

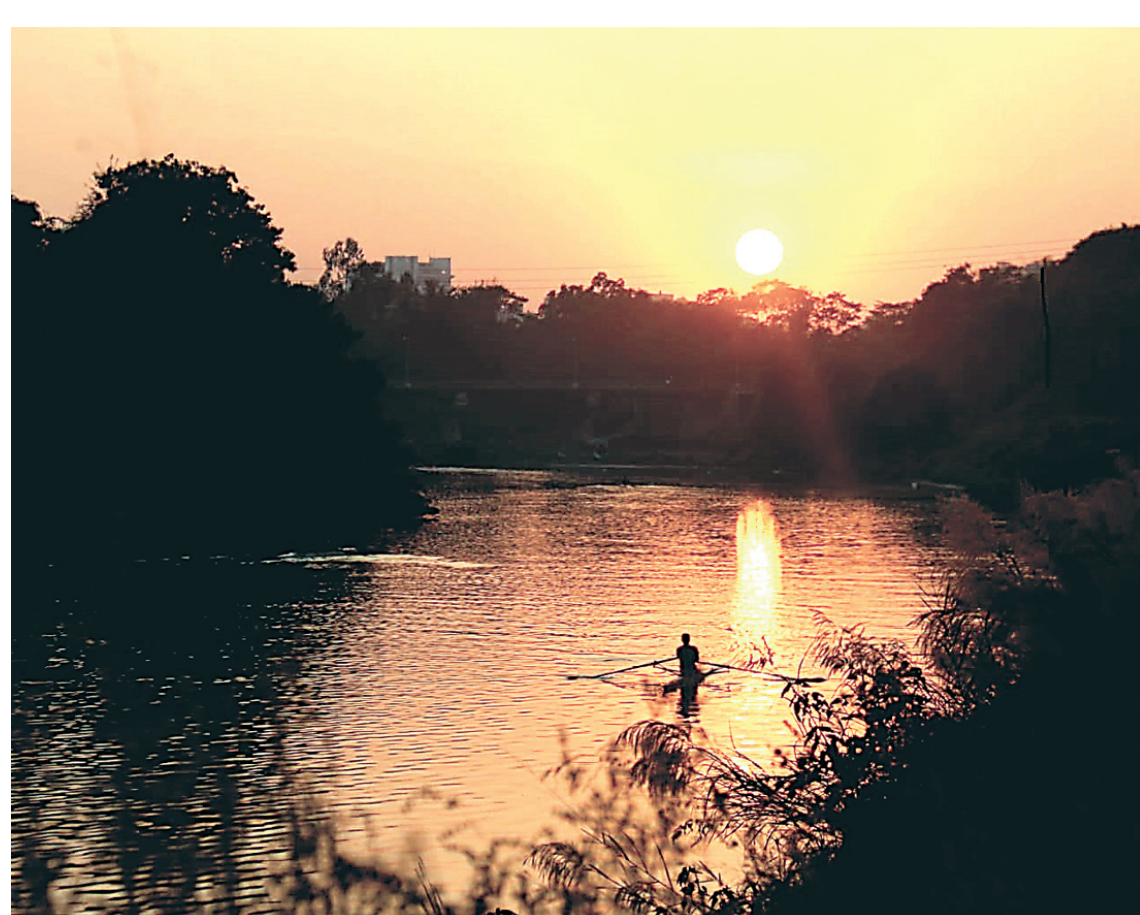
Maximum
28.8°C

Minimum
12.4°C

Matter of Thought

Continuous public education

The polling process for the 15th Legislative Assembly elections in the state has concluded. With the fate of political candidates sealed in the EVMs, the focus has now shifted to speculations about which party will form the government. While political analysts debate and citizens return to their daily routines, an important question lingers: how well do the people understand the government they've elected? Citizens across the state have exercised their democratic right by electing Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) to represent them. Voters naturally have expectations from these representatives, but a large section of society remains unaware of the actual roles, duties, and responsibilities of MLAs. The Legislative Assembly shapes the state's development by addressing critical issues such as social security, employment generation, industrialization, climate change, agriculture, healthcare, and lawmaking. Effective implementation of government schemes also falls within its ambit. However, due to a lack of understanding about these functions, there often exists a disconnect between the expectations of the electorate and the responsibilities of their elected representatives. This disconnect leads voters to evaluate MLAs on a narrow spectrum, often based on visible infrastructure projects like building sewers, water tanks, or community spaces. While such contributions are important, they form only a fraction of an MLA's responsibilities. The real essence of governance lies in policy-making, legislative participation, and ensuring the holistic development of the state. To bridge this gap, continuous public education about democracy and governance is essential. The foundation of this education begins with civics lessons in schools. However, this critical subject often gets reduced to a marks-oriented exercise, losing its real-world significance. Students learn about democracy only within the confines of their textbooks, with little emphasis on its practical application or relevance in adult life. The consequences of this limited understanding are far-reaching. Many voters approach elections with misconceptions, equating MLAs with local corporators and expecting them to address hyper-local issues. The broader responsibilities of legislators, such as shaping state policy and debating legislation, remain poorly understood. During elections, campaigns often focus on creating voter awareness. Discussions revolve around the duties of voters, and public participation increases during this time. However, this awareness is short-lived, often fading once the elections are over. A voter is dubbed a "king" during elections, but does this kingship end at the press of a button? True democracy demands a citizenry that remains informed and engaged beyond polling day. Public education is not a one-time activity but a continuous process. The path to a stronger democracy lies in education that empowers individuals to participate in governance.



As temperatures drop and winter's chill settles in, the sun sets over the horizon, casting a vivid reflection on the still waters of the Godavari and painting the evening sky in shades of orange.

Pic: Satish Devgire

Winter chill returns

NASHIK: After a brief lull, winter has firmly reestablished itself in Nashik and surrounding areas. The last few days have seen a sharp drop in temperatures, with the city recording a minimum of 12.4°C on Thursday (November 21) for the second consecutive day. Meanwhile, Niphad, known as the district's coldest region, registered a minimum temperature hovering around 10°C. Pune, too, experienced significant cold, recording the lowest temperature in the state at 12.2°C.

