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RIVERS CHOKING

NGT orders ignored

NASHIK: Despite clear directives from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) prohibiting the discharge of sewage and wastewater into the Godavari and other rivers, untreated waste continues to flow freely into the river. From its origin in Trimbakeshwar to Gangapur, Panchavati, Ramwadi, Godaghat, Tapovan, Shilapur, and Saikheda, sewage, industrial effluents, and chemical-laden foamy water are being released into the river, posing a severe threat to aquatic life.

The situation is particularly concerning as devotees from across the country take this river water as a Tirth (sacred offering). Laboratory tests of the river water will show that it is unfit for consumption or even general use due to poor pH levels.

A sewage treatment plant was built in Nashik under the previous Simhashtha Kumbh Mela development plan, but it operates on an outdated FAB (Fluidized Aerobic Bioreactor) technology and is now

nearly defunct. Despite significant financial provisions over the years, the necessary upgrades have not been made, allowing untreated wastewater to flow directly into the river. In several areas, pipes from toilets have been illegally connected to the river, and garbage dumping has worsened the pollution.

Authorities such as the Pollution Control Board, the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC), and other municipal bodies appear to be ignoring the issue. While ordinary citizens are fined for minor violations, large-scale polluters dumping sewage, plastic, and waste into the river are going unpunished. The much-publicized Namami Goda campaign, meant to rejuvenate the river, has remained largely on paper, with no concrete impact on ground reality. In an earlier effort, the Zilla Parishad proposed constructing suc-



cess pits along the Godavari's banks to prevent sewage from flowing directly into the river. Block Development Officers were instructed to implement the plan, but little progress has been made. The continuous discharge of untreated sewage

has led to the death of thousands of fish and other aquatic species in the river, particularly in Nashik city and surrounding areas. A long-term plan for wastewater treatment was drafted, but insufficient action has led to further deterioration of the situation. Former Municipal Commissioner Kailash Jadhav had announced a

new ozonation process to ensure that the biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) in the treated water remains within permissible limits. However, even this initiative remains stalled. Sewer pipes are discharging directly into the river at nearly 50 to 60 locations in Nashik, with 10-15 of these spots witnessing significant contamination. The NGT has consistently raised concerns over the declining quality of Godavari's water due to unchecked sewage and silt deposits, yet authorities have failed to act decisively.

For years, the pollution of the Godavari has been a pressing issue, and complaints continue to surface about untreated sewage being discharged into the river. The High Court, in response to petitions, has issued various directives for remedial action, assigning responsibility to the Nashik Municipal Corporation, Pollution Control Board, and law enforcement agencies. However, the work remains stalled, leaving the sacred river in an increasingly dire state.



Barricades and direction boards on the Nashik-Surat-Saputara-Wani national highway are in poor condition, especially at Saputara, Thanapada, Hatgaon, and Borgaon. With heavy traffic due to major vegetable markets in Nashik, Surat, Ahmedabad, and Ankaleshwar, the deteriorated signage and barricades increase the risk of accidents. Concerned drivers have demanded that the Public Works Construction Department should take immediate action to repair them.

GROUNDWATER LEVEL DEPLETION

Well digging banned in 776 villages

NASHIK: A survey has revealed a significant drop in groundwater levels across Nashik district due to excessive extraction. As a result, authorities have banned well digging for personal use in 776 villages, with Sinnar and Niphad tehsils being the most affected.

The survey was conducted based on watershed areas rather than administrative boundaries. Data from agriculture records, talathi reports, and water resource departments were analyzed to assess water levels across 80 catchment areas in the district. The study found that 12 catchment areas are experiencing groundwater extraction at a rate faster than natural recharge.

Out of 1,948 villages surveyed,

1,172 were classified as safe, while 419 were nearing critical levels. In these villages, new wells for individual use are prohibited, and only shared wells for multiple users are allowed. A complete ban on digging new wells or borewells has been imposed in 357 villages spread across 15 catchment areas where groundwater extraction exceeds 90%.

Tehsils such as Nashik, Sinnar, Niphad, Dindori, and Igatpuri in the Godavari valley are among the worst affected. High-powered electric pumps are being used extensively for irrigation, depleting groundwater at an alarming rate. In Sinnar alone, 77 villages have been restricted from well digging due to excessive water withdrawal.

