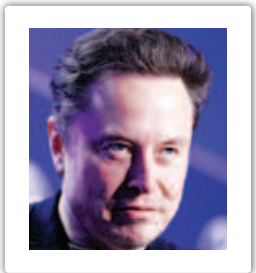


Trump taps Musk to ‘save trillions’ in war on waste

AFP, New York

Republican White House candidate Donald Trump unveiled a plan Thursday to install tech billionaire Elon Musk at the head of a government efficiency commission to eliminate “trillions” of dollars in wasteful spending.

The Tesla and SpaceX CEO has emerged as a major voice in US politics but is accused of turning the social media platform



Twitter, now known as X, into a megaphone for right-wing conspiracy theories since acquiring it in 2022.

Trump told business executives at a speech in New York that Musk -- the world's richest man, according to Forbes -- would oversee a “complete financial and performance audit of the entire federal government” in a second Trump administration.

“As the first order of business, this commission will develop an action plan to totally eliminate fraud and improper payments within six months,” he said.

Musk, who endorsed Trump in July, is one of the Biden-Harris administration’s fiercest critics. The efficiency commission was initially Musk’s idea, but this is the first time Trump has confirmed he would adopt the plan and tap Musk to lead it.

“I look forward to serving America if the opportunity arises. No pay, no title, no recognition is needed,” Musk posted on his social media platform, X.

Curtain raises on 2024 US election

First ballots sent to voters two months before the polling day

AFP, Washington

The first ballots for the US election were slated to go out to voters yesterday, two months ahead of what looks set to be a photo finish between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump.

The closely fought battleground state of North Carolina was expected to distribute around 130,000 absentee voting slips, with a presidential debate -- the next likely campaign inflection point -- set for next week.

Early in-person voting will start as soon as September 20 in some states.

North Carolina is among a handful of swing states that Harris and Trump have been crisscrossing as they embark on the most intense phase of a White House race expected to be decided by razor-thin margins.

Harris’s entry into the contest six weeks ago turbocharged enthusiasm among Democrats, who had been despondent about President Joe Biden’s chances of stopping Republican Trump from re-entering the White House.

Her team announced Friday that it raised \$361 million in



August, the largest monthly haul of the cycle and nearly triple the Trump team’s figure.

“In just a short time, Vice President Harris’s candidacy has galvanized a history-making, broad, and diverse coalition -- with the type of enthusiasm, energy, and grit that wins close elections,” said campaign manager Julie Chavez Rodriguez.

“As we enter the final stretch of this election, we’re making sure every hard-earned dollar goes to winning over the voters who will decide this election.”

Harris’s ascent to the top of



the ticket has tilted the races for the White House, Senate and House of Representatives in the direction of Democrats, though all three fights remain close.

While Trump has seen the leads he built over Biden evaporate, his campaign still sees several possible paths to victory and believes it has more support on key election issues like the economy, immigration and crime.

Trump’s aides argue that Harris’s “honeymoon” with voters has overstated support that is beginning to erode as her policy views come into focus.

Harris is up 1.8 percent in head-to-head nationwide polling, according to aggregator RealClearPolitics.

The polls that really count -- in the crucial swing states of Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada, Georgia and North Carolina -- show an even tighter race, with Harris up 0.2 percent overall, a statistical dead heat.

Other wrinkles on the path to November 5 include Trump’s 34 felony hush money conviction in New York, which is likely to charge back into the headlines with his much-delayed sentencing scheduled for September 18.

The first -- and perhaps only -- debate between Harris and Trump is the next big landmark, set for Tuesday on ABC News.

Trump -- who has consistently opposed mail-in voting -- posted a short video on TikTok urging Americans to send him back to the White House, “whether it’s mail-in ballots, early voting, or voting on Election Day.”

He was due to address an influential police union in North Carolina on Friday, and then hold a rally on Saturday in Wisconsin.

Yagi slams into south China

AFP, Hong Kong

Super Typhoon Yagi slammed into China’s Hainan island yesterday, bringing windspeeds of over 230 kilometres an hour in what is set to be the strongest storm to hit the region in more than a decade.

Hainan province evacuated more than 400,000 people ahead of the storm’s expected landfall, while tens of thousands prepared to seek shelter in neighbouring Vietnam.

Yagi killed at least 13 people in the Philippines this week when it was still classified as a tropical storm, triggering floods and landslides on the main island of Luzon before strengthening into a super typhoon over the past few days.

The typhoon “is equivalent to a Category 4 hurricane”, according to Nasa Earth Data. Yagi will head towards Vietnam after moving through southern China, on course to hit the northern and north-central regions around the famed UNESCO heritage site Halong Bay today.



ONLINE AD TECH Google ‘anti-competitive’: UK

AFP, London

US tech titan Google employs “anti-competitive practices” with regards to online advertising, Britain’s competition watchdog concluded yesterday in provisional findings of a two-year long investigation.

The probe has focused on so-called ad tech -- the system that decides which online adverts people see and how much they cost. The US Department of Justice and European Commission are carrying out similar investigations into Google.

In Britain, the Competition and Markets Authority “provisionally found that Google is using anti-competitive practices in open display ad tech, which it believes could be harming thousands of UK publishers and advertisers”, the CMA said in a statement yesterday.

In a statement to media on Friday, Google VP of Global Ads, Dan Taylor, said the CMA’s “case rests on flawed interpretations of the ad tech sector.

“We disagree with the CMA’s view and we will respond accordingly”.

Ex-bureaucrats

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an investigation into alleged corruption by former cabinet secretary Kabir Bin Anwar. He is accused of amassing illegal assets under his name and those of his family members through abuse of power.

According to an ACC source, a complaint filed against Kabir in November 2022 said that he amassed illegal wealth while serving as the secretary of the water resources ministry.

