

Focus on the Clinton victory

Clinton first of his generation to win White House

LITTLE ROCK, Nov 4: Bill Clinton became the first of his generation to win the White House on Tuesday after a grueling 13-month campaign in which he trumped charges about his character with relentless attacks on his opponent's economic stewardship, reports AP.

"It's an overwhelming experience," Clinton said as he cast a ballot for himself while voters nationwide were doing the same.

Clinton arrived in Little Rock to an exuberant and emotional homecoming at the end of a 29-hour swing from New Jersey to Colorado.

"It's been a good, long ride," said Clinton, whose pledge to focus on middle-class problems, in the end, overshadowed Republican charges about his Vietnam draft record and alleged extra-marital affairs.

Clinton, 46, became the second youngest elected President in US history and the first Democrat to win since 1976. He took his 12-year-old daughter, Chelsea, into the voting booth, shuffling his feet as he read the ballot behind a curtain.

Walking back to the governor's mansion, he flashed a thumbs up sign to supporters and, at one point, raised both

hands to the sky. Clinton's last stop before returning to his Arkansas home was in a hangar at Denver's Stapleton Airport, inside to protect the weary, adrenaline-fueled candidate and hundreds of cheering supporters from a cold, windy and sometimes snowy morning.

"The new Democratic Party represents the West better than the old Republican party of trickle-down economics," Clinton said, explaining why he was finishing his year-long effort in a state long considered safe Republican territory.

"I ask you what it would be like to have an economic policy that brought us together," he said. "Think of John Kennedy's unrestrained faith in the future of America."

"On this last day of the campaign, we should take it to the limit one more time," he said.

Clinton pushed his health to the limit in the campaign's final hours—going non-stop since Monday morning, forcing from his hoarse throat the theme that has carried him since the beginning: change presidents to change the economy.

"I've got a simple message for you tonight. Do you think



Bill Clinton and Al Gore

you'd be better off with four more years? he asked the several thousand people who gathered at the Fort Worth airport after 1 am local time (0800 GMT) Tuesday.

"Wouldn't it be nice to have four new years? It drives me nuts to see all the jobs that are out there to be done."

Campaigning all night—surviving on cat naps between stops in Texas, New Mexico and Colorado—the Arkansas governor pounded away at President George Bush, but not by name, and even more indirectly at independent candidate Ross Perot.

"I have just about lost my voice," he told a largely Hispanic, working-class crowd at McAllen, Texas, in the Rio Grande valley near the Mexican border. In the voting booth, he said, "If you will be my voice, I will speak for you for four years."

Of Bush, he said, "If he had spent so much time attacking your problems, we'd be in a lot better shape today and so would he."

Referring to Perot, he said, "Your vote counts just as much as any billionaire's."

In Albuquerque, several thousand people were on hand after 3 am (1000 GMT) in a state which no Democrat has

won since Lyndon Johnson in 1964.

"I know that New Mexico hasn't voted democratic in a presidential election for nearly 30 years. But I think you're ready for a change too," he said.

Clinton's last campaign trip carried him more than 4,000 miles (6,600 kilometers) from its start in Philadelphia early Monday.

His squadron of three leased Boeing 737 jets touched airports in eight battleground states—Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, Texas, New Mexico and Colorado—which together account for nearly half of the 270 electoral votes needed to win.

While Clinton was away, Little Rock was being prepared for a huge party. Downtown streets were closed and every hotel was booked as Clinton supporters anticipated a victory.

Clinton promised no official statement—either claiming victory or conceding defeat—until after all polls close in the lower 48 states. He made that promise on a recent trip to California at the urging of Democrats there, who fear a voter dropoff if the presidential race is decided early.

Life-long preparation for presidency

WASHINGTON, Nov 4: Life for Arkansas governor Bill Clinton has seemingly been one preparatory experience after another, each aimed at a specific goal—the presidency—with a few stumbles along the way, reports AP.

Clinton, the nation's longest-serving governor, rose to win the presidency on Tuesday night, defeating incumbent President George Bush.

But Clinton's past has not been pristine. He is still dogged by questions about efforts to avoid the military draft, anti-Vietnam War activities in London when he was a Rhodes scholar at Oxford and marital infidelity.

Feverishly curious, effortlessly outgoing, always in a hurry to do something, Clinton, 46, is described by friends as a "sponge for knowledge," a deep-thinker with an engaging, persuasive personality and a smooth-talker with a gift for gab much like his late father, a salesman.

