

Racism will barely affect US election: McCain

TAMPA, Florida

Republican presidential candidate John McCain says racism will play virtually no role when voters head to the polls next Tuesday because it will be trumped by the nation's economic problems.

In a transcript of an interview taped for broadcast Wednesday night on CNN's "Larry King Live," McCain said people will vote "for the best of reasons, not the worst of reasons." He said most people will vote based on who they want to lead the country.

Referring to people who might vote against Democrat Barack Obama because he is black, McCain added: "It would be a tiny, tiny, minority. Because people are hurting too much now. I mean, they're worried about staying in their homes, keeping their jobs."

The sharp economic downturn and calamity in the financial industry has become the campaign's dominant issue.

McCain also repudiated a suggestion by conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh that Colin Powell's endorsement of Obama was because both men are black. Powell is a Republican and served President Bush as secretary of state.

"I reject it," he said of Limbaugh's statement. "Look,

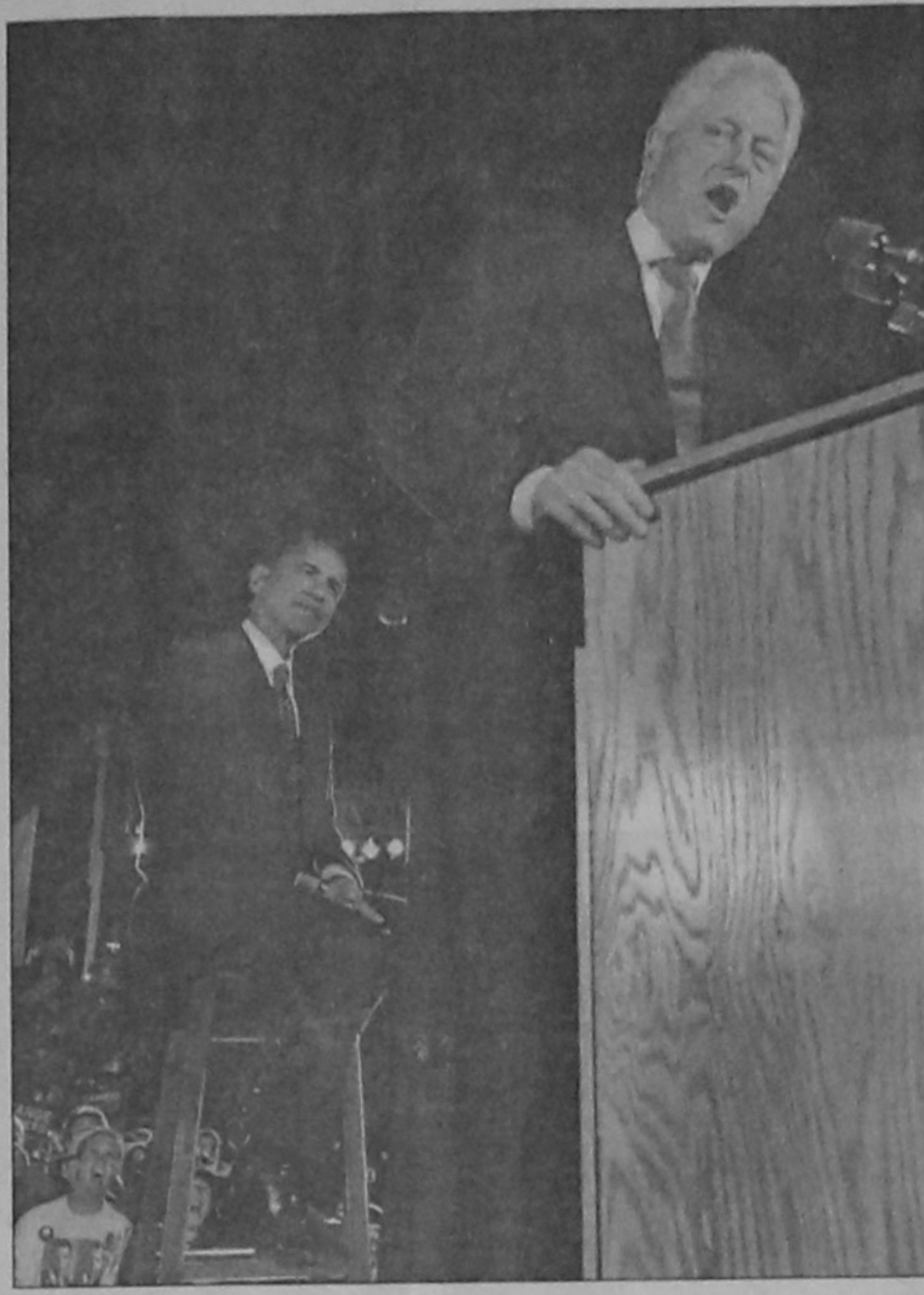
there is racism in America. We all know that because we can't stop working against it. But I am totally convinced that 99 and 44 one-hundredths percent of the American people are going to make a decision on who is best to lead this country."

