

IDEALS OF INSPIRATION | STAY SAFE FROM CYBER CRIMES | FORT TOURISM: RAIGAD

Maharashtra Ahead

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**WOMAN TO
SUPERWOMAN**

SHIVJANMOTSAV



The grand celebrations of the birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj took off in the august presence of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar at Shivneri Fort. The melodious tunes of traditional *shehnai* and *chaughada* drums, thunderous roar of *tutari*, resonant sounds of drums, with saffron festoons and jubilant shouts of *Jai Bhawani*, *Jai Shivaji* as well as *Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj ki Jai* reverberated across the historic fort.



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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Empowerment of women helps development of society. The State Government is endeavouring for overall development of women. Efforts are being made to enhance their entrepreneurship skills and attain progress. The State Government is determined to solve their problems through various schemes and programmes.



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IDEALS OF INSPIRATION

The Government of Maharashtra is always striving to ensure that women make great strides in every field. But this tendency to make giant strides is naturally present in some women. Some of them create their own identity with determination and hard work and set an ideal for ordinary women. They become a source of inspiration to many owing to their accomplishments. These are some success stories that showcase the extraordinariness among the ordinary.



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RIGHTS AND POWERS

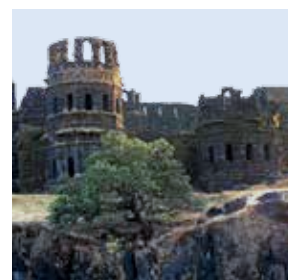
The right to equal opportunity and live with dignity has been given to women, but to enjoy Constitutional powers, it is essential for them to know law. The main reason for tolerating injustice and atrocities is ignorance about law. While the Government, social bodies and people strive hard to create awareness among women, it is essential for society to take a resolute initiative on its own accord to give them these rights.



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STAY VIGILANT AND SAFE FROM CYBER CRIMES

In India, women are worshipped only at religious places and festivals. However, in normal life, they are exploited in innumerable ways and victimised physically, psychologically and sexually. Now, with the internet transforming human lives, it has further exposed women to crimes like cyber-stalking, online defamation, trolling, email spoofing, pornography, psychological torture and sexual abuse.



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RAIGAD: THE PRIDE OF MAHARASHTRA

The magnificent fort of Raigad, which has been witness to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation ceremony, is one of the highlights of Maharashtra's rich history. It is not just a fort, but a symbol of pride and honour for Maharashtra. The fort is an example of extraordinary architecture, and is nothing less than a pilgrimage for the disciples of Shivaji Maharaj and fort lovers.

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Go Girl Go

On 29 August 2019, the Union Government launched an initiative called Fit India Movement. The goal of this programme was to promote and preserve sports culture, encourage various sporting events, and maintain good health with physical fitness. Under this programme, the Maharashtra Government launched Go Girl Go Scheme, and also keeping in mind the objective of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Beti Khilao, the State Government has started a public awareness campaign for health and fitness of girls. The goal of this campaign is to provide maximum sporting facilities, free learning environment and opportunities to develop skills among girls. If the girls of age group 6-18 years are educated on personal hygiene, nutrition, health and good lifestyle habits, it can definitely help in building healthy families in future.



The State Government is devising many schemes to promote sports so that many new sporting talents can be spotted for national and international sports events. The success of Maharashtra's players at Khelo India Youth Games held in Guwahati recently highlights the fact that the efforts of the Government are bearing fruit. As a next step, Go Girl Go has been introduced so that girls get fitter and find interest in sports, and the State gets new players to represent Maharashtra and India in various sports events. Though the scheme is for girls from all over Maharashtra, its emphasis is to take sports and fitness to the remotest places and interiors of the State. Only then, the sports culture can be truly promoted and new players can come up from all parts of Maharashtra.

The State Government is committed to the holistic development of girls, which include their physical and mental health. For this, new sports competitions are being planned in the near future. In these events, more than 1,04,00,000 girls from Maharashtra are expected to participate. There is no doubt that it will lead to a new sports and fitness movement in the State.

Protecting Rights, Dignity and Opportunities of Women



**Adv. Yashomati Thakur
(Sonawane)**
Minister for Women and
Child Development

For any society to truly become strong and healthy, it must give due respect to its women. Bharat Ratna Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar gave equal rights to Indian women in the Constitution. Since then, from time to time, constitutional and legal experts have passed several laws to protect the rights of Indian women and ensure their safety.

However, the onus to protect their rights is also on society, and on all of us. As Minister for Women and Child Development, I am particularly interested in the cause of women empowerment. Our priority is all-inclusive development of women by taking all schemes and measures of the department to the last person of society.

Today, women are leading on all fronts and are continually marching ahead. Girls are toppers in Std. X and XII exams. As per a recent Supreme Court judgment, women officers working in the army will now be entitled to permanent commission. Whenever women got an opportunity, they have proved their mettle with their excellent work across fields like politics, education, science, health or any other. At one side, women are reaching to the new pinnacles of progress, the other side of society is very grim. The growing atrocities against women, their sexual and physical abuse, and the mentality to deprive them of their rights are truly unfortunate. There have been legal provisions for working women, and strict laws are passed so that they do not suffer any sexual exploitation at work. The Government also has launched various schemes to educate women and make them self-reliant with employment and self-employment

opportunities. Maharashtra leads in implementing many such schemes for the all-inclusive development of women.

Maharashtra has a rich legacy of social reformers like Mahatma Jotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil and Maharshi Dhondo Keshav Karve. Following their principles, Maharashtra continues to give special importance to women's education. Our girls get free primary and secondary school education without any discrimination. But along with formal education, the emphasis has also been given to nurture their entrepreneurial spirit. As a result, these efforts have helped in creating a strong and successful movement of self-help groups in rural Maharashtra. These groups are an important part of today's rural economy, and have made women self-reliant.



Women and men are two wheels of society. By depriving women of equal opportunities under the pretext of cultural or social traditions, society cannot progress and evolve in the true sense. Hence, as a society, we have to respect and empower women, ensure them equal opportunities and protect their right to live with dignity. Women are infinite source of energy and resources, and only need channelising in the right direction.

On the occasion of International Women's Day, March 8, *Maharashtra Ahead* is bringing out a special edition on women. The special issue includes women empowerment thoughts of various Ministers and Government policies for all-inclusive development of women. It has informative features on legal rights and health of women and their role in economy and society. I am sure that you will like the special issue.

Adv. Yashomati Thakur (Sonawane)
Guest Editor



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: A KEY TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*Empowerment of women helps development of society. The State Government is endeavouring for all-inclusive development of women. Efforts are being made to enhance their entrepreneurship skills and attain progress. The State Government is committed to solve their problems, says Minister for Women and Child Development, **Adv. Yashomati Thakur**.*

Women are sensitive by nature. They possess infinite strength to face any kind of situation with patience. Being a woman myself, I can say this authoritatively on the basis of my own experience. The power of women to keep themselves and their families together during difficult conditions is an important aspect in our social structure.

Be it a working woman, business woman or a housewife, be it a woman living in an urban area or a village, they are constantly striving for the sake of

progress of the family. Even though there is a difference between the condition of an urban woman and a rural woman, the problems that they face are similar in some ways. Working women have to leave their infants in a child-care facility. Similarly, women living in rural areas, who go to work in farm fields, have to take their children along with them, since there are no elderly women present in the family. It shows the similarity between the problems faced by a rural and an urban woman to some extent.

It is our duty to implement policies for the sake of women's social and economic development as well as for their security. We will sincerely fulfil this responsibility in the near future. The problem of women's security is largely due to the wrong outlook of anti-social elements. It is the need of the hour to inculcate the teaching of our ideal, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, of looking at a woman as a mother and a sister. Efforts will be made accordingly to impart the teaching of showing respect to women under moral education in schools and colleges.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Economic empowerment of women is the aim of the Government of Maharashtra at all times. A working woman or a business woman is self-reliant, but rural women and housewives face financial problems. At such times, it is necessary to give them a boost. The movement of self-help groups (SHGs) that has emerged through Maharashtra Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) is proving to be very useful in uniting the women to solve each other's financial problems.

Through MAVIM, the work of building skills as well as providing encouragement and confidence to women is done to help them start small and big ventures. Employment opportunities are becoming available to women through this. Rural women are coming forward with self-confidence, selling products by setting up the stalls of their SHGs at various places. Similarly, marketplaces are becoming available for their products.

MAZI KANYA BHAGYASHREE

It is important to drop this insistence on desiring a son as the progeny of the clan. It is observed that if girls are given an opportunity, then they study better than boys and excel in jobs and

businesses. The welfare scheme, Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree (My Daughter, My Fortune) is implemented in Maharashtra to increase the birth rate of girls and to prevent female foeticide. The benefit of the scheme can be received only by those families who have consented to the sterilisation surgery after the birth of one girl child and two girl children. A fixed deposit is made in the name of the girl child by the Government.

Considering the sex ratio of the children, the Union Government's campaign, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (Save Girl Child, Educate Girl Child) is being implemented in all districts of the State. This scheme is being implemented through coordination among the Departments of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare, Education, Rural Development, Home and others. The objective of this campaign is the effective enforcement of the law made to prohibit Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act (PCPNDT), to curb female foeticide. Special attention is being given to

districts that have a low sex ratio. Instructions have been given to take strict actions through coordination between the Health and Home Departments to curb the malpractice of performing sex determination test of foetus by visiting neighbouring States; the practice of sex determination tests will not be tolerated.

We must celebrate women's contribution in the country's growth not just one day but every day.

FOCUS ON EDUCATION AND HEALTH

It is not our only duty to welcome the birth of a girl child, but we must also ensure that equal educational facilities are provided to girls as boys. Attention should be given to their health, security and empowerment, so that girls become self-reliant and make their families proud. Social change will take place in a real sense when girls are accepted with enthusiasm rather than with reluctance. I believe that these changes have already begun to take place and we are progressing towards the creation of an efficient and strong society.

WELCOMING SUGGESTIONS

While positive things are taking place in society, some incidents of pervers-

THE SHG MOVEMENT

A network comprising women is being formed due to this movement of women's self-help groups through which several constructive things happen. Respect is shown to their opinion in the family due to their self-confidence. Women who are active within the SHGs easily go to Government offices to solve their issues. Similarly, women's leadership is coming to the forefront in local self-government institutions. I am taking important decisions to further strengthen these SHGs and provide them with encouragement. Under this, the annual average balance limit for the provision of take-home ration (THR) and hot-cooked meal (HCM) has been lowered from ₹25,000 to ₹10,000 to ensure that more women's SHGs and other institutions can participate in the tender application process.



sity can also be seen. It has been observed that several cruel incidents of rape, sexual abuse, mental torture, acid attack, throwing petrol and setting on fire, sexual molestation of children and so on, are taking place. While the police is always prepared to curb such incidents, we all should collectively contemplate on such incidents as a society. The Government is always striving to curb such unnatural tendencies. However, we will welcome any suggestions or instructions about the kind of welfare solutions that can be collectively implemented.

The Police Department has implemented CCTV installation drives on a large scale in cities. Hence, it has become possible to confirm the identity of the accused persons in cases of eve-teasing. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has also promised to amend laws and make necessary corrections to ensure that the accused get the most stringent punishment.

MANODHAIRYA SCHEME

It becomes extremely necessary to help those women and children who fall prey to abuse, to cope with the mental trauma and to rehabilitate them. The Government is implementing the Manodhairya Yojana (self-confidence scheme) for this purpose. A financial assistance of ₹1-10 lakh is provided to victims, who are also given counselling, medical and legal aid, shelter, education and occupational training to help them deal with the mental trauma. It is the aim of the Government to not simply provide financial aid to them, but also strive towards enabling them to live with dignity.

WELFARE SCHEMES

Various schemes are being implemented through the Department of Women and Child Development to provide as-

TAKING CARE OF MOTHERS

A difficult situation arises for those women who have to work on a daily basis for their two meals, when they are not able to go to work during the periods of pregnancy and breastfeeding. Considering this, the Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY), a maternity benefit programme, is implemented in the districts of Amravati and Buldhana. Under this scheme, women, during the periods of pregnancy and breastfeeding, are provided with compensation payments in cash to make up for the loss of wages and nutritional diet. Such women are given ₹3,000 at the time of their first pregnancy and ₹3,000 after the child turns six months old, which amounts to ₹6,000 in total.

It is our objective to provide assistance to the truly underprivileged through these welfare schemes, for which some important steps are being taken. Necessary decisions will be taken in the coming future to bring transparency in the implementation of these schemes.



sistance to underprivileged and victimised women. Several types of plans are being implemented. These include various kinds of shelter plans, State-operated women's shelter facilities, shelter homes, orphanages, women accommodation centres and secured housing units under which, subsidy for the marriage of the daughters of destitute and abandoned widows, subsidy under Devadasi Kalyan Yojana (Devadasi

welfare plan) for the livelihood of Devadasis as well as for their own and their daughters' marriages, counselling centres for women, and Savitribai Phule Multipurpose Women's Centre for victimised women.

EMPOWERMENT OF YOUNG GIRLS

The Kishori Shakti Yojana (a scheme for the empowerment of adolescent girls) is being implemented in 23 districts to create awareness about the adverse effects on the health of adolescent girls due to child marriage and frequent child birth and the importance of a strong motherhood. Education and training is provided to these girls on the subjects of nutritional diet, health and personal hygiene, and cleanliness of the surroundings.

SAFE DAY-CARES

Working women leave their children in a child-care facility with a heavy heart. The need of safe child-care facilities has been realised. Through this, as per the guidelines from the Union Government, the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme is being implemented in the State on an experimental basis. Currently, 600 child-care facilities have been started in the districts of Thane, Nashik, Nandurbar, Amravati, Gadchiroli and Chandrapur. These child-care facilities have proved to be a huge support system for working women.

EMPOWERING ANGANWADI

Female workers and helpers in Anganwadis as well as female workers in mini-Anganwadis play an important role in the eradication of malnutrition. The Government will ensure that they get their honorarium on time. We have also approved filling 5,500 vacant positions for female volunteers and female helpers in Anganwadis. Approval has been

given to increase the rent allowance of Anganwadis conducted in private apartments in the State. The new rentals will be ₹1,000 for rural and tribal areas, ₹4,000 for urban areas and ₹6,000 for metropolitan areas. Hence, it will become possible for the Anganwadis conducted in leased premises to rent apartments with better amenities.