His critics call him "slick." More than anything, Clinton is a tireless competitor who obsessively drills for his chosen sport—politics—with a sense of urgency to be liked and places everyone.

He chose to run for president in a year when better-known Democrats bowed out, thinking Bush was unbeatable. He quickly rose above a crowd of half a dozen obscure candidates to win the nomination.

"Very few things are accidental in Bill's life," said Jim Moore, a roommate at Georgetown University.

At 30, Clinton was elected Arkansas attorney general. Two years later, he became the nation's youngest governor. His brash attitude caused him to lose his re-election bid, but he came back two years later and has been governor of Arkansas ever since.

As public as he has been about his ambitions, there is an extremely private side to Clinton, a person who never discussed with his closest friends his most painful experiences—his turbulent childhood, his alcoholic stepfather, his half-brother Roger Jr's drug conviction, his marriage difficulties.

Friends and family say his passion for political and personal popularity, stems from the two determining factors of his childhood: the death of his father before he was born, and the alcoholism of his stepfather Roger Clinton, who loved his family but abused his wife, Virginia.

Clinton was born William Jefferson Blythe IV, named after the father he never knew. His father was a well-liked equipment salesman from Hope, Ark, who was killed in a car accident four months before Clinton was born.

At age 2, his mother left him with his grandparents while she pursued an advanced nursing degree.

When Billy Blythe was 4, Virginia married Roger Clinton, the Butck dealer in Hope.

The boy, who legally changed his name to Clinton, grew up quickly. At age 14, he confronted a raging stepfather, coming through his parents bedroom door and, already a head taller, declared, "Don't ever strike or lay a hand on my mother ever again. Not ever," according to his mother.

"I was 40 years old by the time I was 16," Clinton has said.

"At high school, Clinton was band leader and had the lead role in the school play—Gentleman Prefer Blondes—and he won a trip to Washington through a student government competition. There, in the summer of 1963, he met President John F Kennedy, and had his picture taken with him.

Smitten with Washington and public service, Clinton applied to only one school, Georgetown, and was accepted. He roomed with Tom Campbell, now an airline pilot based in California, who remembers at their first meeting, Clinton asked for his vote for freshmen class president.

He won a Rhodes scholarship and went to Oxford, England. Then he enrolled at Yale Law School, where he met Hillary Rodham, a sophisticated feminist from Chicago who had graduated at the top of her Wellesley College class.

Clinton returned to Arkansas in 1973 to practice and teach law, and launch his political career with an unsuccessful bid for Congress the next year. He married Hillary in 1975, and a year later was elected attorney general; two years later governor.

What strikes some friends most about Clinton is that he has hardly changed at all over the year—still the same Clinton they knew in high school, or the same Clinton they knew in college.

Clinton will become the third-youngest US president and the first member of his generation to win the White House.

A mandate for change

WASHINGTON, Nov 4: For Democrats, it was euphoria not felt in 12 years. For Republicans, it was the end of the Reagan-Bush era, and the beginning of a struggle for control of the party, on the losing end for the first time since 1976, reports AP.

"It's a victory that obliterates a lot of the demographic, geographic and ideological barriers that they said prevented the Democratic Party from winning on the national level," said party Chairman Ron Brown.

"This is a dramatic mandate for change, from a revived and energized Democratic Party."

As the state-by-state results slowly made the outcome clear, Democrats tried to contain their glee, waiting for the polls to close on the West Coast.

Ever superstitious, Bill Clinton, now the president-elect, told aides he wanted it that way. "The results finally clear," California's polls closed, they danced in the streets of

Little Rock, the capital of the Arkansas governor's state.

Jesse Jackson didn't wait, telling a Democratic Party celebration in Washington: "Today we defeated Bush. Today we defeated fear."

Bush administration and campaign officials, many of them veterans of three straight presidential victories, were somber. They echoed President Bush's pledge to cooperate in the transition.

"He knows in his heart he's done the right things for this country," said Bush campaign manager Fred Malek. "He will do everything in his power to ensure a smooth transition."

As states Bush needed to win went to Clinton, Bush aides faced up to defeat.

"Sometimes the wind is at your back. Sometimes it's at your face," said Bush deputy campaign manager Mary Matalin.

Other Republicans began criticizing the Bush campaign while many states were still voting.

Supporters of Ross Perot said even a loss would mean a win for the Texas tycoon. They noted he brought millions of voters back to a political system that had driven them away.

Combined, it was one more night of "spin" from the campaign aides, advisers and handlers. This political season all but over, it was one more — for some the last-chance to give their version of why the nation voted as it did.

