RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



Minister's phone stolen in his LS constituency

A personal assistant of Union Minister Giriraj Singh has lodged a complaint with police here that the mobile phone through which the BJP leader operates his social media platforms, has got stolen, the police said on Thursday. An FIR was registered on Wednesday here by Avanish Kumar, who is accompanying Mr. Singh on a tour of his parliamentary seat. The phone a Samsung S10 plus had a SIM card issued in his

CBI seeks sanction to prosecute six officials

The Central Bureau of Investigation has sought prosecution sanction against six Karnataka officials, including two IPS officers, for their alleged role in the I-Monetary Advisory (IMA) group scam. "The agency has requested the authorities concerned for the sanction to prosecute IPS officers . Hemant Nimbalkar and Ajay Hilori," said an official.

Alert after 'intrusion' of 4 terror suspects in T.N.

A high-level of security alert has been issued across Tamil Nadu following the alleged intrusion of at least four terror suspects. The SUVborne suspects on an "unknown mission" were sighted near Salem three days ago. Heightened security arrangements are in place at vital installations, places of worship, major railway stations, bus stands, malls and other areas of public

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

the Central government in a

bid to counter domestic

shortages and tame soaring

prices are set to enter the re-

tail market – mostly in Delhi

and Andhra Pradesh - by Sa-

turday, according to officials

from the Consumer Affairs

announced that public trad-

ing agency Metals and Min-

erals Trading Corporation

On Thursday, the Ministry

Ministry.

Pact to open door for U.S. defence firms

They can cooperate with Indian private sector for future agreements, including the one on fighter jets

The Industrial Security Annex (ISA), signed between India and the U.S. at the second 2+2 dialogue in Washington, will open the door for U.S. defence companies to partner with the Indian private sector for several multi-billion dollar deals in the pipeline, including the one for 114 fighter jets. The two sides also took stock of the steps being taken to operationalise the foundational agreement, the Communications Compatibility and Se-Agreement

With this, three of four foundational agreements are through. The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA) is still under negotiation as both sides try to iron out few reciprocal issues.

"We hope that this [ISA] will enable smooth transfer of classified technology and information between private



Boosting ties: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with Mark Esper and Mike Pompeo in Washington during the 2+2 dialogue. • REUTERS

Information

(GSOMIA), which India

signed with the U.S. long

back. It became critical as In-

dia opened up the defence

sector to the private sector

and the Strategic Partner-

ship policy, which has few

big military platforms and is

reserved for the Indian priv-

ate sector. U.S. companies

are in the race for multi-bil-

lion dollar deal for 114 fighter

jets, among other deals.

Agreement

entities of the U.S. and India," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said at a press conference after the talks.

U.S. Secretary of Defence Mark Thomas Esper stated that the ISA would "facilitate collaboration between our defense industries by supporting the secure transfer of key information and technology."

The ISA is a part of the General Security Of Military

competitions are a once in a generation opportunity. We are offering some of the best technology widely employed by the U.S. Navy and Air Force, including the F/A-18 Super Hornet and the bespoke F-21," said Joel Starr, Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, US State Department, at a conference in Hyderabad on Wednesday. After decade-long negotia-

"The IAF and Navy fighter

tions, India signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Understanding (LEMOA) in 2016 and third agreement COMCASA last year.

Mr. Singh also highlighted the operationalisation of COMCASA and the maritime cooperation. "Our Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) cooperation has been extremely useful. We have sent an invitation to the U.S. to nominate a liaison officer for the fusion centre in India." he said. The Indian Navy has invited friendly nations to post liaison officers at the Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) that was set up last year. Mr. Singh stated that one of the major movements over the last year has been steps to operationalise the COM-CASA, which enables most of the U.S.-origin platforms to have a "secure communication capability." Mr. Singh said they had been holding meetings and taking necessary steps to open a COMCA-SA account. "This will be discussed in the Military Cooperation Group format, including our agreement to explore cooperation in defence-space and defencecyber and special forces," he

Defence officials said the account of \$5 mn, from which any deductions would be done for services or information sought from the U.S. under the COMCASA had been created and work was on to develop a tactical data

EMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS Forecast for Friday: Cold day conditions likely in some pockets over Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh. Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal.

CITI	IVALIN	IVIAA	IVIIIV	CITT	IVALIN	IVIAA	IVIII
Agartala		18.0.	11.0	Kozhikode		35.0	24.0
Ahmedabad		27.0.	15.0	Kurnool		32.0	19.0
Aizawl		20.0.	8.0	Lucknow		17.0	9.0
Allahabad		18.0.	9.0	Madurai		30.0	23.0
Bengaluru		25.0.	17.0	Mangaluru		38.0	21.0
Bhopal	–	24.0.	11.0	Mumbai		31.0	23.0
Bhubaneswar	–	27.0.	12.0	Mysuru		00.0	00.0
Chandigarh	–	13.0.	9.0	New Delhi		28.0	18.0
Chennai	–	30.0.	25.0	Patna		15.0	5.0
Coimbatore	0.2	29.0.	21.0	Port Blair		31.0	25.0
Dehradun		17.0.	8.0	Puducherry	1.2	30.0	23.0
Gangtok		13.0.	6.0	Pune		28.0	16.0
Goa	–	34.0.	22.0	Raipur		26.0	15.0
Guwahati	–	25.0.	12.0	Ranchi		22.0	6.0
Hubballi	–	29.0.	18.0	Shillong		16.0	6.0
Hyderabad	–	28.0.	18.0	Shimla		12.0	5.0
Imphal	–	21.0.	5.0	Srinagar		8.0	4.0
Jaipur	–	21.0.	10.0	Thiruvananthapuram.		34.0	24.0
Kochi	–	32.0.	24.0	Tiruchi		31.0	23.0
Kohima	–	21.0.	5.0	Vijayawada		30.0	21.0
Kolkata		21.0.	10.0	Visakhapatnam		29.0	22.0

..170 .135 .6 .24 .42 ..206 .131 84 .33 .63 ..193 .129

SO2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide, Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by

reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death

nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced

NITI Aayog seeks ideas on population policy

Think tank to hold consultation today

JAGRITI CHANDRA

Government think tank NITI Aayog will hold a national consultation on population stabilisation on Friday to explore ways to strengthen the country's population policy family planning programmes.