We have set a target of building around 4,000 new rooms for the Anganwadis in the coming financial year. Funds will be made available from District Annual Plan, Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme as well as Village Council Development Plan. It is important to provide contribution out of social responsibility, such as the contribution of corporate houses from corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds as well as various non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The State Government is sensitive towards the health and education of children in child welfare institutions. A huge step has been taken through the decision of making a provision of ₹2 crore for the Juvenile Justice Fund for the sake of rehabilitation of these children. Programmes that are not included in any of the State or Government implemented schemes for the welfare and rehabilitation of the children through this fund will now be implemented. Similarly, a provision will be made to give medical aid or surgery for severe diseases in children. A provision will also be made from this fund for skill development training, entrepreneurship assistance and business training for children.

There are NGOs present in the State that are doing constructive work in areas such as provision of nutritional diet for mothers and infants, skill development training for women in sewing, crafts and other areas, health check-up of women and children, mental health and so on. Various initiatives are being implemented for the welfare of women, children and youth by working in conjunction with various trusts and social organisations such as Tata Trust, Reliance Foundation, Indian Law Society, Village Social Transformation



It is the focus of the Department of Women and Child Development to provide assistance to underprivileged and victimised women.

The department runs several programmes for their security, self-confidence and uplift in Indian society. The mission, however, requires our collective efforts to bring about a real change on the ground.

Foundation, SNEHA, United Nations Foundation, and Raymond.

IMPORTANCE OF SOCIETY'S INITIATIVE

The Government is making efforts on several fronts for women empowerment, but it is also our duty, being a part of society, to make a contribution. Deploable practices such as female foeticide are harmful to social balance. The Government is implementing a law to

curb these practices, but it is necessary for society to seriously think over these issues. The low birth rate of 894 girls per 1,000 boys in the State is a matter of grave concern. In 2017, there were nine such districts where the birth rate of girls per 1,000 boys was below 900. Efforts are being made to overcome these challenges through effective enforcement of the PCPNDT Act with coordination between all departments and through the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme.

It is important to break away from the traditional mindset of giving preference to sons as the progeny of the clan. Several families are getting family planning surgeries done even after having only daughters. This is a ray of hope. Now, girls and women are earning a name for themselves in diverse fields, such as education, sports, literature, art, acting and business. Several women are playing a vital role in making their family as well as the country proud. Hence, it is our duty to not consider them as secondary, but give them equal treatment. On the occasion of the International Women's Day, I hope that we all remain committed to this duty.

**—As told to Sachin Gadhave,
Departmental Liaisoning Officer**

Along with the Government, it is important that we all take initiatives towards ensuring qualitative education for girls and women empowerment, especially in rural areas. Taking inspiration from visionary social reformers like Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule, we must continue to focus on providing quality education to women. Be it girls' education in rural areas or women empowerment, society should join hands with the Government. The State Government is making efforts to ensure that girls from the inaccessible and rural interiors also have access to proper education, but that's not enough. Soci-



of good touch, bad touch. Similarly, boys should be taught to take 'no' for an answer.

CULTURE AND VALUES

Our students are the future of our nation and society. Not just as School Education Minister, but also as a teacher, I have tried to ensure that students get all modern educational facilities. Yet I believe that education should not be restricted to only academics and books, but students should get more practical and interactive education. Primary education is important for creating a dynamic new generation.

Children should also be given good cultural and mor-

technology. It is going to launch e-learning educational tools as well as virtual classrooms in 725 schools in the State under e-Balbhharati project. This will greatly benefit students in remote and inaccessible regions. This project will be carried out through the VSAT-based modern technology platform. With the help of virtual classrooms, the students can get coaching in all subjects.

EDUCATION SCHEMES

The Government is implementing many campaigns and schemes to encourage education for the girl child such as attendance allowance, Savitribai Phule Dattak Palak Yojana, free distribution of uniforms and books, Savitribai Phule scholarships for backward classes, student allowances, free bus passes and free cycles to travel to school, Kasturba Gandhi Girls' hostel, human development schemes and Lek Vachava, Lek Shikva (Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao) schemes.

Free education till class 12: This scheme is beneficial to girl students of Std. XI-XII. Girls studying in aided and non-aided higher secondary schools and junior colleges are eligible for this scheme.

Free travel scheme: The State Transport (ST) buses have given free travel facility to girl students of Std. V-XII in nearby villages, so that they do not miss out on education due to lack of schools in rural areas.

Savitribai Phule Scholarship Scheme: This scheme is for girls studying in Std. V-VII and hailing from the backward classes, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and special backward classes. For girls to be eligible for the scheme, they should be regular students of Std. V-VII, and the eligible students get ₹60 per month for 10 months, totalling up to ₹600.

Measures to curb school dropouts: To curb the number of dropouts of girls in Std. VIII-X, those from backward classes, ST, etc., and are regular, are given a scholarship of ₹100 per month for 10 months, totalling up to ₹1,000.

Scholarship for Std. V-X students: The scholarship is given to two eligible

EMPOWERING THROUGH VALUE EDUCATION

*Schools aren't mere tools for providing formal education, but important institutions for shaping future generations. Today, it is not enough to give children just formal education; it is equally important to inculcate in them cultural and traditional values. Women education can empower society. The Government is aware of its significant impact and is taking necessary steps accordingly, says Minister for School Education **Prof. Varsha Gaikwad**.*

ety should consider this as its responsibility as well. Whenever I visit the rural areas as School Education Minister, my emphasis is on checking the quality of education that girls receive and providing them the help they need to make it even better. It is important to raise awareness among parents towards the girls' education.

The recent incident at Hinganghat shook the core of Maharashtra. It highlighted the importance of creating alert, responsible and sensitive citizens apart from giving them basic mainstream education. Girls need to feel safe while going to schools or colleges. They need to be made aware

al education. It is important to ensure that no child is deprived of education due to financial conditions. Maharashtra has always been a leader in education and we all need to work towards maintaining this leadership.

VIDNYANVAHINI: AN EDUCATIONAL CHANNEL

The School Education Department is soon going to launch a direct-to-home (DTH) education channel so that students can access good guidance and coaching directly. Maharashtra Rajya Pathya Pustak Mahamandal, popular known as Bal Bharti, is also changing with the times and adopting modern

Std. V-VII students and two top scorers from the backward classes. Those who have scored minimum 50 per cent or more in previous grades and have passed with first or second rank among the backward classes can avail this scholarship. The economic criteria don't apply to this scholarship. Standard V-VII students are given ₹50 per month (₹500 for

To encourage girl child education, the Government has taken up programmes like attendance allowance, free books, cycles and uniforms, scholarships and girls' hostels.



FREE CYCLES DISTRIBUTION SCHEME

This scheme is for girls of higher secondary schools in the rural and class-C Nagar Parishads as well as for those below the poverty line. Std. VIII students who have scored 45 per cent in Std. VII and who are studying in Government-recognised and aided schools are eligible for this scheme. Priority is given to students from the rural, interior and inaccessible areas, while in the cities girls living in slums and other such areas can avail this facility.

10 months) and Std. VIII-X students get ₹100 per month (₹1,000 for ten months).

Pre-matric scholarships for Std. IX-X students: The Centre has launched pre-matric scholarships to reduce the numbers of school dropouts from the backward classes. The scholarship scheme is for Std. IX-X students whose

parents' annual income is below ₹2 lakh. There is no minimum percentage requirement for this scheme, and other beneficiary students are not eligible for this scheme. The State Government school students of Std. VIII-X from backward classes will be eligible for the scholarship. The scheme does not

have any income criterion, but students from SC category, studying in Std. IX or X with annual income below ₹2 lakh will benefit from the scholarship. Students from SC category and studying in Std. VIII and those in Std. IX and X with an annual income of over ₹2 lakh will continue to have scholarships under Savitribai Phule scheme. However, the same student cannot avail the benefits of both the schemes.

For hostel students, there is a provision of ₹350 for 10 months plus ₹1,000 per annum for books and other items. For non-hostel students, the aid is ₹150 per month (for 10 months) and ₹750 for books and other items. The aid of ₹160 per month to *divyang* students and ₹240 to mentally challenged students is also given.

Model schools and girls' hostels: The Centre has a scheme of model schools and girls' hostels in 43 places in 10 districts. This scheme has been launched to curb the number of school dropouts among girls and encourage a greater number of girls to take up primary and secondary school education. These places are Akkalkuwa, Dhadgaon, Taloda, Shahada, Nandurbar, Navapur, Gevrai, Wadwani, Dharur, Hingoli, Parbhani, Gangakhed, Jintur, Purna, Pathari, Selu, Manwath, Bhokardan, Partur, Mantha, Ghansawangi, Ambad, Jalna, Badnapur, Dahanu, Talavali, Vikramgad, Mokhada, Jawhar, Gaganbawda, Igatpuri, Trim-bakeshwar, Peth, Surgana, Mukher, Umri, Dharmabad, Biloli, Dhanora, Etapalli, Bhamragad, Aheri and Sironcha.

Rajshree Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj scholarship: The Rajshree Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Scholarship was launched to improve the quality of education of SC and ST students and to help them perform better. There is no income criterion for eligibility, but students need to score 75 per cent or more in Std. X. This scholarship is given to students in junior college, i.e. Std. XI and XII, and the amount is ₹300 per month for 10 months.

— **As told to Varsha Phadke-Andhale, Departmental Liaisoning Officer**

The decisions made at the Government level are implemented by the administration. Even though sometimes these decisions take some more time, but are implemented in letter and spirit. Further, everyone should take a humanitarian view of divyang, destitute, women and sisters and take care of them as a part of a family. They should be given priority everywhere, says Minister of State, Women and Child Development, **Omprakash alias Bacchu Kadu.**



SUPPORT TO THE DESTITUTE

We should give preference to the deprived sections as this is their prime right. Everyone should think about this. Along with the Government, it is our responsibility also to ensure that the benefits of the schemes reach the last person of society. This is the prime responsibility of every officer and staff of Women and Child Development Department.

As the State Minister of this department, I would like to tell everyone that you should give preference to the welfare of widow, abandoned, divorce, disabled and divorced women. You have to work diligently for schemes such as Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Anudan Yojana, Shravanbal Seva, State Pension Scheme, and self-employment schemes for widows, abandoned and divorced women.

SMARTER THAN US

When we work for our respected *divyang* women, we need to understand that even though they are physically challenged, they are intellectually bet-

ter than us. One of our visually challenged sisters has proved this by becoming a District Officer. They should get all the facilities that are available in State Transport Corporation. Everybody should remember that they should not be given secondary treatment, and make an effort to give them justice. The rights, facilities and concessions provided to her are given by the Government and not by an individual. You are just implementing it and must do it diligently. There should be no incident of harassment of the *divyang* by an officer or staff.

We should also think about toilets for the *divyang*. We should identify the need of this facility and provide it urgently.

We should pay attention to abandoned and widowed women considering them as socially deprived persons.

An ignored section of our society, *divyangs* can contribute significantly to development if given a chance.

They have problems that are different from those faced by people living in cities. One can understand their situation better if one visits rural areas. Be it a woman from any community, such problems are really serious. These women cannot speak out and, therefore, I believe that we should stand by them.

BOOSTING SELF-CONFIDENCE

I request all officers and staff of my department to seriously focus on this matter. We have to do major work for women in rural areas. We have to focus on boosting their self-confidence, education, health, skill development and organisation, and establish their participation on the social, financial and political front. For this, devotion in work is necessary. Supporting the *divyang* is true humanity.

—Dr. Raju Patodkar, Departmental Liaisoning Officer

HEALTHY MOTHERS, HEALTHY BABIES

*The Women and Child Development Department of the Government of Maharashtra is effectively implementing all Central and State Government policies for the holistic development of children and women. Many initiatives are implemented to tackle malnutrition in children and mothers, says **I. A. Kundan**, Secretary, Women and Child Development.*

The Department of Women and Child Development is implementing various schemes in the State for the all-inclusive development of women, thereby paving the way for the promotion of women and child nutrition, protecting children's rights, and helping women develop skills, and employment opportunities in society.

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION

The department is committed to work for the holistic development of women and children. Our main objective is to devise policies and schemes and implement vari-

ous Central and State Government schemes effectively.

Accordingly, we are implementing many acts and policies pertaining to the rights and needs of children and women. These include Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. In addition, women are getting skills training under Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) and employment opportunities are being made available to them.



USING MODERN TECHNOLOGY

The State Government is running a drive to fulfil nutritional and health-related needs of children and mothers. This includes using Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software (ICDS-CAS), public awareness campaigns, mass movements, community-based programmes and other innovative initiatives. With the help of ICDS, the common application software, all Anganwadi workers have been given mobile phones and most of the in-

formation is available to them in digital format. There is definitely a positive change in the mindset of people due to community-based programmes.

Our State is equipped to fight the malice of malnutrition and achieve the target with such nutrition drives by 2022. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that all mothers and children get the nutrition they need. Let us pledge to not rest till we achieve that. ■

NUTRITION-RICH DIET FOR MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

Our primary goal is to make nutritional diet available to children and mothers with the help of Integrated Children Development Service. The State has around 1,09,000 Anganwadi centres. Pregnant women, nursing mothers and children in the age group of 0 to 6 years are given nutrition under this scheme in urban, rural and tribal areas.

Under this programme, the goal is set to bring down the rate of stunted, underweight children, as well as children born with low birth weight who remain underweight (in proportion to height) by two per cent every year. Also, a goal is set to reduce the rate of TB by three per cent per year in women in the age bracket of 15 to 49 years and children of 0 to 6 years. These goals are key objectives of the nutrition drive launched by the Union Government in March 2018 and which aims to achieve its goals by 2022.



PROGRESS OF WOMEN BELONGING TO MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Various schemes are being implemented by the Government for the development of minority communities. The schemes are proving beneficial for the education of girls as well as the economic, educational and social empowerment of women.

The Government of Maharashtra is committed for an overall development of minority communities. The State Government is implementing various schemes for the progress of women and girls from minority communities.

HOSTELS STARTED FOR GIRLS AT 21 PLACES

A scheme of hostels for girls from minority communities undergoing higher education is being effectively implemented in the State. These hostels are being started at 21 locations in the State such as Kavayitri Bahinabai Chaudhari North Maharashtra University (Jalgaon), Ghansawangi (District Jalna), Government Teachers Training College (Panvel), Rajaram College (Kolhapur), Government Institute of Science (Aurangabad), Government Vidarbha Institute of Science and Humanities (Amravati), Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University (Aurangabad), Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University (Nanded), Dr. Panjabrao Deshmukh Krishi Vidyapeeth (Akola), Government College of Engineering (Jalgaon), Government Polytechnic (Solapur, Hingoli, Washim and Jintur (Parbhani)), Government Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) at Parbhani, Purna, Gangakhed, Selu, Pathari in Parbhani district and Chandrapur (district Chandrapur) and Vasmat (district Hingoli). The admission capacity of these hostels is 1,910. The hostels admit 70 per cent of girls from minority communities and 30 per cent girls from non-minority communities.



