

LETTER FROM HARVARD

The Rise of Patrick Buchanan

In this cold and freezing winter, the hot news is the meteoric rise of Patrick Buchanan from fringe candidate to potential front runner in the Republican presidential candidate nomination process.

into more technologically sophisticated, capital-intensive sectors. However, although international trade theory says that it all works out in the long run with everyone being better off, the American garment worker who has lost his job to his lower-paid Mexican counterpart is not exactly jumping with joy.

which would protect American industries without losing its export markets. Buchanan's brand of populism, of course, draws on a long (although somewhat marginal) history of isolationism and imperial fantasies imbedded in the American body politic.

unfriendly, even hostile to the rights of women and minorities (African Americans, Jewish Americans, Hispanic Americans), and the main proponent of a fundamentalist Christian conception of American society.

Republican position has not endeared him to the growing Hispanic electorate. His attacks on the welfare system and the undeserving poor have been seen as thinly veiled attempts to stigmatise African Americans.

In short Buchanan has managed to alienate almost everyone except his core constituency: white blue-collar workers, men and women — who make up the bulk of registered voters. He has also kept faith with the Christian Right (perhaps the most powerful lobbying group in the Republican party), by taking an uncompromising stance on opposing the right to abortion under any circumstances and promoting a vision of Christian family values.

Buchanan's ascendancy has come as a big surprise to most commentators and political pundits who have basically written him off as a marginal candidate. His success owes a great deal to two factors. The first is a canny assessment that working people in America are hurting despite favourable macro-economic trends and that the Republican party is increasingly seen as exclusively concerned with catering to big business at the expense of the working poor; secondly an uninspired campaign by Robert Dole, the quintessential Wash-



REFLECTIONS by Dr Omar Rahman

unfortunately leads many on the Right to nostalgic dreams of an Imperial America. Buchanan's economic vision of America although more sharply drawn and perhaps less free trade oriented than his fellow candidates is not what is causing waves in the political landscape.

ments on public policy have come back to haunt him. His critics have charged him as being anti-semitic for his comments about Congress being Israeli occupied territory (in the context of the Gulf War).

Religious Right Crusades for Total Power

This year's presidential election in the United States could place the Republicans in control of all three branches of government. Such a result, argues a Gemini News Service correspondent, could usher in a chill climate of intolerance spearheaded by conservative revolutionaries who believe they have God on their side.

Mohamed Hamaludin writes from Miami

The race for the White House How it works



Bill Clinton is unopposed in his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, but all Democratic Party primaries will be held to select convention delegates

Options for Increasing Rice Productivity

The single biggest problem faced in Bangladesh agriculture is the low productivity of rice. Present production and productivity trends of rice should draw serious attention of the concerned personnel due to several reasons. The country is approaching the next century with unstable rice production system and with decreasing food security both at macro and micro levels.

by Dr Subhash Dasgupta



concept (for example one panicle from one seed), increase in plant populations and modification in techniques that can lead to increased production should be considered in developing HYVs.

per rice variety will fulfil our expectation that is, get more yields from less inputs is early to say. Maximum Input Technology (MIT) It is also an option of augmenting yield. The concept is based on using more fertilizer in irrigated areas with higher management systems that can lead to increasing yield.

Hybrid Rice Technology Using first generation seeds (F1), obtained from two distinct parents through hybridisation is called Hybrid. China is the pioneer of this technology and successfully implemented it that helped spur its rice yield even 15 t/ha at the farmer's field.

Management Technology The management practice is a great science and its area is also vast. Considering the resource constraints in agricultural development, the improvement of management practices is the only option that presently we have in our hand to bridge the yield gap existing between potential and actual yield.

Super Rice Variety International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines has been working on this technology which will be available to the farming community at the end of this century. Still we shall have to wait at least 5 years to get the technology.

Performing 10,000 Angiographies

A further milestone has been achieved at BM Birla Heart Research Centre, Calcutta, with the completion of over 10,000 angiography procedures in the cardiac catheterization laboratory of the centre says press release.

tre performed the first full Electrophysiological Study of heart in Eastern India on a patient on 14.02.96. This event also marks the launch of the only Electrophysiological Study (EPS) lab in eastern India at BM Birla Heart Research Centre equipped with a highly sophisticated 36 Channel, fully computerized EPS machine.

The founding fathers of United States democracy, fearful that power could become centralised in the hands of one group, created three branches of government with counterbalancing powers.

But what would happen if an ideologically-driven party, intolerant of the views of others, managed to seize control of the Presidency, Congress — and the Supreme Court? Would it lead to a dictatorship of the majority?

There is possibility this year that the Republican Party could extend its control to all three branches. And the party is spurred on towards this goal by a 'God and country' alliance of conservative zealots and right-wing Christians.

If the Republicans, who made big congressional gains in the first half of this decade, triumph in November, it would be the first time for more than 60 years that their party has controlled the legislative and executive branches at the same time.

On top of this, the Republicans have the upper hand in the judicial wing because Republican President Ronald Reagan (1980-88) and George Bush (1989-92) were able — as a result of vacancies — to install a majority of conservatives in the nine-member Supreme Court.

In Congress, many of the eager freshmen see themselves as carrying on the 'Reagan Revolution', named after the elderly ex-president they revere as the father of modern-day American conservatism.

They have turned their attention to the domestic agenda now that they no longer have the Cold War drum to bang. They seek to cut down the size of government, especially through eliminating or hacking back federal programmes, such as welfare and health care, set up over the past six decades to serve as a social safety net for the poor, and needy.

The fervent conservatives have formed an alliance with groups such as the Christian Coalition which, despite a constitutional separation of Church and State, unabashedly proclaim their intention to place God as the central focus of everything that is done in the country.

They give massive electoral support to the Republicans. The right-wing revolution has stalled in Congress over a dispute concerning the balancing of the federal budget — in chronic deficit for years — with incumbent Democratic President Bill Clinton using his veto to protect key social programmes.

Conservative Republicans are now focusing on the big prize — the presidency. They see capture of the White House as completing the takeover of the federal government, which they denounce and want to reduce, but which they would use to entrench their agenda.

They demand two essential requirements of a Republican presidential candidate: opposition to abortion, and com-

