

Thought of the Day
And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.
- Paulo Coelho



Congress Will Get More Seats In 2024 Compared To 2019 Elections : P Chidambaram



US Imposes Entry Ban on Ex-Surinamese President, Former Military Officials



President Biden's Son Hunter Loses Bid to Dismiss Gun Charges



Ecuador Ex-VP Glas Must Stay in Jail Despite Illegal Arrest, Court Rules



Israelis Rally Against Government Amid Deadlock on Gaza Hostages

• **Tel Aviv (Israel)**

Thousands of Israelis rallied against their government on Saturday, with some demanding Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu call off the half-year-old war in Gaza amid a

deadlock in diplomatic efforts to retrieve hostages held there by Hamas. Hamas-led gunmen seized 253 people during an Oct. 7 attack on Israel that killed 1,200 others, according to officials. Some hostages were freed in a November truce but Egyptian- and

Qatari-mediated efforts to secure another deal appear to have stalled. As concern mounts in Israel for the wellbeing of the 129 remaining hostages, who cannot be contacted, their families and friends have organised increasingly vocal demonstrations against Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's rightist government. They have dovetailed with activists who have long called for Netanyahu's ouster given his trial on graft charges - which he denies - and his attempts to overhaul the judiciary last year.

Rest on Page 2

Hundreds Rally in Niger's Capital to Push for U.S. Military Departure

• **Niamey (Nigeria)**

Hundreds took to the streets of Niger's capital on Saturday to demand the departure of U.S. troops, after the ruling junta further shifted its strategy by ending a military accord with the United States and welcoming Russian military instructors.

Marching arm in arm through central Niamey, the crowd waved Nigerien flags in a demonstration that recalled anti-French protests that spurred the withdrawal of France's forces from Niger last year after the army seized power in a coup.

One hand-written sign in English read "USA rush out of Niger," in a show of support for the junta and its decision in mid-March to revoke an accord that had allowed around 1,000 U.S. military personnel to operate on its territory out of two bases.

"We're here to say no to the American base, we don't want Americans on our soil," said protester Maria Saley on the sidelines of the march.



Contd. on Page 2

Police Arrest International Gang in \$686 Million Medicinal Cannabis Scam

• **Madrid (Spain)**

Police forces led by Spain have arrested a gang which allegedly defrauded 645 million euros (\$686.41 million) from victims in 35 countries in a scam centred around cannabis plants for medicinal use.

The gang mounted a marketing system and attended international cannabis fairs to convince victims to invest in the system, the Spanish National Police said in a statement.

It led the operation with the help of Europol and police forces in five other countries. Nine suspects, who have not been named, were detained on April 11 on suspicion of fraud in Spain, Britain, Germany, Latvia, Poland, Italy and the Dominican Republic.

"The business model offered by this organization consisted of using the capital transferred from investors to develop partnerships to finance the cultivation of cannabis plants," Silvia Garrido, Spanish police spokeswoman said.

"With this system, they promised victims profits of



Contd. on Page 2

The Royal Thai Temple, Buddhagaya organised a Special Prayer Meet



Page 3 News

• Bangkok / 13 April

The Royal Thai Temple, Buddhagaya organised a Special Prayer Meet and offering of Water ceremony under the sacred Bodhi Tree in the premises of the Mahabodhi Temple on Saturday

the 13th April, 2024 at 8 a.m. on the occasion of the Songkran Festival, the Thai traditional New Year's Day. The Lord Abbot of the Royal Thai Temple Led By Phradhambodhivong Chief Abbot of Royal Thai Monastery Buddhagaya the Theravada and Lama's invited from different Temples and Monasteries in

Buddhagaya. On behalf of the Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee, Dr. Mahashweta Maharathi, Secretary and Mr. Kiran Lama, Member attended too. Later on at 9:30 am in order to celebrate the Songkran Festival, to mark the end of the old year was organised at the Royal Thai Temple, Buddhagaya. Songkran is also

called the 'Water Festival'. After a brief Ceremony of Chanting and offering of Sangha Dana, the Bhikkhus, Lamas, Dr. Mahashweta Maharathi, Mr. Kiran Lama, Ambassador Dr Parvinder Singh World Peace Institute United Nation joined in offering scented water to the Buddha Statues, Stupas and the Bodhi Tree

in the premises of the Royal Thai Temple Buddhagaya led by Phradhambodhivong Chief Abbot of Royal Thai Monastery Phramaha Nipon Prasandee Secretary of the Abbot Buddhagaya Abbot. The Lord Abbot and the Bhikkhus and Lama's were offered scented water celebrating the Songkran Festival.

PM Srettha Celebrates Songkran in Hua Hin

Page 3 News

• Prachuap Khiri Khan / 13 April

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin joined the throngs of Bangkok residents traveling for the Songkran festival, choosing to spend the holiday at his vacation home in Prachuap Khiri Khan's Hua Hin district. On Friday morning, the premier was seen participating in local traditions, offering alms to monks at a market where he also enjoyed some local cuisine from his preferred vendors. Srettha late visited the Hua Hin Railway Station to review the arrangements made for travelers and ensure that the facili-



ties were up to standard to handle the holiday influx. As Songkran festivities stretch until April 21 this year, most Thais are utilizing the extended break to reconnect with family or explore. According to Tourism and Sports

Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol, the festival is expected to inject approximately 50 billion baht into the tourism sector, underscoring its significant impact on the local economy.

Songkran's Fatalities Decline Despite High Accident Rate

Page 3 News

• Bangkok / 13 April

On the first day (Apr 11) of Songkran's "seven dangerous days," Thailand recorded 234 road accidents, resulting in 25 fatalities. The annual period, notorious for a surge in traffic incidents due to heavy travel, speeding, and inebriation, coincides with the Thai New Year break, with accident monitoring extended from April 11 to 17. Despite the concerning figures, there was a noticeable decrease in accidents, injuries, and

fatalities compared to the three-year average for the same period, with accidents down by 19.03%, injuries by 14.28%, and deaths by 21.88%. Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Director-General Chaiwat Junthirapong confirmed the decline, noting a slight improvement in road safety during this critical travel time. Songkhla province experienced the highest number of accidents, with 11 incidents reported, followed by Krabi and Ayutthaya,

each with 10, and Trang with nine. Songkhla also saw the most injuries, while Bangkok reported the highest number of fatalities, with three deaths. The data showed that motorcycles were involved in 86.07% of the accidents, followed by pickup trucks and cars. The primary causes of these accidents were speeding, lane cutting, and drunk driving, with the most frequent risky behaviors including failing to use safety equipment, speeding, and alcohol consumption.