The Meteorological Department has observed that minimum temperatures in Madhya Maharashtra are now slightly below the seasonal average. The third week of November has been marked by a steep drop in temperatures across the region, accompanied by changing wind patterns. Over the past 48 hours, the wind direction has shifted from south-northeast to southwest, increasing wind speeds and contributing to cooler conditions.

Just weeks ago, the region experienced warmer days as the cold conditions from October lingered only briefly into early November. By mid-November, temperatures began climbing, offering a reprieve from the chill. However, this temporary warmth has now been replaced by a notable drop

in mercury levels, as predicted by the Meteorological Department.

The atmosphere across the district is currently dry, which has amplified the intensity of the cold. Niphad, often a benchmark for winter's severity in the region, recorded a minimum temperature of 10.9°C, and forecasters anticipate single-digit temperatures in the coming days.

In Nashik, a steep decline in both minimum and maximum temperatures has been recorded. Just a few days ago, the minimum temperature stood at 16.8°C (November 16). By November 21, this had dropped by more than four degrees to 12.4°C. Similarly, the maximum temperature, which had hovered above 30°C for much of the season, fell to 28.8°C on Thursday, marking the first instance in weeks where it stayed below the 30°C threshold.

Meteorological forecasts suggest that the current cold spell is likely to persist for several days, with temperatures continuing to drop at night. Residents are advised to prepare for chilly mornings and evenings as winter tightens its grip on the region.

The return of cooler conditions marks the beginning of what many hope will be a pleasant winter season, offering a welcome break from the warmer days of early November.

SSC, HSC exam timetable released

PUNE: The Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education (MS-BSHSE) has announced the timetables for the Class 10 (SSC) and Class 12 (HSC) board exams for 2025. The HSC exams will be held from February 11 to March 11. It will be held in two shifts: the first shift from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and the second shift from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., while the SSC exams are scheduled from February 21 to March 17. The SSC examination will be held in two shifts- first shift from 11 am to 2 pm and second shift from 3 pm to 6 pm.

This year, 15,13,909 students have registered for the HSC exams. Among these, 7,60,046 are from the science stream, 3,81,982 from arts, and 3,29,905 from commerce.

The SSC exams will begin with a language paper, while the HSC exams will open with English. The board

will soon release the admit cards for both Class 10 and 12 examinations.

board will release the Maharashtra supplementary exam timetable 2025.

These supplementary exams provide a second opportunity for students who could not clear the Maharashtra board exams in 2025.

The Maharashtra SSC supply exams and Maharashtra HSC supply exams 2025 are tentatively scheduled for July 2025, offering students a chance to improve their scores and pass their respective exams. This system ensures that students have multiple opportunities to succeed in their academic pursuits.