McCain's comments came six days before Election Day. Polls show only small percentages of people saying the race of the candidates will be a factor in their vote, but analysts and political professionals will be watching the results for evidence of any role racial attitudes may play.

In the interview, the Arizona senator also said he was surprised at how controversial his vice-presidential running mate, Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, has become. Though she is a major star among Republicans and conservatives, many Democrats and some independents find her polarizing. And, in many polls, she is disliked by as many or more people as like her.

"You know, I didn't think she would be so controversial," McCain said. "But I got to tell you, every time I'm around her, I'm uplifted. This is a solid, dedicated, reformer. A fine governor."

He said he had "total" confidence in Palin should she have to handle a crisis like an attack on the United States.



Former US president Bill Clinton addresses a rally for US Democratic presidential candidate Illinois Senator Barack Obama at Osceola Heritage Park in Kissimmee, Florida on Wednesday.

Indian astrologers predict sweeping Obama win

AFP, Mumbai

Indian astrologers are predicting Barack Obama will win the US presidential election by a comfortable margin, but one warned of potentially life-threatening times ahead for the Democratic candidate.

"Obama is 100 percent in Leo and Leos are not only born leaders but they have a special charm all of their own," well-known Indian astrologer Bejan Daruwalla told AFP.

"(Republican candidate) John McCain has good points but he's nowhere in the picture. He's miles away. He might have been very good in his time but this is not the right time."

Fellow Mumbai astrologer Raj Kumar Sharma also forecast a clear Obama victory in the November 4 vote -- mirroring the latest opinion poll data that suggests the 47-year-old Illinois senator is out in front.

"The circumstances and conjunction of stars are very clearly indicating that John McCain is going to lose this election and Barack Obama is going to win, at least by 10 percent," he said.

But he said he was worried about the weak sun moving into Obama's chart from April 2010 to January 2011.

'Dirty tricks' escalate as US election nears

AFP, Washington

In the final days of the US presidential election, campaign yard signs are being defaced, fliers advise Democrats to vote a day late, DVDs warning of Islam's clash with the West flood mailboxes, and allegations of fraud are flying.

In American politics, it's all part of the late-game frenzy, when what one side considers a dirty trick can be easily hailed by the other side as a pure exercise of the right to free speech.

For example, a phony flier bearing the state of Virginia's logo has turned up, saying that "all Republican party supporters and independent voters supporting Republican candidates shall vote on November 4th as prescribed by law."

Those supporting Democrats in the battleground state "shall vote on November 5th," it said.

Similar fliers in Philadelphia warn that anyone with unpaid traffic tickets or outstanding arrest warrants could be jailed if they turn up at the polls on election day.

These practices commonly target minorities -- who this year overwhelmingly support Barack Obama -- and while most states

prohibit making false statements regarding elections, the laws are difficult to enforce.

"It is an insidious form of vote suppression that often goes undressed by authorities, and the perpetrators are virtually never caught," said a report by the political watchdog group Common Cause.

Vandals in northern Virginia went on a brief escapade this month, pasting a letter "S" on yard signs so they read "Osama-Biden," in an attempt to link the Democrat and running mate Joe Biden to al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden.

Other tricks have verged on absurd, such as the 20-year-old white Ohio woman who claimed she was attacked by assailants who carved a "B" (for Barack) on her cheek in anger at the John McCain sticker on her car.

She later admitted fabricating the story. In addition, the "B" was carved in reverse, as if done with the help of a mirror.

Experts say that when an election approaches, just about anything goes, as Democrats tend to focus on get-out-the-vote efforts while Republicans aim to sway undecided voters and hope that low turnout will bode well for conservatives.

This election season, both sides have seized on allegations of fraud, after authorities launched an investigation into the nationwide community activist group ACORN for allegedly attempting to swell the voter rolls by registering people who don't exist.

The Republican National Committee maintains a website listing of "recent vote fraud cases," while the Democratic National Committee posts a "Count the Lies Counter."

Meanwhile, television, mail and Internet advertising by the campaigns, political action committees and advocacy groups have taken an increasingly negative turn on both sides.

