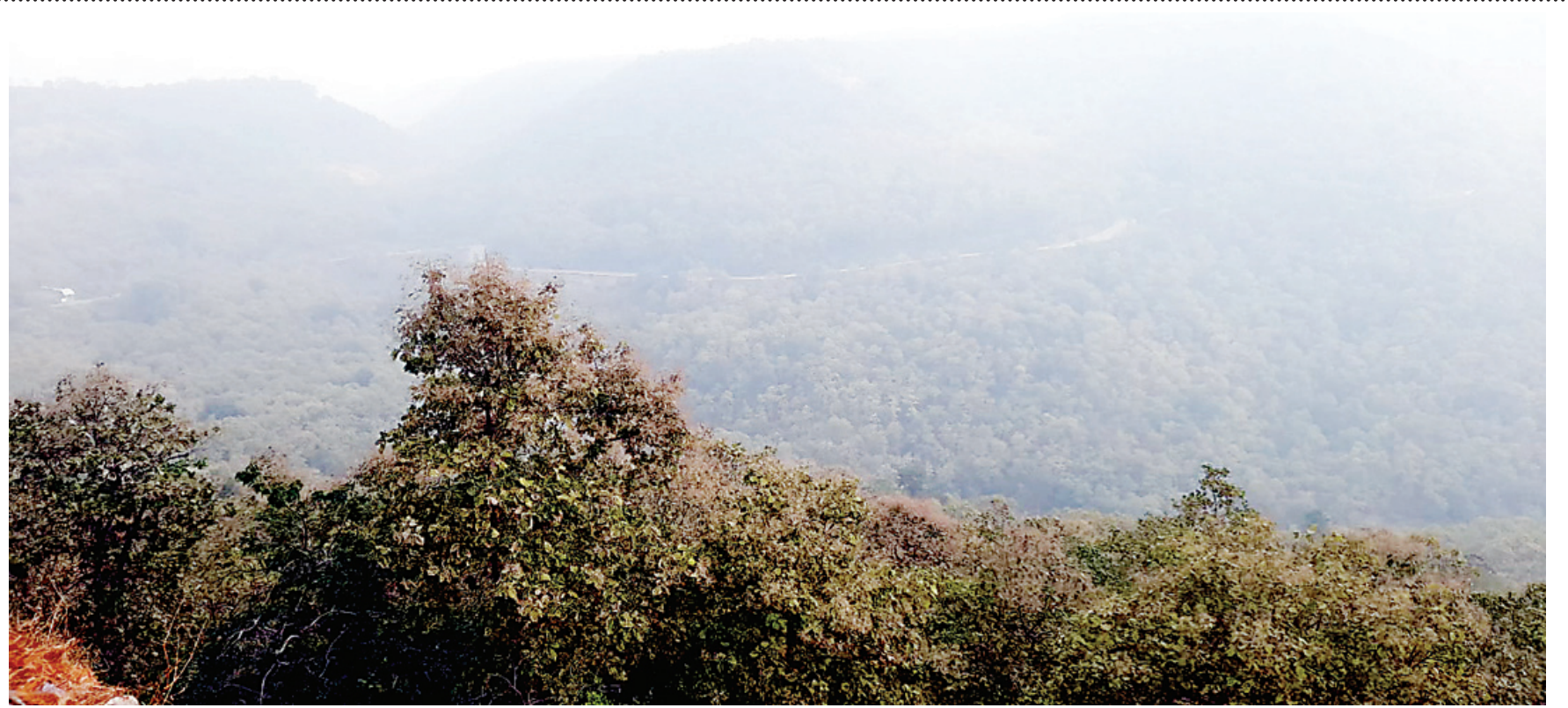


Matter of Thought

Awareness on physical fitness

The recent program honoring the memory of cricket legend Dronacharya Ramakant Achrekar has sparked considerable discussion, with various aspects catching the public's attention. Among the most talked-about moments was the appearance of cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar, whose fitness at the age of fifty left a lasting impression on the attendees. Known as one of cricket's greatest legends, Tendulkar's remarkable physical condition and enthusiasm at the event were expected to be a topic of discussion—and they certainly were. His daily routine, which includes a mix of gym workouts, stretching, weight training, yoga, and other fitness activities, is a testament to his dedication to personal well-being. Despite having crossed the age of fifty, Tendulkar's regimen has not changed. His disciplined approach to fitness is a clear example for society, showing that age is no barrier to maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Tendulkar is not alone in this pursuit. Another high-profile example is Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan. No matter how packed his schedule may be, when in Mumbai, Bachchan is known for his unwavering commitment to physical fitness. His trainer once shared in an interview that Bachchan can always be found in the gym by 6 a.m., making physical exercise a non-negotiable part of his day. These examples from two public figures, who continue to lead demanding careers while maintaining their fitness, should encourage others to prioritize health as they age. Recent health surveys have highlighted a concerning trend: diseases that once primarily affected those in their sixties and beyond are now emerging in individuals much younger, sometimes even in their twenties. Genetics may play a role in some illnesses, but for many, the primary culprit is a lack of exercise and physical activity. This is a shift from the previous generations when physical labor and outdoor activities were a natural part of daily life. The rise of sedentary lifestyles has contributed to the early onset of conditions that were once considered part of the natural aging process. In our fast-paced lives, many people claim they have no time for exercise, yet it is only when they face a health crisis that they scramble to find time for physical activity. The truth is, if individuals made time for fitness earlier on, many diseases could either be avoided or delayed in their onset. A lifestyle change is essential, and it all begins with a shift in mindset. The need for physical fitness must be recognized and prioritized, as it is clear from the examples of people like Tendulkar and Bachchan that consistent physical activity is key to long-term health. However, the number of individuals actively embracing fitness must increase further. The old adage, "It is better to be careful than to worry later," holds true in this context, as taking preventive steps today can save significant health challenges in the future.