Among the former bureaucrats who would come under the ACC scanner are former cabinet secretaries Khandaker Anwarul Islam, Mohammad Shafiqul Alam, and Mohammad Musharraf Hossain Bhuiyan, former principal secretaries to the prime minister Ahmad Kaikaus, Nazibur Rahman, Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, Abul Kalam Azad, Abdus Sobhan Sikder, and Sheikh Md Wahid-uz Zaman.

Speaking to journalists, ACC Secretary Khorshedha Yasmeen recently said, “Once a complaint is filed against any individual under the Anti-Corruption Act, we take action against that person, no matter who it is. If the allegations are found to be true during an investigation, charge sheets are filed and cases are lodged in courts. There is no room for leniency.”

Star Media Group’s

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Anam, reflecting on his tenure, emphasised the importance of continuing to project Asia’s voice globally. He also shared details of upcoming ANN projects, including an “Asia Dialogue” series and initiatives to recognise young changemakers across the region.

“ANN is a platform that tells Asian stories through Asian newspapers to the rest of the world,” Anam noted, emphasising the need for the region to have its own media voice.

He acknowledged the rise of social media and digital platforms as key shifts in the media landscape.

ANN is a leading regional alliance of news outlets from Southeast, East, and South Asia, promoting regional collaboration and sharing editorial content on major developments across Asia.

Ukraine needs more weapons

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The package “will surge in more capabilities to meet Ukraine’s evolving requirements,” Austin told the meeting.

The assistance is expected to include ammunition for HIMARS precision rocket launchers, artillery rounds, anti-tank and anti-air weapons, a US defence official said on condition of anonymity.

The talks in Germany, with representatives from some 50 nations, will focus on areas including bolstering Ukraine’s air defences and encouraging allies to boost their defence industries, Pentagon spokesman Major General Pat Ryder said ahead of the meeting.

“Ukraine matters to US and international security, and the efforts of (Kyiv’s allies meeting in Ramstein) continue to play a vital role

in Ukraine’s fight for freedom and sovereignty,” he said.

The meeting comes as Moscow’s forces advance in the Donbas, with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday declaring that capturing the eastern area was his “primary objective” in the conflict.

Since the start of its offensive in February 2022 when it failed to seize the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Russia has adapted its aims, concentrating instead on trying to conquer eastern Ukraine.

While Ukraine’s surprise push into Russia’s Kursk region last month caught Russian forces off-guard, Putin stressed that the move had failed to slow Moscow’s advance.

The United States has been Ukraine’s biggest backer during the conflict, providing military aid worth more than \$55 billion (50 billion euros) since February 2022.

tried to hack me when I tried to stop them from looting on early Thursday. I’ve quit the job today [Friday] for my own security. I can’t continue this anymore,” the guard said.

Narayanganj Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Mahmudul Haque said Industrial Police personnel were deployed to the factory after the August 25 fire incident. He promised action over the latest incident.

Md Asaduzzaman, superintendent of Industrial Police 4 in Narayanganj, said the factory covers an area of at least 50 acres, which is open from all sides.

“The security situation of the factory is now very vulnerable. Moreover, you know the existing condition of police. We’re trying our best [to maintain law and order].”

Hasina, Quader

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However, the accused, allegedly following directives from Sheikh Hasina, Obaidul Quader, Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal, and other senior leaders, carried out attacks on the protesters at various points in the town, according to the case documents.

The accused also allegedly vandalised BNP offices, businesses, and homes, looted properties, and set them on fire, said the case details.



Residents walk amid the destruction following an Israeli military raid in the Jenin refugee camp in the occupied West Bank yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

Trail of destruction as Israeli forces leave Jenin

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announced on Sunday.

Before also visiting Ramallah, she warned against calls by headline right-wing members of Israel’s cabinet for the military to take a similar approach to the West Bank as in Gaza.

“When members of the Israeli government themselves call for the same approach in the West Bank as in Gaza, that is precisely what acutely endangers Israel’s security,” Baerbock told reporters.

Jenin, in the northern part of the West Bank, has long been a stronghold of Palestinian armed factions, and the Israeli military said the operation, which also targeted the city of Tulkarm, was aimed at thwarting Iranian-backed militant groups planning attacks on Israeli civilians.

Yesterday, thousands, including large numbers of armed men who fired into the air, joined funeral processions for people killed during the fighting. Many of the bodies

were wrapped either in Palestinian flags or the green, black and yellow flags of Hamas, Islamic Jihad or Fatah.

In all 21 people were killed in Jenin during the operation. Many were claimed as members by the armed factions but a number were uninvolved civilians, including a 16-year-old girl, apparently shot by a sniper while looking out of the window.

More than 680 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, according to Palestinian health ministry figures.

In Nablus, Rafidia hospital director Fouad Nafaa said a US citizen, an activist in her mid-20s, died from a “gunshot in the head” after being admitted yesterday.

The official Wafa Palestinian news agency said she was an activist in a campaign to protect farmers from Israeli settler violence.

Meanwhile, Israeli military strikes killed at least 12 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip yesterday, medics

said, as health officials resumed vaccination of tens of thousands more children in the enclave against polio.

In Nuseirat, one of the territory’s eight historic refugee camps, an Israeli strike killed two women and two children, while eight other people were killed in two other strikes in Gaza City, the medics said.

Meanwhile, Israeli forces battled Hamas-led fighters in the Zeitoun suburb of Gaza City, where residents said tanks have been operating for over a week, in eastern Khan Younis, and in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, where residents said Israeli forces blew up several houses.

Since October 7 last year, Israel’s offensive in Gaza has so far killed at least 40,878 people, according to the health ministry in the Hamas-run territory.

Most of the dead are women and children, according to the UN rights office.