

Will Hillary Clinton create history come November?

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IN a little over two months from now, history may be created if Hillary Clinton is elected the first woman president of the United States of America. Some assert, the question now is not 'if' she will win but by 'how much'.

Traditionally, US presidential elections have drawn attention globally. The 2016 version is no exception. This time though, the attention is focused not just on policies but more on the uniqueness of the two very contrasting candidates: on the one hand, there is for the first time a woman candidate, who is suave and one who has strong political experience and pedigree on her side and, on the other, there is the brash straight talking pretender who has neither. If ever there was any major election whose outcome would be easy to project so far ahead of actual voting day, this is the one. One does not have to look too deeply for the reasons for such a projection. In virtually every area, the Democrat nominee looks better and stronger than her Republican rival. For starters, Hillary Clinton's Democratic Party has closed ranks solidly behind its chosen candidate while the Republicans would want to drop theirs faster than a hot potato. While Clinton's composure grows with each passing day, Trump looks like someone who has mastered the habit of stumbling at every step into a fine art.

While the mainstream US media is showing clear signs of leaning towards Clinton, Trump has succeeded in making the media his major enemy. Besides, on the important issue of trustworthiness, the gap in voter perception between the two is not much significant. Historically, endorsements and funds have always played an important role in any election campaign in the United States. The same is the case for the current race for the White House. On both counts, Hillary Clinton is running a coun-

