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Bulusan Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (MDRRMO) shows Bulusan volcano spewing ash during an eruption as seen from San Roque village in Bulusan town, Sorsogon province

EU 'off the pace' in global microchip race: Auditors

BRUSSELS: The EU is lagging behind in the global race to produce microchips, and looks set to fall well short of its target to claim a fifth of the world's market, the bloc's auditors said Monday. "The EU urgently needs a reality check in its strategy for the microchips sector," said Annemie Turtelboom, a member of the European Court of Auditors. "This is a fast-moving field, with intense geopolitical competition, and we are currently far off the pace needed to meet our ambitions." The disappointing outlook for the European Union comes despite Brussels passing a flagship Chips Act in 2023 aimed at bolstering production in the bloc. Turtelboom said that at current growth rates, the EU was "nowhere close" to reaching its target of having a 20 percent share of the global microchip market by 2030.

Airbus finalises deal for US supplier Spirit assets

PARIS: European aircraft maker Airbus announced on Monday it reached a final deal to buy some assets of struggling US subcontractor Spirit AeroSystems, whose core business is being taken over by rival Boeing. Airbus had announced almost a year ago its plans to acquire some operations of Spirit AeroSystems, which supplies fuselages, wings and other components to aircraft makers. At the time, Airbus said the deal aimed to "ensure stability of supply for its commercial aircraft programmes through a more sustainable way forward". The European group said on Monday it would take over Spirit sites in Kinston, North Carolina; St Nazaire, France; and Casablanca, Morocco. It will also acquire production of fuselage, wings and other components in Wichita, Kansas; Belfast, Northern Ireland; and Prestwick, Scotland. Airbus will receive \$439 million in compensation from Spirit AeroSystems to take over the sites, lower than the \$559 million figure announced in July last year.

Four jailed over shooting at Israeli company in Sweden

STOCKHOLM: A Swedish court sentenced four teenagers to prison on Monday for their involvement in a shooting that targeted an Israeli military technology firm last year. A 13-year-old boy opened fire on the entrance to an office of Elbit Systems in the city of Gothenburg in southwestern Sweden on October 10, 2024. He was arrested shortly after but was not charged since he was below Sweden's age of criminal responsibility of 15. No-one was injured in the shooting. However, the Gothenburg district court sentenced four others on Monday for their roles in recruiting the young boy, supplying the gun and organising the shooting. One 19-year-old was handed a five-year prison sentence for "involving a minor in a crime", as well as aiding a weapons offence and aiding an unlawful threat.

Eight migrants die off Tunisia, 29 rescued: Official

TUNIS: Eight migrants from various countries died and 29 others were rescued after their boat capsized off the coast of Sfax in central Tunisia, the Tunisian National Guard told AFP on Monday. The migrants were "all foreigners", including some from sub-Saharan Africa and others of different nationalities, said Houcem Eddine Jebabli, a spokesman for the National Guard. The Tunisian Defence Ministry said the shipwreck occurred early Sunday. Tunisia is a key transit country for thousands of sub-Saharan migrants seeking to reach Europe by sea each year, with Italy's island of Lampedusa only 150 kilometres (90 miles) away. Earlier this month, authorities began dismantling informal camps near Sfax where thousands of migrants, mainly from Sub-Saharan African countries, stayed. With the European Union's mounting efforts to curb migrant arrivals, many irregular migrants feel stranded in Tunisia. In 2023, Tunisia signed a 255-million-euro (\$290-million) deal with the EU, nearly half of which was earmarked for tackling irregular migration.

Uganda opposition says HQ 'sealed off' by security forces

KAMPALA: Uganda's opposition said on Monday that security forces had "sealed off" its headquarters in the capital Kampala to stop the party launching a protest campaign ahead of national polls next year. Security forces have in recent years frequently targeted the opposition party of the National Unity Platform (NUP), led by musician-turned-politician Bobi Wine. The east African country is preparing for a presidential election in January 2026, in which President Yoweri Museveni is expected to extend his 40-year rule. "The joint security forces, police, and the military, all heavily armed, have sealed off our party headquarters and we can't access it," NUP Secretary General Lewis Rubongoya told AFP. "The deployment of security and sealing off of our headquarters is planned to block the press conference today where we were to launch the 'protest vote' campaign," he said.