Thailand Offers Free Access to Ecotourism Sites During Songkran Festival

Page 3 News

• Bangkok / 13 April

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has underlined the initiative to develop ecotourism sites, specifically recreational forests, to serve as educational spaces and enhance awareness of the importance of natural resources. Police General Patcharawat Wongsuwon, Deputy Prime Minister and Natural Resources and Environment Minister, made the statement. He emphasized the significance of family bonding and relaxation during the Songkran festival, with free access provided at three locations across Thailand.



Meanwhile, Surachai Achalaboon, Director-General of the Royal Forest Department, mentioned that waiving entry fees to three recreational forests during Songkran aims to boost tourism and promote nature education. The three sites—Three Whales Stone, Khao Eto Waterfall, and Sea of Mist

Aiyerweng—are acclaimed domestically and internationally. This policy allows the public to connect with nature and supports local tourism. The Forest Department manages 30 recreational forest areas across the country, celebrated for their scenic beauty and diverse activities. These

locations offer both relaxation and educational opportunities, helping to foster environmental awareness among the youth and the general public. The sustainable development of these recreational forests into ecotourism destinations includes engaging local communities in conservation efforts, enhancing their income, and promoting the preservation of natural resources. Offering free access during Songkran not only enriches the visitor experience but also bolsters understanding of natural conservation and promotes family unity.

Songkhla Lake Nominated for UNESCO Heritage List

Page 3 News

• Sonkhla / 13 April

The Cabinet has approved the submission of Songkhla Lake and its surrounding lagoon settlements for UNESCO World Heritage Site consideration. The documents are set to be reviewed by the UNESCO committee in New Delhi, India, in July as part of this year's candidates for cultural world heritage recognition. Songkhla Lake, known as the largest natural lake in Thailand, is technically a lagoon complex that spans over 1,040 square kilometers and touches the provinces of Songkhla and Phatthalung. The area is celebrated for its rich biodiversity, including vast mangrove and swamp for-

ests, paddy fields, and grasslands. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre in Paris, which coordinates the nominations, announced an April 15 deadline for this year's submissions, positioning Thailand's entry just within the cutoff. Once on the tentative list, the Songkhla settlements will undergo a year of review before potentially being designated as a World Heritage site by 2025. Thailand currently boasts four cultural world heritage sites: the Historic Town of Sukhothai and its associated historic towns, the Historic City of Ayutthaya, the Ban Chiang archaeological site, and the Ancient Town of Si Thep along with its associated Dvaravati monuments.

Thailand sees 146% rise in foreign arrivals over same period last year

Page 3 News

• Bangkok / 13 April

About 10 million foreign tourists, including 1.9 million Chinese, visited Thailand between the beginning of this year and April 9th, a 146% increase from the same period last year, Government spokesman Chai

Wacharonke said today. He said that more tourists are expected to arrive during the long Songkran holiday, especially from Muslim countries following the end of the Ramadan. According to the Immigration Bureau, of the 10,168,745 foreign arrivals in Thailand by April 9th this year, 1,920,039 were Chi-



nese, 1,274,528 Malaysian, 670,233 Russian, 595,705 South Korean and 519,878 were Indian. Chai attributed the increase to the government's pre-travel visa free policy for a number of nationalities and convenient immigration procedures. The Tourism Authority of Thailand has projected that

foreign and local tourists are expected to spend about 100 billion baht during the Songkran break. 16,307 incoming and outgoing flights are expected at airports across the country from April 11th to 17th, averaging 2,330 flights a day, according to Aeronautical Radio of Thailand.

Congress Will Get More Seats In 2024 Compared To 2019 Elections: P Chidambaram

Page3News

• Kolkata / 13 April

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram today asserted that his party would get more seats in the ensuing elections than in 2019 and predicted that the INDIA bloc would secure a resounding victory in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

In an interview with news agency PTI, Mr Chidambaram also said that neither Hinduism nor the Hindus were under any threat and it was the BJP's "calculated strategy" to paint the entire Opposition as "anti-Hindu" to project PM Modi as the "saviour of Hindus".

He also described West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee as a "key player" in this election and said that her ability to hold the fort in the state will strengthen the INDIA bloc.

"I cannot speak for all the states. I can confidently predict that the INDIA bloc will record a resounding victory in Tamil Nadu. In Kerala, the two fronts (UDF and LDF) will share the 20 seats, leaving nothing to the BJP.



In Karnataka and Telangana, the Congress governments are popular and Congress will get many more seats than in 2019," Mr Chidambaram told Press Trust of India.

The Congress had won 52 seats in the Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

Noting that the Congress may

show an improved performance, he claimed there are also encouraging reports about the INDIA bloc from Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and Delhi.

The senior Congressman said that PM Narendra Modi accusing the Opposition parties of appeasement politics and

calling them a "band of anti-Hindu politicians bent on breaking India up" is the BJP's strategy for the ensuing Lok Sabha polls.

"This is the BJP's calculated strategy to paint the entire Opposition as anti-Hindu and to boost Narendra Modi's credentials as the saviour of

Hindus. Hinduism is not in danger," he opined.

On whether Mamata Banerjee could be a factor in the ensuing election, Mr Chidambaram said, "Undoubtedly, she is a key player in this election. Her ability to hold the fort in West Bengal will strengthen the INDIA combination."

The Congress Rajya Sabha MP said that the Kachchatheevu issue was "closed" and questioned the BJP's timing of raising the issue when the elections were around.

"Kachchatheevu is a closed issue. The agreement was reached 50 years ago. PM Modi has been in office since 2014; why did he not raise the issue in the last 10 years?" the former Union minister questioned.

The Kachchatheevu issue pertains to decades-old territorial and fishing rights dispute around the island located between Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. It gained prominence ahead of the Lok Sabha polls as both BJP and Opposition parties are engaged in a war of words over the issue.

