

Harkin expected to drop out today

WASHINGTON — President Bush and Democrat Bill Clinton headed toward delegate-rich "Super Tuesday" races claiming big boosts from weekend victories.

The Democratic field was expected to narrow by one as Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin decided to call it quits.

Harkin scheduled news conferences for Monday in Washington and Des Moines after a series of disappointing finishes, including a 6 percent showing in South Carolina on Saturday.

Two Iowa Democratic Party officials said Harkin told he would announce his withdrawal from the race on Monday.

Nevada Democrats, meanwhile, held party caucuses Sunday to begin the delegate selection process.

Republican challenger Patrick Buchanan remained winless but vowed to take his insurgent candidacy all the

way to the GOP convention in Houston in August. "This campaign... is about more than piling up delegates," Buchanan said in a TV interview.

However, Buchanan strategists are now looking beyond Super Tuesday — where they are not optimistic of scoring wins — to the March 17 showdown in Michigan as a make-or-break state for the conservative TV commentator.

Bush's 67 percent win over two conservative GOP challengers and Clinton's 63 percent dominance of the Democratic field in South Carolina's primary on Saturday are likely to spill over into this week's Super Tuesday.

There are 11 Democratic races and eight Republican ones on Tuesday, most of them in the South.

Clinton won Wyoming on Saturday with 28 percent of the vote. Former Sen. Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts narrowly outpolling Clinton in Arizona in the overall vote, but Clinton won more delegates there.



What is Super Tuesday?

On Tuesday, eleven states will have primaries and caucuses with 421 Republican and 783 Democratic delegates at stake, almost one-fifth of all delegates to the national conventions this summer. This early contest has a large, real and psychological impact with its significant number of delegates.

Why it exists

South's strategy
Organized in 1988, it was the brain-child of southern states who wanted greater say in the nominating process.

Strength in numbers

It was hoped that if they banded together and voted as a bloc, it would help candidates favorable to the south, particularly moderate and conservative Democrats.

Front-loading

Presidential primaries have increased since 1968. This has shifted the focus of the nominating process from party leaders to state-by-state primary campaigns, allowing early primaries to give a candidate a winner's image.

How it has affected elections

More front-loading

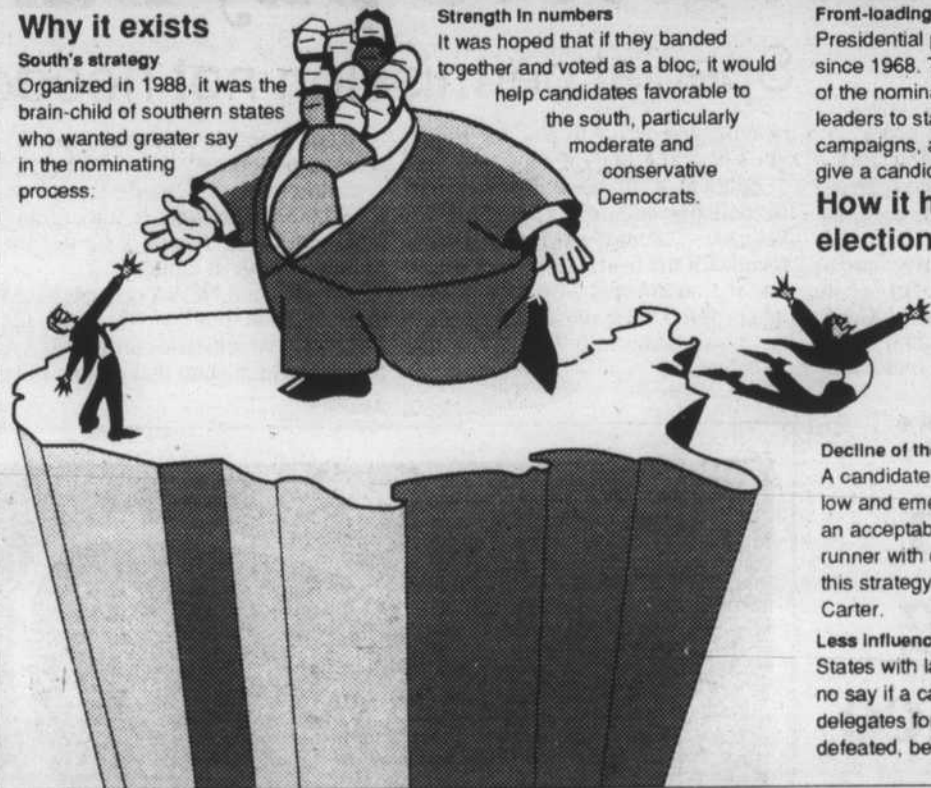
Candidates must organize and raise enough money even earlier or be in danger of being knocked out early on.