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An independent Minorities Development Department was established in Maharashtra in 2008 after the Justice Sachar Committee Report. Since then various schemes are being implemented in the State in the interest of minority communities. Muslim, Bouddha, Christian, Jain, Sikh and Parsi communities have been included in the minorities. Comprehensive remedial measures are being implemented by the department for the empowerment of girls and women from these communities.

**—Nawab Malik,
Minister for Minorities
Development**

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EDUCATION LOAN SCHEME

To make it easier for girls and boys from minority communities to go in for higher education, an education loan scheme is being implemented through Mau-

lana Azad Minorities Financial Development Corporation. Loans from this scheme are made available for higher professional education. With the benefits of this scheme, girls can complete their higher education.

The corporation also makes available business loans for unemployed persons from minority communities. Unemployed girls and women can also avail the benefit of this scheme and start their own business. More information about this scheme is available on the website mdd.maharashtra.gov.in.

VARIOUS SCHEMES

Classes for minority communities are held in 42 ITIs in the State in second and third shifts and at 15 Government polytechnics in second shift. A scholarship scheme is being implemented for minority community students pursuing higher vocational and all courses after standard 12. The benefit of pre-matric and post-matric scholarships also exists. Girls from minority communities can benefit from these schemes.

Maulana Azad National Scholarship scheme is being implemented for girls from minority communities who cannot complete education due to financial reasons. The scholarship is payable for school-college fees, purchase of study books for the course, writing materials and instruments, as well as lodging and boarding expenditure. The scheme is implemented through Maulana Azad Education Foundation of the Government of India. More information on the same is available on the website www.maef.nic.in

For developing leadership traits and capabilities in women from minority communities, Nai Roshni scheme is being implemented. Under this scheme, women from minority communities are provided training in Government systems, working with banks and other institutions, and other areas. These women are provided resources and technical skills for their empowerment and confidence. Details about this scheme are available on www.minorityaffairs.gov.in.

**—As told to Irshad Bagwan,
Departmental Liaisoning Officer**

IDEALS OF INSPIRATION

The Government always endeavours to ensure that women make great strides in every field. But this tendency to make giant strides is naturally present in some women. Some of them create their own identity with determination and hard work and set an ideal for ordinary women. They become a source of inspiration to many owing to their accomplishments. These are some success stories that showcase the extraordinariness among the ordinary.

WE ARE CAPABLE

Cultivating a professional approach or a start-up mindset along with their traditional line of business, these women, who are part of self-help groups (SHGs), have attached the wheels of new businesses to their group. One such group is Rani Laxmibai SHG from Bhadji in taluka Khultabad of Aurangabad district. Ratna Dhansingh Puse is the head of

this group. She wanted to start something by taking along with her around 10 women from her locality.

It was decided to make and sell *chikki* as a nutritional product. A loan was taken from the Bank of Maharashtra. Today, the members of this SHG prepare *chikki* using ingredients like peanuts, *rajgira* (amaranth), sesame and desiccated coconut. They do not have any rent to pay,



FELICITATION OF SEED MOTHER

Rahibai, hailing from a small village named Kombhalne, recognised the real strength of native varieties of seeds. Today, Rahibai Soma Popere, who comes from a remote region in Akole taluka in Ahmednagar district, is popularly known as Seed Mother, not only in Maharashtra, but throughout India. She received the prestigious Padma Shri at the hands of President Ramnath Kovind. Agriculture Minister of Maharashtra Dadaji Bhuse also felicitated her with a saree.

Rahibai has preserved 112 varieties of seeds of vegetables, rice, wheat, millet, cereals and other crops. Through SHGs created by her and comprising women and farmers, the work of the development of these age-old seeds is being done. Till now, nearly one lakh people have collected seeds from her. Students of agricultural technology from across India pay a visit to see her project.

Rahibai has revived the age-old tradition. The Department of Agriculture will provide assistance to deliver her work far and wide to the farmers in the State, informed Dadaji Bhuse. Giving an impetus to the conservation of native varieties of seeds, he said that farmers will be encouraged for the production of such seeds.

Since native seeds have tremendous nutritional value, these are beneficial for human health. This realisation has raised people's interest in food ingredients that are cultivated organically.

Rahibai has conserved all types of old, indigenous green leafy vegetables and seeds of vine-like flowering (herbaceous) plants. The seeds that are preserved by her were consumed by our ancestors since time immemorial.



Rahibai Popere was felicitated with Padma Shri at the hands of President Ramnath Kovind. Minister for Agriculture Dadaji Bhuse also felicitated her.

The Agriculture Minister stated that he will submit a report to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray highlighting the work of Rahibai. "We will turn the work started by her into a large-scale project. Her work of conservation of age-old seeds is a guide to farmers," said Dadaji Bhuse. He also promised that along with helping in the work of promotion of native varieties of seeds, the concept of the project will also be conveyed to the farmers.

as they prepare the *chikki* at home. This *chikki* is sold at Bhadra Maruti Mandir at Verul Leni in Khultabad as well as at various food exhibitions in cities of Aurangabad, Pune, Mumbai and Delhi. The women from this savings group sold 11 quintals of *chikki* at ₹4.5 lakh in 12 days at Mahalaxmi Saras Exhibition held at the MMRDA ground in Mumbai's Bandra-Kurla Complex. They made a profit of ₹2 lakh after deducting the expenses.

—Vijay Choudhari

PASSION FOR RESEARCH

Tuber crops are extremely nutritious

for our health. Sweet potato is an important food item in our fasting diet. It is so nutritional that it should not be just a part of our fasting diet, but also of our daily diet. Namrata Ankush Giri is doing research on this subject. She hails from Golatgaon (Aurangabad) and is working as an agricultural scientist at Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (CTCRI), Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. She is currently researching about how and to what extent food products made from tuber crops are beneficial for health.

Namrata Giri completed her B.Tech

in Food Technology from Vasantrya Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth at Parbhani. Meanwhile, she got married to Durgesh Shankar, a lawyer. Later, she completed her M.Tech in Food Technology after she got support from her husband. While she was working as an Assistant Professor, she met with success in the first attempt itself in the prelims, mains and interview in the UPSC (Union Public Service Commission) competitive exams conducted by the Agricultural Scientists Recruitment Board (ASRB), New Delhi.

Selected as the first Agricultural Scientist (Food Technology) from Maharashtra, Namrata Giri came first in the State and eighth in the country in the ASRB examination. She joined the Central Tuber Crops Research Institute in 2014, and has been working there since. She has been researching on tuber crops for the past few years. Tuber crops are multi-purpose and healthy. Namrata's research on



Namrata Ankush Giri

tuber crops is on sweet potato, taro and colocasia. We do not consume these tuber crops in our daily lives. We eat them only during the fasting period in Maharashtra and other North Indian regions. However, it is mentioned in her research studies that they contain vital nutrients for the nutrition of the body. Crops like sweet potato are known as aid crops in food security and drought.

Among all tuber crops, sweet potato is healthy for diabetes patients. The glycemic index of sweet potato is low. Hence, the blood sugar level increases very slowly. She is researching about the preparation of healthy food products, such as biscuits, cakes, cookies, pasta, vermicelli, ready to eat products, nutribars and other products, from sweet potatoes.

Farmers can also find employment opportunities in starch and flour-processing industry from sweet potato,

SELF-EARNED MONEY GIVES A WOMAN NEW IDENTITY

A State-level exhibition of products made by women's SHGs was recently conducted in Nagpur by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) as well as Utkarsh Foundation. The work of empowering women is in progress through these SHGs. These groups have given employment to women, with a few becoming successful entrepreneurs. Women are becoming financially independent through these SHGs. As women from rural areas lack marketing skills, they are getting an opportunity to introduce their products across the globe through these exhibitions. Besides, products of all kinds are made available to customers under one roof.

NABARD is contributing towards poverty reduction as well as increasing the pace of women empowerment, especially in rural areas. Women's SHGs from 15 districts across the State had participated in this exhibition. Fifty women SHGs from Nagpur and 35 from other districts had set up stalls for this purpose. These stalls displayed 60 different types of products.

Snehalata Savarkar hailing from Karanji Kanji in Wardha district cultivates mushrooms through organic farming. She cultivates different products of mushrooms, which includes fresh mushroom, *mugvadya* (a snack) and *muramba* (jam). There is a special demand for mushrooms that are grown organically. "Through NABARD, we got our own identity through self-employment, of which we are proud," she says.

—Aparna Yavalkar-Dangore, Divisional Information Office, Nagpur



which can lead to financial growth. Besides, nutritional foods will reach the people. Sweet potatoes contain higher amounts of carotene, anthocyanins, starch, proteins, Vitamin B and minerals. Namrata Giri says that the consumption of sweet potato helps in meeting Vitamin A deficiency. It will be helpful if farmers and entrepreneurs unite to promote the value education of sweet potato. It would increase the demand for sweet potato, benefitting both.

The CTCRI has developed certain species of sweet potato to which Namrata Giri has made a contribution. These species include Bhu Krishna and Bhu Sona. These are sweet potatoes of purple and orange colours. These sweet potatoes are beneficial for night blindness. Gluten-free food products have been made from these sweet potatoes.

Namrata Giri explains that these products are extremely beneficial to those suffering from celiac disease,



an allergy to foods made from *maida* and wheat that lead to reactions such as stomachache and vomiting after consumption.

—Santosh Deshmukh

DUTIFUL

There are some *vastis* in the precincts of Sanjay Gandhi National Park. The people here have small houses. The forest is their house and village. They have no means of transport. But in going across this dense forest everyday, walking for four hours, *anganwadi sevikas* Anjali Kisan Jadhav and Sonal Sanjav Barap are fulfilling their duties of looking after the nutrition of children and mothers.

Anjali Jadhav and Sonal Barap keep a regular check on the weight and height of the *anganwadi* children. They take nutritious meals to the doorsteps of tribal homes, bringing solace to many families. They work cheerfully, and are always ready to help the people. The affection of the tribals is what keeps them going, despite the four-hour walk. ■

A HOME OF HER OWN

Sonu Bansi Solse (26 years), hailing from the Tidi village in taluka Vaijapur of Aurangabad district, who was frustrated due to her husband's addiction, was staying with her parents along with her son. Without a house or land of her own, she used to do odd jobs to earn a livelihood to ensure that she does not become a burden on her parents. Working as a cleaner in the village school, farm labourer and utensil washer, she worked hard to solve the daily problems of life, but did not have a place of her own.

Taking note of her passion for survival, the Gram Sabha approved a resolution to recommend her name for the Ramai Awas Yojana (Ramai Housing Scheme). After completion of the process, a residential unit was sanctioned in her name. When she came to know that a dwelling unit has been sanctioned to her, her joy knew no bounds. She decided at that moment that apart from the financial aid, which she will be getting from the Government, she will spend money from her own savings to build a nice house.

There was no space to build a house so Solse's father made a plot available to her. Under the Ramai Hous-

ing Scheme, the construction of the house was done in multiple stages based on the receipt of the instalments received.



With the guidance of Group Development Officer Ajaysinh Pawar, village volunteers and civil engineer, the house was built. Solse saw her dream become a reality and with that her passion for life was renewed. Solse is educated only till Std. VIII, but her ambition does not let her rest. She wants to take along the women from her village to establish a self-help savings group and start a small-scale business.

Sonu Bansi Solse's lifestyle has dramatically improved after building the house. Society's perception towards her has also changed. During the rainy season, water entered her thatched roof house. Snakes and scorpions also came in, making the house dangerous to live in. Now she does not have any trouble during any season, since she has a permanent house with solid construction. Her house also has a toilet, giving her a complete and hygienic accommodation and

a better living standard.

—Ganesh Madhavrao Chukewad, Development Officer, Panchayat Committee, Vaijapur



Tejashri Financial Services has been started under Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal. The cheque of the first instalment was handed over to the scheme by Deputy Chairman of Maharashtra Legislative Council Dr. Neelam Gorhe, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, and Minister for Women and Child Development Adv. Yashomati Thakur (Sonawane).

DRIVERS OF ECONOMIC CHANGE

Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) is proving to be the engine of development of rural Maharashtra. The State Women's Development Corporation of Government of Maharashtra since its inception has become an important medium of women's all-around progress, playing a crucial role in organising women, developing their abilities and making them independent. As a nodal agency, MAVIM implements various women empowerment programmes through self-help groups.

The economic progress of Maharashtra is dependent on the development of its rural areas. Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) is crucial as it helps in giving a different direction to the economic system of the State, which is largely based on agriculture. This empowerment programme of making women self-dependent through self-help is operative for more

than four decades. The various national and international awards received by MAVIM indicate that it is proving to be an important medium of social, educational and industrial development of women in the State.

MAVIM is a State Government sponsored programme that aims at establishing social, economic and political justice for women for their empowerment and continuous development. It

was founded in the International Women's Year, on February 24, 1975. Considering the importance of all-round development of women and the expertise of MAVIM in the area, the Government has declared it as an apex institute for women's development at the State level. That is why MAVIM is responsible for the important work of implementing in the State various development schemes sponsored by the Central as



“**“The work done by the women of MAVIM in the urban and rural areas is excellent. Maharashtra is marching ahead by progressing in various fields, continuously. If the mind of women is properly understood and if they are given proper direction, they can certainly make progress in their respective fields. For this, all cooperation will be extended to them by the Government. The work of the women’s self-help groups of MAVIM is inspirational and important for the future progress of the Mahamandal.”**

—Uddhav Thackeray,
Chief Minister

“**“During the ban on plastic, MAVIM carried out the responsibility of making bags from paper and cloth. There is a close relationship between the aim of guaranteed progress and women empowerment. The Government has always been making efforts to strengthen MAVIM and Maharashtra State Women’s Commission. The programme of women’s self-help groups also includes support of the self-help groups of Rural Development and Urban Development Departments. In collaboration, the self-help groups of MAVIM are also progressing and bringing a new range of products into the market. In future too, MAVIM will continue to progress.”**

—Dr. Neelam Gorhe, Deputy
Chairman, Maharashtra
Legislative Council

well as State Government.

MAVIM also ensures coordination among the self-help groups (SHGs), financial institutes, self-service institutes and the concerned departments of the Government.

EXPANSION OF MAVIM

MAVIM, with its programmes spread all over Maharashtra, has its headquarters in Mumbai (Bandra). It has 36 district offices that include Mumbai and rural areas of the State. All of its programmes are implemented through district offices. The officers and staff of these offices are always eager to help, taking into consideration women’s economic needs and abilities.