Students are advised to regularly check the official website for further updates. After the declaration of the Maharashtra Board result 2025, the

Steps to download the Maharashtra board timetable 2025

- **Step 1:** Visit the official website – mahahsscboard.in
- **Step 2:** Locate the link for the Maharashtra SSC/HSC datesheet 2025.
- **Step 3:** The timetable will appear in PDF format.
- **Step 4:** Review the schedule and save it for future reference.

Agricultural impacts

The return of winter chill has mixed implications for the region's agricultural sector, particularly during the ongoing rabi season. By November 19, approximately 55% of rabi sowing had been completed, with preparations underway on the remaining fields. Early-sown crops are showing healthy growth, benefiting from the cooler weather, which supports germination and initial development. However, a further dip in temperatures could pose risks to certain crops, especially in frost-prone areas like Niphad. Farmers are advised to monitor weather updates closely and take preventive measures to protect vulnerable crops.

Assembly elections

Women voters show strong turnout



NASHIK: The recent assembly elections in Nashik witnessed a significant rise in the participation of women voters, marking a promising shift from previous years. This surge in women's turnout has contributed notably to an increase in the overall voter turnout, which rose to 69.12% compared to 62.6% in the last assembly elections.

The increased turnout can be attributed to various public awareness campaigns, including government-led initiatives and programs aimed at combating voter apathy. Over the past few years, voter turnout had shown a worrying decline, often stagnating between 50% and 60%, despite hopes for 100% participation.

To address this trend, the government implemented the Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme. This initiative included creative outreach efforts like the

"Votoba" and "Votothon" campaigns, cycle rallies, and collaborations with NGOs to raise awareness and motivate voters.

Additionally, the Ladki Bahin initiative, which specifically encouraged women to exercise their voting rights, played a crucial role. The visible impact of this campaign suggests that targeted outreach can effectively mobilize segments of the electorate that might otherwise remain underrepresented.

This election has underscored the importance of sustained voter education and targeted initiatives to engage underrepresented groups. The success of women-focused campaigns like *Ladki Bahin* highlights the need to continue empowering marginalized voices in the democratic process. The increased turnout not only strengthens democracy but also sends a clear message: active participation is crucial to shaping a better future for all.

Awaiting results

As counting begins tomorrow, political parties and candidates have refrained from making premature claims of victory. With a higher voter turnout, the outcomes are expected to be closely contested across constituencies. Analysts predict that the increased participation, especially by women, could influence the results in ways that might not align with traditional voting patterns.

Constituency	Women voters
Nandgaon	189252
Malegaon Central	199812
Malegaon Outer	202311
Baglan	165609
Kalwan	194301
Chandwad	191597
Yeola	200562
Sinnar	197908
Niphad	203651
Dindori	208506
Nashik East	1799 34
Nashik Central	154623
Nashik West	218213
Deolali	144753
Igatpuri	166972

Stage set for vote counting

NASHIK: With a record 69.2% voter turnout in the recent assembly elections—higher than the previous tenure—all eyes are now on the counting of votes and the announcement of results scheduled for Saturday.

The district's 15 assembly constituencies are poised for simultaneous vote counting, beginning at 8 a.m. on November 25. While the process was smooth during the polls on Wednesday, anticipation is mounting as the results are expected to reveal the impact of this increased voter participation. The results for the Deolali constituency are expected to be the first to be declared due to the relatively fewer counting rounds required there. Similarly, the Niphad constituency is likely to follow closely behind. In contrast, the Nashik West constituency will require 30 rounds of counting—the highest in the district—leading to the likelihood of its results being announced last. This delay is attributed to the volume of votes and the meticulous process required to ensure accuracy.

Counting arrangements have been meticulously planned across all constituencies in the district. According to the district administration, most preparations are complete, with specific measures taken to ensure transparency and security.

Each constituency will have a team of 100 to 120 employees managing the process. Separate teams have been appointed for counting postal votes. Four officials will manage each of the 14 tables designated for counting electronic voting machine (EVM) ballots in each constituency.

To maintain the integrity of the process, strong rooms housing the EVMs have been sealed under heavy police security. CCTV cameras have

been installed at polling stations and counting venues, providing 24/7 surveillance. Security personnel are stationed in and around the counting centers to ensure a smooth and secure environment. The district administration anticipates that initial trends for most constituencies will become clear by 2 p.m. However, the declaration of final results will vary depending on the number of rounds required for each constituency.

The 15 constituencies in Nashik district are under close observation as political parties and candidates await the results. The higher voter turnout has added a layer of unpredictability, with analysts speculating about potential surprises in some key constituencies.

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