LS candidate Malwinder Kang held workers meeting at Balachaur

Page3News

Jatinderpal Singh Kaler

• Balachaur / 13 April

According to the guidelines of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann, in view of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, under the able leadership of Bibi Santosh Kataria Constituency MLA, Balachaur, the candidate announced from Sri Anandpur Sahib constituency of Aam Aadmi Party, Malwinder Singh Kang, all volunteers and workers at Balachaur. met with Before addressing the meeting, he paid obeisance and took blessings at Baba Balraj Temple in Balachore, where he was specially honored by the organizing committee. Addressing on this occasion, Malwinder Singh Kang said that under the able leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Maan, Punjab is digging high bridges for health facilities, education and employment, power generation and canal water for irrigation. . More than 90 percent of the people of Punjab have zero electricity bills, due to which the leaders of other traditional parties are not happy with these pro-people plans of the Aam Aadmi Party because for 75 years, the leaders of these traditional parties have prioritized familyism. have given and people have been



cheated by them always. Malwinder Singh Kang said that during the tenure of the Aam Aadmi Party led by Bhagwant Maan, many big gangsters have been arrested to stop the hooliganism in the state and the law breakers have tightened the ban on the peace of Punjab. He said that today's meeting of volunteers has taken the form of a rally from which it appears that all the volunteers of Aam Aadmi Party are united and I have full hope that I will win from Lok Sabha constituency Sri Anandpur Sahib with a huge majority. Will strengthen the arms of Supremo Arvind Kejriwal. On this occasion, Bibi Santosh Kataria said in her address that the people of the constituency have blessed Malwinder Singh Kang by joining

the workers' meeting in large numbers today and they also give full assurance that he will win in the parliament with a large majority. will be sent He thanked the collective gathering of workers who attended the meeting. On this occasion, senior party leader Ashok Kataria, Satnam Jalalpur District President and Chairman District Planning Board, Manjit Singh Ghuman President X Service Men Wing Punjab, Baljit Singh Bharapur, Youth Leader Karanveer Kataria, Shivkaran Chechi President BC Wing Punjab, Ranveer Singh Dhaliwal Block President, Sethi Udhanwal District President BC Wing, Ranveer Chechi, Praveen Puri Block President, Sudesh Kumar Kataria, Honey Dub, Chandra Mohan JD, Muhammad Sarfaraj, Manjit Bedi, Gurchen Singh Block President, Paramjit Singh Constituency Coordinator, Jaswinder Bachhua, Balveer Majra Jatta, Jasveer Ghuman, Balveer Meelu, Jamal Johar, Surinder Bhatti, Baldev Raj, Naresh Kumar Neeta, Pawan Kumar Rithu, Karampal Karawar, Jolly Bains, Honey Jogewal, Naresh Pandit, Parveen Vashisht, Pammi Thopia, Ravi Inder Bhatia and Keshav Meelu including all volunteers were present.

Shiromani Akali Dal will win with a huge lead - Gurpreet Gujjar Railmajra

Page3News /
Jatinderpal Singh Kaler
• Nawanshahr / 13 April

The first list of Shiromani Akali Dal was released by party supremo Sukhbir Singh Badal regarding the Lok Sabha elections. In which Daljit Singh Cheema from Gurdaspur, NK Sharma from Patiala and Anil Joshi from Amritsar, Professor Prem Singh Chandumajra Lok Sabha Constituency Sri Anandpur Sahib and Iqbal Singh Jhunda from Sangrur were announced.

There was a huge wave of happiness among the party workers when Professor Prem Singh Chandumajra got a ticket from Lok Sabha constituency Sri Anandpur Sahib. On getting the ticket, senior Akali leader Gurpreet Gujjar Ralmajra said that he will defeat Pro-

fessor Prem Singh Chandumajra with a huge lead. He said that people

are fed up with the policies of Aam Aadmi Party Inflation is rampant He said that there is no such thing as law and order in the state The law ad order is completely over He said that the Shiromani



Akali Dal is a party that serves the poor, laborers and the needy He said that this time the public will win Professor Prem Singh Chandumajra by putting a lot of effort Gurpreet Gujjar Ralmajra thanked the party high command for giving ticket to Professor Prem Singh Chandumajra from Sri Anandpur Sahib. He said that the people of Lok Sabha Constituency Sri Anandpur Sahib will win with a huge lead and make Professor Prem Singh Chandumajra successful.

Fitness Zone (gym), Botanical Garden And Visitors' Room inaugurated By Sh. Dinesh Uniyal, Igp Nws

Page3News /

Jatinderpal Singh Kaler

• Kathgarh / 13 April

On the occasion of inauguration of Fitness Zone (Gym), Botanical Garden and Visitors' Room, 13 BN CRPF was honoured to have Sh. Dinesh Uniyal, IGP CRPF, NWS Chandigarh as the chief guest and was formally welcomed by Smt. Kamal Sisodiya Commandant 13 BN CRPF.

Sh. Dinesh Uniyal, IGP CRPF, NWS Chandigarh inaugurated "Fitness Zone" (Gym), Botanical Garden and Visitors' Room. This was followed by a felicitation programme, in which the



E- Magazine 'Pragati' was launched by the chief guest. He praised the Leadership of the unit and contribution towards achieving the 'Pragati ki raftaar' in the camp. Also, with the quote that 'Healthy mind has a healthy body', highlighted the importance of exercise and yoga in the life of force personnel and emphasized on the bene-

fits of physical fitness and fresh air that can be achieved in the gym and botanical garden.

Smt. Kamal Sisodiya, Commandant 13 Bn also brought up the positive changes daily exercise has on people and how it can be life changing. She cited IGP sir as role model for all in force as he takes keen interest in his fitness and is extremely fit.

BJP To Release Poll Manifesto Tomorrow, PM Narendra Modi To Be Present

Page3News
• New Delhi / 13 April

The BJP will release its manifesto - Sankalp Patra - for the Lok Sabha polls on Sunday, with its planks of welfare and development besides a roadmap for 'Viksit Bharat' expected to figure prominently in its election agenda.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior leaders of the party will attend the unveiling of the manifesto at the party headquarters which coincides with the birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar, a towering

leader from the Dalit community and an architect of the Indian Constitution. As the BJP government has fulfilled most of its



core ideological promises, including the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and the repeal of Article 370, all eyes will be on how the ruling party's larger cultural and Hindutva agenda figures

in the manifesto. Party sources said measures for the youth, women, farmers and the poor -- four "castes" PM Modi has often spoken about -- will be among the highlights of its poll pledges.

