

Perot campaigns in person at New Jersey race track

FLEMINGTON, N.J. (AP) — Ross Perot began to campaign in person on Sunday and joined the debate over character for the first time, casting himself as more reliable than President Bush or Bill Clinton.

Perot made the first face-to-face appearance of his revived campaign before an enthusiastic crowd of thousands at a stock car track. He also planned to speak to a rally in Pittsburgh later in the day.

"If you are going into combat and you could take any of the three of us, who would you want on your side?" Perot asked the cheering crowd at Flemington Speedway.

"If you were taken hostage in a foreign country, which one of the candidates do you think would come in and get you?" Perot said.

"All three candidates go over to your house one night and want to

— “
All three candidates go over to your house one night and want to borrow money from you. Which one would you lend money to?
 — Perot

borrow money from you. Which one would you lend money to?" he asked above uproarious laughter from the crowd.

"Which one of the three candidates as young men would you want your daughter to marry? Which of the three candidates will be the best role model for your children?"

Perot flew by private jet to the rally with his wife, Margot. Paul Kuhl, the speedway's owner, who sported a Perot button, said he put

the crowd at 24,000 to 26,000, but other estimates were of about 10,000 people.

Perot attacked what he called Republican dirty tricks by saying he dropped out of the race July 16 when he learned that GOP operatives planned to distribute a fake photograph of his daughter, Carolyn, "to smear her before the wedding and actually disrupt the wedding ceremony."

Perot said he didn't tell her why he quit the race until she returned from her honeymoon. Perot quoted his daughter as saying, "The wedding's over, get back into the race."

"I don't want everybody in America plucking chickens for a living," Perot said, ridiculing Clinton's efforts to expand the job base during his 12 years as governor of Arkansas, which has become a center for chicken processing.

"You know they say I'm crazy and everybody who supported me is crazy," Perot said.

Bullet strikes U.S. plane; Somali airlift suspended

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — An American plane delivering food to the starving in the central town of Baidoa was struck by a bullet Sunday, and the United States suspended its airlift.

An American spokesman said workers did not know who had fired on the cargo plane.

Relief agencies are caring for an estimated 80,000 people in Baidoa, which is among the towns hardest hit by Somalia's famine. However, relief officials say the situation has improved with increased deliveries of food, and the daily death toll has dropped from a high of about 350 to 70.

Drought and war have killed more than 100,000 people in Somalia this year, and another 2 million are on the verge of starvation.

Clan warfare and banditry have periodically forced the suspension of international food airlifts, underscoring the difficulties relief workers face. As much as half the nearly 200,000 tons of relief supplies delivered to Somalia this year has been looted.

It was the second time a U.S. plane was hit by gunfire since the Americans began their emergency airlift of food Aug. 21. Another C-130 was hit

by a stray bullet Sept. 18 in the western town of Belet Huen, causing a two-week suspension of U.S. flights to that town.

In the last week, a German relief plane was hit by a bullet at Mogadishu's airport, and on Saturday two planes for the International Committee of the Red Cross were fired on in the southern port of Kismayu.

In Sunday's incident, the U.S. plane was making the second of 12 flights planned for Baidoa, said Army Lt. Col. Robert Donnelly, the spokesman for the American operation, based in Kenya's coastal city of Mombasa.

Donnelly said the military C-130 Hercules was shot as it approached Baidoa's airstrip Sunday morning.

"One bullet hit the aircraft," said Donnelly, 43, of Suffern, N.Y. "We don't know how many shots were fired or where the bullet was fired from."

He said the bullet hit the right external fuel tank and it was only discovered when a crew member looked out a window and saw fuel leaking. No one was hurt, and the plane returned to Mombasa.

The remaining 10 flights were suspended, with some diverted to Hoddur, 80 miles to the north.

Indian holiday of lights turns deadly

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — An explosion in a fireworks shop during a national holiday celebration Sunday started a fire that killed at least 25 people and injured 100, news reports said.

The explosion in the eastern city of Jaria occurred as millions of Hindus across India celebrated Diwali, the festival of lights, with fireworks and lamps.

The Press Trust of India news agency said at least 100 people were feared trapped in the rubble of several buildings destroyed by the explosion and fire. The news agency quoted

rescue officials as saying many of those trapped are feared dead.

The explosion was probably triggered by a short circuit in the fireworks shop, Press Trust said. It provided no other details.

