

Running mates set higher stakes for presidential debates

PLEASURE IS ALL MINE



warns against is forming 'a general opinion or judgment on the basis of a single event, remark, etc.'

Now, there are less stern, in fact mellowed, poetic or philosophical versions of the expression-- 'one swallow not making a summer.' One of which is - "This, too, shall pass," possibly referring to grim moments - being attributed to late lamented novelist and poet Syed Shamsul Haque by his son named Ditiyo (Second) Syed Haque. The other version is in the famous words of novelist Humayun Ahmed-- "This is not the only day; there are other days to beckon."

All these idioms may fit into both ends of the spectrum of emotions being at play, following the verbal duel between governor Pence and Senator Kaine, Republican and Democrat vice presidential nominees respectively, on Tuesday evening.

In the presidential debate on September 26, Hillary - an experienced interlocutor - beat Donald Trump hands down. Donald came to the stage with some inherent disadvantages; first, he was practically making his debut in a one-to-one debate. Secondly, whilst Mrs. Clinton used a whole array of briefing files to prepare herself for the event, Donald on the other hand, relied on crowd-sourced oratory, literally on the hoof.

In contrast, his running mate came to the table with a clear-cut strategy and tactical repertoire to flesh out on the voids Donald had left. Particularly in terms of temperament, governor Pence looked calculative, cool headed and

composed; yet combative when he bluntly referred to Kaine as a 'failed' governor of a state.

At one stage, when Pence would be confronted with a recital by Kaine of uncivil words used by Trump, Pence sounded as if he felt his senior partner lacked polish. Reaction in the Trump camp was instantaneous. Interestingly, a Republican-sourced Twitter on the television screen read: "Well, polls give Pence a thumbs up but Donald doesn't! Pence looked like being his own man."

Hillary, by contrast, thanked Kaine for sharing, and not straying into any denial mode. But he was criticised by some observers who thought he came wired to a memory bank to reel off from it somewhat like an automaton.

It seemed as though an unfazed Pence was courting interruptions from Tim Kaine which earned him a Twitter epithet of being a 'caffeinated' performer. The Democrat nominee interrupted his Republican rival at least 30 times, compared to half that number he had to contend with.

On the whole, if you look up close at the proceedings, you would find that content-wise, Kaine was substantial and aggressive but Pence's style was subtle and sophisticated to a fault when he murmured evasively-- "it's low, it's low on your part"--obviously, without an effective answer to offer to a legitimate Kaine question.

Kaine stuck to his guns on issues, spewing out just about everything exercising the national thought process today--Trump's undermining of women, minority cultural groups, Afro-Americans, Latinos, Mexicans, his rooting for deportation of most of the so-called 160 million illegal immigrants form one category of his disruptive agendas.

In other categories fall bans, walls; xenophobic antagonisms to ensure that America is for the Americans. The trade pacts with important nations or groups of countries would have to be rewritten for American companies to stay home



Democrat Tim Kaine and Republican Mike Pence: Men who could be a heartbeat away from the presidency.

PHOTO: AFP

and save jobs for their compatriots. This has appeal to white blue collar Americans.

In this warped perception, America is not obliged to pay for the security burdens of NATO and its allied members, or for that matter, provide security guarantee in the Middle-East free of cost.

Trump may be even ready to allow for nuclear proliferation by throwing to the winds the NPT.

Pence had no answers to these questions; not any convincing and unassailable ones, to be sure. And what answer can you expect when Putin is 'solicited' for allegedly cyber hacking in the US electoral system?

Trust issues continue to feature over Trump Foundation; Clinton's charitable foundation drawing on foreign donations; Hillary as secretary of state operating on her personal e-mail server with 33,000 items having been withheld probably due to their 'sensitivity'; and last but not least, Trump's alleged

evading tax payment for years.

Our only hope is that the grounds already covered extensively may be left out in the next series of debates to make room for a meaningful answer to the prime question centred on how the Hillary- Kaine combination is going to be a change-maker avoiding being 'more of the same'.