Groundwater study & classification

A computer-based assessment determines groundwater status by analyzing rainfall, water conservation efforts, and agricultural water usage. Villages where less than 70% of available water is extracted are considered safe. Areas where extraction exceeds 70% are categorized into different risk levels, with those exceeding 90% classified as critical or nearing depletion.

Army jawan arrested for spying

NASHIK: An army jawan posted in Nashik has been arrested for allegedly spying for Pakistan's intelligence agency, ISI. The suspect, Sandeep Singh, who held the rank of Naik in a military unit in Nashik, is accused of leaking sensitive military information, including photographs, details of weapons, officer appointments, and maps of military camps in Nashik, Jammu, and Punjab. Investigations have revealed that over the past two years, he had sent this classified information to an ISI agent in Pakistan using his mobile phone.

Acting on these findings, a team from Amritsar rural police arrested Sandeep Singh on Saturday (February 8). Amritsar Chief Superintendent of Police (Rural) Charanjit Singh and Superintendent Harinder Singh provided details of the arrest. The investi-

gation into this case began with the arrest of Amritpal Singh, a resident of Chamba Kalan village in Taran Taran. He was found to be involved in international drug smuggling and espionage activities. Following this, another army personnel, Rajbir Singh, was identified as a suspect, and efforts are underway to track him down. Meanwhile, the police also arrested two more individuals, Mandeep Singh alias Maddy and Madhav Sharma, from Rajasthan.

During their operation, the police seized 500 grams of heroin, Rs. 10 lakh cash linked to smuggling activities, a pistol and a currency counting machine.

According to Charanjit Singh Sohal, both Sandeep Singh and Rajbir Singh were actively involved in drug smuggling along with passing classified information to the ISI.

Rajbir Singh on the run?

Following the arrest of Amritpal Singh, it is suspected that Rajbir Singh fled from the Nashik army camp. On February 7, an Amritsar police team arrived in Nashik to apprehend him, but they received intelligence that he had already escaped. The army has now launched a search operation to locate him.

Dilapidated police quarters to be demolished

NASHIK: A structural audit conducted by the Public Works Department has identified several old police residential buildings at the Nashik city police headquarters on Gangapur Road as dangerous and unsafe. In response, Deputy Commissioner (Police Headquarters) Chandrakant Khandvi has ordered the immediate evacuation of 13 hazardous chawls, including 10 buildings. The police headquarters houses a government colony for police personnel, with old two-story buildings and chawls. Over time, structures in areas such as Snehandhan Park, Devlali Camp, Nashik Road, and Pathardi Phata have also deteriorated.

In August 2023, the Police Commissionerate requested a structural audit from the construction department. Following the as-

essment, a detailed report was submitted in February 2025, recommending the demolition of unsafe structures. Plans are now in place to rebuild these quarters, with new barracks and residential buildings expected to be completed by the end of 2026, ahead of the upcoming Simhashtha Kumbh Mela. Before the city police force became operational, chawls and buildings were constructed at the headquarters for police personnel. Over time, as the city police force expanded, officers from the rural police force also moved in. Ahead of the 2003 Simhashtha Kumbh Mela, some of these chawls were demolished, making way for newer buildings, including the Snehandhan Park police colony. In 2025, a fresh structural audit has led to another redevelopment initiative.

List of buildings to be demolished

The following structures have been declared unsafe and will be demolished:
Police Line Chawls: No. 1 to 5, No. 6 to 8, No. 9 to 11, No. 12 and 14
Old Buildings: No. 2 and 4, No. 8, No. 9 to 11, No. B-1 to B-4

CA Mutha to speak on Budget today

NASHIK: Renowned Chartered Accountant Sanjeev Mutha will deliver a lecture on Budget 2025 today, February 10, from 5:30 to 7:30 pm at the Institute of Engineers Hall, Untwadi Road. The session is organized by the Professional Realtors Association of Nashik (PRAN).

This marks the 24th knowledge session by PRAN, which conducts monthly programmes for its members and real estate professionals, informed PRAN president Vikrant Awhad and secretary Nitin Kotkar.

The event is open to all and free of charge, but prior registration is required. Key organizers include vice president Pradeep Randhir, joint secretary Raj Talreja, treasurer Kailas Kadam, advisor Rajendra Kotkar, committee member DJ Dhamane and other office bearers are taking sincere efforts to make the programme a success.

