

Briefs

Kids at risk

DELHI: India has shown a 94 per cent rise in reported sexual offences against children under POCSO between 2017 and 2022, from 33,210 to 64,469 cases, but despite the rising numbers, the prosecution rate remains above 90 per cent, signalling stronger enforcement and reporting mechanisms, according to a new report.

All Gujarat Ministers resign

GANDHINAGAR: In view of the reshuffle in Gujarat cabinet, all the state ministers except Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, have resigned. The swearing in ceremony of the new ministers will be held at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar tomorrow at 1130 am. Governor Acharya Devvrat will administer the oath of office and secrecy to the new ministers.

Maoist menace nearly over

DELHI: As many as 258 battle-hardened Maoists have surrendered in Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra in the last two days, Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced on Thursday. He also gave a clear message to the Maoists that if they surrender, they will be welcomed but those who continue to wield the gun will face the wrath of security forces. Shah also declared that two worst-hit regions of Chhattisgarh are now free from the Maoist menace.

Record freefall jump

NEW DELHI: In a major boost to India's airborne capabilities, the indigenously developed Military Combat Parachute System (MCPS) by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully completed a combat freefall jump from a staggering altitude of 32,000 feet. With this feat, MCPS has become the only parachute system currently in operational service with the Indian Armed Forces capable of deployment above 25,000 feet.

Probe into AI crash

DELHI: Pushkaraj Sabharwal, father of deceased Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, and the Federation of Indian Pilots have moved the Supreme Court seeking a court-monitored inquiry headed by a former apex court judge into the June 12 crash of Air India flight AI171 in Ahmedabad that killed 260 people. On September 22, the top court said certain aspects of the AAIB preliminary report on the crash indicated lapses on the part of pilots.

Temperature

Max32.2°C
Min20.4°C

Market

Sensex83467 (+862)
Nifty.....25585 (+261)

Gold & Silver

Gold (10 Gram)	
24 Carat	1,28,000
22 Carat	1,17,760
Silver (Per KG)	1,90,000

Bazaars sparkle with Diwali joy

NASHIK: On the eve of Diwali celebrations beginning today with Vasu Baras, Nashik's traditional markets have come alive with colour, light, and festive cheer. From handcrafted akash kandils and glittering lanterns to decorative lights, sweets, gold jewellery, and new garments — the city's shopping hubs are abuzz with activity as residents prepare to welcome the festival of lights. Major marketplaces such as Main Road, Shalimar, Ravivar Karanja, Panchavati, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Chowk at Nashik Road, and Levitt Market at Deolali Camp are witnessing heavy crowds. After months of slow sales, traders say the festive rush is finally returning — bringing a much-needed revival for small businesses and MSMEs that depend on Diwali demand. At the bustling Main Road and Shalimar markets, stalls brim with colourful décor. "Business is slow on weekdays, but weekends are packed," said a lantern seller arranging bright paper kandils. "Latkans and diyas are in great demand this year. We're hopeful that Diwali will bring better sales." Narrow lanes on MG Road are glowing with hanging lanterns, drawing both loyal customers and



curious first-time buyers hunting for the perfect festive touch. For Nashikites, Diwali shopping continues to be a cherished family ritual.

"We are all excited for Diwali. Whether rich or poor, everyone shops — there's no discrimination," said a 58-year-old homemaker smiling while picking diyas. "Gold is expensive, but people are still buying. The younger generation likes online shopping, but we prefer the market — no exchange hassles!" A 65-year-old shopper added, "We Indians celebrate Diwali with full energy — gold prices don't matter when it's about tradition!" Even among the youth, optimism runs high. A college student said, "The new GST reforms are a Diwali gift for the middle class. Everyone should celebrate in their own way — with sweets, lights, or firecrackers." Meanwhile, children have their own festive priorities. Near Dongre Vastigriha Market, a group of students chatted excitedly while their parents shopped for sweets. "Our clothes shopping is still pending!" one laughed. Another added gleefully, "I'll buy sutli bombs and rockets this time!" As Nashik lights up for Diwali, the city's markets once again reflect the spirit of togetherness, tradition, and joy that defines the festival — a celebration that unites generations under one glowing sky.