POLICIES AND APPROACH OF MAVIM

- Well-planned implementation of women’s development schemes and programmes at district level
- Planning of programmes based on

the needs of women and giving priority to reducing their dependency on subsidies

- Starting from the lowest strata, inclusion of beneficiaries in planning
- Flexible implementation of process and policies based on ground realities in the work areas
- Promoting stability in officers and staff based on effective management and spirit of teamwork
- Proper preventive measures to avoid concentration of power in one hand or dictatorship
- Use of smart technology for the selection of the poorest of the poor beneficiary
- Addressing relative poverty based on precise and subtle exploration as a MAVIM work strategy, the following four main criteria are stressed upon for any programme/project based on any self-help groups.

BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING THE INSTITUTE

MAVIM believes that the process of institution building and strengthening it further plays an important role in the community development of women. The process of institution building includes SHGs, village development committees and cluster-level federation of SHGs, or Loksanchalit Sadhan Kendra (CMRC).

The institutions established by MAVIM have developed an administrative system to provide social capital, democratic governance, and many programmes and services to members. Alongside, it has stressed on taking up programmes such as social enterprise development and collation of resources through various partners.

MICROFINANCE SERVICE

This service covers:

- Internal savings and grant of loans
- Partnership with banks and other financial institutions to get loans of larger amounts
- Links with insurance companies to provide insurance facilities to the women of the SHGs.

“In 2018-19, a fund of ₹31.03 crore was made available to MAVIM by the Planning Department. MAVIM should make use of this fund and enhance its reputation through its various programmes. It should undertake the production of those products that are needed by various departments of the State Government. We have total faith in MAVIM and the fact that the loans given to it by the Government are repaid in time.”

—Ajit Pawar,
Deputy Chief Minister

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DEVELOPMENT OF LIVELIHOOD AND ENTERPRISE

For creating income sources for women, their skills should be developed and new skills should be imparted to them. They should be introduced to advanced technology and labour-saving basic facilities to increase their participation in entrepreneurship. All cooperation must be extended to make markets available to them for their products.

HEALTH

Women's health is a sensitive issue. Partnership with the outside agencies is being established to keep women healthy and make them aware of their health and cleanliness.

EMPOWERMENT OF MINORITY SECTION WOMEN

With the help of Maharashtra Government, Minorities Development Depart-

ment and Maharashtra State Minorities Commission, a minority women's empowerment programme was implemented in 10 cities with a high minority population (Mumbai-Dharavi, Chandivali, Trombay; Thane-Bhiwandi, Mumbra-Kausa, Nashik-Malegaon, Aurangabad-Parbhani, Nanded, Washim-Karanja, Nagpur, Pune and Sangli-Miraj).

AGRO DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The six main districts of Vidharbha, namely Amravati, Yavatmal, Washim, Akola, Buldhana and Wardha, have a high incidence of farmer suicides. Hence, with the cooperation of the Maharashtra Government and IFAD, the Krishi Samridhi Samanvita Krishi Vikas project was launched in 2009. This project was completed by June 2019.

ANTYODAYA YOJANA

In this project, MAVIM plays the role of coordinator and this project is being implemented in 250 cities, located in 34 districts of the State. This project is of two years' duration and will remain operative from the month of September 2017 to March 30, 2024. The role of MAVIM in this project will be to strengthen the poor and their institutes and impart training for the enhancement of their skills.

GRAMIN JEEVAN UNNATI ABHIYAN

Under Maharashtra Rajya Gramin



ACHIEVEMENTS OF VARIOUS PROGRAMMES

- Out of 361 CMRCs established by MAVIM, 80 per cent are self-funded.
- The women of the self-help groups have two to three long-lasting sources of income.
- There is a participation of 1,51,059 women in 6,180 micro livelihood plans.
- There is an increase in income of ₹5,000-20,000 of the women participating in the micro livelihood plan.
- Loan of ₹2,836.38 crore made available by various banks to the women of self-help groups.
- Successful in providing benefits of ₹44 crore (financial year 2018-19) to women through coordination of work among different departments.
- Successful in establishing women's right to property, women's participation in decision making and women's representation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).
- Adoption of technology in agricultural work, thereby making efforts to reduce women's hard work.

Jeevan Unnati Abhiyan, technology experts and implementation institutes have been appointed for three years in six talukas of three districts, namely Thane (Bhiwandi, Shahpur), Solapur (Malshiras, Mohol) and Gondia (Salekasa, Tirora). This programme will remain under implementation till March 2023.

OTHER PROGRAMMES

Through its various business training courses and workshops, MAVIM consistently strives to help women become entrepreneurs. In addition, programmes are implemented for a businesses aligned with agriculture, making agriculture profitable. Special emphasis is on the use of technology to reduce labour and achieve higher productivity.

TEJASHRI FINANCIAL SERVICES

Recently, the 45th anniversary of MAVIM was celebrated. On this occasion, women from several MAVIM-founded self-help groups that had done inspirational work were honoured with Tejaswini Kanya Puraskar. Similarly, women achievers, who have contributed substantially towards the empowerment of women in society, were also honoured by the dignitaries.

On this anniversary, a scheme, Tejashri Financial Services was inaugurated for the benefit of women. This scheme is initiated by the Planning Department of the Maharashtra Government and will be implemented in the State through MAVIM. For this purpose, MAVIM has been sanctioned a fund of ₹68.58 crore. Out of that, the first instalment of ₹31.03 crore has been transferred for this financial year.

TEJASWINI KANYA PURASKAR

Neha Gajbhiye, Nagpur; Sandhya Hatkar, Nanded; Jayshree Aaher, Nashik; Pratiksha Nimkar, Amravati; Priyanka Lokhande, Pune; and Madhavi Patil, Palghar are a part of self-help groups set up with the help of MAVIM. They have been honoured with the Tejaswini Kanya Puraskar. Along with them, Chitra Ubale-Dikki,

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“Women's self-help group movement is very old, and today these self-help groups are progressing on a large scale. As women look after their family properly, they can also look after their country. The products of MAVIM should be encouraged by recognising the products as needed by society and through the implementation of various programmes. For this, women will be provided with an opportunity.”

—Balasaheb Thorat,
Minister for Revenue

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“Although MAVIM is a sponsored programme of Maharashtra Government devoted to women empowerment through self-help groups, it is committed to act as an apex institute for the all-round development of every woman in the State.”

—Jyoti Thakare,
Chairperson, MAVIM

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Jyoti Mhapsekar-Stree Mukti Sangathana, Rubina Shah, Swati Vaidya and Revati Nikam have been awarded for their valuable contribution in the field of social service towards women empowerment.

—Team Lokrajya



SOARING WITH THE WINGS OF SKILLS

Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM) is being implemented across the State. The programme has been aptly named Umed, a word that embodies the whole essence of the project. Umed aims at boosting work potential. If there is hope, a person can rise from any dire situation in life. With Umed, lakhs of women have been shown the path to self-employment. New wings have been given to their skills and abilities, says Irshad Bagwan.

The campaign Umed is being implemented by the Rural Development Department of the Government of Maharashtra to eradicate poverty in the rural areas of the State. In this campaign, the issue of poverty eradication has been considered in its totality by including all aspects, ranging from community development to creation of guaranteed sources of livelihood. The pillars of support of Umed—capacity building, financial inclusion, social mobilisation and marketing services—are equally important elements for livelihoods enhancement, availability of public services and benefits of various schemes. Under Umed, integrated efforts are made to ensure that poor and risk-prone families in rural Maharashtra are provided with prosperous, respectful and safe life. Women are organised through self-help

groups (SHGs) to encourage entrepreneurship. Gram Sangh (village organisation) and Prabhag Sangh are created at the levels of Gram Panchayat and Zilla Parishad, respectively. Through these sanghs, a favourable atmosphere is being created to establish entitlements and rights of the poor along with financial services and opportunities of guaranteed livelihood.

UMED UP TO VILLAGE LEVEL

The implementation of this project is being done in 34 districts and 351 talukas in an intensive manner. District Mission Management Unit and Block Mission Management Units have been established to run the programme. To effectively implement this campaign from State level to village level, an independent, dedicated and responsive

implementation machinery has been created. A strong team of resource persons from the community has been formed up to the village level. Identification of a poor family is done by the community person, who plays an important role in including them in the SHG. The community people are local women who work as a part of the community group.

FUNDS PROVIDED TO SHGS

So far, under Umed, 4.23 lakh women SHGs have been set up, and through them 45 lakh families have been connected with the campaign. A ₹823 crore community fund and ₹6,600 crore bank loan have been made available to these groups. Under the campaign, 10.83 lakh families have been provided with various sources of livelihood, which have generated an income of approximately ₹1,070 crore. There are nearly 40,000 trained community personnel working at the village level.

GRANT OF LOAN UNDER UMED

Women are the focus of Umed, hence all the programmes are designed exclusively for women SHGs. Once these SHGs complete 30 months, they are given a revolving fund (RF). Women can use these funds for their basic needs and business.

After six months, a micro investment plan is made for each member of the group, and the group is given community investment fund (CIF). A bank loan is given to the group. Utilising this loan, the members select a business

A big social and economic revolution is taking place in Maharashtra through the SHG movement being implemented under Umed. There is an increasing participation of women in the decision-making process. The women of SHGs make products with a lot of hard work and honesty. Therefore, the customers also find their products trustworthy. That is why a recently held Mahalaxmi Saras exhibition in Mumbai achieved a financial turnover of about ₹15 crore. Rural women are creating an economic revolution through this medium. The campaign and the various programmes implemented through it have reduced poverty in the lives of village women. The products of SHGs are finding a market in big cities like Mumbai.

—Hasan Mushrif, Minister for Rural Development



after considering factors such as their skill sets, resources and aspiration. To enhance their skills and capabilities, women are trained under Umed. The benefits of this campaign are available to all poor village women, who must join an SHG to avail these benefits.

TRAINING THROUGH UMED

Young men and women from the families of the members of women SHGs get training and help to find employment. For this purpose, the campaign has selected a project implementation institute. Youth who wish to be self-employed are given training at district level through lead banks under RSETIs. Banks loans are granted to them to become self-employed. Umed also offers

an opportunity to train and work for the campaign in the capacity of Wardhini, Prerika, Pashu Sakhi, Krishi Sakhi and Kriti Sangam Sakhi. Thus, a team of trained and skilled community workers has been created.

MARKETS FOR PRODUCTS OF SHGS

Under Umed, the products of women SHGs are marketed by arranging exhibitions at the district, region and State levels. The Mahalaxmi Saras exhibition held in Mumbai is one such popular exhibition. Through this exhibition, women SHGs achieved a turnover of ₹12 crore last year and ₹15 crore this year. Nearly more than 500 SHGs have participated in this exhibition. Similar exhibitions are also held at regional and district levels.

ASMITA YOJANA

The girls in rural areas make less use of sanitary napkins. Taking cognisance, Asmita Yojana is being implemented through self-help groups. Under the scheme, adolescent girls are given sanitary napkins at a subsidised rate of ₹5. Rural women are also provided these sanitary napkins at subsidised rates.

For detailed information about UMED campaign, log on to <http://www.umed.in>. To participate in the campaign, contact Block Development Officer, Panchayat Samiti.

—Departmental Liaisoning Officer

DASHSUTRI CAMPAIGN

A key feature of mobilisation and institution building in Umed is its adherence to Dashasutri. The Dashasutri comprises 10 organising principles that are followed rigorously by the self-help groups. In addition to the five principles of financial discipline, the Dashasutri encourages women to discuss and take action on issues of health, nutrition, employment, access to social safety nets, good governance, education and water-sanitation-hygiene. Dashasutri is a hallmark of quality SHGs and village organisations (VOs) across all districts of Maharashtra. **The Dashasutri comprises:** (1) Regular meetings (2) Regular savings (3) Internal lending (4) Regular repayment of loans (5) Book keeping (6) Good health (7) Quality education for all (8) Regular participation in PRIs (9) Access to entitlements through Government schemes (10) Sustainable livelihoods.

*Although the Constitution of India has accepted the policy of gender equality, the benefits of Constitutional provisions have not yet percolated enough to the women due to social status, caste-based categories, language, culture, and changes occurring in their context. The right to equal opportunity and live with dignity has been given to them, but to enjoy Constitutional powers, they must know the law. The main reason for tolerating injustice and atrocities is ignorance about the law. While the Government, social bodies and people strive hard to create awareness among women, it is essential for society to take a resolute initiative on its own accord to give them these rights, says **Adv. Priya Deshpande**.*

The principal architect of the Constitution of India, Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar has immensely obliged women of the country in various respects. He broke the shackles of tradition for women through Hindu Code Bill and made efforts to bring revolutionary changes to their lives. While ruling out the secondary status of women, he created legal provisions for gender equality. Although there is a large class of women today who have attained realisation of their rights, there's a section that still has to tolerate injustice due to poor legal knowledge resulting from lack of education and media.

In order to ward off injustice faced by this section of women, it is essential that they are made aware of the existing laws for women and are empowered to attain self-realisation.

DOWRY PROHIBITION ACT

According to the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, giving or receiving a dowry is a crime. In order to provide more teeth to this Act, new clauses 304 (B) and 498

(C) have been included. If anyone asks for dowry, the concerned woman or her relatives can lodge a complaint with the police, as a Dowry Prevention Officer has been appointed at every police station. Besides, district and taluka-level committees have also been established under the Act.

ACT AGAINST OBSCENITY

There's a provision that exists under the Indian Penal Code 292 to 294 for punishment in case of obscene behaviour with women. Similarly, those who disgrace women through media such as advertisements, books and pictures, and others, could be arrested without a warrant. Any kind of mischief against women at public places, obscene gestures and comments are also punishable.

CARRYING OUT MISCHIEF IS AN OFFENCE

Breach of modesty of women in any way, such as dishonouring women, holding her hand or putting a hand inside her clothes, etc., is punishable under Indian Penal Code 354. In addition, a complaint can be registered with the police under section 509 of IPC in case of teasing or harassing women.

PREVENTION OF CHILD MARRIAGE ACT

To eradicate the tradition of child marriages in society, amendments have been carried out in the Child Marriage Prevention Act (Sarda Act), 1929. There is a provision for punishment if the girl's age is less than 18 years and the age of the boy is less than 21 years. This Act is applicable equally to all castes and religions.

FAMILY COURTS ACT

To resolve the disputes of marriage and family at a single location, Family Courts Act, 1984 has been enacted and made applicable. In case a Family Court does not exist, the District Courts have been provided the status of a Family Court.

RIGHTS AND POWERS



RIGHT TO CHILDREN

If a woman is divorced, she can keep the custody of her children up to the age of five years. However, the decision of the court is binding in case of children above five years.

EQUAL REMUNERATION ACT

This Act provides that men and women should be provided equal remuneration for the same work. Barring employment in certain work areas, women cannot be called for a night shift at work.