"This indeed was a referendum on the need for economic change," said Clinton campaign manager David Wilhelm. "The voters were extraordinarily focused on that issue. Every time George Bush tried to change the subject he hurt himself."

Clay Mulford, Perot's son-in-law and the general counsel for his independent campaign, said the Perot legacy would be "a very positive one for the citizens and for the way politicians relate to them."

In defeat they excel

By Nilratan Halder

People in Bangladesh have had a rare insight into the US presidential election this time, thanks to the ruthless efficiency of the CNN for its live coverage. Many of the things are new to us, and therefore no question of pausing and pondering on any comparable situation in those areas. But there are areas common between the US system and ours that naturally ought to draw comparison. One area, however, stands out quite prominently. It is the manner of conceding

defeat by the vanquished.

Both George Bush and Ross Perot have lost to Bill Clinton, but even in their defeat the incumbent president and the Texan billionaire have maintained the high standard and lofty tradition that have made the US what it is. At this point what really matter are the many excellences with which both the victor and the vanquished treat each other. By all accounts, dignity, grace and greatness of heart are never allowed to plunge a point below.



Down but not out

Well, that really is the beauty of democracy. Even in defeat, one has the opportunity to scale a newer height in the way Bush and Perot did. Perot knew right from the beginning that he was fighting a losing battle. But not quite. It is he who gave the American electorate a new sense of direction and virtually helped blow a fresh wind in the whole process. Bush too fought as an underdog and that perhaps explains the not so sophisticated personal attack he made during the election campaign. He paid the price for the dirty trick.

Once the results were in, he was however very prompt — perhaps among the first few — to congratulate Bill Clinton on his victory. He betrayed no sign of animosity or even rivalry but gracefully extended his full co-operation in a smooth and peaceful transition of power. But Ross Perot did even better in that he was quite philosophical. He said that he considered his life 'like a grain of sand in the oyster.' It is no mean achievement to bring the best in one in defeat. Bush and Ross have exactly done that, they rose to the occasion and Clinton has four long years before him to match their performance not in defeat but in victory. The American people are looking forward to a really new beginning, a great beginning.

Braun: First black woman Senator

WASHINGTON, Nov 4: The makeup of the US Congress changed dramatically Tuesday when voters elected the first black woman in the Senate, increased the number of blacks in the House and Democrats benefitted from presidential candidate Bill Clinton's gains, reports AP.

Clinton's march toward victory would end the dominant post-World War II pattern of a Republican-controlled White House and a Democratic Congress. That could end legislative paralysis and pave the way for quick measures — such as trimming the huge government budget deficit — to revive the economy.

Past legislative "gridlock" between the White House and Congress has stalled other bills — such as those to reform health care, a high priority of Clinton.

Republicans all but abandoned hopes for a Senate takeover. Democrats seemed assured of protecting their 57-45 majority — and perhaps adding a few seats.

"I think Bill Clinton tonight is helping a lot of people," said Rep John Lewis, a Democrat from Georgia and a member of the House leadership, as he surveyed returns showing that many of his colleagues will return next year.

Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois became the first black woman elected to the Senate Tuesday, defeating Republican Rich Williamson, a former State Department official. Five

Southern states sent to Washington their first black members of the House of Representatives this century.

Blacks increased their representation in the House by one, to 27, and could capture more seats as votes are counted.



Braun makes history

The black gains were due in part to redrawing election district boundaries to create new majority black areas and encourage minority candidates to run.

Besides Braun, 11 other Democrats won new terms in the Senate. The Democrats lost a seat in North Carolina

but picked one up in Wisconsin.

Republican Sen Alfonse D'Amato, who rode to the Senate on the Ronald Reagan landslide in 1980, survived a stiff challenge from Democratic Attorney General Robert Abrams in one of the most mean-spirited Senate contests. D'Amato painted Abrams as "hopelessly liberal." Abrams denounced D'Amato as "a fascist."

Among the Democratic incumbents re-elected to the Senate were Patrick Leahy of Vermont, Wendell Ford of Kentucky, Barbara Mikulski of Maryland, Bob Graham of Florida, John Breaux of Louisiana, Richard Shelby of Alabama and Christopher Dodd of Connecticut. Former astronaut John Glenn survived the toughest challenge of his career to remain in the Senate representing Ohio.

Three Republican incumbents, Bob Dole of Kansas, Dan Coats of Indiana and Don Nickles of Oklahoma, also won.