The BJP had appointed a manifesto committee headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh that met twice to deliberate on its contents after the party had launched multiple exercises, including vans sent across the country and social media campaigns, to seek people's suggestions.

Multiple Races to Stab and Shoot Person in Shopping Center After Russian Oligarch Caught

Page3News

• Sydney / 13 April

Multiple people were stabbed Saturday, and police shot someone, at a busy Sydney shopping center, media reports said.

ABC TV in Australia reported Saturday that police evacuated shoppers at Westfield Shopping Centre in Bondi Junction, which is in the city's eastern suburbs. A New South Wales ambulance spokesperson said that one of two alleged offenders had been shot by police and they were searching for the other, ABC reported. The spokesperson said people were still inside the shopping center.

The Sydney Morning Herald reported that four people died in a stabbing. Police couldn't be immediately reached to confirm



the report. The newspaper said one person was also shot, but it wasn't clear if the person had died.

Video showed many ambulances and police cars around the shopping center, and people streaming out. ABC reported that armed police were searching a rooftop parking lot. Paramedics were treating patients at the scene.

Witness Roi Huberman, an ABC sound engineer, told the network that he sheltered in a store during the incident.

"And suddenly we heard a shot or maybe two shots and we didn't know what to do," he said. "Then the very capable person in the store took us to the back where it can be locked. She then locked the store and then she then let us through the back and now we are out."

Indonesia Denies Using Air Strikes in Papua Region, Where Kidnapped NZ Pilot Is

Page3News

• Jakarta / 13 April

Indonesia's military on Saturday denied using air strikes in a remote, restive part of the country, after a video of a New Zealand pilot kidnapped by Papuan rebels featured him saying military actions had made his position unsafe.

An armed faction of the West Papua National Liberation Army (TPNPB), led by Egianus Kogoya, kidnapped the pilot, Phillip Mehrtens, on Feb. 7, 2023 after he landed a small commercial plane in the remote, mountainous area of Nduga.

Nugraha Gumilar, the spokesperson for Indonesia's military, said the rebel group is "always

reporting hoax news", after the rebels claimed the military had been dropping bombs onto civilian areas. Indonesia's military is still trying to save the New Zealand pilot, Gumilar added.

In a video released by TPNPB this week, Mehrtens, who is surrounded by the armed Papua rebels and wearing a dark brown t-shirt and boots, said he is "not safe" following the claimed air strikes.

"Before I was in the safe area, but have been taken again by the Papua military, and it's not so safe for me anymore," he said.

Kogoya of TPNPB, said in a statement that it demanded the Indonesia's military to stop dropping bombs with a helicopter, calling it a "very

unbalanced" action.

The rebel group also said it will only release the New Zealand pilot through a negotiation facilitated by the United Nations.

In response to the new development, New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade spokesperson said the government is doing everything it can to secure a peaceful resolution and Mehrtens' safe release, including working closely with Indonesian authorities. A low-level but increasingly deadly battle for independence has been waged in the resource-rich western half of the island of Papua since it was controversially brought under Indonesian control in a vote overseen by the United Nations in 1969.

US Imposes Entry Ban on Ex-Surinamese President, Former Military Officials

Page3News

• Zagreb / 13 April

The United States on Friday announced an entry ban on former Surinamese President Desi Bouterse and six former military officials, citing alleged involvement in the extrajudicial killings of political opponents in the 1980s.

"These individuals and four family members are generally ineligible for entry into the United States," the U.S. State Department said in a statement, which said the officials had been involved in the so-called "December Murders". Bouterse, 78, dominated politics in the tiny South American country for decades, leading a coup



in 1980 and finally leaving office in 2020.

Five years ago, he and six others were convicted for their role in the 1982 murders of 15 leading government critics, including lawyers, journalists, union leaders, soldiers and university professors. Bouterse was sentenced to 20 years in prison but

did not report to prison in January this year, triggering an international manhunt. He has yet to reappear.

"The United States commends Suriname for its commitment to the rule of law, including its effort to maintain judicial independence and combat official impunity," it said.

Unveiling Ambedkar as a Needonomist: A Tribute on his 133rd Birth Anniversary

As the world commemorates the 133rd birth anniversary of Bharat Ratan Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on April 14, 2024, it is imperative to shed light on his lesser-known role as a distinguished economist to be known as a Needonomist. Beyond his renowned stature as a champion of scheduled castes and one of the architects of India's constitution, Ambedkar's insights into economics hold profound relevance for global economies, especially in times of crisis with butterfly effect (Lorenz Attractor)- a small change at one place in a complex system can have large effects elsewhere in the world to reduce if not remove the panic and fear of the global economic crisis.

Ambedkar deserves to be known to the World as an outstanding economist with recognition more than a noble prize in economics. The unique aspect of his scientific mind is evident in various memoranda and statements that he submitted to the Government of India from time to time are indicative of the fact that he had mastered the subject of economics to a great extent.

Ambedkar's academic journey, culminating in a Doctorate of Science from the London School of Economics, underscores his wisdom as a Needonomist. His contributions to economic thought transcend borders and ideologies, offering

timeless wisdom that resonates even today.

For reducing panic and fear of any crisis in any economy of the world, it would be relevant to adopt the canons of public expenditure advocated by Ambedkar. In 1949, Ambedkar said that every Government should spend the resources garnered from the public not only according to rules, laws and regulations but should also see that 'faithfulness, Economy and wisdom (FEW)' are adhered to in the acts of expenditure by public authorities.

His canons of public expenditure advocate for a judicious and principled approach to government spending falling in the domain of needonomics (economics of needs), these principles serve as a guiding light for policymakers worldwide.

The remarkable thing about Ambedkar's canons of public expenditure is that they are ism-neutral. One can follow a policy of a large or small public sector and yet the principles behind these canons are applicable. First, the canon of faithfulness, faith in this context as defined by the dictionary a 'duty or commitment to fulfil a trust, promise...' The canon of faithfulness underscores the importance of politicians in power and opposition honouring the trust bestowed upon them by the electorate. It emphasizes a commitment to the original



Professor Rashmi Bhardwaj* & Professor Madan Mohan Goel**

intentions of the people, ensuring accountability and integrity in governance as needo-governance more than the claim of good governance.