SEXUAL OFFENCES

Severe punishments are handed over in case of sexual offences under the Indian Penal Code 375 and 373. The hearing of sexual offences is held at the court behind closed doors.

HINDU SUCCESSION ACT

Under the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, women have been provided comprehensive rights to the property and have been provided with unlimited rights to enjoy her *Streedhan* and to spend the same.

A Hindu woman can also seek a part of the joint family property. She can even file a case in the Court to receive *Streedhan*. A woman has also been provided equal rights in ancestral property.

HINDU MARRIAGE ACT

Under Indian Penal Code 125, a woman has the right to demand alimony. There is a provision in the law for the payment of interim alimony amount for maintenance of the wife during the period of legal proceedings in a dispute between husband and wife.

MATERNITY BENEFIT ACT

There is a provision for maternity benefit for employed women, i.e. leave in case of pregnancy followed by the care of the new-born child. During this period, the woman is paid full salary for a certain number of days. However, according to the law, leave and other benefits are limited to two deliveries. The law also has a provision for full salary leave for a woman after abortion.



WAYS THAT BRING THE PROPERTY TO A WOMAN

An earning woman with a salary from her employment or business, the honorarium received by her, and the profits from her business are items of self-earned property for her.

Even if she is contributing to the traditional, shared business, the same is also a source of her income. She has a right to demand an amount for herself from the business income. Apart from this, women receive valuable gifts on occasions such as birthday, engagement, marriage, first 12 festivals after marriage, marriage anniversaries, becoming pregnant and delivery, naming ceremony, festivals and ceremonies of all types, entry to a new house, and marriages of relatives. She is the rightful owner of all the gifts and ornaments received from her parents or in-laws.

If someone bestows property through a will or a gift deed, it becomes her property. A woman receives a part of her inherited and parental property. She receives some part in the property of her in-laws in some way. After a divorce, she can receive lump sum alimony and all this is owned by her.

Women get separation from their husband due to various reasons and many times, instead of a monthly alimony amount, it facilitates both the parties to receive a lump sum amount from the husband. In certain families, the woman is provided with a part of the farmland, residential flat or house or shop in lieu of lump sum alimony payment. This part received by her is considered as her owned property and she has total rights from the use, purchase-sale and income earned from this property. Often, citing false reasons such as the amount spent on her marriage, dowry, ornaments made for her marriage and her education and others, the woman is bypassed while settling parental property. This is not accepted under the law. Irrespective of any prevailing conditions, her right to the parental property remains uninterrupted.

SPECIAL MARRIAGE ACT

According to the provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954 a mentally competent woman of 18 years or above can opt for love marriage or inter-caste marriage as per her own will.

ARREST OF WOMEN

Only women police are allowed to arrest women and that too after sunrise and before sunset. A woman can be called to a police station only in the presence of her family members and only if there is an appropriate reason. If a woman is arrested, she can be kept in a women cell only.

CLAIM RELINQUISH LETTER

Women, sometimes, are in two minds regarding demanding a part of their parental property because if they ask, they are worried it may spoil their relations with brother, sister-in-law and other sisters. And, if they do not ask, their in-laws may get unhappy. Sometimes women forego their right to the parental property so that the support from the parental side is sustained. In some cases, they have to make trips to the Courts to receive the due benefits from their brother. Any decision about the property should be taken in consultation with a legal advisor and with complete understanding. It should not be an emotional decision.

Get appropriate advice while creating a document such as relinquishing the right of your own earned property, head of the family or Power of Attorney. Understand your legal rights fully before signing any such document.

A HOME FOR TWO

In case of a dispute between husband and wife or if they cannot accommodate each other, the wife is usually thrown out of the house. In order to change this situation, the Government has promulgated new rules since 10th October 1994.

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS

Lease of the land, house and the plot would now have equally shared ownership of husband and wife.

(Government Resolution: PRAVAM 1094/3625/10,894) The identity cards for slum dwellers will now have photographs of both husband and wife on the first page.

While purchasing a flat or a plot, the documents for the same should be in the name of both. It is essential to have this in the documentation.

The houses to be constructed under Indira Awas Yojana should be named after both husband and wife. (Government Resolution No. IIA 1094/PRA.81/ Force 17/Dt. 13.12.94) If the person is unmarried while registration of house or property, there is a condition that the house or property will also be on the name of the wife after marriage.

MUSLIM WOMEN

According to Islamic Law, a Muslim woman has inheritance rights in the family property.

IMPORTANT PROVISIONS

Right of a widow: Every widow has a right on the property of her husband. If the deceased husband has no child, the widow shall receive one-fourth part of the property, and if there is a child, she will receive one-eighth part. If the deceased husband has more than one living widow, the right of the widow is divided and becomes 1/16.

Right of a daughter: A daughter is considered as an heir to the property of her father. In case there is no son, the daughter receives a 50 per cent share of the property of her father.

Right of a mother: After the son, a mother has the right to his property. If the deceased son does not have a child, meaning if the woman does not have a grandchild, she receives one-third part of the property of her son. If she has a grandchild, the part of the woman is divided and she receives one-sixth of the property.

Under the Islamic law, a Muslim woman has inheritance rights in family property.



Right of paternal and maternal grandmother: Maternal grandmother would receive one-sixth part of the property of her grandson. However, paternal grandmother receives a part of the property of her grandson only if parents of her grandson or mother of her grandson are not alive.

Any Muslim individual can prepare a will only for a third of his property. However, an individual without a child can bestow two-thirds of his property through a will to his spouse.

Muslim women receive part of the property through relationships such as daughter, widow, mother, grandmother and grandson. A woman is free to receive property as a gift from other relatives apart from the individual from whom she is supposed to receive the inheritance. An unmarried daughter has a right to stay at a foster home and to receive maintenance from parents. If she is divorced after marriage, the responsibility of maintenance of the woman is that of her parents after the period of three months of *iddat* is over. Similarly, the responsibility for her maintenance after her parents is that of her sons, who are earning members.

MEHR

Mehr is the right of every Muslim woman. Mehr is a property to be given by the husband to his wife at the time of marriage. Mehr is of two types. One is the property that is handed over to the wife at the time of marriage. The other is while ending a relationship or taking a divorce or the property that is handed over to the wife at the time of the death of her husband.

However, the amount or the property of Mehr has to be decided by the groom when the marriage is being decided and it is only after the offered Mehr is accepted by the bride-to-be and her relatives, the marriage takes place.

CHRISTIAN WOMEN

If an individual dies without making a will, the entire property is divided between husband, wife and other close relatives. In the absence of any child or other relatives, the entire property is



PROTECTION FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

To further empower the rights or protection available to women, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 was passed in 2006. So that the woman distressed by atrocities should receive justice as early as possible, the provisions of this Act have been especially promulgated. The Act specifies the process so that the distressed woman could receive orders for assistance. Besides, from now on, it will not be necessary for the distressed woman to file separate cases under various Acts for the implementation of her rights.

received by the wife. All sons and daughters have an equal right to the property. If the son or daughter is not alive, the part will be divided equally between their offspring. A property earned by a Christian woman is her owned property. A woman has the right to distribute her property through a will or a testament.

VISHAKHA GUIDELINES

To prevent sexual harassment of women

at the workplace, implementation of Vishakha Guidelines has started in the State. For this, Grievance Redressal Committees have been established all over the State, and to prevent illegal human trading of women, girls and children, a State Action Force has been established.

WORKPLACE FOR WOMEN

To prevent sexual harassment of women at workplaces, the Supreme Court of India has issued certain guidelines. These are applicable at private, public and all other institutions. The responsibility of preventing sexual acts and complaints in this regard is on the concerned institutions and staff. For fast redress of a complaint, an arrangement has been made in every department for the establishment of a Committee with a woman president and more than half of its members women.

AN ACT FOR DEVADASIS

This Act is related to rehabilitation of Devadasis and their children, through education, health and creation of ways for their economic self-reliance. For this, independent schemes from the Department of Women and Child Development have been activated.

—The author is a legal expert

STAY VIGILANT AND SAFE FROM CYBER CRIMES



Cyber Mahaguru

*In India, women are worshipped only at religious places and during festivals. In normal life, they are exploited in innumerable ways and victimised physically, psychologically and sexually. With the internet transforming human lives, it has further exposed women to crimes like cyber-stalking, online defamation, trolling, email spoofing, pornography, psychological torture and sexual abuse, says **Adv. Prashant Mali**.*



The invention of the World Wide Web, mobile phones and tabs, and other inventions of technology and communication have changed women's standard of living.

Although, these inventions have huge benefits, these also tend to have some negative effects on our lives and have, thus, created great threats, generally called cyber crimes. Let's understand some of these crimes better.

Internet Trolling: An internet troll is a member of an online social community who deliberately tries to disrupt, attack, offend or generally cause trouble within the community by posting certain comments, photos, videos, GIFs or other forms of online content. When a person posts lewd comments on social media, they are liable under Section 354A of IPC and can be punished with one-year imprisonment and fine. The provision also covers posting or messaging content related to pornography against the will of a woman and demand

or request of sexual favours, which are punishable with three years' imprisonment and fine. Although the Supreme Court struck down Section 66A (punishment for sending offensive messages through communication service) of the Information Technology (IT) Act in 2015, protecting the freedom of speech and expression of Indian citizens, there exist laws in India which protect women from becoming victims of online harassment.

Voyeurism: Both IPC and IT Act list voyeurism as an offence. If a man captures an image of a woman engaged in a private act without her consent, he will be punishable under Section 354C of IPC, which holds the man liable to minimum one-year imprisonment extending to maximum three years along with fine. The law can be invoked in circumstances where a woman would not usually have the ex-

pectation to be observed by the perpetrator. For the sake of clarity, the provision under IPC also defines "private act" as an act of watching over a woman carrying out an activity that is reasonably considered private. Section 66E of the IT Act specifies each term giving a detailed meaning to voyeurism in relation to the internet. Publishing a visual image of a person in print or electronic form that violates the privacy of another person is held punishable for three years imprisonment or ₹2 lakh fine.

Cyber Harassment via Social Media:

Harassment of female netizens may include vulgar messaging to an individual's wall and personal email id, which is mentioned in the profile, regular peeping in as a visitor and leaving message on her wall, sending request for friendship, constantly posting messages disagreeing with her and joining groups where she is a member, etc. It also includes bullying, blackmailing, threatening and cheating on email. E-harassment is similar to letter harassment or felony, but creates problems quite often when it is posted from fake ids or cloned profiles, etc., with the intent to terrify, intimidate, threaten, bother, harass, humiliate or denigrate female netizens.

Pornography: Cyber pornography plays an accessory role in negative social issues such as child abuse, violence against women, rape, inequality, relationship and family breakdown, youth crime, promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases. A few incidents reported have led to episodes of

Not all laws mention the term "internet" explicitly, except provisions under IT Act, 2000. We must study this act.

“aggravated penetrative sexual assault” (as Section 5 (g) of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

If the victim is an adult, one may have to club Section 375 (rape), 376D (gang rape), 354C (voyeurism) of IPC, Section 66E (violation of privacy), 67 (punishment for publishing or transmitting obscene materials in the electronic form), and 67A (punishment for publishing or transmitting sexually explicit materials in the electronic form) to address the issue of creation of gang rape videos.

E-mail Spoofing: This means sending an email to another person in such a way that it seems that the email was sent by someone else. A common method used by men is to email vulgar photographs of themselves to women, praising their beauty and asking for a date, etc. Section 66D of the IT Act and Section 417, 419



Online Defamation: Cyber tort including libel and defamation is another common crime against women on the internet. This occurs when someone posts defamatory matter about someone on Facebook, WhatsApp or any other social media platforms or sends emails that contain defamatory information to a person's friends. The harm through defamatory statements about any person on a website is widespread and irreparable, as the information is available to the entire

etc. Revenge porn refers to circulating someone's intimate pictures and videos without their consent, usually by former romantic partners.

Matrimonial Fraud: In the recent past, there have been incidents when people, especially women, were cheated via various matrimonial websites. Cyber cons are targeting people through matrimonial websites. Several people have fallen prey to these frauds and have lost a lot of money. The crooks get in touch with their targets through these portals for alliances, a few make money in the name of buying properties for their future, while others use other techniques.

REMEDIES TO TACKLE CYBER CRIMES

Here are some steps and suggestions on how women can save themselves from

CYBER STALKING

This is a behaviour wherein an individual wilfully and repeatedly engages in a tactic of harassing conduct directed at another person which reasonably and seriously alarms, torments or terrorises that person. It involves following a person's movements across the internet and posting messages (sometimes threatening) on social media platforms frequented by the victim. Cyberstalkers target their victims via e-mails, messengers, chat rooms, discussion forums, open publishing websites, and other online platforms. The stalkers may do it for sexual harassment or their obsession for love, revenge/hate, ego or power trips.

Section 354D of the IPC provides that, “whoever commits the offence of stalking shall be punished on first conviction with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to three years, and



shall also be liable to fine; and be punished on a second or subsequent conviction, with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, and shall also be liable to fine.”

and 465 of the IPC are applicable for this offence. The offence is cognisable, bailable and compoundable with the permission of the court before which the prosecution of such offence is pending and triable by any magistrate.

Cyber Morphing: Photo morphing is a special effect that allows a person to morph or change one image or shape it into another. Today, morphed photographs have become one of the many forms of online crime against women, faced not only by celebrities, but also by other men and women online.

world, and it affects the victim.

Virtual Rape via Cyberspace: This is another violent and brutal type of cyber victimisation where women are targeted by scoundrels or harassers in the cyberspace. He either posts vulgar messages, or particular community members may “mob attack” the targeted female with words that create more enthusiasm among other unrelated members to comment on the victim's sexuality. Then the profile owner becomes a hot topic of vulgar name calling, erotic discussions, sexual image,

being victimised in cyberspace: change passwords frequently, avoid revealing your home address, maintain stable social relationships, be aware about cyber crimes, attend seminars and workshops organised by Police and cyber experts for better understanding of cyber victimisation, avoid unsolicited calls and messages, understand privacy settings of social network, check your account regularly, protect data on the move, and keep firewall turned on.

—The writer is a cyber law and cyber security expert

WOMEN POWER FROM MAHARASHTRA IN NATIONAL CAPITAL

It is generally observed that if women decide to do something, they almost certainly achieve it. We have instances to prove this, from mythological characters to modern women. Some women have made a mark in the Capital of the Nation through their outstanding work. Here are some incredible women, who are making Maharashtra proud in Delhi, says Anju Nimsarkar.