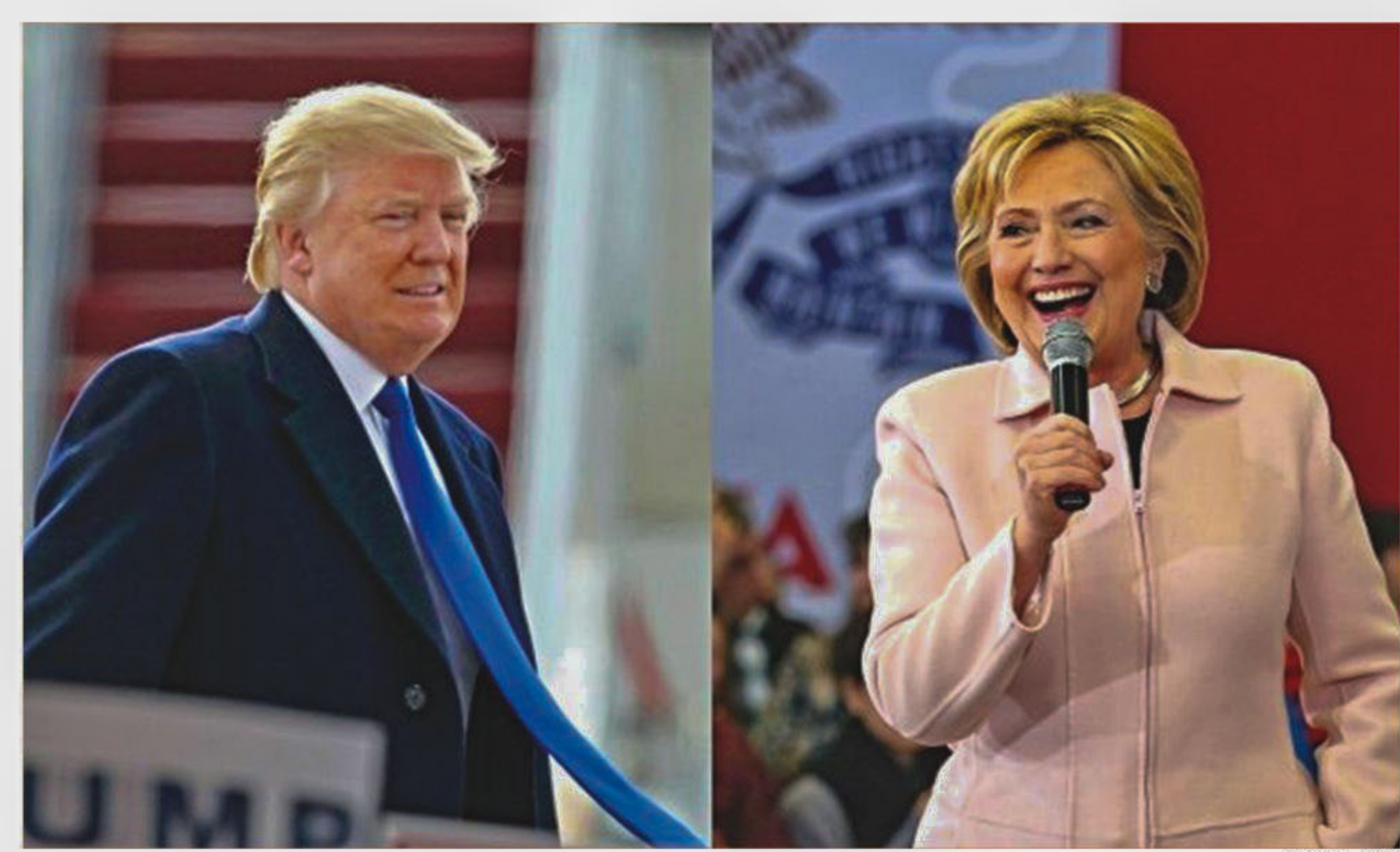


PHOTO: AFP

try mile ahead of Donald Trump. This has enabled her to conduct a smoother campaign so far and it can only get better going into November. Trump, on the other hand, is having problems even in keeping his own campaign team intact, let alone run an organised campaign. In terms of his style and language, he continues to embarrass even his close supporters, either having to put up a weak defence or routinely retracting public comments in the face of scathing criticism. This has prevented him from effectively focusing on issues where Hillary Clinton could hurt. In the domain of substance, Donald Trump has personified inconsistency and contradiction. His campaign pledges to create jobs in America by shutting off outsourcing manufacturing of goods to other countries sound hollow when one realises that the Donald Trump branded shirts are made in Bangladesh, suits in Mexico and ties in China.

His body language while laying out his economic policies in Detroit suggested a tinge of discomfort, him having to read from a script that he himself did not believe in and which were in sharp variance with what he had said earlier. Now as his ratings continue to slide, he has decided to change course, again, and resort to using his own script and delivering in his now familiar style. While that may have helped him in the nomination process against weak opponents in a fractured Republican camp, in the larger canvass this would hurt him even more. Yet, in the run up to the two candidates being formally nominated by their respective parties, Clinton had to face a far more gruelling contest from her lone but fiercely combative adversary while Trump surprised everyone by virtually walking over the combined efforts of more than a dozen of his.

Observers have always wondered how Donald Trump, a ranking non-politician, could have come so far; what was his message that drew hundreds of thousands of supporters to his side. The

answer may lie in a general disenfranchisement with the more conventional style of politics, especially among the young, unemployed and uninitiated American voter. He perhaps represents a phenomenon that calls for a change. In the process though, Trump turned key voters away from him. This includes the important women and Hispanics blocs whose votes can prove to be decisive. While his open and at times rabid anti-Mexican and anti-Muslim rhetoric may have touched a sympathetic chord among some, it has most certainly cost him more among the much larger rest. Very few African-Americans would vote for him.

It may still be early in the election process but the pace at which Trump's ratings are heading south with no sign of letting up, nothing less than a miracle of divine proportions can change his fortune. Some are beginning to wonder if Donald Trump will end up matching Barry Goldwater's ignominious defeat to Lyndon Johnson in 1964 when the Republican candidate lost in forty

four states, or the more humiliating loss of forty nine States that Democrat George McGovern's suffered to Richard Nixon in 1972.

Many had thought Donald Trump would be able to give Hillary Clinton a run for her money. That looks nothing more than an illusion now. In any case Hillary Clinton is no stranger to bruising electoral battles through most of her political life. Her memoirs testify to that. She had been directly involved with her husband Bill Clinton's election, first as Attorney General and then as Governor of Arkansas, leading to his election and re-election as president. Her own election as a US Senator from the politically volatile State of New York was not just an achievement; it gave her a firsthand exposure to the wheeling and dealings that takes place in the country's highest legislative body. Having served as Secretary of State under President Barack Obama, she had a ringside view to, and a role in, policy making and taking tough decisions in the Executive Branch. Not surprising, therefore, that President Obama, in his valedictory speech at the Democrat Party Convention, called Hillary the most qualified person to move in to the Oval Office. Donald Trump's experience, by comparison, remains limited to making business deals and a television reality show at home, and in the external arena, it is confined to making profitable financial and commercial investments abroad.

The realm of real politics though, is much, much bigger than the sum of all the television studios put together. It is where hard choices are made. It is in that realm that Hillary Rodham Clinton will create history when she walks in to the Oval Office in January next year as the first woman President of the United States.

On a slightly side note of academic interest, strange as it may sound, Bangladesh, which got its independence almost two centuries after America, elected its first woman Head of Government a quarter of a century before the Americans will elect theirs.

The writer is a former Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh and Ambassador to the United States.

Monsoon and the mosquito menace

POONAM KHETRAPAL SINGH

MOSQUITOES are a pest with no equal. Though not all mosquitoes transmit life-threatening diseases, those that do kill approximately 725,000 people worldwide every year. When not fatal, the diseases mosquitoes spread can result in bouts of debilitating fever, nausea and vomiting, compromising immune systems and disrupting economies. The WHO South-East Asia Region is particularly affected.

Dengue, chikungunya and malaria are all endemic to the region. These three mosquito-borne diseases threaten the health and welfare of more than 1.4 billion people region-wide. And the first two of them are transmitted by the Aedes aegypti mosquito, which can also spread Zika and yellow fever – diseases that threaten to take root.

As the monsoon washes across the region, mosquito populations must be controlled. The best way to do so is by limiting breeding opportunities and mitigating human-mosquito contact.

Each of us can take action. Household features such as gutters, uneven concrete, pot plants and spare or discarded tires are all possible water catchment areas. With some mosquito larvae needing just one inch of water to develop into disease-carrying adults, it is essential these sites are monitored and standing water is disrupted wherever it gathers. And it is essential this happens on a weekly basis.