Economy, the second canon, goes beyond mere thriftiness, advocating for the intelligent allocation of resources to maximize their impact. Ambedkar's vision of the economy transcends frugality, focusing instead on the efficient utilization of funds to achieve societal well-being. Economy in public expenditure does not simply mean a low level of public spending but is the intelligent use of funds so that every rupee is beneficial and worth its purchasing power which is otherwise declining day by day.

Wisdom, as the third canon, highlights the necessity of informed decision-making in public expenditure as commonsense is a symptom of wise Government. Beyond mere adherence to rules, Ambedkar stresses the importance of prudent and sagacious choices guided by

economic expertise and foresight. In the context of a just utilization of public funds, the economic wisdom of the academic professional outside Delhi Durbar becomes a paramount necessity.

The apparent faithfulness to the intentions, wisdom not sufficient in themselves for public expenditure. Ambedkar's canons offer a flexible framework adaptable to diverse economic contexts. They urge policymakers to align expenditure decisions with overarching objectives and available resources while ensuring efficiency and effectiveness. The allocation of expenditure among competing demands and the manner of utilization fall within the domain of these canons. In an era marked by global economic uncertainty, Ambedkar's canons serve as a beacon of rationality and prudence. They provide a touchstone for evaluating the necessity and efficacy of public expenditure, fostering transparency and accountability in governance. Every single decision should be assessed in terms of faithfulness to the will of the people; wisdom as provided by the professionals in the field, coupled with well-considered and honest judgment in execution.

As the world pays homage to Ambedkar's multifaceted legacy, it is incumbent upon us to recognize his seminal

contributions to economics. Beyond being a revered figure, he emerges as an unsung hero of economic thought, deserving of recognition commensurate with his profound impact on the world stage.

In honouring Ambedkar as a Needonomist—a term coined by Professor Madan Mohan Goel as the propounder of the needonomics school of thought to reflect his economic acumen—we not only pay tribute to his intellectual legacy but also imbue his principles into the fabric of global economic discourse. Let us commemorate his birth anniversary by embracing his timeless wisdom and applying it to navigate the challenges of an ever-evolving world.

*The first author is a Fellow of the Institute of Mathematics & Applications, UK; Professor of Mathematics, Nonlinear Dynamics Research Lab, University School of Basic & Applied Sciences, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi

** The second author is Propounder Needonomics School of Thought, Former Vice-Chancellor, Starex University, Jagannath University, RGNIYD (GOI), and Superannuated Professor of Kurukshetra University.

US, Japan, Philippines Trilateral Deal to Change Dynamic in South China Sea, Marcos Says

Page3News

• Washington / 13 April

A cooperation agreement by the Philippines, the United States and Japan will change the dynamic in the South China Sea and the region, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said on Friday, while seeking to assure China it was not a target. "I think the trilateral agreement is extremely important," Marcos told a press conference in Washington a day after meeting President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in the nations' first trilateral summit. "It is going to change the dynamic, the dynamic that we see in the region, in ASEAN in Asia, around the South China Sea," Marcos said, referring to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

The three leaders expressed "serious concerns" about China's "dangerous and aggressive behavior" in the South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual ship-borne commerce with vari-



ous maritime disputes among China and other countries. Still, Marcos said the summit was "not against any country" but had focused on deepening economic and security relations among Manila, Washington and

Tokyo. China claims almost the entire South China Sea despite a 2016 ruling by the Permanent Court of Arbitration found Beijing's sweeping claims had no legal basis. Philippine and Chinese ships

have had a series of run-ins in the past month that included the use of water cannon and heated verbal exchanges.

Beijing on Thursday summoned Manila's ambassador to the country and a Japanese

embassy official to oppose what its foreign ministry described as "negative comments" against China.

The deepening China-Philippines row coincides with an increase in security engagements with the United States under Marcos, including expansion of U.S. access to Philippine bases, as well as with Japan, which is expected to sign a reciprocal troop pact with Manila. Biden has asked Congress for an additional \$128 million for infrastructure projects at the Philippine bases.

Marcos also expressed confidence that around \$100 billion in possible investment deals over the next five to 10 years from the summit will come into fruition. While in Washington, Marcos also met with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, who assured him of continued U.S. support.

"This whole cooperation is critical to our collective security and continued prosperity across the region," Austin said, reiterating Biden's strong defense commitment.

Gunmen Kill 9 Men After Abduction in Southwest Pakistan, Say Police

Page3News

• Quetta / 13 April

Gunmen shot and killed nine men after abducting them from a bus in a troubled province in southwestern Pakistan bordering Afghanistan and Iran, officials said on Saturday. No one has claimed the responsibility for the Friday night attack in Balochistan province in Pakistan's southwest. Separatist ethnic Baloch militant groups in the mineral-rich region have been fighting for decades against the state, saying it denies them their share of regional resources. Several gunmen intercepted the Iran-bound bus in Noshki district, taking the nine men with them after determining they were from the eastern province of Punjab, said police officer



Abdullah Mengal. "All of them were travelling to Taftan," he said. The victims were shot at close range, he said. Their bullet-ridden bodies were found from beneath a bridge after one and a half hour, said the district deputy commissioner, Habibullah Musakhail. Ethnic Baloch insurgents have previously claimed responsibility for similar

killings in the region, which is home to deep-water Gwadar sea port being developed by neighbouring China. The insurgents have also targeted Chinese nationals and their interests. Beijing has invested heavily in regional development projects as part of its \$65 billion pledge under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.

President Biden's Son Hunter Loses Bid to Dismiss Gun Charges

Page3News

• Washington / 13 April

A federal judge in Delaware on Friday declined to dismiss gun charges against Hunter Biden, one of the two criminal cases against Joe Biden's son as the Democratic U.S. president ramps up his campaign for re-election.