Maharashtra is known as a progressive State of India. This status has been achieved due to the equality of men and women in the State. Nobody can deny that the path of progress is more difficult for a woman, as she has to empower and prove herself when she gets into various roles, from a wife and a mother to a professional. When one lands in a place like Delhi after leaving one's town, district and State, the journey of establishing oneself becomes more difficult. Some of these women have come to the Capital after their marriage, while some have come on jobs and some to fulfil their dreams. In performing their roles at home and office and establishing their identity, they have to put in consistent hard work. Because of them, Maharashtra is held in high esteem in the Indian Capital.

In my work at the Maharashtra Information Centre, New Delhi, I have come in contact with many such women. Here are the write-ups about some of these women.

CORRESPONDENT, EDITOR, WRITER

Namita Bhandare, a prestigious name in journalism, was born in a non-Marathi family in Mum-



Namita Bhandare

bai and later got married into a Marathi family. She started her career in journalism when there were not many women in that field. Her career from reporting to editorship took place in the Capital. It is notable that she worked



Archana Mirajkar

as the country's first Gender Editor in the *Mint* newspaper. Presently, she writes as a columnist in various English newspapers on gender equality.

Marathi women have made their mark in international media as well. Archana Mirajkar works as media coordinator in the Canadian Embassy. Hailing from Kolhapur, she is also an author.

Another name in journalism who gave a new direction to her life is Nivedita Vaishampayan-Madane. Hailing from Nashik, she came to Delhi so that her son could be with both parents. After coming to Delhi, she restarted her writing career. She got an opportunity to work as an editor of the Marathi magazine, *The Core*.

BLOGGER

Adv. Rucha Mayee from Nashik studied law. However, today she is better known as a blogger. Through her writings, she aims to impart maximum counselling through minimum words.



Nivedita Madane

STATE FOOD

Vibha Chiplunkar made Marathi food recipes popular in Delhi through her Maharashtra Food stall in Dilli Haat, INA. This has been a favourite of foodies for the past 25 years.

ART LOVERS

Delhi is a city of art and culture as well. Located in the heart of the Capital is Mandi House, which is the hub for theatrical groups. Gauri Dewal from Wardha is playing an important role in enriching the dramatic art and culture heritage of Delhi. She has made a lasting impression on the audiences by her roles for the past 15 years. Some of her popular roles were in dramas, *Leela*, *Roop-Aroop*, and *After The Third Bell*.

Maya Karanjkar from Satara has contributed a great deal to the art of painting. There are regular exhibitions of her paintings.

SOCIAL WORK

Himali Dabi-Kamble, the mother of Tina Dabi who stood first in Indian Administrative Service 2016, was born in Nagpur. She was an officer in the Indian telecommunications service. She studied hard in order to train her daughter for the UPSC

examination so she is now a teacher for general knowledge in various private tuition classes.

Sharada Dolare from Osmanabad district started a school in Delhi. Her school, named Modern Public School,



Adv. Rucha Mayee

has classes from first to tenth standard. This school charges reasonable fees.

In Delhi, there are many old and new Marathi institutes. One of them, named All India Siddharth Welfare Centre, is 45 years old. Sujata Ambore received the honour of becoming the first woman president of



Maya Karanjkar

this institute. Smt. Ambore is a woman with leadership qualities and it is notable that under her leadership, the institute is making progress. She is from Parbhani.

Dr. Sangeeta Kasture from Nanded is presently a Scientific and Policy Officer in the Biotechnology Department of Government of India's Science and Technology Ministry. She strives to ensure that rural areas should get 24-hour power supply. Bio fuel is made from agro leftovers like rice and wheat straw, cotton stalk and sugarcane. Dr. Kasture provides financial aid through her ministry to various research institutes, universities, colleges and volunteer- ing institutes engaged in research. During the past 10 years,



Vibha Chiplunkar

while working at national and international levels on clean energy, she has formed a big network of more than 1,000 scientists.

Dr. Jaya Surya from Chandrapur is working as a Senior Scientist in the Indian Agricultural Research Institute of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Union Government. She has many records accredited to her name. So far, she has more than 50 research papers published.

— **Information Officer, Maharashtra Information Centre, New Delhi**



Located in the Capital as professionals, these women from Maharashtra are working at National-level, bringing accolades to the State.

HEALTH

Leela Bhatkar is the first Marathi woman to reach the position of Deputy Superintendent of Nursing at Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi. She lost her father when she was only two. Her

mother courageously raised and educated her children and made them independent. Her parents are from Wardha district.



Sujata Nandeshwar

Working in the same hospital is Sujata Nandeshwar, a Senior Nursing Officer and a multi-talented person. She is always ready to render any help related to health matters. The Personnel Ministry of the Union Government every year

arranges inter-ministry competitions. In this, Nandeshwar has many times worked as a cultural coordinator of the health department. Being an avid dancer, she has won a gold medal in dance six years in a row since 2010. She is equally active in social work and has started an institute, Ramai along with other Marathi nurses.



Shweta Rana-Karandikar

Originally from Nagpur, Nilima Shingade is a nurse in All India Institute of Medical Sciences. She spreads awareness about the preventive measures of various cancers affecting women. She is connected with many institutes that give counselling on cancer.

Hemangi Sinha-Bhise was born in Nagpur. She does counselling through Arjun Foundation in Delhi. She advises poor young girls about the hygiene necessary during menstruation. She also counsels boys and girls about mutual respect and behaviour based on equality.

Shweta Rana-Karandikar, originally from Mumbai, selflessly raises funds in Delhi for Nagaland-based Eliezer children's home. There are five girls and four boys in this home. Tinu Meren Ozkum and Aosenla Imchen is a couple who works for this children's home with a view to provide family-like diet, atmosphere and proper education to the children. So far she has collected more than ₹1 lakh for this children's home through various sources.

Shanta Wagh from Udgir, Latur, is dedicated to the cause of providing various amenities to slum dwellers for the last 25-30 years. She works as a coordinator for Bhoomi Awas organisation in Delhi.



Leela Bhatkar



Nilima Shingade



Shanta Wagh

According to World Health Organisation (WHO), health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. So, while writing about women's health, the definition has to be presented from a woman's point of view duly based on the definition mentioned above.

The three factors that are important for a woman's health are diet, exercise and peace of mind. These are regularly pointed out on several media. In which state, do we see women actually following the listed three factors? It needs to be noted that a difference or a gap is found between the state of women living in urban areas and rural parts.

WOMEN AND DIET

Effects of fasting: Women fast on many days in a week. It has been observed that the number of poor women who fast for 8 to 12 days in a month is significantly high. These fasts are usually nutrition-deficit which thereby give rise to various health-related problems such as acidity, headache, obesity, shivering of hands and legs, and weakness.

Also, women are inclined to skip their breakfast. Drinking tea twice or thrice a day while attending to household chores often results in skipping of this important meal of the day. This again adds to their health-related issues. Hence, having a good, nutritious breakfast in the morning is important, as it provides enough energy that lasts for the entire day.

Negligence towards vital nutrients: This takes place in two ways. In the case of homemakers, the practice of eating stale, left-over food is a common practice. Also, women, especially young, adolescent girls and working women are likely to eat delectable and scrumptious fast-food. In

WOMEN'S HEALTH VITAL FOR A HEALTHY SOCIETY

Women, while giving priority to their family, tend to neglect their own health. In fact, women should be more watchful about their health, because if they, who are an integral part of society, are healthy, only then will society remain healthy. On the occasion of International Women's Day, this column is an attempt to educate women about the importance of taking charge of their health in their own hands, says Dr. Sujata Joshi-Patodekar.



Exercise is not only meant to control weight, but is also necessary for our overall wellbeing and life.

both cases, the body does not receive the required, balanced diet—the root cause of several health-related problems in women.

In fact, the National Family Health Survey states that in about 50 per cent women, the range of haemoglobin is 8 per cent or lower.

Malnutrition on one hand, and obe-

sity and overweight on the other, has far-reaching consequences. The number of girls and middle-aged women affected by a condition called Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) is also increasing. The symptoms of PCOS are menstrual irregularity or delay, increase in acne on facial skin and infertility, irregularity or failure to ovulate, etc. A solution here is a proper and

WOMEN AND MENTAL HEALTH

Owing to the menstrual cycle, motherhood and menopause, hormones play a crucial role in a woman's life. Due to these phases, she has to face psychological as well as emotional challenges.

Amidst all this, a woman's psychological health is also put to the test by her secondary status in the family, the tension in relationships, gender discrimination at the workplace, and having no say in birth control. She is also constantly gripped by the fear of becoming a victim of domestic violence, rape and one-sided love.

Women should pay extra attention to their self-protection and psychological health. They should set aside time for their well-being. And yes, instead of shirking away from their duties, husbands should fulfil their role in marriage of treating their wives with respect and concern. This is just a small yet meaningful expectation on this Women's Day.

nutritious diet, which women must understand and follow.

REGULAR CHECK UP AND NEED FOR MENTAL SUPPORT

After the age of 40 and especially after menopause, it is necessary for women to go for regular body check-ups. The women of today have to shoulder psychological, physical and economic responsibilities. Although women take care of their entire family, their own health is ignored by them. Taking care of the family and their health needs must be balanced appropriately.

WOMEN AND EXERCISE

The busy schedule of homemakers and working women makes it difficult for them to spare time for exercise. Lack of exercise is also a primary cause of osteoporosis among women in their 40s. The habit of a morning walk is formed right from our early days, but as women do not find time in the morning, they neither exercise nor go for a walk. Women should remember that it is important to exercise—be it walking, cycling, muscle exercises or weight-lifting, at any time of the day, based on their convenience. When you exercise, the brain releases the chemical endorphin that gives a feeling of euphoria, thereby causing a positive impact on health. Exercise is not only meant to control weight, but is also necessary for our overall well-being and life. Like proper diet, this should also be incul-

cated in women's daily regime.

WOMEN AND COSMETICS

Urban women have become extremely conscious of how they look. This is largely due to the impact of media and advertise-

ments. Women who use fairness creams and skin smoothening products, without any consultation, later visit skin specialists for treatment. It is important to seek proper advice from experts instead of falling prey to such advertisements. In fact, it should be realised that instead of hankering for fair skin, one must focus on healthy skin. If the radiance of self-confidence is present on the face, then a dark skin colour also looks vibrant.

Clothes also say a lot about how we look or carry ourselves. In the hot Indian climate, cotton clothes and clothes that allow air circulation are important. Sweat cannot be dried off in tight and synthetic clothes. Besides, in an attempt to self-treat, cases of fungal infections of the skin like ringworm have dramatically increased, and which we should not neglect. ■

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I, Anil Aloorkar, hereby declare, that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

ANIL ALOORKAR
Printer and Publisher

NEVER GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS

If a woman gets support from her family, then she can climb the mountain of success by defeating all difficult situations. Archana Wankhede, a woman from a common family of Buldhana, has set up an example for women who sacrificed their career after marriage. Here is her success story, in her own words.

UPSC was nothing less than a dream for me. My native place is village Dongar Shewali (Buldhana). My father was a clerk in Maharashtra State Transport Board. After completing my secondary school from Buldhana city, where we were settled, I completed my graduation in engineering from Anuradha Engineering College in Chikhli and Masters in Engineering from Vishwakarma Institute of Technology, Pune.

Though my father was a Government ser-

vant, he was interested in agriculture due to which I too remained connected with village and farming. I knew the problems of farmers and farm labourers. I witnessed their weak financial



Archana P. Wankhede
I.A.S. 2018

condition so I decided to do something for them. I wanted to choose such a career through which I could serve common people. After marriage and birth of my daughter, I got a job as an assistant professor at Somaiya College, Mumbai. Financially, we were quite stable as I had a permanent job and my

husband is a software engineer, but the inability to do anything for common and needy people made me uneasy and powerless. That's when I decided to enter the administrative field through UPSC.

CHASING SUCCESS

Once decided, I started to study hard. In four attempts I could not even pass the pre-exam. That's when I realised I was not devoting enough time to study. I then decided to seek admission in Yashada in 2017. My parents-in-law took care of my daughter. In my fifth attempt, I passed in the pre and main exam and cleared my interview too, but still I got eight marks less than the required criteria. In the sixth attempt, my brother, who too was preparing for the exam, gave me strong support. Pravin Chavan also guided me when I was in Pune. In 2018, my dream of becoming an IAS officer came true. In fact, I was the first IAS woman from Buldhana.

DISCUSSION AND INTERVIEW

In Yashada, I had a group of five to six friends. We used to discuss current affairs, international and national happenings during breakfast, lunch and dinner. Such positive atmosphere boosted our confidence. I used an online platform for non-academic and study IQ and also watched YouTube videos for some particular topics.

In the interview of UPSC exam, questions are based on history, geography and other information related to the candidate's birthplace. One also has to remain updated about current affairs, political and social questions. Campus interview held at Yashada, SIC and Maharashtra Sadan helped me to face the interview successfully.

Will Smith's popular quote "I want to represent possibilities" has a great impact on me. I knew that if we are able to succeed through difficult situations, then we can set an example for others. Hence, I wanted to create a milestone by defeating all odds.

—Rajaram Devkar

SUCCESS FORMULAE

- Read NCERT books to strengthen the base for an administrative exam.
- Before studying any subject, read question papers on that subject carefully. While preparing for the main exam, study the question paper of the main exam of all subjects.
- Reference literature must be limited as time for study is limited. Take the guidance of seniors and watch the videos of candidates who have passed exams with good marks on YouTube. Decide the booklist first and follow it.
- Revision is a must for the preparation. Hence, continue your revision until you are really satisfied.
- The most important formula is to be confident. Because if we keep faith in ourselves, only then can we prepare for the exam in a positive way.
- Always stay positive and keep away from negative people. You must be in the company of friends having positive thoughts. Positivity keeps you away from depression and it is most important for your study.
- Be ready for sacrifices. While studying for the UPSC exam, you can get a job through other competitive exams or MPSC. Remember this job is nothing but a lure. It may take you away from the goal of your life. Hence, you have to be away from all kinds of distractions. It is okay to get some job as a plan-B but you must be ready to leave it.
- Village background, poor English, responsibilities after marriage, need of another job, etc., all these become meaningless when you decide to qualify for the administrative exam.
- Success demands firm determination and hard work. Online media is very useful for the study.

FOR FARMERS' WELFARE

The Government has given topmost priority to economic transformation of farmers. The Cooperative and Marketing Department is geared up to play an important role in this transformation. To make the loan waiver a worry-free experience, the State Government has adopted an easy method with minimum paper process, says
Balasaheb Patil, Minister for Cooperation and Marketing.

It is necessary to bring economic transformation in the lives of farmers, especially if we want to make Maharashtra economically empowered. Since the Department of Cooperation and Marketing is directly concerned with farmers, the Government is making all efforts for farmers' economic empowerment. For the last four years, farmers have been caught up in the vicious cycle of loans. Hence, the Government has announced the Mahatma Jotirao Phule Farmer Loan Waiver Scheme, a convenient, simple and transparent plan, which gives debt relief to farmers in the real sense. A list of beneficiary farmers have been published.

