



By: *Tomorrow's Affairs Staff*

In the earliest TV debate ever, who will give the impression of being more fit for the presidency?



Both participants in Thursday's presidential **debate** on CNN will go head-to-head in front of already-set expectations and perceptions of a divided audience.

There appears to be very little room for the duo to be creative and capitalise on a direct duel last seen four years ago.

Regardless of the subject at hand, it is unlikely that they, and particularly their teams, will be overly happy that their ages will mark the debate. The primary question the audience will want answered is whether they are capable of conducting the most responsible and influential job in the world, regardless of their age.

This time around, Joe Biden and Donald Trump will find themselves in more sterile circumstances compared to the 2020, with their campaign teams approaching this top media and political event with the idea of not losing rather than making a profit.

As a result, they have rapidly agreed that there will be no audience in the studio and that the candidate's microphone will remain muted while his rival speaks. There will be a lot of parallel monologues without interaction, i.e., without direct verbal confrontation.

Mutual defensive

The campaign teams of the two contenders in the November elections took a defensive approach to the first of two televised debates. Given the high stakes and fairly even ratings, caution was greater than ambition to win.

With this, the creators of both candidates' strategies have shown that they believe there is still plenty of time after the first TV debate for corrections, sharper attacks, or amortisation of mistakes.

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The forthcoming elections will not be the first to put the current and former presidents against each other, but the Biden-Trump duel on CNN will be the first televised debate between the current and former presidents.

More importantly, it will be the earliest organised TV debate in election history. This arrangement contributed greatly to campaign strategists in both camps setting the goal of not losing rather than winning.

At first glance, this kind of setup will suit President Biden more than Donald Trump.

Temperament and sterile atmosphere

Biden will have a chance to tell the audience about the results of his tenure in the White House, especially the increase in employment. However, he must ensure that Trump's attacks and shifting topics do not divert him from his carefully crafted messages, as in 2020.

On the other hand, Trump's temperament, as well as his position as a challenger, puts him in the role of an attacker, disruptor, and critic of the narrative (Biden's) that has the ability to determine the mainstream of the debate.

Despite this initial handicap, Trump has agreed to the "sterile" terms of the debate, which means he will look elsewhere for an opportunity.

"This Thursday debate is totally 100 per cent rigged. The organising principle of CNN is a hatred of Donald Trump and the MAGA movement to the core of their being, they hate, not disagree, not have policy differences, they hate Donald J. Trump and they hate the MAGA movement," **said** Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief political strategist.

Trump will once again take revenge on the media

Surely, Trump will once again take revenge on

the media, which he has labelled his enemies for years, with CNN at the top of his blacklist.

However, the significance of the debate extends beyond his anger towards the "hostile" media, which he has also shown during his tenure in the White House, and particularly after 2021, for him to devote the majority of his performance to this revenge.

A small gain from the TV debate

Trump needs the forthcoming debate to consolidate the campaign's progress so far and practically verify it through his first direct encounter with his opponent.

From past experience, TV debates have been crucial for candidates even though they have not changed the balance of power.



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“These elections are turning on very few votes in very few states, and what that means is literally anything you could think of could be pivotal. You don’t have to move 5 points. You have to swing 5,000 votes,” **said** Lynn Vavreck, a UCLA political scientist.

Despite the campaign raising the crucial issue of Joe Biden's ability to continue his mandate due to his age, Trump will not have as much room in the TV debate to capitalise on this direction as he has so far.

His age alone has also made him the subject of

debate as to whether he is fit for another mandate. However, one of the biggest expectations of viewers will be to estimate, in a direct duel, which of the two is in better shape for the job in the White House.

At the end of the 90-minute duel, this impression will be something the candidates will fight about the most, while all the messages, data, and policies carefully prepared by their teams will remain in the background.