U.S. District Judge Maryellen Noreika in Wilmington ruled against Hunter Biden's request to dismiss two counts of lying about his use of illegal narcotics when he purchased a Colt Cobra handgun in 2018 and a third count of illegally possessing that weapon. The ruling clears the way for a trial on the gun charges, tentatively scheduled to start on June 3 in Wilmington. Hunter Biden has pleaded not guilty. Spe-



Federal judge in Delaware on Friday declined to dismiss gun charges against Hunter Biden, one of the two criminal cases against Joe Biden's son as the Democratic U.S. president ramps up his campaign for re-election

cial Counsel David Weiss brought the gun charges in September, when Hunter Biden became the first child of a sitting president to be indicted. He had faces more than 20 years in prison if convicted on the gun charges. Republican candidate Donald Trump, seeking to regain the presidency in the Nov. 5 U.S. election, faces four criminal indict-

ments of his own. Hunter Biden's attorneys had argued the gun charges should be dismissed for a variety of reasons including that the law under which Hunter Biden was charged was likely unconstitutional after the U.S. Supreme Court expanded gun rights in a 2022 ruling that set a tough new test to determine the legality of firearms re-

strictions. Biden's legal team also had argued that Weiss was not appropriately appointed, that Hunter Biden was being selectively prosecuted and that he had a binding agreement that shielded him from prosecution. Hunter Biden also has pleaded not guilty to federal tax crimes in a separate case brought by Weiss in California, facing up to 17 years in prison if convicted. That trial is scheduled to start on June 20. The special counsel accused Hunter Biden of failing to pay \$1.4 million in taxes between 2016 and 2019 while spending millions of dollars on drugs, escorts, exotic cars and other high-ticket items. U.S. District Judge Mark Scarsi in Los Angeles on April 1 rejected Hunter Biden's motions to dismiss the tax indictment.

Page3News

• Beijing / 13 April

Floods, droughts, an earthquake and freezing conditions in China caused direct economic losses of 23.76 billion yuan (\$3.28 billion) in the first quarter, the government said on Saturday. The emergency management ministry cited damage from several cold spells, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, landslides in Yunnan province in the southwest and flooding on the Yellow River. The disasters killed 79 people while 110,000 needed emergency relocation and resettlement and 10.4 million people across 26 regions and

provinces were affected in the period, the ministry said in a report.

Other natural disasters included a drought in the southwest affecting 424,000 hectares (10,500 acres) of crops, sandstorms in the northwest and forest fires in the southwest and south. Last year natural disasters in China caused 345.45 billion yuan (\$47.7 billion) of direct economic losses, with 691 people dead or missing, the ministry reported in January.

In January the ministry said it plans a three-year campaign to tackle problems hampering response times during disasters and accidents, including production safety lapses in sectors like mining.

Mexico Sounds Alarm Over 'Zombie Drug' Sedative in Opioids

Page3News

• Mexico City / 13 April

Mexican public health officials are sounding an alarm after a study discovered the presence of animal tranquilizer Xylazine in opioids in cities on the country's northwest border with the United States. Known popularly in English by names like "tranq dope" and "zombie drug," Xylazine cut into heroin and fentanyl has in recent years worsened the opioid scourge in U.S. cities like Philadelphia.

On April 8, Mexico's health ministry in conjunction with the mental health and addiction commission (CONASAMA), issued an alert "for health personnel and first responders in Mexican border cities for possible adulteration of heroin and fentanyl with



Xylazine."

Because it is a sedative but not an opioid, Xylazine can make opioid overdose reversal treatments less effective and raise the risk of fatal drug poisoning, while also causing severe skin abscesses that can be life-threatening.

In Mexico, like in the United States, Xylazine is only approved for use in animals, not humans.

The government's alert pointed to a study that tested 300 samples of drug residues in the cities of Tijuana and Mexicali, identifying Xylazine as an

adulterant in 35 residues of heroin mixed with fentanyl and 26 fentanyl residues.

The study, which is ongoing and has not yet been published, is funded by Mexico's National Council for Science and Technology (CONACYT).

The study was seeking to identify adulterants in drugs and was not specifically looking for Xylazine.

"We were surprised to find Xylazine," said Clara Fleiz, an investigator at Mexico's National Institute of Psychiatry and the study's lead author.

The alarm comes amid signs the consumption of fentanyl, the highly potent synthetic opioid fueling tens of thousands of deadly overdoses per year in the United States, is spreading within Mexico's borders.

China Natural Disasters Cost \$3.3 Billion in First Quarter, Government Says

The US and UK Restrict the Trade of Russian-Origin Metals

Page3News

• Washington / 13 April

The U.S. and U.K. will begin restricting the trade of new Russian-origin metals — including aluminum, copper and nickel — on global metal exchanges and in derivatives trading.

The announcement is meant to follow up on the Group of Seven nations' commitment in February "to reduce Russia's revenues from metals" as its invasion into Ukraine has dragged on for more than two years.

Russia is a key exporter of metals like aluminum, steel and titanium — but British and American officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview the announcement, said the economic impact from the ban would be negligible for consumers and producers.

The intent is to limit Russia's revenues from metals, they say, as metals have earned the nation \$40 billion in the past two years,



according to British officials.

"Our new prohibitions on key

metals, in coordination with our partners in the United Kingdom,

will continue to target the revenue Russia can earn to continue

its brutal war against Ukraine," said Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen in a news release.

"By taking this action in a targeted and responsible manner, we will reduce Russia's earnings while protecting our partners and allies from unwanted spillover effects," she said.

The officials said new Russian metals will not be allowed to be traded on the exchanges, including the London Metal Exchange and Chicago Mercantile Exchange. However, metals produced before midnight Saturday in London will be permitted.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. and EU have levied sanctions on Russia's biggest banks and its elite, frozen the assets of the country's Central Bank located outside the country and excluded its financial institutions from the SWIFT bank messaging system.

The U.S. and U.K. have also previously sanctioned Russian gold, gas and diamonds.

US Biotech Executive Sentenced to 7 Years in Jail for COVID Test Fraud



Page3News

• Rome / 13 April

The chief executive of a U.S. biotechnology company that falsely promised investors it could produce a quick and accurate COVID-19 test was sentenced to seven years' in jail on Friday, the Justice Department said. Keith Berman, 70, of Westlake Village, California, pleaded guilty last December to securities fraud totaling around \$28 million. The Justice Department said that from February through De-

ember 2020, Berman falsely claimed his Decision Diagnostics company had developed a 15-second test to detect COVID-19 in a finger prick sample of blood when, in reality, no such test existed. "Berman defrauded investors to profit from the pandemic," Nicole Argentieri, head of the Justice Department's criminal division, said in a statement.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission had sued the company and Berman in December 2020.