FARMER LOAN WAIVER SCHEME

Farmers depend on agriculture and, therefore, sometimes have to take loans from District Central Banks, cooperative banks or commercial banks for farming. The Mahatma Jotirao Phule Farmer Loan Waiver Scheme has been announced to make the farmers debt free and worry free. Under the scheme, every farmer's crop loan, of up to ₹2 lakh, and short-term restructured crop loan will be waived. The scheme is simple, easy and transparent, and care

has been taken to ensure that farmers do not face any trouble. The farmers are not required to apply for this scheme to avail its benefits. There is also no condition put on payment of the arrears.

RESTRUCTURED LOANS

Under the scheme, the loan amount of the short-term crop loan and short-term restructured crop loan taken between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2019 as well as pending up till September 30, 2019 will be waived off. The crop loan taken by farmers from nationalised banks, commercial banks, district central cooperative banks, rural banks and various executive cooperative in-

Centre or bank branch to verify their Aadhaar. Those farmers who match their Aadhaar number and the loan amount while doing authentication, will receive the benefit of the scheme immediately. Those farmers who cannot do so should register a complaint directly with the district-level committee through the portal. The committee will communicate the decision regarding the matter to the farmers.

THIS WILL NOT BENEFIT ALL FARMERS

Farmers who pay their income tax from sources outside of farming will not get the benefit of this

STRENGTHENING THE MARKETING DEPARTMENT

The Marketing Department is directly related to farmers. Its primary objective is to make available necessary infrastructure facilities to farmers to sell their farm produce well. The primary task of the department is to provide subsidy to APMC for warehouses, roads, auction houses, cold storage facilities and auction platforms. It is also the work of this department to develop an organised marketing network on a global scale equipped with competitive infrastructure facilities to ensure appropriate rates for the agricultural products produced by farmers. When a farmer comes to the APMC with his farm produce, then the committee not only works towards making an apt rate available, but also works towards instilling trust. Hence, the farmers get support and trust here.

The impetus has, thus, been given to rural development by keeping the farmer at the centre, so that those who feed the entire world become prosperous. It is my primary wish that the farmer should be blessed with prosperity and the farming community becomes financially empowered.



Balasaheb Patil

stitutions will be waived off. Therefore, farmers will become eligible for taking loans in the kharif season of 2020.

Banks have started to upload information about the loan accounts on the web portal. This list of farmers will be made available village-wise at the Gram Panchayat of every village. Farmers who are mentioned in the published list are expected to visit the nearest Government Service

scheme. This category of farmers include current/former ministers, State ministers, members of the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha, Legislative Assembly/Legislative Council, all the officers and staff of the Union and State Government (whose overall monthly salary is more than ₹25,000, except Class IV staff), officers and staff of the State Undertakings (Mahavitaran, State Transport Corpo-

ration and others) and of aided institutions, pensioners and the officers and office-bearers (chairman, vice president and board of directors) of Agricultural Produce Market Committee, cooperative sugar factories, cooperative spinning mills, urban cooperative banks, district central cooperative banks and cooperative milk federation, whose monthly pension is more than ₹25,000 (except ex-servicemen).

CHALLENGES OF SUGAR INDUSTRY

Cooperative manufacturing in Maharashtra has led to development, employment of local population, and economic transformation of farmers to some extent. Sugar industries and farmers producing sugarcane are a part of this movement. The production of sugarcane is sometimes



A GUARANTEE FOR ₹1,800 CRORE LOAN FOR COTTON

Farmers, whose names are in the loan waiver list, to avail the benefit of the scheme should link their Aadhaar number to bank accounts. The Government has provided the guarantee for the ₹1,800 crore loan amount taken by the Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Growers Marketing Federation (MSCCGMF) from the Bank of India at an interest rate of 7.75 per cent for ensuring timely payments to farmers on purchase of cotton in the 2019-20 season. The guarantee required to be paid by the federation on the State guarantee has also been waived. The purchase of cotton in the season of 2019-20 has been started by the federation.

low or high due to natural calamities. Last year, there was a heavy downpour in western Maharashtra. Areas in Sangli and Kolhapur were affected badly. As a result, sugar industries and farmers got into trouble. It is necessary to help them. Also, if farmers are unable to repay the pending loan amount within a stipulated time, then they too get into trouble.

Currently, 60-80,000 quintals of cotton on an average is being purchased daily. Nearly 30 to 35 lakh quintals of cotton is expected to be purchased by the federation. Therefore, ₹1,800 crore was required for the purpose. This decision has been taken to ensure that farmers do not face incon-

venience and get their money on time.

WHAT SHOULD FARMERS DO?

The benefit of the scheme will go to needy farmers only. Hence those farmers who are eligible should link their Aadhaar number with their bank account. As the process has been made online, farmers are not required to make unnecessary visits to the banks. The burden of the loan on the farmer will be reduced due to loan waiver, making them eligible for another loan.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO COOPERATIVE SECTOR

The contribution of the cooperative sector in the progress of the State is huge. The sector is considered as the financial vein of the rural region. Through this sector, several cooperative institutions are formed. These include development societies, executive societies, banks, credit societies and sugar factories. These institutions provide financial assistance to farmers in times of need, and have helped in devouring private money lending to some extent. Providing more encouragement to this sector is need of the hour.

AGRO-PROCESSING INDUSTRY

Since there is State-wise crop diversity in India, the raw material for various agriculture-processing industries can become easily available. Hence, farmers should pay attention to agro-processing industry. Farmers growing sugarcane give their produce to sugar factories. Though the basic policy of the factory is to produce sugar, there is also a huge demand for ethanol today. This demand should be encouraged. The Union Government has taken an initiative for this purpose and projects have been implemented in several places. Though the volume is low currently, it is necessary for sugar factories to pay attention to ethanol production. In some areas, the business of setting up projects for producing organic jaggery and organic sugarcane is in progress; it is necessary for the farmers to focus more on such agro-processing industries.

—As told to Kashibai Thorat,
Departmental Liaisoning Officer

CABINET DECISIONS

Here are the highlights of a few decisions taken for the benefit of Maharashtra in the Cabinet.

MAHARASHTRA'S DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

A decision has been taken to celebrate Maharashtra's Diamond Jubilee with great pomp. Various activities to be undertaken throughout the year were discussed in the meeting. Programmes will be organised across the State from May 1, 2020.

A presentation was made by the Department of Cultural Affairs in the



Cabinet on the theme Maharashtra's Diamond Jubilee. Cultural programmes based on different themes such as Samyukta Maharashtra Movement, folk art, Marathi theatre, Marathi cinema, programmes based on the history and life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, social reformers of Maharashtra, Maharashtra globally, saints of Maharashtra, classical music, tribal culture, Click Maharashtra, agriculture, qawwali festival, Durga Mahotsav, and 100 years of Marathi cinema will be organised.

It has also been decided to conduct programmes on spreading awareness about Samyukta Maharashtra Movement, the martyrs of the movement, publishing a coffee table book on Maharashtra's historic, social, geographical and cultural highlights, programmes for the participation of NRIs from Maharashtra, preparing a documentary

EQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WATER TO NIRA CANALS

The canals of Niradevghar and Gunjawani dams are currently non-functional. It has been decided in the Cabinet that the unused water will be provided equally to the beneficiary areas around the Nira left and right canals. This decision will benefit the areas in terms of urbanisation, industrialisation, farming, sugar industry and orchards. Details about this decision are as follows:

The work of Niradevghar Dam was completed in 2007 with a water storage capacity of 11.73 TMC; water storage capacity of 3.69 TMC has been created in Gunjawani Dam since 2018. It was observed that canal works for both the projects were left incomplete and, therefore, the beneficiary areas were unable to use the water. Therefore, it was decided that the extra water that is left after the basic requirements of both the projects are catered to will be distributed equally to the left and right canals of Nira.

About 55 per cent of water will be given to Nira left canal and 45 per cent to Niral right canal.

Due to this, 2,427 hectare/TMC water will be available for irrigation in the beneficiary areas of both the canals. The beneficiary areas of Nira left canal includes a total area of 37,070 hectares from Purandar, Baramati and Indapur talukas, whereas the right canal areas are 65,506 hectares from Khandala, Phaltan, Malshiras, Pandharpur and Sangola talukas.



on Maharashtra's rich culture and traditions, an advertisement showcasing Maharashtra's all-round progress and creating a theme song for Maharashtra's Diamond Jubilee. An appeal has also been made in the Cabinet for all administrative departments to come up with at least one scheme or programme on the theme of Maharashtra's Diamond Jubilee.

SEWAGE WATER TREATMENT

The Cabinet has approved the first sewage water treatment proposal prepared to treat the wastewater generated in the State's urban areas. Around 9758.53 MLD of wastewater is generated from 319 local government bodies in the State. There is a capacity to treat 7747.24 MLD of wastewater, and a capacity of 2011.91 MLD can be generated additionally. The wastewater treatment capacity is 75 per cent satisfactory. However, according to the National Green Tribunal, it is mandatory to generate the additional 2011 MLD faecal process treatment capacity.

Provision of ₹2,820 crore will be sanctioned to the municipality and municipal corporation areas under phase 1 through Centre's Amrit Abhiyan-2 or State's Maharashtra Suvarna Jayanti Nagarotthan Maha-Abhiyan.

STAMP DUTY FOR MERGERS AND RECREATION HIKED

The State Cabinet has approved an increase in stamp duty to ₹50 crore from the present ₹25 crore on merger and amalgamation of documents.

FUNDS FOR CHILDREN WELFARE

The Cabinet has approved the provision of ₹2 crore as the State Children's Fund for the welfare and rehabilitation of various children's organisations. Under

THE FIVE-DAY WEEK

The decision of five working days' week for all Government employees was taken in the Cabinet meeting. Like the Centre, the employees of the State Government will also get all Saturdays and Sundays off. In addition, the working hours have been increased by 45 minutes per day. This rule will be applicable from February 29.

The current working hours for Government offices in Mumbai suburban, 9:45 am to 5:30 pm, will be changed to 9:45 am to 6:15 pm. The working hours for peons will be 9:30 am to 6:30 am. Similar working hours will also be applicable for Government offices outside Mumbai suburbs where the current working hours are from 10:00 am to 5:45 pm. The timings for all offices have been kept uniform. The working hours include lunch-time of maximum 30 minutes between 1 and 2 pm. The five-day week will not be applicable to the following offices/departments:

Emergency services: Government hospitals, diagnostic labs, police, prisons, water supply schemes, fire-brigade, sanitation workers; **Educational institutes:** Government colleges, medical colleges, schools, polytechnics; **Water Resources:** Labs at Dapodi, Satara, Wardha, Akola, Ahmednagar, Ashti, Khadakvasla, Nashik and Nanded, Central labs at Nagpur and Bhandara and insti-

tutes appointed for region-specific projects, groundwater resources and public works department, residential and non-residential institutes, daily-wage labourers and workers.

Public Health: Vaccine Institute, Nagpur; **Revenue and Forest:** Integrated units from Balharshah, Paratwada and Dahanu, the sawmill at Allapalli, workshops under divisional forest officers at Balharshah and Paratwada, Government photo registration office, Pune; **General Administration:** Factory department at Government transportation; **Agriculture Department:** Dairy schemes under Dairy Development Department; **Industries, Energy and Labour:** Government press; **Skill and Entrepreneurship Department:** All it is; The new rule will help save electricity, water, fuel and other resources. Employee satisfaction and quality of life will also improve.

Currently, an employee works for 288 days annually. An employee works for 7.15 hours per day. Thus, there are 175 working hours per month and 2,088 working hours per year. After the implementation of five-day week, an employee will work for 264 days on an average. However, the working hours will increase to 8 hours. Thus, an employee will work for 176 hours per month and 2,112 hours per year.

clause 105 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2015, the State Government may create a fund in the name it thinks fit for the welfare and rehabilitation of children. Similarly, as per rule 85 of Maharashtra State Juvenile Justice Act, there is a provision to create a fund, State Children's Fund for the welfare and rehabilitation of the children dealt with under this Act. Currently, around 21,178 children live in 560 different shelters. Soon, medical help for severe diseases, skill development and vocational training will be given to them.

BAHUJAN WELFARE DEPARTMENT

The Department for Other Backward Classes, Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, Vimukta Jatis, Nomadic Tribes and Special Backward Classes Welfare will now be called Bahujan Welfare Department. To make the long name of the department short and precise, and considering the schemes it implements, the schemes it will implement in future, and the schemes handed over to it by the Department of Higher

and Technical Education, the new name has been suggested.

FREE SPECTACLES FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

The Cabinet has approved the decision of providing free spectacles to school children to help them overcome visual challenges. The approximate recurring cost of this initiative is ₹20 crore and the estimated non-recurring cost is ₹5 crore. Currently, a complete health check-up is being conducted once a year for school children under Centre's Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram. This year, 1,195 medical cells, active for this purpose, observed that visual challenges have increased among school children. Around 8 per cent out of 1,21,67,585 school children have visual defects. Providing them with glasses will help them study better.

FARM LOAN WAIVER

It has been decided in the Cabinet to sanction a grant of ₹10,000 crore in advance for the Mahatma Jotirao Phule Farm Loan Waiver Scheme. The ordi-

nance will be issued after receiving suggestions from the Department of Law and Judiciary and with the approval of the Governor. Currently, the limit for contingency fund is ₹150 crore. This will be raised to ₹10,150 crore by temporarily adding ₹10,000 crore. This scheme will be implemented on February 22, 2020. Till March 5, 2020, ₹10,000 crore will be needed and, hence, the funding will be provided in advance.

DIRECTORATE OF MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

It has been decided to improve the structure of the Directorate of Municipal Council. Accordingly, in addition to the present 138 posts, a further 274 posts will be added soon. Sanction has been accorded for a new structure with 550 posts. Out of these, 108 posts will be in the headquarters, 117 posts at divisional level and 325 posts at district level. Officers holding senior posts of Joint Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner in the Directorate and the Chief Officer category will be given promotions. ■

A REVIEW OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN FEBRUARY 2020

FIVE LAKH HOMES THROUGH MHADA IN NEXT THREE YEARS

Minister for Housing Dr. Jitendra Awhad has said that 5 lakh homes will be built through MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority) during the next three years. Out of these, 50,000 homes will be made available to police staff and 50,000 homes to Class IV Government employees.



Dr. Jitendra Awhad made this announcement at the recently concluded meeting in connection with MHADA, Slum Development Authority as well as the review of Government lands and implementation of a comprehensive project on Government land in Thane through MHADA within Thane Municipal Corporation limits.