Potential voters in key swing states have also been swamped with ideological mailings -- including one DVD from the Clarion Fund called "Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West," which has been mailed to 28 million people.

The Clarion Fund insists it simply aims to "raise awareness because people are being lulled into a false sense of security," said communications director Gregory Ross.

Iraq opposes any clause letting US stay after 2011

AFP, Baghdad

Baghdad wants to delete any reference in a security pact with Washington to the possibility of US troops staying in Iraq after 2011, an MP close to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki said yesterday.

The demand is one of five amendments proposed by Iraq, Ali al-Adib, a member of the Shiite Dawa party, told AFP.

"The Iraqi government wants to remove from the agreement any mention of a possible extension of the American presence in Iraq," he said.

The controversial document, which negotiators have laboured over for months, is supposed to be in place by the end of the year to set new

guidelines for US military operations in Iraq after the expiry of the present UN mandate.

US President George W. Bush on Wednesday promised to consider Baghdad's proposed changes to the SOFA (Status of Forces Agreement) but warned against shifts that risked "undermining" the accord.

The draft pact, which has triggered fierce opposition in Iraq, says US forces will withdraw from towns and neighbourhoods by the end of June next year and from the whole country by the end of 2011.

In the latest version, clause four of section 25, dealing with the withdrawal of American troops, allows "the possibility for each party to ask the other to put back or bring forward

the date of withdrawal."

It says any such change must "have the approval of both sides".

Bush, who leaves office January 20, discussed the agreement with Maliki on Monday.

He had hoped to have the final accord by July 31, but now is all but certain not to see it approved before the November 4 election to choose his successor.

Iraq also wants changes to the rules on immunity for American soldiers, another of the thorny issues of the agreement.

Congolese rebels threaten to open fire on UN force

AFP, Goma

The leader of Congolese rebels warned UN forces blocking their way to the refugee-swollen city of Goma on Thursday that they would open fire if the UN tried to prevent their takeover of the city. Around 800 peacekeepers from the UN's MONUC force are the only obstacle to a complete rebel takeover of the strategic eastern Democratic Republic of Congo city after government forces fled the rebel advance on Wednesday.

The UN Security Council has condemned the rebel assault, and begun moves to send troop reinforcements to Goma.

Rebel leader Laurent Nkunda said he wanted to avoid a direct confrontation with UN peacekeepers, but would not shirk a fight for the city if necessary.

"We will respect MONUC. We cannot engage them, but if they shoot at us, they are soldiers, we will have to defend ourselves," he told AFP in a telephone interview conducted in English.

"MONUC cannot refuse me to go to Goma. They are incapable of securing the people of Goma so how can they refuse me to go there?"

Nkunda's forces declared a unilateral ceasefire Wednesday after being kept at around 20 kilometres (12 miles) from Goma by MONUC helicopter gunships.

UN forces had blocked tens of thousands of people displaced by the fighting from entering Goma, a French aid group said Thursday.



A Syrian woman shouts slogans as another holds a portrait of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad during a demonstration in Damascus yesterday to protest a deadly US raid that targeted a Syrian village near the Iraqi border on October 26.

SONY



র্যাংগ্‌স

লেটেস্ট মডেল ২১"

এঙ্গেল ভিউইং ফ্ল্যাট টিভি

FIRST TIME IN BANGLADESH



60° ভিউইং এঙ্গেল

মাত্র

৳ ১৫,৬৯০

এ সুযোগ ৩১ অক্টোবর '০৮ পর্যন্ত

সমাপ্তি উপলক্ষে..

সনি রঞ্জিন টিভি



কিনলেই
সনি ডিভিডি প্লেয়ার

মাত্র ৳ ৫,৫০০

সনি প্রজেক্টরে



৳ ৫,০০০

ছাড়!

প্রতিটি র্যাংগ্‌স



New Arrival Vertical Deep Fridge

রেফ্রিজারেটর/ফ্রিজারের সাথে

৳ ৭০০

ডিস্কাউন্ট +

১টি আয়রন

RANGS

Buy 1 Get 1 Free

40" S & V Series Bravia

26" LCD Bravia Free

40"W, X, D & 46"V, 52"W Series Bravia

20" LCD Bravia Free

32" & 37" All Series Bravia

Sony Home Theatre Free

26" All Series Bravia

Sony Home Theatre Free

20" LCD Bravia

Sony Bluetooth mp4 Player Free

পাওয়া যাবে SONY RANGS - এর সকল বিক্রয় কেন্দ্রে