The House of Representatives, the larger of the two chambers of Congress with primary responsibility for economic legislation, could gain more new faces than at any time since 1932. All 435 seats in the House were contested Tuesday.

Democratic Rep Dave McCurdy, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, won re-election from Oklahoma. S B Woo's failed to become the first member of the US Congress born in China.

Youngest president since Kennedy to make economy main issue

NEW YORK, Nov 4: Bill Clinton, the youngest president since John Kennedy in 1960, is expected to act energetically to treat the ailing US economy with medicine aimed at spurring growth, creating jobs, providing health care and improving education, reports AP.

"These are the things we have run on and these are the things we would want to address right out of the box," said Clinton campaign director and confidant Bruce Lindsey.

An Election Day poll of people who had just voted showed the depth and the impact of those economic concerns. Nearly 80 per cent said the economy was "not good" or "poor," and they voted over-

whelmingly for Clinton.

Clinton will promptly seek an alliance with the Democratic majority in Congress which has not seen a Democratic president elected since Jimmy Carter in 1976.

He is expected to convene a meeting before his inauguration with the main power brokers on Capitol Hill to seek a consensus on priority legislation.

But, as he works to cure the economy's ailments, Clinton will have to keep in mind his pledge to rein in the budget deficit.

Aides indicate that Clinton will surround himself with a young staff and that women and minorities will be better represented on the staff and in the Cabinet than was the case in the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Clinton is expected to rescind Bush's ban on abortions at federally funded clinics, and sign bills allowing unpaid family emergency leave, regulation of cable television and possibly other legislation killed by Bush vetoes.

A team of volunteer Clinton economists was at work well before the election on a plan to speed up economic recovery proposals. According to campaign statements and information from aides, the Clinton administration's first-100-day package would include: — Short-term measures to jump-start the economy, spending billions on roads, bridges and other projects to create jobs fast. — Tax reforms to help long-term economic growth, including a research and development tax credit and a tax break for investment in

startup companies.

— An education package that offers apprenticeship training to high school graduates not bound for college and eases the conditions of college loans.

— Legislation guaranteeing every American basic health care. Forging a package that includes the dramatic insurance reforms needed to control spending will be a major test of Clinton's resolve against doctors, drug companies, hospitals and other powerful interest groups. — Creation of urban enter-

prise zones to attract businesses to the inner city disaster areas with tax and other incentives.

Clinton's chief economic advisors include: Roger C Altman, 46, investment banker and former assistant treasury secretary for domestic policy in the Carter administration; Robert B Reich, 46, a political economist at Harvard University; Robert E Rubing, 54, New York investment banker and Clinton contributor; Robert J Shapiro, 43, former aide to 1988 Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis; Ira C Magaziner, 44, Rhodes Scholar with Clinton; Derek N Shearer, 45, California professor; Felix Rohatyn, 64, New York investment banker.

Clinton will have to decide on his Cabinet and White House team. There are thousands of political jobs in the government to be filled. The new president will receive briefings from top figures in the outgoing administration on the affairs of state. He probably will have a courtesy meeting with Bush.

In addition, Clinton's transition team will place people in each of the departments of government. They will prepare documents for him describing pending policy issues.

And he must consult with the leaders of the new

transfer of power works.

Q Is there any uncertainty about who is in-charge of the nation?

A. No. Bush retains all constitutional powers as president until Clinton's inauguration at Noon on January 20.

As a practical matter, though, he is now a "lame duck" president. Though his constitutional powers remain, his political preeminence is likely to dissipate quickly.

Democrats returning to power for the first time in 12 years, and within Bush's own party, factions can be expected to waste no time battling to fill the political vacuum created by his defeat.

Q When does Clinton's election become official?

A. Not until the Electoral College votes are counted.

Under the Constitution voters on Tuesday actually elected electors from each state—one for every member of Congress. The electors will meet in their state capitals on December 14 to officially cast their votes. By law, the electoral votes are counted by Congress on January 6, 1993.

Q Will the new president gradually take over presidential powers?

A. No. He remains without presidential authority until his inauguration.

But he will spend the next 11 weeks preparing for his new administration. The General Services Administration has had office space in Washington furnished and ready for the arriving Clinton team, expected to number in the hundreds.

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Congress to pave the way for his legislative agenda.

Q Why must the new president wait so long to take office?

A. The Constitution sets Noon, January 20, as the time the new president assumes office. Until 1933, and the ratification of the 20th Amendment to the Constitution, the president-elect had to wait even longer until March 4.

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