IDB, World Bank Reports on Emergency Capital Could Pave Way for Expanded Lending

Page3News

• Washington / 13 April

The Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank on Friday issued separate reports on callable capital, the emergency capital pledged by governments but not paid in, that could help multilateral development banks expand their lending capacity.

The reports followed months of technical studies and reverse stress tests that showed shareholders viewed their commitments to provide the emergency capital as legally binding, but saw a remote chance it would ever be needed.

The IDB bank said it conducted reverse stress tests that showed all its shareholders considered obligations for callable capital legally binding, but a call on the emergency capital remained a "highly remote scenario." The World Bank said its analy-

sis showed the likelihood of a call was "extremely remote."

IDB said its senior management was confident that credit rating agencies would find the analysis useful in assessing the value of callable capital. The study is part of a major push by the IDB and other multilateral banks to expand the resources available to help poor countries fight climate change.

The World Bank said its review of the procedures and governance of callable capital had provided more clarity and transparency about shareholders' commitments, and could pave the way for changes to allow more lending.

"This information will help rating agencies to better assess the value of callable capital to Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)," it said. "Additional recognition by rating agencies of the value of callable capital could po-

tentially allow the World Bank and other MDBs to expand financial capacity to tackle growing development needs and improve the lives of millions."

Similar reports on callable capital are being published by the African Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

A senior U.S. Treasury official said the reports marked progress after months of hard work, with attention to turn now to increased engagement with the credit ratings agencies.

"These statements should really give confidence that there's potential scope to give more value to callable capital," the official told Reuters. "This was meticulous, detailed work on the part of the MDBs and the shareholders were really happy."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has asked

the MDBs to prioritize incorporating "a prudent share" of callable capital into their capital adequacy frameworks, as part of broader reforms aimed at expanding funding options to help developing countries amid a worsening climate crisis.

Senior executives at multilateral development banks (MDBs) have been meeting with top credit ratings agencies amid a broad push to expand their lending capacity and help countries brace for climate change and other challenges.

Several studies say the World Bank and other MDBs could expand their lending capacity by hundreds of billions of dollars if the ratings agencies modified the allowance they make for callable capital, without jeopardizing their AAA credit ratings, which enable them to borrow at low rates and pass on the savings to developing countries.

One Killed, 10 Injured in Cable Car Accident in Southern Turkey

Page3News

• Istanbul / 13 April

One person was killed and 10 others were injured on Friday in the southern Turkish province of Antalya after a cable car cabin collided with a broken pole, the interior ministry said on Saturday.

Twenty-four cabins were stranded in the air at 5:23 p.m. (1423 GMT) on Friday. Sixteen hours later, more than 60 people were still stranded in the remaining nine cabins in the air, the ministry said. One hundred and twelve people had been rescued.

None of the people waiting to be rescued had critical injuries or were in poor health, Disaster and Emergency Man-



agement Authority chairman Okay Memis told reporters at the scene, adding that they aimed to complete rescue work before sunset.

In a statement on social media platform X, the interior ministry said seven helicopters and more than 500 rescue workers were carrying out rescue efforts.

A video released by the

interior ministry showed rescue personnel tied to safety ropes climbing into cabins.

According to the information on its website, the cable car has 36 cabins with a capacity of six people each, and it takes an average of nine minutes to go uphill to the Tunektepe facility with panoramic views of the city of Antalya.

US Ex-Diplomat Sentenced to 15 Years for Spying for Cuba Over Decades

Page3News

• Washington / 13 April

A former U.S. diplomat was sentenced to 15 years in prison on Friday after admitting to acting as an agent of Cuba in what the Justice Department has called one of the highest-reaching and longest-lasting infiltrations of the U.S. government.

Victor Manuel Rocha, who served as U.S. ambassador to Bolivia from 2000 to 2002, pleaded guilty to two charges including acting as an illegal foreign agent. He was initially charged in December.

Rocha, 73, secretly supported Cuba's ruling Communist Party and aided the country's intelligence gathering against Washington for more than four decades, including during a 20-year

career in the State Department, according to U.S. prosecutors.

"Today's plea brings an end to more than four decades of betrayal and deceit by Mr. Rocha," David Newman, a senior national security official at the U.S. Justice Department said during a press conference in Miami. "For most of his life, Mr. Rocha lived a lie."

Rocha admitted his decades of work for Cuba and boasted about his ability to avoid detection in a series of meetings in 2022 and 2023 with an undercover FBI agent who posed as a representative of Cuba's foreign intelligence service, according to a criminal complaint filed in Miami federal court.

"What we have done...it's enormous. More than a grand slam," Rocha told the

undercover agent, according to the complaint.

A lawyer for Rocha did not respond to requests for comment. Rocha agreed to plead guilty as part of a deal with federal prosecutors that requires him to divulge details of his interactions with Cuban intelligence.

But U.S. officials said they may never know the full extent of Rocha's cooperation with Havana.

Rocha sought out positions that would give him access to sensitive information and influence over U.S. foreign policy, according to prosecutors.

Rocha worked for the State Department from 1981 to 2002, including as a member of the White House's National Security Council from 1994 to 1995, according to court documents.

Police Shut Down Pro-Palestinian Gathering in Germany Over Hate Speech Fears

Page3News

• Berlin / 13 April

German police cut the power and shut down a conference of pro-Palestinian activists on Friday after a banned speaker appeared by video link, organisers said.

The three-day Palestine Congress, promoted by pro-Palestinian groups including former Greek Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis's DIEM25 party, said it aimed to raise awareness of what it called Israel's "genocide" in Gaza.

The police banned the final two days of the event, citing concern about the potential for hate speech.

Among the speakers was activist Salman Abu Sitta, author of a January essay that expressed understanding for the Hamas militants who on Oct. 7 raided Israel.

"A speaker was projected who was subject to a ban on political activity," Berlin police said on social media. "There is a risk of a speaker being put on screen who in the past made antisemitic and violence-



glorifying remarks. The gathering was ended and banned on Saturday and Sunday."

Organisers of the conference said police intervened when Salman, who according to Stern

magazine was banned from entering Germany, began speaking on video.

"The police violence, like we were some sort of criminals, was unbearable for a democratic

country," said Karin de Rigo, a parliamentary candidate for the German offshoot of DIEM25.

"They not only stormed the stage, they cut the power like we were transmitting violence."