HSC EXAMS

3,354 students appear from KTHM College

NASHIK: The Class XII HSC Board examinations will commence on Tuesday, February 11. A total of 3,354 students from all faculties will appear at Centre No. 105-B, KTHM College, located on Gangapur Road. The chief centre director, S. N. Kasav, informed that seating arrangements have been made at various sub-centres, including KTHM College.

All examinations for divyang students, along with subjects such as Hindi, Sanskrit, French, Geography, Cooperation, Mathematics (Commerce), Sociology, and HSVC, will be conducted at the main centre in KTHM College. The seating arrangements are as follows:

KTHM College: Science (S002255 to S003032), Commerce (S146961 to S148224 + S400002), HSVC (S164167 to S164265)

Maratha High School Sub-centre: Science students (S001747 to S002254) for English, Marathi, Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, and Biology

CMCS College: Arts students (S091483 to S092223 + S400001) for English, Marathi, Political Science, Economics, Psychology, and History.

Maratha High School excels in GK Olympiad

NASHIK: Maratha High School, run by Maratha Vidya Prasarak Samaj Sanstha, has achieved a 100% success in the General Knowledge (GK) Olympiad Exam, with all 101 students passing with excellence. Among them, 15 students secured gold medals for their outstanding performance.

A felicitation ceremony was organized to honour the achievers. The gold medalists were presented with medals and certificates in recognition of their success. On this occasion, principal Purushottam Thorat, vice principal Rangnath Ugale, supervisor Shankar Kotwal and others were present on the dais.

The students received guidance from Veena Kale, Sangeeta Jadhav, Smita Shinde, and Sunita Patil.

E-2 ZONE KHO-KHO COMPETITION

MVP Polytechnic wins Kho-Kho Tourney

NASHIK: The Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj Polytechnic College team claimed victory in the final match of the Kho-Kho Inter-College Sports Competition, organized by MVP Samaj Sanstha's Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj Polytechnic College under the E-2 Zone. The team has now advanced to the state-level competition.

The competition was inaugurated by MVP director Adv. Laxman Landge, who emphasized the importance of field games in shaping the personalities of participating students. He highlighted that sports competitions offer players a platform to showcase their skills and stressed the significance of organizing and planning such events.

Led by principal Prof. Prashant Patil, the competition saw participation from various polytechnic colleges across the district. All the matches were fiercely contested, with the final showdown

between MVP Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj Polytechnic College and M. S. Gosavi Polytechnic College. MVP Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj Polytechnic College emerged victorious, while M. S. Gosavi Polytechnic College secured the runner-up position. Both teams were felicitated by Prof. Prashant Patil.

Referees Shivam Bagul, Kunal Jadhav, Sahil Kakad, and Prathamesh Dhattrak officiated the matches. Sports teacher Nilesh Pawar, along with department heads, teachers, and non-teaching staff, contributed significantly to the competition's success.

General secretary of MVP Samaj Sanstha, Adv. Nitin Thakare, president Dr. Sunil Dhikale, chairman Balasaheb Kshirsagar, vice president Vishwas More, and other office bearers congratulated the winning team and extended their best wishes for the upcoming state-level competition.

New Era students promote Green Nashik initiative

NASHIK: The students of New Era English School took a significant step towards promoting environmental sustainability by launching an awareness campaign, 'Green Nashik'. This initiative, undertaken by the school's Nature club and student council, aimed to emphasize the importance of a green and sustainable environment.

Nature club students and student council with help of placards, banners, slogans created awareness and gave tree saplings. They interacted with passersby, sharing information about the need to protect and preserve Nashik's natural resources. Key messages highlighted included the importance of tree plantation and conservation, reducing, reusing, and recycling waste, the impact of pollution on wa-

ter bodies and air quality, and the role of individual actions in contributing to a

Nashik cause. The students also distributed cloth bags containing flyers to spread



sustainable environment. "We believe small actions can make a big difference," said the Head Girl, a member of the New Era English School's Nature club. "As students, we want to promote environmental awareness and encourage others to join us." The students distributed around 600 tree saplings to citizens, promoting sustainable practices and encouraging others to join the Green

awareness about the initiative. In a show of support, the Nashik city traffic police and members of Damini squad appreciated their efforts towards promoting environmental awareness.

"We're proud of our students for championing Green Nashik," said the incharge teacher. "This activity demonstrates their commitment to creating a sustainable future."