Decline of the dark horse

A candidate can no longer afford to lay low and emerge late in the process as an acceptable alternative to a front-runner with enemies. Jerry Brown tried this strategy in 1976 and lost to Jimmy Carter.

Less influence for later states

States with later primaries may have no say if a candidate wins enough delegates for nomination, or is defeated, before their primary.



AP

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War for disputed territory continues

BAKU, Azerbaijan — Armenians and Azerbaijanis battled Sunday for a third day over Askeran, a town in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Both former Soviet republics again charged that troops controlled by the Commonwealth of Independent States helped the other side. Such accusations repeatedly were denied by the Defense Ministry in Moscow.

Armenia's military commissioner, meanwhile, denied a Russian television report that his republic had ordered a general mobilization for military service of all eligible men up to age 50.

The two republics have been fighting since 1988 over Nagorno-Karabakh, an area inside Muslim Azerbaijan populated mostly by Christian Armenians. Fighting intensified after

the breakup of the Soviet Union and grew worse recently, with both sides making unconfirmed claims of hundreds of deaths.

Azerbaijan's president, Ayaz Mutalibov, was forced to resign Friday by hard-liners who thought he did not act strongly enough in the conflict.

The battle for Askeran erupted Friday when Azerbaijani militants fought their way into the outskirts of the town.

The Interfax news agency said Azerbaijani forces fired dozens of rockets into Askeran on Sunday.

"There were numerous casualties and many buildings were destroyed," Interfax reported, without providing a casualty count.

The ITAR-Tass news agency said

two other Armenian villages, Karmiravan and Shaumyanovsk, were attacked Saturday night and Sunday morning. It also said an Azerbaijani tank was destroyed near Askeran.

At least 42 people have been killed in Nagorno-Karabakh since Friday, Armenian press reports said.

Farkhat Mekhtiev, a spokesman for the Azerbaijani presidential press office, described the political situation in Azerbaijan as "chaotic" following Mutalibov's resignation. He said that while Mutalibov was temporarily replaced by parliament chairman Yagub Mamedov, real power belonged to Prime Minister Gasan Gasanov, who has vowed to press the fight with Armenia.

The parliament is scheduled to choose a new president Tuesday.

87 people die when ferry sinks off Thailand

Oil tanker slices passenger boat; 24 survive wreck

SI RACHA, Thailand — An oil tanker sliced into a ferry crowded with religious pilgrims before dawn Sunday, and at least 87 people drowned when the passenger ship sank, authorities said. About two dozen people were rescued.

Survivors said the ferry's captain apparently ignored warning lights flashed by the tanker and cut across its path. Authorities said he was missing.

Maj. Gen. Sathit Chalermsook of the marine police said the ferry might have carried 140 passengers but had no precise figure. Rescue operations in the nation's worst maritime disaster

in modern times stopped at nightfall and were to resume Monday.

Survivors said most passengers were asleep when the ships collided in the Gulf of Thailand. They said many people were trapped in the lower deck of the two-deck ferry.

A number of Thai ferries have capsized while overloaded with local and foreign tourists visiting offshore resort islands.

Sea traffic off the southeastern coast has increased dramatically in recent years because of a huge coastal development plan that includes a large port, industrial sites and tourist facilities.

At one point after Sunday's accident, Thai television quoted the Ministry of Interior as saying 130 bodies had been recovered. But the ministry later revised the number to 87.



AP

Rosenwasser

Continued from Page 1

Many Israeli women, aghast at the bloodshed and atrocities committed by their government against the Palestinians, are siding with their Pales-

The largest conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians is who has the right to the land, she said.

She told the audience they needed to pressure the American government to stop aiding Israel until the occupation is stopped.

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