Responsible waste disposal is likewise critical. Non-biodegradable items of household waste – or solid waste – should, wherever possible, be limited, with the rule 'reduce, reuse, recycle' applied as much as practicable. When discarding waste, do so in sealed plastic bags to avoid containers becoming unintended breeding hot-spots. Also ensure the waste is collected by authorities in a timely fashion.

Households that lack access to piped water must take special precautions. Water storage containers should be fitted with tight lids, with care being taken to restore lids after every use to avoid mosquito infiltration. Where storage vessels rely on rainwater, a fine-mesh covering should be fitted to keep mosquitoes out. Cooperation with authorities carrying out house-to-house water treatment with approved chemical or biological materials is likewise necessary to keep households and neighbourhoods safe. Wherever possible, piped water should be accessed and used, with authorities recognising that a steady water supply is integral to the public's health.

There are other ways that we can limit our exposure to mosquitoes and halt the spread of mosquito-borne pathogens. Key initiatives include wearing light-coloured, long-sleeve clothes, using approved insect repellent and sleeping under a bed net. Windows and doors should be fitted with screens, and householders should consider using approved insecticide sprays or vaporisers in and around their dwellings. By providing mosquitoes fewer opportuni-

ties to bite us, we not only protect ourselves from life-threatening diseases, we also limit their circulation. That makes everyone safer.

In keeping with this higher purpose, we must encourage our neighbours and communities to mobilise. Though each household can limit the number of mosquitoes in its immediate vicinity, more far-reaching progress requires greater participation and commitment. Like the neighbourhood watch systems designed to protect property and public safety, we must develop greater cohesion in protecting ourselves against mosquitoes and the diseases they carry. Potential mosquito breeding sites in public spaces such as parks, playgrounds, community centres and markets must be identified, eliminated and brought to the attention of authorities for lasting solutions.

Governments have a responsibility to act. Immediate steps to vanquish mosquito populations – including space spraying and the targeted use of larvicide – are important. But strategies to compromise mosquitoes' long-term future in and around human settlements are the only way to ensure lasting gains. The collapse of earlier mosquito control efforts is testament to the need to modify our environments, and to do so permanently.

In both rural and urban areas, this means improving and expanding domestic water supply to ensure that every household has access to potable water. It means providing more frequent and reliable waste management services that ensure household and industrial waste are disposed of

swiftly and responsibly. And it means draining mosquito-breeding cesspools that render life-threatening diseases a fixture of modern life.

Aside from protecting health, the economic gains will be significant. Every year, mosquito-borne illnesses account for millions of lost working hours and foregone earnings. Treatment also incurs direct and indirect costs, which are then borne by individuals and wider society. By investing in sustainable mosquito control measures, governments can not only save lives, but can avoid these costs and the economic burden they represent.

As the most capable and distinguished scientific minds work to find new ways to prevent and treat mosquito-borne diseases, it is imperative that we don't lose sight of our own capacity to act. Each one of us can greatly reduce mosquito populations and our exposure to the diseases they carry. And governments can support these efforts with targeted interventions that permanently modify our cities and towns.

As monsoon deepens and emerging mosquito-borne diseases threaten to take hold, now is the time to act. Now is the time to make decisive, lasting gains in the struggle to prevent life-threatening mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue, malaria, chikungunya and Zika.

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QUOTABLE Quote



CZESŁAW MIŁOSZ

Polish poet, prose writer, translator and diplomat who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1980.

The purpose of poetry is to remind us how difficult it is to remain just one person.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Narro cut
- Manger fill
- Stash away
- Fall guy
- Roasting spot
- Wore away
- Loafer
- Kathleen Turner film
- Olympic awards
- Ring win
- Vigilant
- Major's successor
- "This - test"
- Californian city
- Turkey choice
- Sofa for two
- Local resident
- Entice
- Penitent person
- Crocus cousin
- Prokofiev hero
- Pear's places
- Down
- Not barefoot
- Not recorded

3 Creative germ

4 Pour drinks

5 Wander off

6 Canine, e.g.

7 Scepter

8 Historic time

9 Tie the knot

11 Canary chow

15 Cloth bundle

17 Cockpit guesses

18 Related

19 Bull-fight beast

20 Motel worker

21 "Lohen-grin" lady

22 Precious

25 Scottish hillside

26 Say inadvertently

28 Flu symptom

30 "Spohie's Choice" actor

31 Relocation pro

33 Mark's Replacement

34 Parched

35 Hardy heroine

36 Snooze


37 Supped

38 Stroller user

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

S	L	I	D	S	E	C	T		
T	A	G	U	P	S	O	N	A	R
A	B	O	D	E	E	A	G	L	E
R	O	T	K	A	M	P	A	L	A
T	R	I	P	O	L	I	G	U	T
S	T	E	E	L	S	E	P		
		A	S	Y	E	T			
M	A	R	E	X	A	C	T		
S	I	N	A	I	R	O	B	I	
A	L	G	I	E	R	S	S	O	N
G	L	I	R	E	D	T	W	I	N
A	I	R	E	D	S	A	N	E	R
S	E	A	T			R	E	S	T

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott

