2024 UK ELECTION

Left, **Britain's Prime Minister and Conservative Party leader Rishi Sunak arrives with his wife Akshata Murty to cast their votes at a polling station in Kirby Sigston, Northallerton, England yesterday as Britain holds a general election.** ***Right***, **Britain's opposition Labour Party leader Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria arrive to cast their votes at a polling station in London yesterday.**

PHOTO: **AFP**

What do govts abroad want from UK polls ?

AGENCIES

The UK is not the diplomatic powerhouse it once was, with Brexit leaving it looking inward and years of economic failures meaning the Conservatives and Labour are both sidelining foreign policy in their campaign messaging. Still, leaders around the world will be taking an interest in the election. Here are some of the key issues:

RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Kyiv is desperately fighting off the battlefield for money, weapons and diplomatic support and the backing of the next UK government could be critical. London still retains diplomatic sway in Europe and is a vocal member of Nato.

Stakes are high for the Ukrainian leader, Volodymyr Zelensky, as he faces the prospect of Donald Trump winning the US presidential election in November. Trump is expected to cut off US military support to Ukraine.

The Tories claim they have "led the world in support of Ukraine against Putin's aggression" and will continue to do so, but it is expected that Keir Starmer would be equally supportive of Kyiv if Labour came to power.

ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

In previous elections, Israeli governments would have probably favoured conservative candidates, who have traditionally followed Washington in near-unconditional backing of Israel over Palestine.

Starmer, however, could prove the exception to the rule as his policies on the occupation have been seen through the prism of the Labour party antisemitism scandal, which he promised to fix.

Whatever his personal views on the destruction of Gaza, Starmer has been criticised by party members for a Middle East stance that could be seen as more pro-Israel than that of the Tories. More than 38,011 Palestinians have been killed and 87,445 have been injured in Israeli military offensive on Gaza since October 7, reports Reuters.

For Palestinian officials, neither a Tory nor a Labour government will give hope for the radical policy change they have been calling for.

THE UNITED STATES

The White House is too focused on its own election to be concerned about the smaller half of the "special relationship". Joe Biden has maintained good ties with both Labour and Conservative politicians, although Trump has a soft spot for the more extreme, populist wing of the Tory party.

Reform UK, led by Nigel Farage, has the most Trumpian politics of all the UK parties, playing up migration as a threat. Farage has previously joined Trump on campaign rallies.

CHINA

Relations between Beijing and London have nosedived under Conservative administrations. Sunak has said that "authoritarian" China, the world's second-largest economy, is the "greatest state-based threat to our economic security", reports The Guardian. Bejing's embassy in London condemned what it called Sunak's "malicious slander against China" and urged British politicians "to end their belligerent rhetoric" and "instead, focus more on domestic economic and social issues".

In a sense, that has happened, with Sunak largely avoiding international issues on the campaign trail. Still, Labour has not indicated any big policy shift in Asia. The party's manifesto promises its policy on China will be to "cooperate where we can, compete where we need to, and challenge where we must".

THE EUROPEAN UNION

As a supranational body, the political and economic union across Europe will be facing the prospect of the first non-conservative government in London since David Cameron called the referendum that led to Brexit.

All three big parties are seeking to improve their relationship with the EU, but Labour – and certainly the Liberal Democrats – may find that easier to achieve.

Senior Brussels sources said this week that while the EU leadership would welcome a change of UK government, it would not revise its Brexit red lines, but was open to improving existing agreements.

What has Labour promised to do if elected?

REUTERS, *London*

Britain's Labour Party was projected to win yesterday's national election with a large majority. Below are some of the party's main domestic policy plans, set out in its manifesto ahead of the July 4 vote:

ECONOMY

Labour has said sustained economic growth will be its first mission for government. Its plan focuses on wealth creation. It has said it will be "pro-business and pro-worker" and introduce a new industrial strategy, which will end short-term economic policy.

TAXES

It has pledged not to raise taxes "for working people", with no increase in the basic, higher, or additional rates of income tax, insurance, or VAT. It will cap corporation tax at the current level of 25 percent.

HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE

Labour plans to cut waiting times in the National Health Service by adding 40,000 more appointments every week. This will include incentivising staff to carry out extra appointments out of hours, pooling resources across neighbouring hospitals and using spare capacity in private sector.

IMMIGRATION

Labour has pledged to reduce net migration. It wants to reform points-based immigration system, by bringing in restrictions on visas and by training workers where there are domestic shortages.

SCO SUMMIT IN ASTANA

India, China FMs agree to work on border issues

REUTERS, *New Delhi*

India's Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar yesterday met his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi in Kazakhstan where the two agreed to step up talks to resolve issues along their border, New Delhi said in a statement.

India and China share a long Himalayan border, much of it poorly demarcated, and relations between the two countries have been sour since a military standoff in July 2020.

India said Jaishankar met Wang on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Astana where they agreed that "prolongation of the current situation in the border areas is not in the interest of either side."

The two agreed to enhance meetings between their diplomatic and military officials "to resolve the remaining issues at the earliest," the Indian foreign ministry said. China and India should properly handle their differences and ensure relations advance on a stable track, a Chinese foreign ministry statement quoted Wang as saying during the talks.

"We must maintain a positive mindset, properly handle and control the situation in the border areas on the one hand, and actively resume normal exchanges on the other hand," Wang said. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in April that the two countries should urgently address the "prolonged situation" on their border.

Modi to visit Russia for talks with Putin on July 8-9

AFP, *Moscow*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Russia on July 8 and 9, the Kremlin said yesterday, in his first trip to the country since Moscow launched its military offensive in Ukraine.

That campaign has tested relations between Moscow and New Delhi, even though India has ramped up its purchases of Russian oil and not joined Western sanctions.

Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin will discuss "prospects for further development of traditionally friendly Russian-Indian relations, as well as relevant issues on the international and regional agenda," the Kremlin said in a statement.

Putin sees Modi as a key potential diplomatic and economy ally, with Russia isolated in the West. But Ukraine has complicated ties.

In a September 2022 meeting between Putin and Modi at a regional summit in Uzbekistan, the Russian president told Modi he understood he had "concerns" about the conflict and that Modi wanted it to end "as soon as possible."

Earlier this year, India said it was pushing Russia to release some of its citizens who had signed up for "support jobs" with the Russian army, following reports some were stranded in Russian border towns and forced to fight in Ukraine.

New Delhi has not been a staunch backer of Kyiv, notably declining to sign a joint statement at a peace summit in Switzerland last month that called for Ukraine's territorial integrity to be respected in any peace agreement.

Pro-Palestinian protesters hang banners from the top of Parliament House in Canberra, Australia yesterday. One of the protesters gave a speech using a megaphone accusing the Israeli government of war crimes, an accusation it rejects. The protesters were arrested and charged with trespassing, and have been banned from the grounds of parliament for two years.

PHOTO: **REUTERS**

BID TO ENCOURAGE TAX PAYMENT

Pakistan blocks 210,000 SIM cards

AFP, *Karachi*

Pakistan's tax authority said yesterday it has blocked 210,000 SIM cards of users who have not filed tax returns in a bid to widen the revenue bracket.

Only 5.2 million people of the more than 240 million population filed income tax returns in 2022.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) passed the edict in April and has since sent orders to the telecommunications authority to block the connections of 210,000 SIM cards, with 62,000 of them later restored, according to the board's data.

"We have unblocked the SIMs of those who have paid their taxes," FBR public relations official Bakhtiar Muhammad said.

"Nobody voluntarily comes up and pays taxes. We have to make ways for the people to pay their taxes."

Pakistan has more than 192 million cellphone subscribers and four telecommunications service providers, according to the telecommunication authority.

Pakistanis must register a SIM card with their national identity number, which is often used for multiple connections. "Access to telecom services is a basic human right and essential for many other fundamental services, including access to information, education, and emergency services," an official at one of the four telecommunications companies told AFP on the condition of anonymity.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর।
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স্মারক নং-৩৫.০১.৬৯০০.৪৫৩.০৭.০০২.২৩-১৬৫৪(১৯) তারিখ ঃ ০৪/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ

সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতিতে ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/লাইসেন্স নবায়ন বিজ্ঞপ্তি

এতদ্বারা সংশ্লিষ্ট সকলের অবগতির জন্য জানানো যাচ্ছে যে, সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর কর্তৃক পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর আলোকে সড়ক ও জনপথ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালন (রাজস্ব) বাজেটের আওতায় সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের মাধ্যমে অভ্যন্তরীন ক্রয়কার্য (NCT-Works) সম্পাদনের লক্ষ্যে ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থবছরের জন্য ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি/নবায়ন করা হবে। সিপিটিইউ কর্তৃক নির্ধারিত আবেদন ফরম নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর অথবা উপ-বিভাগীয় প্রকৌশলীর কার্যালয়, সড়ক উপ-বিভাগ-১/২, নাটোর হতে অফিস চলাকালীন সময়ে সরবরাহ করা হবে। ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা অফেরতযোগ্য পে-অর্ডার/ব্যাংক ড্রাফট/চালান নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী, সওজ, সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর এর অনুকূলে জমা প্রদান করে অথবা মানি রিসিটের মাধ্যমে ১০০০/- (এক হাজার) টাকা পরিশোধ করত: আগ্রহী ব্যক্তি/প্রতিষ্ঠান নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সংগ্রহ করতে পারবেন। নির্ধারিত আবেদনপত্র (ডকুমেন্ট) সঠিকভাবে পূরণ পূর্বক প্রয়োজনীয় কাগজপত্রসহ নিম্নে বর্ণিত (ছক-০১) সময়ের মধ্যে নাটোর সড়ক বিভাগে জমা প্রদান করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো। সীমিত দরপত্র পদ্ধতি প্রয়োগের ক্ষেত্রে পাবলিক প্রকিউরমেন্ট বিধিমালা-২০০৮ এর বিধি-৬৩ ও ৬৪ অনুসরণযোগ্য এবং এ তালিকাভুক্তিকরণ দরপত্র আহবান/কাজ প্রদানের নিশ্চয়তা বিধান করে না।

উল্লেখ্য যে, ইতিপূর্বে অত্র দপ্তরের তালিকাভূক্ত ঠিকাদারগণ ২০২৪-২০২৫ অর্থ বছরের লাইসেন্স নবায়ন (Renewal) ফি বাবদ টাকা-২,০০০.০০ (দুই হাজার) মাত্র + ১৫% ভ্যাটসহ নিম্ন বর্ণিত (ছক-০২) তারিখের মধ্যে অত্র দপ্তরে জমা পূর্বক লাইসেন্স নবায়ন করার জন্য অনুরোধ করা হলো।

ছক-০১

বিবরণ	তালিকাভুক্তির ফরমের মূল্য	তালিকাভুক্তির ফরম সংগ্রহের সময়সীমা	তালিকাভুক্তির ফরম জমা প্রদানের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদার তালিকাভুক্তি	১০০০/-	০৭/০৭/২০২৪ হতে ০৭/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত	০৭/০৭/২০২৪ হতে ০৮/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ বিকাল ৫.০০ ঘটিকা পর্যন্ত

ছক-০২

বিবরণ	নবায়ন ফি	বিনা জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	৫০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা	১০০% জরিমানায় নবায়নের সময়সীমা
ঠিকাদার লাইসেন্স নবায়ন	২০০০/- টাকা + ১৫% ভ্যাট	০৭/০৭/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ হতে ১৪/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত	১৬/০৮/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ হতে ১৫/০৯/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত	১৬/০৯/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ হতে ১৫/১০/২০২৪ খ্রিঃ পর্যন্ত

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(মোঃ কামরুল হাসান সরকার)
পরিচিতি নং- ৬০২৩১২
নির্বাহী প্রকৌশলী (চঃদাঃ), সওজ
সড়ক বিভাগ, নাটোর।

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