Delhi court extends Tahawwur Rana's NIA custody for 12 days

PTI, NEW DELHI: A Delhi court on Monday extended by 12 more days the NIA custody of 26/11 Mumbai attack accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana. Special NIA judge Chander Jit Singh extended Rana's custody on NIA's request after his previous 18-day remand got over.

26/11 MUMBAI ATTACK

Rana was produced in court with his face covered amid tight security.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) said Rana had to be confronted with various evidences, including "voluminous documents" which required his further interrogation.

The probe agency also apprised the judge in an in-chamber proceeding about its investigation in the last 18-days since it was granted Rana's custody.

The NIA, represented by senior advocate Dayan Kr-



Security personnel escort Mumbai terror attacks accused Tahawwur Hussain Rana after he was produced at the Patiala House Court, in New Delhi

ishnan and special public prosecutor Narender Mann, accused Rana of not cooperating in the investigation. Advocate Piyush Sachdeva from Delhi Legal Services Authority represented Rana.

The NIA has claimed before the court that Rana planned several plots similar to the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks to target multiple Indian cities, in-

cluding Delhi.

In its previous remand order, the court directed the NIA to conduct Rana's medical examination every 24 hours, and allow him to meet his lawyer every alternate day.

The court allowed Rana to use only a "soft-tip pen" and meet his lawyer in the presence of the NIA officials, who would be out of an audible distance.

During the arguments on the last occasion, the NIA said Rana's custody was required to piece together the full scope of the conspiracy, and submitted he was required to be taken to various locations for retracing the events that took place 17 years ago.

Rana, a close associate of 26/11 main conspirator David Coleman Headley alias Daood Gilani, a US citizen, was brought to India after the US Supreme Court on April 4 dismissed his review plea against his extradition to India.

On November 26, 2008, a group of 10 Pakistani terrorists went on a rampage, carrying out a coordinated attack on a railway station, two luxury hotels and a Jewish centre, after they sneaked into India's financial capital using the sea route in the Arabian Sea.

As many as 166 people were killed in the nearly 60-hour assault.

SC notice to Centre on plea to ban sexually explicit content on OTT, social media

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday called it an "important concern" and sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea seeking a ban on streaming of sexually explicit content on OTT and social media platforms.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai and Augustine George Masih said it was either for the legislature or the executive to come out with measures to deal with the issue.

"This is not within our domain. As it is, there is lot of allegation that we

are encroaching upon the legislative and executive powers," Justice Gavai said in an apparent reference to recent attacks on the judiciary.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the government would not take it as an adversarial litigation.

"Kindly monitor it here. We will come out with something which balances the freedom of speech while (Article) 19 (2) is taken care of," he said.

Mehta said some of the contents were not only ob-

INDIA'S GOT LATENT REMARKS ROW

SC orders return of passport to Ranveer Allahbadia

PTI, NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday allowed the return of passport to podcaster Ranveer Allahbadia to enable him to travel abroad for work. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh relaxed the condition after Assam and Maharashtra governments said the investigation against him was complete.

The bench asked Allahbadia to approach the Maharashtra cyber police bureau to retrieve his passport.

The top court told Allahbadia's lawyer, senior advocate Abhinav Chandrachud, it would consider his prayer to club the FIRs against his client and bring it in one place on the next hearing.

Chandrachud said the Maharashtra FIR was the first one on the issue and the Guwahati FIR could be clubbed with it as it stemmed from the same facts and incident.



Justice Kant, however, told Chandrachud the Guwahati FIR comprised a different set of allegations, specific to people of Assam. "If you want to argue on the issue, then we will hear it on the next date of hearing and you can make out case then," the judge said.

The bench also allowed NGO Cure SMA Foundation of India to implead "India's Got Latent" host Samay Raina and other co-accused through the police of Maharashtra and Assam, as their statements were recorded in the case.

Ramaphosa affirms S Africa's commitment to progressive foreign policy

PTI, JOHANNESBURG: South Africa remains committed to a progressive foreign policy outlook and engaging with countries of both the Global North and the Global South in pursuit of its national interest, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa has said. In a speech read on his behalf at a Freedom Day national celebration in Ermelo in Mpumalanga province on Sunday, Ramaphosa said the installation of President Nelson Mandela as South

Africa's first democratically-elected President on April 27, 1994 after 27 years as a political prisoner of the white minority government, that ruled the country for decades, had restored the dignity of South Africa's people – both black and white.