Earlier Sunday, a man died of burns after his clothes caught fire when firecrackers exploded near him, the news agency reported.

Diwali stems from the Sanskrit-language word Deepawali, or row of lights. Hindus light oil lamps and wax candles on window ledges and garden walls, converting villages, towns and

cities into vast pools of illumination.

On Saturday, 150 makeshift fireworks shops were gutted in an accidental fire in the northern city of Shimla. Also Saturday, 14 fireworks shops, two cars and a motorcycle were destroyed in a fire in New Delhi. No injuries were reported.

The origin of the centuries-old festival is not known, but it has come to be associated with a number of legends. The most common is that Diwali commemorates the coronation of Rama, an incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu, as the king of Ayodhya.

Clinton

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form in higher education would help him find work in the future.

"I'm going to be a professor, so I figure if he helps education, there's going to be more jobs for professors," Bufkin said.

Along with students and other area residents, high-ranking Iowa Democrats, including Sen. Tom Harkin, turned out to show support for Clinton.

About 1,400 unionized work-

ers rallied in Des Moines earlier Saturday to hear Clinton speak about rejuvenating the U.S. economy and creating jobs. His speech was broadcast to AFL-CIO groups in 31 states.

Bush has been pledging to create more jobs since he was elected, Clinton said, but hasn't followed through with his promises.

"Today is the day we set our clocks back an hour, and he's been trying to do that for four years," Clinton said of Bush. "No matter how much he sets his clock back, as my running mate Al Gore said, 'It's still time for him to go.'"

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HIV

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reported having more than one partner over the past 12 months.

Frighteningly, he said, 66 percent of those surveyed reported not using condoms. Nationally, 8 million people under the age of 25 have a sexually transmitted disease.

Most people are surprised to find that only 797 adolescents in the country have AIDS, Hunnicutt said. But that number includes only those who have reported the full physical manifestations of the disease.

"Remember that there is a window of time from contracting the virus to expressing the illness," he said. The window is about 10 years. The present 797 cases could climb to 41,000 in 10 years, Hunnicutt said.

The infection rate on college campuses is 3.3 per 1,000 students, he said, and people still don't see AIDS as a big problem.

"The spread of the disease does not happen linearly; it happens exponentially," Hunnicutt said.

For example, he said, one HIV-positive student with five partners who each have five other partners during one year translates into 125 people possibly infected with the virus. If each of those people also has five partners, then the number could reach 625. In a five-year period, he said, 15,625 people could be infected with HIV.

It took the United States eight years to diagnose its first 100,000 AIDS cases, Hunnicutt said. For the second 100,000 cases, it took only 26 months.

A vaccine is the greatest hope for putting a stop to AIDS, Hunnicutt said, but one is not likely to be discovered soon.

The best way to reduce the risk of contracting the virus is knowing the facts about alcohol and HIV, he said.

There are three ways the virus can be transmitted: 1) through sexual contact; 2) sharing intravenous needles; and 3) from mother to child at birth.

Contrary to popular myths, HIV isn't transmitted through casual contact, such as hugging or shaking hands, mosquito bites, saliva, tears, urine or blood transfusions, he said.

Hunnicutt said blood had been screened for HIV since 1985, and the risk of contracting the virus through transfusions had virtually been wiped out.

Ways to prevent contracting the virus fall under two categories: safe sex and safer sex. Safe sex includes abstinence or a long-term monogamous relationship with an uninfected partner, he said. Safer sex suggests the modification of sexual practices through the use of a latex condom, Hunnicutt said.

The safety of condoms is limited because of improper use, leakage and breakage. Condom failure rate for contracting HIV may be higher than the failure rate for pregnancy, Hunnicutt said, because the virus can be contracted at any time, while pregnancy can only occur when a woman ovulates.

"The only way to be 100-percent sure that you or your partner is not infected is to get tested," he said.

Because it takes six months for HIV antibodies to appear in the bloodstream, Hunnicutt said, a blood test may be negative. It's best to have another test six months later, he said, and during that time, partners should refrain from high-risk sex.

Most people tend to look at the behavior of those around them, Hunnicutt said, and say that it's a normal part of growing up.

"Normal is not the issue," he said. "The issue is what's healthy."

"The question is not necessarily what other people are doing; the question is, 'What decision are you going to make?'"

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