The takes from Tuesday's face-off, together with those of the first debate between the presidential candidates, will be the grist to the mill of preparations for the next two presidential debates scheduled within the current month itself. Pence clinched 20 percentage points over Kaine in the encounter, according to instant polls. Although the presidential debate is a different ball game and a tremendous standalone event, Pence, as part of the Trump ticket, appears to have made up for the margin of defeat at 20 percent that his senior partner had conceded to Hillary Clinton.

There is a caveat, though, to Pence's success. In a post-debate assembly of

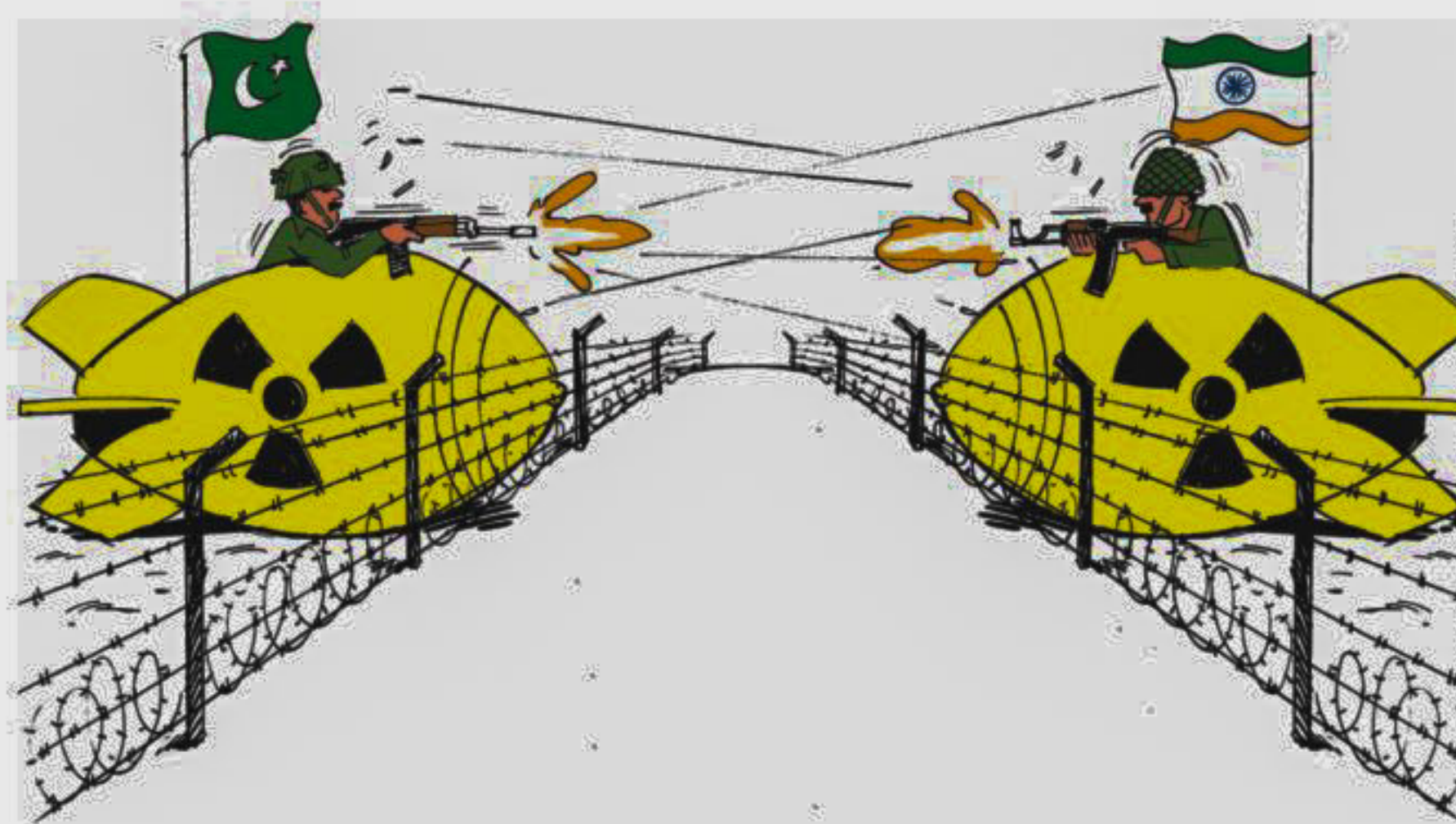
some one and a half a dozen 'undecided voters' organised at the studio, the anchor asked them to raise their hands to indicate their support to either Pence or Kaine. Five persons thought Kaine performed better with only two endorsements for Pence. The rest remained undecided.