Maharashtra is enveloped in a winter chill, with temperatures dropping sharply across the state. Fog blankets this mountain range, creating a serene yet cold ambiance. Nashik, too, is feeling the bite of winter, with minimum a dipping significantly. Pic: Satish Devgire

Winter chill returns

NASHIK: Following a spell of fluctuating weather, Nashik has reclaimed its title as Maharashtra's coldest city, recording a minimum temperature of 9.4°C on Monday. This marks a significant drop from Sunday's 12.5°C and a steep decline from last Wednesday's unusually warm 21.9°C. The city is now firmly back in the grip of winter, with residents experiencing a stark contrast to the recent unseasonable warmth caused by cloudy skies. The influx of cold winds from the north has intensified, leading to a sharp decline in temperatures across the state. North Maharashtra is ex-

periencing a pronounced chill, with mercury levels falling below 10°C. Further temperature drops are anticipated today in most regions, except for Mumbai and the Konkan belt, where the cold is expected to remain milder. Last week, Nashik witnessed a weather rollercoaster, starting with overcast skies and intermittent rain that pushed minimum temperatures to an unusually high 21.9°C. The warmth was attributed to cloud cover trapping heat at night. However, the return of clear skies allowed cooler northern air to flow into the region, triggering a steady drop in temperatures. While nights have

turned brisk, daytime highs remain relatively moderate, with Monday's maximum temperature at 26.5°C. The unusual warm phase was a consequence of Cyclone Fengal and a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal, which disrupted winter patterns across Maharashtra. Nashik and neighboring regions in Madhya Maharashtra and Marathwada experienced moderate to heavy rainfall. With the dissipation of these weather systems, northern dry winds have resumed, bringing a statewide cold wave. According to weather expert Manikrao Khule,

the cold is expected to persist for at least 10 more days, with temperatures dipping further across the state. This chill has already intensified in Vidarbha, Marathwada, and Khandesh. The India Meteorological Department has also warned of isolated rainfall in some areas, but overall, colder conditions are likely to dominate. The sudden drop in temperatures has led to an increase in health issues, with cases of cold, fever, and respiratory illnesses on the rise. Citizens are advised to take precautions as the intensity of the cold is expected to increase in the coming days.

Pollution control measures

38 locations identified

NASHIK: Pollution levels in Nashik have been on the rise in recent days, prompting the municipal corporation to take action. To address this growing issue, the mechanical department of the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) will purchase four dust suppression machines using funds from the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP). These machines will be deployed at 38 locations in the city where pollution levels are particularly high. Key areas identified for installation include Mumbai Naka and Dwarka, which are known to be some of the most polluted parts of Nashik. The dust suppression machines are mobile and can be moved to different areas based on where pollution levels are the highest. In addition to their regular use, these machines will also be utilized for sanitation purposes, especially during the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, when the city experiences an influx of visitors, and pollution tends to worsen. The machines will be strategically placed across six city divisions: Nashik West, Nashik East, Panchavati, Nashik Road, Satpur, and CIDCO. While the NMC's mechanical department had initially requested six machines, only four will be available for deployment at this time. However, even with this limited number, officials are hopeful that the machines will significantly help reduce pollution levels in these high-traffic areas. The growing use of private vehicles in Nashik is another key factor contributing to the city's rising pollution levels. A report submitted by the municipal corporation earlier suggested encouraging the use of public transport as a means to mitigate this problem. Despite these recommendations, the number of private vehicles on the roads continues to increase, exacerbating both air and noise pollution. With the Simhastha Kumbh Mela approaching, the number of visitors to the city is expected to surge, leading to a further increase in pollution. To tackle this, the municipal corporation plans to enhance pollution control measures, including the use of dust suppression machines, during the event.

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Scholarship exam

Deadline for registration extended

NASHIK: The State Examination Council has extended the deadline for submitting applications for the Higher Primary Scholarship Examination (5th) and Secondary Scholarship (8th) examinations to be held on February 9, 2025, until December 15. After that, applications can be submitted with delay and excessive late fees from December 16 to

31. Scholarship examinations are held every year to boost the intelligence of students. Students of classes 5 and 8 participate in this. This examination is conducted on the same day across the state. In view of this, the Zilla Parishad has prepared to conduct a practice examination of 7,657 students in 244 schools in the district on Tuesday (Dec 10).

The Primary Education Department has set a goal of improving the results of students by conducting practice examinations like the main examination. For this, 'OMR' sheets have been printed, and all these papers will be distributed to schools. Since the main examination of the scholarship is in February, the process of applying online is now underway.

Social media abuzz

NASHIK: Following the recent Assembly elections, all attention has now turned to the upcoming municipal elections. At the same time, rumors regarding the potential transfer of the Municipal Commissioner have begun to make rounds, particularly on social media. There has been growing speculation that Tukaram Mundhe, recognized for his strict discipline, might be appointed as the Commissioner in the new year.

Major damage to vineyards

NASHIK: The recent spell of unseasonal rains has caused significant damage to crops across the district, affecting 318 hectares of land in the talukas of Dindori, Nashik, and Niphad. Of this, 211.30 hectares of vineyards have been severely impacted, according to the district administration. While the rains have helped alleviate water concerns for farmers, the untimely downpours have created new challenges, particularly for those in the horticultural sector. These rains, which have occurred during the winter season, have affected multiple regions, including Nashik city. A total of 63 villages across four talukas have been affected by the unseasonal rain. The most significant damage has been reported in Nashik taluka, where 36 villages were



impacted, leaving 460 farmers struggling with the consequences. Other affected areas include 19 villages in Dindori taluka, 4 villages in Niphad taluka, and 4 villages in Sinnar taluka. In these areas, a total of 675 farmers have been affected. The grape crop has suffered the most, with 118.20 hectares of vineyards in Dindori taluka and 83 hectares in Nashik taluka damaged. Overall, Dindori taluka saw 120.80 hectares of crops affected, while Nashik taluka reported damage to 188 hectares. Vineyards

in Niphad and Sinnar have also experienced damage, totaling 9.50 hectares in each taluka. In addition to vineyards, other crops have also been impacted, including pomegranates, vegetables, tomatoes, onions, and onion nurseries. The total area affected includes 107 hectares of horticultural crops and 220 hectares of multi-annual crops. Farmers are now facing not only the loss of their crops but also the challenge of recovering from the financial impact of this untimely weather.

Damage breakdown

- Total Affected area: 327.80 hectares
- Talukas: Dindori, Nashik, Niphad
- Villages: 63
- Farmers: 675

Crop damage (hectares)

- Grapes: 217.30
- Pomegranate: 3
- Vegetables and others: 76.80
- Tomatoes: 27
- Onions: 2
- Onion nursery: 1.20

'Implement PCPNDT Act effectively'

NASHIK : District Collector Jalaj Sharma has emphasized the need for robust enforcement of the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act, 1994, as amended in 2003, to curb sex-selective practices. Speaking at a meeting of the District Vigilance Committee under the PCPNDT Act held at the District Collector's Office, Sharma directed health officials to intensify inspections and awareness campaigns. The meeting saw participation from key district officials, including Additional Chief Executive Officer of the Zilla Parishad Dr. Arjun Gunde, District Civil Surgeon Dr. Charudatta Shinde, Resident Health Officer Dr. Anant Pawar, and Municipal Health Officer Dr. Tanaji Chavan, alongside health superintendents and officers. Sharma underscored the impor-

tance of conducting quarterly inspections of sonography centers to ensure compliance. He highlighted the necessity of auditing the F forms maintained by these centers, which are crucial for monitoring the use of diagnostic techniques. Additionally, a district-wide awareness campaign about the provisions and importance of the Act was proposed to educate stakeholders and the public. Advocate Suvama Shepal provided an overview of actions undertaken in the district under the PCPNDT Act, including inspections and legal proceedings. The presentation also detailed challenges in implementation and suggested areas for improvement. Meanwhile, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has proposed research to evaluate the effectiveness of the PCPNDT Act in combating female foeticide. This initiative follows criticism of the IMA's earlier

stance advocating for the legalization of sex determination, a practice strictly prohibited under the Act. Violations invite severe legal consequences, reflecting the government's commitment to addressing gender imbalance. The meeting concluded with a collective resolve to strengthen vigilance and ensure adherence to the PCPNDT Act for safeguarding the district's demographic balance. *Need to conduct quarterly inspections of sonography centers to ensure compliance. There is a necessity of auditing the F forms maintained by these centers, which are crucial for monitoring the use of diagnostic techniques. Additionally, a district-wide awareness campaign about the provisions and importance of the Act has been proposed to educate stakeholders and the public.* - Jalaj Sharma, District Collector