The event, being held in partnership with the Population Foundation of India, will include officials from the Centre as well as seven States – Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Kerala and Ta-

Bulbs likely to reach Delhi, A.P. retail markets over weekend

Expensive affair

On Thursday, the price o

onions reached ₹160/kg in

among major metros. The

Chennai, the most expensive

+ Onion imports yet to bring

price relief to customers

mil Nadu - and experts on the subject. "The conference will contribute to a NI-TI Aayog working paper to help India in its vision for attaining population stabilisation as voiced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 15, 2019," said a press statement from NITI

The officials will brainstorm over recommendations like treating population stabilisation and family planning as a national priority and ensuring inter-go-

160

150

130

128

125

120

120

120

120

120

Portugal sets up Gandhi prize

The first edition will be dedicated to animal welfare

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa on Thursday announced the setting up of a Gandhi Citizenship Educa tion Prize while attending the second meeting of the National Committee for the Commemoration Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary, chaired by President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

The only foreign Prime Minister to be a part of the committee, Mr. Costa said Portugal would launch the prize in order to promote



Antonio Costa

Gandhi's ideals, a Union Culture Ministry statement said. Every year, the prize

would be inspired by Gandhi's thoughts and quotes, he said, adding that the first

dedicated to animal welfare. Gandhi had said "the greatness of a nation can be judged by the way its animals are treated". The committee includes Vice-President M. Venkaiah

edition of the prize would be

Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his Cabinet colleagues and Chief Ministers, apart from Gandhians. Mr. Modi told the gathering that the world was keen

to learn about Mahatma Gandhi, and it had become India's responsibility to remind everyone of his rele-

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Centre has designed a standard format for ration cards as it moves ahead with 'one nation, one ration card' initiative and has asked State governments to follow the pattern while is-

Currently, the central

Under the initiative, eligible beneficiaries would be able to avail their entitled foodgrains under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) from any Fair Price Shop in the country using the same ration card.

"In order to achieve the aim of national portability, it is necessary that ration cards issued by different States and Union Territories conform to a standard format," a senior Food Mi-

Ration cards to look similar across country

suing fresh ration cards.

government's ambitious initiative is being implemented on a pilot basis in a cluster of six States. It wants to implement this facility across the country from June 1, 2020.

nistry official said.

Speedy trials shouldn't bury the cause of justice: SC_{+}

Bench sets aside death penalty of a rape accused convicted after a 12-day trial

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

Speedy disposal of a case should not be at the cost of had said in a judgment setting aside the death penalty of a man in a rape and mur-

The court found the man

was convicted after a 12-day trial and without proper legal representation. In fact, a legal aid lawyer appointed justice, the Supreme Court for him was given no time to be at the expense of the baseven prepare his defence

Expeditious trials should not bury the cause of justice, said the three-judge Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit.

"Expeditious disposal is undoubtedly required... However, the attempts to expedite the process should not ic elements of fairness and the opportunity to the accused, on which postulates the entire criminal administration of justice is founded,"

the judgment said. The Bench said "what is paramount is the cause of justice and keeping the basic ingredients which secure that as a core idea and ideal, the pro cess may be expedited, but fast tracking of process must never ever result in burying the cause of justice."

(MMTC) has contracted to buy an additional 12,500 tonnes of onions from Turkey, taking the total contracted imports to 42,500 However, customers suf-

fering under a prolonged price surge are yet to see any of these imported onions.

According to Ministry officials, just over 1,000 tonnes of imported onions have arrived in the country so far. That initial shipment arrived at the Mumbai port last Sun-

average price was ₹112/kg day, but due to procedures

to fumigate and clean the onions, their arrival in the retail market has been delayed. The initial buyers are state-run National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED), which has been supplying subsidised onions in the National Capital Region, and the Andhra Pradesh State government, said

a Ministry official.

Retail prices in Delhi have not dropped below the ₹100 per kg mark for the last two weeks (since December 5). In fact, they peaked at ₹145 per kg on Wednesday, according to data from the National Horticulture Board.

Chennai

Kolkata

Bhubaneswar

Thiruvanan-

thapuram

Bengaluru

Dehradun

Hyderabad

Mumbai

Patna

Pune

The situation is particularly severe in southern India, with onions selling for ₹160 per kg in Chennai on Thursday, and ₹120 per kg in Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

Raped and set ablaze, U.P. girl dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

An 18-year-old girl, whose family had alleged that she was raped and set ablaze in Fatehpur, succumbed to her burns at a hospital here, officials said.

The police, who had registered an FIR last week, are investigating the claim that she set herself afire after a village panchayat put an end to her relationship with a relative. "She had suffered from organ failure following serious injuries and we tried to resuscitate her, but she could not survive," Head of the department (surgery) at the hospital, Sanjay Kala, said.