Pundits tend to view a vice-presidential debate as sort of a key-hole through which you assess the potential of one who may have to stand in for the president during a contingency.

As for Tuesday's encounter between the two running mates, it has not only been an appetiser for the main course, but also raised the stakes for the two upcoming presidential crossings of swords. In the unlikely event Hillary's fortune is reversed in the second round, her momentum with popular votes may be diluted in the final debate. So her stakes going forward are that much higher.

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The Bay of Pigs



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Pakistan are lumped into as being 'Indians' with the clock seemingly stopping in 1947.

Coming back to the mattresses. These are hand me downs from upgraded PIGS who have graduated and moved on. I also start picturing 1947, 1965 and 1971 being re-enacted in the adjacent bedroom in the middle of the night, while my American friend living in the next door apartment and always somehow there to lend a helping hand, somehow standing by idly in the last case with his Seventh Fleet. I also fear that after these 'encounters', Sunny will force Asim to eventually move out, but not before him (Asim) kicking my behind twice.

But this is how geo politics plays out among the meagre PIGS who should be

busy with assignments, classes, projects, cooking, cleaning, doing groceries, slogging through the snow, and oh, more importantly, seeking funds to pay the tuition fees which are astronomical enough to fund the Indo-Pak nuclear arms race. It can be a random café in the middle of nowhere and an Argentinean will give the looks to a British, Donald Trump to Salma Hayek (well, mixed with a dose of coquettishness), a Pakistani to an Indian, an Israeli to a Palestinian, a Korean to a Korean, a Chinese to a Taiwanese,

And where did it all start? Again, a more sophisticated scorched earth policy in 1947. Good going Brit boys. You left that little source of residual income called Kashmir to eternally feed the Western defense industries.

So, another massive military buildup along both sides of the Indo-Pak border.

Action on other fronts too. India bans Pakistani artists in Bollywood while Pakistan reciprocates by blocking all Indian TV channels. Kapil Sharma ceases to entertain the stressed out in Pakistan and Fawad Khan is no longer available to flutter the hearts of Indian females. Now THIS means war!

I wonder if the BSF has been deployed inside the sleeping quarters of the Sania Mirza and Shoaib Malik household...

So as troops make a bee line to the Line of Control, costing millions, with hardware costing billions, I wonder if the arch rivals can perhaps focus on

making a pee line to provide proper latrines to the 41 million in Pakistan and the 770 million in India who have no access to proper sanitation. If all these less fortunate in India and Pakistan stand in line at the same time to answer the call of nature (rather than the call to take up arms), the line extends from the earth all the way to Mars.

Of course, the feline fangs prevail. Pakistan goes shopping for more F-16 Fighting Falcons and the Indians for Rafale fighter jets. Speaking of falcons, one was once actually found dead on the Indian side with a camera attached to it, presumably sent from Pakistan. There is a further aerial intercept - an unsuspecting pigeon is detained with a hate message to PM Modi. The poor pigeon - literally and metaphorically, is roasted for information. It is X-rayed to see if there are any hidden transmitters inside it, though I'm sure a non-vegetarian salivated in the process - Pavlovian style.

Let's have no Pak-India war but have a pakka-latrine war, please. Just buy one less F-16 and one less Rafale and that full-bladder line from Earth to Mars will surely and drastically reduce in length.

Meanwhile, I gotta go check out on Asim Ashraf and Sunny Khosla...

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HUMOROUSLY YOURS



NAVEED MAHBUB

school in Michigan.

My roomy's first question: "So, why did we have to get separated?" He is Asim Ashraf from Pakistan taking the conversation back to 1971.

"Well, let's not get into that." And that was the end of the topic - once and for all.