In Germany as in other Western countries, the war in Gaza has stirred growing popular opposition as the Palestinian death toll has mounted.

Germany's backing for Israel is rooted in a desire to atone for the genocide of Europe's Jews in the Nazi Holocaust. The presence of a large, growing Muslim and Arab population in Germany has made the tension particularly acute.

Many protesters have complained that expressions of solidarity with Palestinians are effectively criminalised by authorities on alert for antisemitism.

"It is right and necessary that the Berlin police intervened firmly at the so-called Palestine Congress," Interior Minister Nancy Faeser posted on social media. She earlier had urged police to be on guard for signs of hate speech at the congress.

In the Oct 7 attack on Israel, Hamas militants killed 1,200 and took 253 hostages, according to Israel. This triggered Israel's war in Gaza, in which more than 33,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to Gaza Health Ministry figures.

US, UK Take Action Targeting Russian Aluminum, Copper and Nickel

Page3News

• Washington / 13 April

Washington and London on Friday prohibited metal-trading exchanges from accepting new aluminum, copper and nickel produced by Russia and barred the import of the metals into the U.S. and Britain.

The action is aimed at disrupting Russian export revenue amid Moscow's ongoing invasion of Ukraine, which has killed or wounded tens of thousands and reduced cities to rubble. Russia is a major producer of aluminum, copper and nickel.

Russian metals producers Rusal and Nornickel did not immediately reply to a Reuters request for comment, nor did the Russian embassy in Wash-

ington.

The U.S. Treasury Department said Friday's action would prohibit the London Metal Exchange and Chicago Mercantile Exchange from accepting new Russian production of aluminum, copper and nickel.

"Our new prohibitions on key metals, in coordination with our partners in the United Kingdom, will continue to target the revenue Russia can earn to continue its brutal war against Ukraine," U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.

"By taking this action in a targeted and responsible manner, we will reduce Russia's earnings while protecting our partners and allies from unwanted spillover effects."

Page3News

• Quito / 13 April

A tribunal in Ecuador on Friday ruled the dramatic arrest of former Vice President Jorge Glas last week was illegal, but said he must remain in jail due to his previous convictions, a decision Glas' lawyer said his team will appeal.

Glas, twice convicted of corruption and now facing fresh charges, was arrested a week ago during a raid by police on Mexico's Quito embassy, where he had been living since December.

The arrest crowned a period of rising diplomatic tension between Ecuador and Mexico, though each country's government has since said it is open to repairing relations.

Glas' defense team had argued the three-judge tribunal should declare his capture at the embassy illegal and set him free, adding Ecuador's government violated his human rights and international law by authorizing security forces to enter a diplomatic mission.

The tribunal agreed the arrest "was illegal and arbitrary," Judge Monica Heredia said, but that due to the existence of previous convictions "this tribunal cannot modify the (jail) sentence."

Glas' lawyer Sonia Vera thanked the international community in a message on X, saying the support was vital for getting the arrest declared illegal.

"However, Jorge is still



determined," she said. "We'll appeal until he is free."

Former President Rafael Correa, whom Glas served under between 2013 and 2017, said this week Glas attempted suicide and was on hunger strike, which Vera later confirmed.

Glas was hospitalized on Monday, but returned to prison the next day.

Glas has alleged police

beat him during his arrest, while the police have said force was used progressively due to the former vice president's resistance. The government has said Glas was planning to escape, though it has not provided details.

Mexico's granting of asylum to Glas violates international laws which prohibit asylum for people facing criminal charges, Ecuador has argued.

Prior to the arrest, Quito declared the Mexican ambassador persona non grata, citing "unfortunate" comments by the Mexican president about election violence.

Mexico has called on the United Nations to suspend Ecuador if the country does not apologize for breaching the embassy.

Georgieva Selected for Second Term as IMF Managing Director

Page3News

• Washington / 13 April

The International Monetary Fund's executive board on Friday selected Bulgarian economist Kristalina Georgieva to serve as managing director for a second five-year term, starting on Oct. 1 this year, the global lender said.

"The Board commended Ms. Georgieva's strong and agile leadership during her term, navigating a series of major global shocks," it said in a statement. Georgieva had been the only candidate for the job.

European Union finance ministers last month endorsed Georgieva for a second term at the helm of



the lender of last resort, virtually assuring her approval. Traditionally, European countries recommend the managing director of the IMF and the United States recommends the head of the World Bank. Georgieva said she was grateful to the board and honored to be selected for a second term, and said she looked forward to continuing to working with the

IMF's "exceptional" staff. "In recent years, the IMF has helped our member countries to navigate successive shocks, including the pandemic, war and conflicts, and a cost-of-living crisis," she said. "We also stepped up our work on climate change, fragility and conflict, and the digital transition, in line with their increased significance for macroeconomic and financial stability, growth and employment."

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said she looked forward to working with Georgieva to strengthen the IMF's support of low-income countries and support the broader membership through well-designed IMF lending programs.

Haiti Decrees Long-Awaited Transition Council, but Questions Remain

Page3News

• Port Au Prince/ 13 April

Haiti's government formalized the creation of a nine-member transitional presidential council on Friday, a long-delayed move intended as the first step in restoring security to the gang-ravaged Caribbean country.

The decree, however, leaves many questions unanswered.

It does not name the new council members or establish a time frame for installing the council and replacing Prime Minister Ariel Henry, who pledged one month ago to step down once his successor was in place.

Indicating the unelected

Henry will initially retain oversight of proceedings, the decree allows the current prime minister to make the "necessary arrangements" ahead of the new appointments. Those chosen must then "participate, in agreement with the prime minister, in the formation of an inclusive ministers' cabinet."

It calls on the council to help speed the deployment of international troops Henry requested in 2022 to aid police in their battles with armed and increasingly powerful gangs.

Nearly 95,000 people have fled the metropolitan area of the capital Port-au-Prince in the last

month as armed gangs have cemented their control. Haitians are lacking basic goods as key ports remain closed, while the outgoing government remains absent.

The decree, published in Haiti's official gazette, names the nine political parties or social sectors to be represented on the council, including two non-voting observers, confirming an announcement made last month.

The transition plan was announced on March 11 as armed men mounted attacks on parts of Port-au-Prince they did not already control, while Henry remained stranded outside the country