Defence Minister unveils HAL's Smart Township



NASHIK: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh yesterday unveiled HAL's Smart Township in Nashik, featuring green technologies, digital infrastructure, and community-focused amenities. Dr D K Sunil, CMD, HAL, Directors, CEOs, and senior officials were present during the event.

Dr D K Sunil, CMD, HAL, said, "HAL's flagship initiative, the Smart Township, is aimed at creating a modern, sustainable, and technologically advanced urban habitat designed to improve the quality of life of its residents and set new standards in resource efficiency and environmental



State Minister Girish Mahajan welcomes Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at Ozar Airport.

at Ozar Airport aboard a special aircraft, where he was received by officials from the defence and district administration. On the occasion, Water Resources Minister Girish Mahajan greeted him

with a bouquet. Also present to welcome the Defence Minister were Former Union Minister of State Dr. Bharti Pawar, HAL Chairman Dr. D. K. Sunil, Zilla Parishad CEO Saket Chaturvedi, Divisional Commissioner Dr. Praveen Gedam, Simhastha Kumbh Mela Authority Commissioner Shekhar Singh, Major General Abhimanyu Roy, Special Inspector General of Police Dattatray Karale, Municipal Commissioner Manisha Khatri, District Collector Ayush Prasad, Brigadier N. R. Pandey, Group Captain Harish Nirwal (Station Commander), and Superintendent of Police Balasaheb Patil, among other dignitaries.

EC clarifies Only 3 voters registered at house, Not 800

NASHIK: The Election Department has clarified that reports claiming more than 800 voters were registered at house number 3829 in the Nashik Central Assembly (124) constituency are incorrect. According to Deputy Collector Madhumati Sardesai, verification revealed that only three voters are listed at the address. Meanwhile, it was observed that over 800 voters are registered at house number 3892 in the same constituency. The Municipal Corporation, Nashik, and the Voter Registration Officer conducted a de-

tailed verification. The preliminary report confirms that house number 3892 falls under city survey number 4905/5, covering an area of approximately 1,501 sq. m, and includes around 700 residential and non-residential structures. Each property has a separate property index number and is registered in the names of different individuals. The report clarified that the location is not a single building or flat but a cluster of separate properties, making the claim of 800 voters in one house misleading.

No Modi-Trump talk: MEA

NEW DELHI: The Ministry of External Affairs yesterday categorically denied any knowledge of a phone conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Donald Trump yesterday, contradicting the US President on his claims that PM Modi had assured him on October 15 that India would not purchase Russian oil. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said at a briefing: "I am not aware of any conversation between Prime Minister Modi and President Trump yesterday". The US President had said yesterday: "I was not happy that India was purchasing Russian oil, and he (PM Modi) assured me today that they will not be buying oil from Russia ... That's a big step. Now I've got to get China do the same thing," he told re-

porters at the White House. Regarding the US President's claims on India's purchase of Russian oil, the spokesperson referred to a statement issued in the morning, in which the government has clearly stated that India's energy import policies are guided entirely by the objective of safeguarding the interests of the Indian consumer. The statement had read: "India is a significant importer of oil and gas. It has been our consistent priority to safeguard the interests of the Indian consumer in a volatile energy scenario. Our import policies are guided entirely by this objective. President Trump, while claiming that PM Modi had assured that India would stop purchasing oil from Russia, described the move as a "big step" in pressuring Russia over the Ukraine war.

Chief secy flags Simhastha work

MUMBAI:With the Simhastha Kumbh Mela scheduled in Nashik and Trimbakeshwar in 2027-28, Chief Secretary Rajesh Kumar has directed the Simhastha Kumbh Mela Authority and all concerned departments to ensure that planning and preparatory work is completed on schedule. A large influx of devotees and tourists is expected, making timely preparation crucial. A review meeting on Simhastha preparations was held at the Mantralaya under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Rajesh Kumar. He emphasized that a competent authority has been appointed to oversee planning. The authority must identify priority works and estimate the time required for completion. Administrative approvals, tenders, and work orders should be processed immediately.