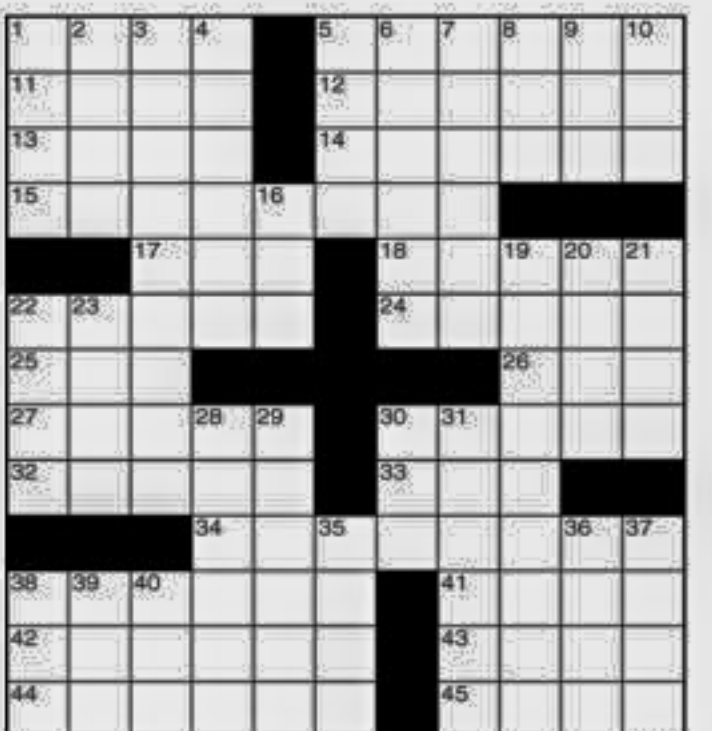
We focus on looking for a third roommate. Asim with the bigger (master) bedroom, will get a cell, er, roommate. Yes, now it's a ROOMmate. I immediately suggest my bubbly buddy Sunny Khosla.

Asim gives me a dirty look: "An INDIAN in the house? And in MY room?"

Asim probably pictures a virtual (Azad) Kashmir in between the two mattresses of Sunny and himself. Yes, we can't afford beds because we're PIGS - Poor Indian Graduate Students. That's what we are known as to the ABCDs - American Born Confused Desis, as affectionately referred to the desis born and raised in the US. We chocolate drops from Bangladeshi, India and

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS
- 1 To boot
- 5 Team symbol
- 11 Promotable piece
- 12 On the beach
- 13 Throw off
- 14 Put on
- 15 Tennis trophy
- 17 Outback bird
- 18 Lab work
- 22 Witch trial town
- 24 Comic Kovacs
- 25 Bordeaux buddy
- 26 S&L offering
- 27 Gift from parents
- 30 Seedy bars
- 32 Uneasy state
- 33 Japanese prime minister
- 34 Forensic workplace
- 38 Gallant
- 41 Sushi need
- 42 Be temperate
- 43 Hostels
- 44 USC's conference
- 45 Gets on
- DOWN
- 1 Mimicked
- 2 Asian monk
- 3 Turning
- 4 Punctual
- 5 Like the Ger. "der"
- 6 Shrewd
- 7 Machine tool
- 8 Machinery part
- 9 Refiner's stuff
- 10 Seth Mac-Farlane film
- 16 Bottomline figure
- 19 Cowardly
- 20 Bike part
- 21 Map areas
- 22 Heroic tale
- 23 Flock response
- 28 Chaperone
- 29 Long step
- 30 Block up
- 31 European peninsula
- 35 File stand-in
- 36 Skin woe
- 37 Porgy's love
- 38 Bunny move
- 39 Juan Peron's wife
- 40 DVR button letters



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

ECHO SPLASH
LOAD OLIVIA
SIRE LATENT
END HAZE
LAURA HAL
GRUPE SHARE
RAGS ERIE
OTHER MIDAS
GET AZURE
TIED IFS
HUMANS OGLE
OMELET RHEA
WATERY ETAS

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott



QUOTABLE Quote



SUN TZU

The supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting.