



Matter of Thought

Nylon manja

A persistent threat despite ban

As the Makar Sankranti festival approaches, the menace of nylon manja (kite strings) has already started causing panic. Despite being banned by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 2017, its use continues unchecked, leading to severe accidents. Recently, in Nashik-Sinnar, a driver suffered cuts to his ear and throat due to nylon manja. Thankfully, his life was spared, but the incident highlights the grave risks posed by this illegal product. In the wake of such incidents, authorities urge two-wheeler riders to wear helmets and cover their necks with thick clothing as a precaution. There is also talk of holding parents accountable if their children are caught using nylon manja. However, this approach merely shifts the responsibility from the root cause to the victims and their families. The real issue — continued production and sale of nylon manja — remains inadequately addressed. Every year, as Sankranti draws near, the use of nylon manja becomes a topic of concern. Authorities launch crackdowns on vendors, but these efforts are typically short-lived, ceasing once the festival ends. This cyclical laxity raises questions about administrative efficiency and commitment. The NGT's 2017 ban explicitly prohibited the production, sale, use, and import of nylon manja. Yet, its production persists, with reels of manja adorned with attractive designs to lure buyers. Sellers know where these strings are made, but enforcement remains inconsistent. The administration must take proactive measures to address the root cause: the illegal production of nylon manja. Identifying and shutting down manufacturing units is crucial. Strict penalties for violators would act as a deterrent, ensuring that production halts entirely. Without production, there can be no sale or use, reducing the burden on law enforcement and preventing accidents. While the primary responsibility lies with the administration, parents also have a role to play. By monitoring the type of kites their children use and guiding them to fly kites safely, they can contribute to mitigating the problem. The continued availability and use of nylon manja highlight a failure of strict implementation of the ban. Without decisive action, more lives will be endangered. It is high time the administration prioritises public safety by enforcing the NGT's directives and eradicating this hazard once and for all. The persistent availability and use of nylon manja reflect a glaring failure in enforcing the NGT's ban. This issue demands decisive and sustained action from the administration to eliminate its production and sale, ensuring public safety.

Dr Manmohan Singh passes away

NEW DELHI: Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh passed away on Thursday. He was admitted to AIIMS in Delhi late in the evening after his health deteriorated, where doctors declared him dead. He was 92 years old and was



ill for a long time. A distinguished economist and statesman, Dr. Manmohan Singh was India's 13th Prime Minister, serving from 2004 to 2014, as well as Finance Minister when he helped shape the nation's new economic policy at the dawn

of the early 1990s.

Dr. Manmohan Singh was born on September 26, 1932, in Gah, which is currently in Pakistan, and education started at Panjab University followed by Oxford and Cambridge where he received his doctoral degree in economics. Dr. Manmohan Singh was an advisor to the Indian

government, with several tenures at institutions, such as the RBI and the Planning Commission, that show off a deep understanding of economic theory with a profound basis. His most defining contribution was in 1991, when he, as the FM under PM P. V. Narasimha Rao, led India to economic liberalization.

Manisha Khatri new NMC Commissioner

NASHIK: Manisha Khatri, the Metropolitan Commissioner of the Nashik Metropolitan Region Development Authority (NMRDA), has been appointed as the new Municipal Commissioner and Administrator of Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC). This marks the first time in 18 years that the NMC will be led by a woman commissioner.

the position from 2004 to 2006.

Khatri's appointment comes at a critical time for the Nashik Municipal Corporation, which has faced



Khatri took charge on December 26, following a series of events that unfolded earlier in the week. Initially, on December 24, she was given an order to assume the role of in-charge Municipal Commissioner. However, two hours later, an order was issued in the name of Rahul Kardile, leading to confusion. Just two days later, on December 26, the government issued a new order, confirming Khatri's appointment as the Municipal Commissioner, which she officially took up immediately.

Khatri's appointment makes her only the third woman to hold the position of Municipal Commissioner in Nashik. Sujata Saunik served in this role from 1998 to 2000, and Vinita Singal held

challenges in advancing development projects under the current administrative structure. With no significant projects launched in the past year and a half, Khatri will need to steer the corporation back on track. Her responsibilities will include overseeing the timely planning of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela and providing support for key projects such as the IT Park, Namami Goda, and the Neo Metro initiative.

Her predecessor, Dr. Ashok Karanjkar, was on medical leave until December 31, making Khatri's appointment all the more timely as the NMC enters a new phase of development and governance.

Good governance Index

Nashik in top five among districts

NASHIK: Nashik district has achieved a prominent position among the top five districts in Maharashtra, as per the recently released Maharashtra District Good Governance Index (2024). The district excelled across various categories and parameters, showcasing its strong governance and developmental strides.

The Maharashtra District Good Governance Index 2024 was unveiled by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis during an event at the Sahyadri Guest House in Mumbai. The index evaluates districts based on 161 parameters across 10 developmental sectors, offering a comprehensive measure of governance quality.

In his address, Chief Minister Fadnavis emphasized the importance of "Ease of Living" as a cornerstone for the state's progress. He remarked that the delivery of timely

Nashik's performance highlights

- **HRD:** Nashik (1st place), Gondia, Pune, Yavatmal, Satara.
- **People-centric administration:** Nashik (1st), Washim, Yavatmal, Buldhana, Amravati.
- **Infrastructure:** Latur, Nashik (Second), Buldhana, Chandrapur, Hingoli.
- **Social development:** Gondia, Amravati, Nashik (Third spot), Dhule, Nagpur.

and efficient public services is a key indicator of good governance, which ultimately strengthens Maharashtra's journey toward becoming a trillion-dollar economy.

The Chief Minister lauded the efforts of district administrations that excelled in the index and urged them to continue their exemplary work. At the same time, he directed guardian secretaries to focus on improving the performance of underperforming districts, ensuring their inclusion in future develop-

mental progress.

The Maharashtra District Good Governance Index serves as both a recognition of achievements and a roadmap for improvement. With Nashik leading in several categories, the district sets a benchmark for governance in the state. As the government continues to prioritize "Ease of Living" and citizen-focused policies, the efforts made by districts like Nashik will play a pivotal role in shaping Maharashtra's future.

Simhastha Kumbh Mela

GIS mapping to provide one-click access to information

NASHIK: Preparations for the Simhastha Kumbh Mela are gaining momentum, with Divisional Revenue Commissioner Dr. Praveen Gedam emphasizing the integration of technology to streamline services and facilities. Dr. Gedam has directed the use of Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping to make detailed information about all city services and facilities accessible to officers with a single click. Dr. Gedam highlighted the benefits of GIS mapping, noting that it will enable faster access to critical services such as the nearest hospitals and

Ram Kaal Path

In addition to Kumbh Mela preparations, the Ram Kaal Path project, a Central Government initiative worth Rs 100 crore, is underway to develop the footprints of Lord Ram in Panchavati. Dr. Gedam confirmed that administrative work on the project has been expedited, aiming to enhance the spiritual and cultural appeal of the region.

other essential facilities. This will ensure that all departments are well-coordinated, facilitating efficient management during the massive congregation.

Given the influx of devotees, detailed reviews of the routes to Trimbakeshwar through Nashik, as well as bypass

routes, were presented. Officers were instructed to streamline these pathways to ensure smooth movement during the event.

A key aspect of the preparations is identifying between 350 and 500 acres of land in Tapovan for the establishment of Sadhugram, a temporary

settlement for sadhus and devotees. Dr. Gedam discussed the options of purchasing or renting the land and suggested exploring innovative ways to utilize it post-Kumbh Mela to generate revenue for the municipal administration. If the land has long-term income potential, purchasing it would be a viable option; otherwise, renting for a year could suffice.

The Simhastha Kumbh Mela planning combines traditional needs with modern technology and infrastructure. By leveraging GIS mapping and focusing on coordinated efforts across departments,

Nashik aims to host a well-organized and memorable Kumbh Mela, ensuring

the safety, convenience, and spiritual fulfillment of millions of devotees.

REVIEW INSIGHTS

- **GIS mapping for facilities:** Departments have been instructed to map proposed and existing service locations, integrating them into a single system for easier access and planning.
- **CCTV monitoring:** The police administration provided insights into the current network of CCTV cameras in the city, and plans were discussed to expand coverage with support from the Smart City initiative.
- **Parking and road plans:** A comprehensive review was conducted to assess traffic flow, road conditions, and parking facilities.

Overcast conditions prevail in city

Mercury rises to 20.2°C

NASHIK: Nashik has experienced an unseasonal shift in its weather over the past week. The minimum temperature, which stood at a chilly 8°C on December 17, has surged to a considerably warmer 20.2°C by Thursday (December 26), marking an increase of 12.2°C within just nine days. This warming trend is accompanied by persistent overcast skies and occasional dense fog, maintaining a winter-like atmosphere in the city.

The India Meteorological Department reported that Nashik recorded a minimum temperature of 15.6°C on Wednesday, while Gondia, the coldest city in Maharashtra, noted a low of 15.8°C yesterday. Despite the rise in temperatures, Nashikites are experiencing a mix of chilly winds and cloudy weather, making it challenging to decide whether to don winter clothing.

The IMD Pune has issued a weather alert, forecasting rain accompanied by hail and thunderstorms across several regions of Maharashtra, including Madhya Maharashtra, Marathwada, and Vidarbha, today and tomorrow.

Rainfall is expected to begin in areas such as Nandurbar, Dhule, Jalgaon, Ahilyanagar, and parts of eastern South Marathwada, Pune, and Nashik from the afternoon of December 27. Thunderstorms are predicted to intensify by Friday night, impacting districts in West Vidarbha and adjacent Marathwada, such as Buldhana, Akola, Washim, Amravati, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Jalna,



Parbhani, Hingoli, and Beed.

Some areas in these regions might experience hailstorms during this period. The IMD has cautioned residents and authorities to remain vigilant as hail can cause damage to crops, property, and vehicles.

By the morning of December 28, the storm system is expected to move eastward, bringing rainfall and possible hailstorms to other Vidarbha districts, including Yavatmal, Wardha, Nagpur, Bhandara, Gondia, and Chandrapur. Rainy conditions are likely to persist in parts of West Vidarbha and Marathwada throughout the day.

Authorities and citizens are advised to take precautions against the potential impact of thunderstorms and hailstorms. Farmers, in particular, should take measures to protect standing crops from damage. Nashikites, meanwhile, are bracing for a mix of unpredictable weather patterns, from warm temperatures to winter's persistent chill.

Weather shifts may impact health

NASHIK: Amid fluctuating weather conditions marked by rising temperatures, cloudy skies, and occasional chilly winds, Nashik faces a potential surge in viral infections. Despite proactive measures by the municipal health department, the city's healthcare infrastructure remains strained as cases of respiratory illnesses show signs of increasing.

Over the past week, the night temperature in Nashik rose significantly from 8°C to 20.2°C, contributing to the atmospheric instability. These abrupt changes have led to heightened health concerns, with experts warning of another wave of viral infections.

During the early winter season, Nashik witnessed a sharp increase in viral cases. Residents reported symptoms such as cold, cough, fever, headache, body aches, and throat infections. Local healthcare facilities, including Dr. Zakir Hussain Hospital in Old Nashik, were overwhelmed, treating more than 200 patients daily. The municipal health department responded

by enhancing preparedness and treatment measures to manage the influx. Currently, diseases such as dengue and swine flu, which were significant concerns in the past, are reportedly under control. However, the persistent winter haze and fluctuating weather conditions continue to trigger viral infections, especially in vulnerable populations. Children, the elderly, and individuals with weakened immune systems remain most affected.

Health officials are particularly concerned about bacterial infections, such as pneumonia, which may emerge as a secondary threat. Respiratory conditions aggravated by climatic changes have further complicated the situation. Individuals with pre-existing respiratory illnesses are strongly encouraged to seek medical attention if their symptoms worsen. Early intervention can prevent complications and reduce strain on healthcare services.

The municipal health department has also drawn attention to the broader im-

pact of climate change on public health.

Sudden temperature fluctuations and increased atmospheric pollutants have heightened the prevalence of respiratory issues and viral outbreaks. The elderly and children are particularly vulnerable, with an increase in fever-like illnesses and related complications reported across the city. The Nashik Municipal Corporation remains committed to ensuring healthcare accessibility and mitigating potential outbreaks.

Precautionary measures

To address the risks, the NMC has emphasized the importance of vigilance. Health experts advise citizens to adopt preventive measures, including:

- Wearing masks in crowded areas.
- Practicing good hygiene, such as frequent handwashing.
- Avoiding overcrowded places to minimize exposure to infections.