, responding to events and signals all over the world to meet the ever-changing needs of peoples in different countries, from different classes, of different religions, with a kind of benign indifference to their status," she wrote in her memoirs.

"The economic history of Britain for the next 40 years confirmed and amplified almost every item of my father's practical economics. In effect, I had been equipped at an early age with the ideal mental outlook and tools of analysis for reconstructing an economy ravaged by state social-

Educated at Oxford, Thatcher began It is for this that she is revered by free- her political career in her mid-20s with market conservatives, who say the an unsuccessful 1950 campaign for a restructuring of the economy led to a parliamentary seat in the Labour Party stronghold of Dartford. She earned nationwide publicity as the youngest female candidate in the country, despite her loss at the polls.

She was defeated again the next year, but on the campaign trail she met Denis Thatcher, a successful businessman whom she married in 1951. Their twins, Mark and Carol, were born two years later.

As the first male Downing Street spouse, Denis Thatcher stayed out of the limelight to a large degree while supporting his wife on her many travels and public engagements. He was said to give her

important behind-the-scenes advice on Cabinet choices and other personnel matters, but this role was not publicly discussed.

Margaret Thatcher first won election to Parliament in 1959, representing Finchley in north London. She climbed the Conservative Party ladder quickly, joining the Cabinet as education secretary in 1970.

In that post, she earned the unwanted nickname "Thatcher the milk snatcher' because of her reduction of school milk programs. It was a taste of battles to come.

As prime minister, she sold off one state industry after another: British Telecom, British Gas, Rolls-Royce, British Airways, British Coal, British Steel, the water companies and the electricity distribution system among them. She was proud of her government's role in privatizing some public housing, turning tenants into homeowners.

She survived an audacious 1984 assassination attempt by the Irish Republican Army that nearly succeeded. The IRA detonated a bomb in her hotel in Brighton during a party conference, killing and injuring senior government figures, but leaving the prime minister and her husband unharmed.

Thatcher won a third term in another landslide in 1987, but may have become overconfident. She trampled over cautionary advice

from her own ministers in 1989 and 1990 by imposing a hugely controversial "community charge" tax that was quickly dubbed a "poll tax" by opponents. It was designed to move Britain away from a property tax and instead imposed a flat rate tax on every adult except for retirees and people who were registered unemployed.

That decision may have been a sign that hubris was undermining Thatcher's political acumen. Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets in London and other cities, leading to some of the worst riots in the British capital for more than a century. The shocking sight of Trafalgar Square

turned into a smoldering battleground on March 31, 1990, helped convince many Conservative figures that Thatcher had stayed too long. In 1992, she was appointed in the

House of Lords, taking the title Baroness Thatcher of Kesteven.

Thatcher wrote several best-selling memoirs after leaving office and was a frequent speaker on the international circuit before she suffered several small strokes that in 2002 led her to curtail her lucrative public speaking career.

Denis Thatcher died the following year; they had been married more than a half

Thatcher's later years were marred by her son Mark Thatcher's murky involvement in bankrolling a 2004 coup in Equatorial Guinea. He was fined and received a suspended sentence for his role in the tawdry affair.

She suffered from dementia in her final years, and her public appearances became increasingly rare. British media reported that Thatcher had been staying at the Ritz - where she died Monday because her Belgravia home did not have an elevator and she was having difficulty getting around. She is survived by her two children,

Mark Thatcher and Carol Thatcher, and her two grandchildren.

World mourns Thatcher

AP, London

Combative and determined to get her way, Margaret Thatcher divided opinion down the middle in life - and in death.

Many leaders lauded Thatcher for her steely determination to modernize Britain's industrial landscape, even at the cost of strikes and riots, and to stand beside the United States as the west triumphed in the Cold War versus the Soviet Union. Others saw a pitiless tyrant who preferred conflict to compromise.

Yet virtually all, friend and foe alike, could agree on one overarching point expressed Monday by British Prime Minister David Cameron: The Iron Lady, he said, was "a great Briton."

As flags at Buckingham Palace, Parliament and across the United Kingdom were lowered to half-staff, A book of remembrance is opened at the palace said Queen Elizabeth II would send a private message of sympathy to the family of the 87year-old conservative icon.

Government officials began preparations for a London funeral with military honors at St Paul's Cathedral, though no date was fixed, followed by a private cremation.

"As our first woman prime minister, Margaret Thatcher succeeded against all the odds," Cameron said in Madrid. He cut short his trip to



the Grantham Museum, in northern England, yesterday, the town where former British PM Margaret Thatcher was born. PHOTO: AFP

Spain and canceled a visit to France to return to London for the funeral preparations.

In Washington, President Barack Obama said many Americans "will never forget her standing shoulder to shoulder with President (Ronald) Reagan, reminding the world that we are not simply carried along by the currents of history. We can shape them with moral conviction, unyielding courage and iron will."

In Poland, Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski said his country should erect a statue of the British leader. In a tweet he praised Thatcher as "a fearless champion of liberty, stood up for captive nations, helped free world win the Cold War."

Former Prime Minister Tony Blair, who ousted the Conservative Party from power seven years after Thatcher's resignation, conceded that Thatcher had been right to challenge labor union power - the traditional bedrock for Blair's own Labour Party.

Falklands lawmaker Mike Summers said Thatcher was "one of very few political leaders who could have mounted the expedition she mounted in 1982 to restore our freedom, and from a Falkland Islands perspective she will be forever remembered for that.'

Britain's pop culture icons past and present also sounded off about the woman who dominated the British political landscape through the 1980s. Many noted her inspirational role to women, even though Thatcher herself famously eschewed feminism and rarely promoted women herself.

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