Child marriage-free Nashik goal ahead

NASHIK: "Preventing child marriage is not just a legal obligation but a collective social responsibility," emphasized Additional Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad, Dr. Arjun Gunde. He was speaking at a training workshop on the Role and Responsibility of Gram Panchayat Officers and Police Patils organized by the District Child Protection Cell under the Office of the District Women and Child Development Officer at Mahakavi Kalidas Kalamandir. Dr. Gunde noted that despite the implementation of the Child Marriage Prevention Act, 2006, in-



stances of child marriage continue due to socio-economic conditions and lack of awareness. "Child marriage is a social evil that hampers the development of children and society. Every citizen must actively participate in preventing it," he said. He further stated that Gram Panchayat Officers and Police Patils have a crucial role in prevent-

ing child marriages at the grassroots level. "Through coordination and awareness at the village level, we can effectively curb this practice. Initiatives like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao must be strengthened to improve the gender ratio," he added. Deputy Commissioner of the District Women and Child Development Department, Chandrashekhar Pagare, informed that as part of the Child Marriage-Free India and Child Marriage-Free State initiatives, orientation sessions are being held across Nashik district for Village Development Officers and Police Patils.

Vasu Baras: The gentle dawn of Diwali

NASHIK: The festival of Govatsa Dwadashi, also known as Vasu Baras in Maharashtra, will be celebrated on Friday, October 17, 2025, marking the beginning of the five-day Diwali festival. The day is dedicated to worshipping cows and calves, which are regarded in Indian culture as symbols of purity, prosperity, and maternal affection. With its spirit of devotion and gratitude, Vasu Baras sets the tone for the upcoming Diwali celebrations — Dhantrayodashi, Narak Chaturdashi, Lakshmi Pujan, Padwa, and Bhau Beej.



Significance: Govatsa Dwadashi falls a day before Dhantrayodashi and holds immense spiritual and cultural importance. The festival is observed as Nandini Vrat, dedicated to the divine cow Nandini, believed to fulfill the wishes of her devotees. In Hindu belief, the cow is considered a sacred and life-sustaining being, embodying the nurturing essence of motherhood. Worshipping cows on this day is said to invoke blessings of prosperity, good health, and familial harmony. **Rituals and observances:** On this auspicious day, devotees begin preparations early by cleaning and decorating cowsheds, adorning cows and calves with garlands, turmeric,

and kumkum, and offering sweets, jaggery, gram, and water. Many families perform Govatsa Puja, offering prayers to cows and calves while seeking blessings for wealth and well-being. In rural areas, women observe fasts and perform rituals with devotion, while in cities, symbolic worship is done using idols or pictures of cows and calves. Rangolis depicting cow motifs are drawn at the entrances of homes, and arghya (holy water) is offered to

the feet of calves as a gesture of reverence and gratitude. As the first light of Diwali season shines with Vasu Baras, homes across Maharashtra and other parts of India will resonate with prayers of gratitude — celebrating the sacred bond between humanity and nature. Families will gather to decorate their homes with rangoli and lamps. Children will excitedly take part in festivities, from buying sweets to setting up small lanterns.

Muhurat

- ❖ Pradoshkala Muhurat: 5:10 PM to 7:39 PM
- ❖ Dwadashi Tithi Begins: 11:12 AM on October 17, 2025
- ❖ Dwadashi Tithi Ends: 12:18 PM on October 18, 2025

Cultural & agricultural

Govatsa Dwadashi holds a special place in agrarian communities, symbolizing respect for livestock that supports rural livelihoods through milk, labor, and nourishment. The day encourages people to express gratitude toward animals that play a crucial role in sustaining daily life. In Maharashtra, the festival is not only a religious observance but also a cultural celebration of abundance and environmental harmony. It is believed that honoring cows on this day ensures prosperity, happiness, and peace in the household throughout the year.