Ramaphosa was unable to officiate at this engagement as he is being treated for flu and had been advised to rest. His address was read by Minister of Mineral and Petroleum Resources Gwede Mantashe.

FROM PAGE 1

'SAFEGUARD OLD GOA, STOP ILLEGAL CONSTRUCTIONS'

"With our knowledge, we have offered recommendations which, in our opinion, are crucial for safeguarding the World Heritage Site for posterity," Gomes said.

When asked about the Old Goa police station housed in the Exposition Secretariat, Gomes replied, "We don't know whether it is a permanent arrangement. We will take it up with the ASI, Goa Circle."

Yogesh Nagvenkar and Avertino Miranda also attended the press briefing.

FOUL-SMELLING DRINKING WATER RAISES ALARM IN TALEIGAO

"It has been two weeks, Public Works Department (PWD) workers are trying to find the solution but without success," he added.

Another resident, Victor Cardinho, noted, "We don't know exactly where the sewage is entering the system, but it's clear that drinking water is being contaminated. Many people have fallen ill. Now, nobody risks drinking tap water — we depend on wells and purchase bottled water for drinking."

The situation mirrors a previous incident in Panjim, where contaminated water led to a jaundice outbreak. Despite repeated complaints from affected residents, the authorities have yet to find a solution.

When contacted, a senior PWD official told O Heraldo that while the exact cause has not been confirmed, efforts are ongoing to trace and rectify the contamination.

INDIA, FRANCE INK RS 63,000-CR DEAL FOR ADVANCED RAFALE-M JETS

"The induction (of Rafale-Marine) would lead to the addition of a potent force multiplier to the Indian Navy's aircraft carriers, substantially boosting the nation's air power at sea," the ministry said in a statement.

The Rafale-Marine will provide the Indian armed forces with state-of-the-art capabilities and the Indian Navy will benefit from the experience of the French Navy that already operates this aircraft, it said.

The Rafale-Marine is a carrier-borne combat-ready aircraft with proven operational capabilities in the maritime environment.

"On behalf of Dassault Aviation and its partners, I would like to thank the Indian authorities, with whom we have been working for more than 70 years, for their confidence in us and reaffirm our unwavering determination to stand by their side to contribute to India's expression of its sovereign power, its strategic challenges and its ambitious vision of the future," said Eric Trappier, the CEO Dassault Aviation.

Under the deal, the French aviation major will deliver 22 single-seat Rafale-Marine jets and four twin-seat trainers. The deal also includes training of personnel, supply of simulators, associated equipment, weapons and performance-based logistics.

It also includes additional equipment for the existing Rafale fleet of the Indian Air Force.

The Indian Air Force already operates 36 Rafale fighter aircraft. The sealing of the Rafale-Marine mega deal came three weeks after the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi cleared the procurement.

In July 2023, the defence ministry accorded the initial approval for the mega acquisition following a series of deliberations and evaluation tests of the platform.

The defence ministry said that the Rafale-Marine has

"commonality" with the Rafale being operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

"Its procurement will substantially enhance joint operational capability, besides optimising training and logistics for the aircraft for both Indian Navy and IAF," it said in a statement. The intergovernmental pact has been signed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and France's Minister of Armed Forces Sebastien Lecornu. The signed copies of the agreement, aircraft package supply protocol and weapons package supply protocol were exchanged by Indian and French officials, the defence ministry said.

"Thanks to our Indian partners for their renewed confidence in the excellence of the French defence industry," Lecornu said in a social media post.

The signing ceremony was attended by Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh and French Ambassador to India Thierry Mathou.

BETALBATIM SIGNBOARD SPARKS SALTETE-WIDE MOVEMENT

He continued, "I supported this because people are facing a shortage of water. Suppose you purchase land and secure a construction license, then you will have to be given water. If not, then you will complain. We have said that if builders are purchasing land, then they will do it at their own risk. The panchayat will not issue any licence."

This frustration is at the core of a movement that started with a simple signboard in Betalbatim, warning developers against purchasing land in the village. What began as a local effort has now sparked a wider grassroots movement across Saltete taluka, with panchayats from the region uniting behind a call to protect Goa's rural identity.

Basilio Fernandes, sarpanch of Camorlim village panchayat, voiced a common frustration felt by many. "Our gram sabha passed a resolution to limit construction to a maximum of ground plus two floors to protect the aesthetic and ecological integrity of the village. But the TCP department continues to grant approvals for buildings up to ground plus four in the same area. What's the point of a resolution if it's going to be overruled?" Fernandes asked.

The Betalbatim signboard has now become a symbol of protest, representing not just a stand against unchecked urbanisation, but a broader push-back against the marginalisation of local governance. The sign's message—cautioning developers against indiscriminate land acquisition—has resonated deeply with other village leaders, who are also growing increasingly frustrated with the current system.

Frank Viegas, sarpanch of Deussua-Chinchinim, echoed these concerns and extended his full support to the Betalbatim initiative. "Departments are giving construction permissions without assessing the ground reality. We're talking about villages where the water and power supply is irregular, yet builders are being issued certificates claiming adequate availability of resources. That's highly irresponsible," Viegas said. He stressed the need for a comprehensive carrying capacity study, one that takes into account essential services like water supply, electricity, waste management, and land use.

Sarpanch Dixan Vaz of Cavelossim also added his voice to the cause, stressing that proper groundwork and consultation with local panchayats must be a prerequisite before granting permissions for large-scale developments. "It is high time that licensing authorities, including the TCP, carry out detailed studies of the villages' resource capacities before approving mega projects. The initiative by Betalbatim is absolutely right, and in fact, this is something that should have been done by the government itself," Vaz noted.

Suzie Fernandes, sarpanch of Colva, acknowledged the growing crisis and expressed concern about the future.

"Many villages have already lost their vital resources. The environment has been severely damaged, and the local population is bearing the brunt. But the key question is whether the government and the concerned departments finally take this issue seriously?" she asked.

As more panchayats lend their voices to the cause, it's becoming clear that village leaders are no longer willing to remain silent. The message is loud and clear: the people on the ground want their voices heard, their laws respected, and their environment preserved — before it's too late.

CONCLAVE TO ELECT NEW POPE SET TO START ON MAY 7

"Of course, there may be some difficulties because the voters have never been so numerous and not everyone knows each other," he told Italy's Corriere della Sera newspaper.

On Monday, the Vatican closed the Sistine Chapel, where voting will take place under Michelangelo's 16th-century ceiling frescoes, to begin preparations.

So far there are few clues as to who the cardinals might choose.

"I believe that if Francis has been the pope of surprises, this conclave will be too, as it is not at all predictable," Spanish Cardinal Jose Cobo told El Pais in an interview published on Sunday.

With conflicts and diplomatic crises raging around the world, Italian Cardinal Pietro Parolin is for many the favourite to succeed him.

Parolin was secretary of state under Francis – the pope's number two.

British bookmakers William Hill put him slightly ahead of Filipino Luis Antonio Tagle, the Metropolitan Archbishop emeritus of Manila, followed by Ghana's Cardinal Peter Turkson.

Next in their odds come Matteo Zuppi, the Archbishop of Bologna; Guinea's Cardinal Robert Sarah; and Pierbattista Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

While Francis's efforts to create a more compassionate Church earned him widespread affection and respect, some of his reforms angered the Church's conservative wing, particularly in the United States and Africa.

Roberto Regoli, a professor of Church history and culture at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, told AFP that the cardinals would be looking "to find someone who knows how to forge greater unity".

"We are in a period in which Catholicism is experiencing various polarisations, so I don't imagine it will be a very, very quick conclave," he said.

Bassetti, who is too old to participate, said that he thought it "will not be long".

Some 80% of the cardinal electors were appointed by Francis – although that is no guarantee they will pick a successor in his mould.

"The future pope must have a universal heart (and) love all the continents. We must not look at colour, at origin, but at what is proposed," Cardinal Dieudonne Nzapalainga from the Central African Republic told the Italian newspaper Il Messaggero.

"We need a courageous leader, a bold one, capable of speaking forcefully, of holding the helm of the Church steady even in storms... offering stability in an era of great uncertainty."

Patrizia Spotti, a 68-year-old Italian visiting Rome for the 2025 Jubilee holy year, told AFP on Monday that she hoped the new pontiff "will be a pope like Francis".

It was a difficult time for Catholicism, she said.

"Churches are empty and the Church itself has made mistakes – all the scandals with the children," she said, referring to the widespread revelations of clerical sex abuse.