The Government currently has 10,000 homes available. A decision has been taken to provide 10 per cent homes to police staff and 10 per cent homes to Class IV Government employees. During the next two months, 1,000 homes for police staff and another 1,000 homes for Class IV Government em-

ployees will be made available through a lottery system. Affordable homes for the poor will not be constructed differently for Government and developers, but will be built together and a lottery will be held together for these homes.

Redevelopment of only the front buildings of MHADA has been carried out at Vartak Nagar in Thane. Based on equal justice principle, while MHADA buildings are redeveloped, these would be an integrated development of the entire layout. Similar principle will be applied for integrated development of Kannamwar Nagar and Tagore Nagar.

The Minister for Housing also informed that new housing projects will be implemented on 72 acres at Kalwa and 100 acres at North Shiv and Mogharpada.



A NEW ENERGY POLICY FOR THE STATE SOON

Minister for Energy Dr. Nitin Raut informed in a meeting of the senior officers of the Energy Department that a new energy policy will be framed in connection with electricity dues of the agricultural electricity consumers and

to boost productivity.

The farmer community in Maharashtra is an important constituent and the Energy Department has to protect the interests of farmers. Instructions to prepare a definitive policy have been issued to the department so that the dues for the farmers could be minimised.

The electricity bills will be placed directly in the hands of the farmers through Urja Mitra working at the village level. This Urja Mitra will discuss the issues of electricity dues of farmers and the concessions available for them. Such issues will form a part of the new policy. Similarly, the electricity available to entrepreneurs in the State and the rates charged will be reviewed. Dr. Nitin Raut further said that the new energy policy will be entrepreneur friendly so that new entrepreneurs can come and number of industries can increase in the State.

PANCHAYATS TO COLLECT ELECTRICITY BILLS

On a basis similar to the appointment of various private agencies for collection

25TH PHASE OF METRO-3 TUNNELLING COMPLETED

The 25th phase of Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ Metro-3 Tunnelling was completed at Worli in the august presence of Minister for Tourism and Environment Aditya Thackeray. This was the first stage of tunnelling for Package-3 of this route, which has a total of seven packages. Package-3 is by far the longest package on this metro route and includes stations of Mumbai Central, Mahalaxmi, Science Museum, Acharya Atre Chowk and Worli.

Tansa-1, the tunnel boring machine for Package-3, was activated from the north end of the Science Museum, activated on September 27, 2018. Facing many geographical challenges, the tunnelling for up line tunnel for 2,073 meters has been completed. A total of 1,381 segment rings have been used for this tunnelling. Seventeen tunnel boring machines are currently activated for work on this 33.5 km route. From the transport point of view, Colaba-Bandra-SEEPZ that is Metro-3 is an important project. The route will resolve the daily commuting issues of Mumbai citizens. Around 78 per cent tunnelling and more than half of the construction work of this project has been completed so far.



MAHARASHTRA SHOULD RECEIVE GST SPEEDILY

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi for a speedier refund of Goods and Services Tax (GST) to Maharashtra and for the benefit of Crop Insurance Scheme to all farmers in the State.

After taking over the reins as Chief Minister, this was the first meeting of the Chief Minister with the Prime Minister at his residence, 7, Lok Kalyan Marg in New Delhi. This announcement was made by the Chief Minister at a press conference held at 15, Safdarjung Lane, the residence of Member of Parliament Sanjay Raut. Minister for Environment and Protocol Aditya Thackeray, MP Sanjay Raut and MP Hemant Patil were present on the occasion.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that he had earlier written to the Prime Minister regarding the refund of the State portion of the GST to Maharashtra. He has now requested the Prime Minister for a speedier refund of the



GST to the State. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured that the Government of India will fully cooperate in the matter. It was also brought to the notice of the Prime Minister that the farmers are facing problems as insurance companies have not yet visited 10 districts of the State for crop insurance.

of electricity bills, one Gram Panchayat from each of the six divisions of Maharashtra will be appointed on an experimental basis to collect electricity bills.

AN INFORMATION CELL FOR HEARING AND SPEECH IMPAIRED AT MANTRALAYA

To resolve the issues of hearing and speech impaired persons in the State and provide them information about the decisions taken by the Government for them, an independent information centre will be set up at Mantralaya with sign language experts. Minister for Social Justice and Special Assistance, Dhananjay Munde made this announcement at Mantralaya during a meeting to address the demands of State-level associations for hearing and speech impaired.

He said that a decision will be taken on the appointment of sign language experts for hearing and speech impaired students as well as for higher education. The standard of the schools for these students will be improved and a decision about training them in ITIs will be taken in consultation with the State Technical Education Department.



The Government plans to start a degree course in sign language and copies of Government decisions issued in respect of *divyangs* (differently abled) will be sent to the schools for the hearing and speech impaired. Trained teachers will also be appointed at these schools. Dhananjay Munde also said that the Government is committed to provide educational as well as physical facilities for *divyangs*.

BAHUJAN WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO GET GRANT OF 16 NEW CHARGES

Minister for Bahujan Welfare Department Vijay Wadettiwar informed that the Government has included 16 other fees as admissible for students from VJNT, OBC and SBC, and the grants for the same will be available to students in vocational or non-vocational streams in aided, non-aided and permanently non-aided colleges. Due to a variety of initiatives implemented in colleges since 2005-06, the other fees increased drastically. The decision has been taken in response to this. Till now, the benefit was available only to students in the arts, commerce and science streams in aided and non-aided colleges and to VJNT, OBC and SBC categories. The benefit was, however, not available for aided and non-aided, permanently non-aided colleges for vocational courses.

The 16 new types of fees that have

now been included are admission fee, extra curriculum/activity fee, university development fund, university student assistance fund/welfare fund, laboratory fees, college magazine fees, university sports fund, university student insurance fund, library fees, computer training fees, University Ashwamedh Fund, youth festival fees, registration fees, university medical assistance fund and student identity card fees.

COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION TRAINING SCHEME

To improve the representation of minority communities in Civil Services Examinations of UPSC, the Competitive Examination Training Scheme being implemented by the Minorities Commission in five districts is to be implemented in all districts of Maharashtra. Directives to formulate such a scheme were issued to the Minorities Development Department. A decision has been taken to increase the stipend to students undergoing training from ₹2,000 to ₹4,000 per month. Similarly, funds provided to training institutes will be increased to ₹50,000, informed Minister for Minorities Development, Nawab Malik.

In order to increase the representation of minority communities in Government employment, a Competitive Examination Training Scheme is being

implemented by the Minorities Commission. The training to deserving minority students is provided at the centres of the State Administrative Training Institutes at Mumbai, Kolhapur, Nagpur, Aurangabad and Yashada (Pune). Ten students are selected for training at each centre. Now, efforts will be made to widen the scope of the training to other districts of Maharashtra.

EXPANSION OF SHIV BHOJAN SCHEME

With an overwhelming response to Shiv Bhojan scheme, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray gave instructions for its expansion. Accordingly, the target number of thalis has been doubled from 18,000 to 36,000. The Food, Civil Supplies and Con-

sumer Protection Department has issued a Government Resolution (GR) in this regard. According to this GR, the objective for every Shiv Bhojan Centre, at minimum 75 and maximum 150 thalis, will be increased to minimum 75 and maximum 200 thalis.

The scheme was started on Republic Day. The poor section of the population has responded overwhelmingly to the scheme.

The Food and Civil Supplies Department had decided the method of selection of centres in the GR dated January 1, 2020. The GR has instructions that, in future as well, the selection of the cen-



tres will be based on the same method and the number of thalis may be increased to 200. Instructions have also been given that apart from officers from the department, tehsildar, Block Development Of-

ficer and officers of equivalent ranks should organise visits and inspections of Shiv Bhojan centres for cleanliness, safety and quality of food. The scheme is currently being implemented at public places such as Government offices, hospitals, bus and railway stations and markets, and its expansion has been planned.

INFORMATION ABOUT DISHA ACT

The State Government is making all efforts to bring a stringent law so that atrocities on women are brought under control. As part of these efforts, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh visited Andhra Pradesh to understand the Disha Act of the State Government. During this visit, he discussed this with Chief Minister Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy, Home Minister Smt. Mekathoti Sucharitha, and Director General of Police of Andhra Pradesh.

The Andhra Pradesh Government has enacted Disha Act for speedy hearing and resolution of crimes against women, especially cases of sexual harassment, a decision within 21 days, and the convict to be sentenced to death.



AGRICULTURE MINISTER – ONE DAY ON A FIELD INITIATIVE

On February 7, 2020, Minister for Agriculture, Dadaji Bhuse announced at a programme in Nagpur that 'Agriculture Minister – One day on a field' initiative will be implemented to understand the issues of farmers. The Minister for Agriculture implemented the initiative within a week and visited the agricultural fields of farmers at Valwade, Ajang-Vadel, Zodge and Malmatha in Malegaon taluka and understood the issues before the farmers in this area. He also asked the farmers if the Agriculture Officer and Agricultural Assistant visit the village.

The initiative has been started by Dadaji Bhuse to inspire farmers for higher produce and understand the issues faced by them. The Minister also suggested the visits of Secretary and Commissioner, Agriculture to meet the farmers. He has instructed the department to discuss issues such as crop planning and production capacity and give information about market and various schemes. Dadaji Bhuse had made this announcement at Farmer Awards' ceremony in Nagpur and implemented the initiative in letter and spirit. He had a dialogue with a farmer, Shantaram Gawli from Valwade and tried to understand his problems. He also discussed the crop insurance scheme and onion production with farmers. He also visited the fields at Ajang-Vadel, Zodge and Malmatha areas to have a dialogue with farmers.



EDUCATION DAY ON FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH

As there is no formal system currently for action on complaints beyond the purview of the School Tribunal, the State Government has decided to establish complaint redressal committees at school, district and divisional levels so that these complaints are addressed and resolved faster. A complaint box will be placed in every school and the first Monday of every month will be observed as Education Day on the lines of Democracy Day. This was announced

by Minister for School Education Smt. Varsha Gaikwad.

At the school level, the complaint redressal committee will comprise headmaster and teachers. Here complaints from students and teachers will be resolved. The committee at district level will consist of District Education Officer/Education Inspector and Group Education Officer. At divisional level, the committee will work under Deputy Director. To resolve complaints from students, parents, schools and institutions, there will be a committee with Chairman, Divisional Board of Education, Divisional Deputy Director of Education and Deputy Inspector, Education as members. Through these committees, any complaint registered by students and parents, such as non-receipt of uniforms, exploitation of any type, and breach of the Right to Education Act, will be resolved. The managements of institutes will also be able to register complaints in case of institutional disputes.

MAHARASHTRA WINS STATE OF THE YEAR AWARD



Maharashtra won the State of the Year award at the 15th edition of India Business Leader Awards held in Mumbai on February 28, 2020. Minister for Industries, Subhash Desai received the award from Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the presence of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. Minister for Tourism, Environment and Protocol Aditya Thackeray and industrialist Mukesh Ambani were also present. ■



An MoU was signed in respect of Pune Metro project with European Investment Bank (EIB). On this occasion, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Minister for Public Works (Public Undertakings) Eknath Shinde, Managing Director of Pune Metro Brijesh Dixit, and Vice President, EIB Andrew McDowell were present.

MOU FOR PUNE METRO PROJECT

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is going to provide financial assistance to the extent of Euro 600 million (around ₹4,800 crore) for the Pune Metro project. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) in connection with the first instalment of the amount, Euro 200 million (around ₹1,600 crore), was signed between the bank and Pune Metro in the presence of Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. At a programme held at the office of Mumbai Metropolitan Regional Development Authority, Brijesh Dixit, Managing Director, Pune Metro and Andrew McDowell, Vice President, EIB signed the MoU.

With the cooperation of European Investment Bank, Pune Metro project will be accelerated and activated early. The project will effectively improve the traffic at Pune and surrounding areas and contribute to the development of the city. The physical progress of Pune Metro today stands at 37 per cent and the financial progress at 29.53 per cent. Funds provided by the bank will be used for the tunnel route of metro, depot works and others. Investment development of the European Investment Bank in various areas of Maharashtra has been promising. The Chief Minister requested the bank for financial assistance for Nashik Metro and environment conservation works along with Pune Metro.

Pune Metro in brief: The Pune Metro Rail Project is an ambitious civil transport project. *It is being implemented through MahaMETRO under a joint partnership of 50:50 between the Government of India and the State Government. *The work on the project was started on January 23, 2017. *This is a 32.5 km route with 30 stations on way. *The total project cost is expected to be ₹11,420 crore. *With assistance from the Government of India and the State Government, the project has loan from A.F.D. France and European Investment Bank.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS OF MANGAON CONFERENCE

The first historical conference was held in presence of Rajarshi Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj and under the Chairmanship of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at Mangaon (taluka Hatkanagale) on March 21-22, 1920. Centenary celebrations of this historical conference have been organised on March 22, 2020 at Mangaon, informed the Minister for Social Justice and Special Assistance, Dhananjay Munde.

The celebrations are being organised by the Social Justice and Special Assistance Department, Government of Maharashtra and BARTI. The Mangaon Conference committee has organised many events and initiatives on the occasion. Dhananjay Munde has said that all the required funds for the celebrations will be provided through BARTI.



A PLEASANT VISIT OF THE FAMILY HEAD

During his recent Nashik tour, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray interacted with people like a family elder striving for the happiness and well-being of every member. Meeting this quiet, calm and sensitive personality was memorable for everyone, says Dr. Kiran Moghe.

In Nashik collector office, an independent review meeting of each district of Nashik division was conducted. MLAs from the region were invited to attend this meeting. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray listened to the grievances of people in their respective constituencies and in the presence of senior administration officials. He decided to solve the problems instantly. "This is the first time that somebody gave a patient hearing to our grievances and took an instant decision to solve them on the spot! We surely owe you special thanks for this," said a representative.

Problems were narrated on an individual basis, followed by which ev-

sand for under-construction houses being built under Prime Minister's Housing Scheme, tourism development, a dry port at Niphad, rivers' connectivity project, and water scarcity problem of Manmad were also taken.

NILWANDE DAM COMPLETION

In the Ahmednagar district meeting, the Chief Minister announced that all pending work of Nilwande Dam will be completed in the next two years and ₹1,100 crore will be allotted. Decisions were also taken on bringing water from westward flowing rivers in Godavari basin, expansion of Ahmednagar MIDC, Savitribai Phule Pune University's sub-centres in Ahmednagar and Nashik,

of Chalisgaon-Malegaon road, administrative building at Chalisgaon, upgrade of Amalner hospital, and building a sub-station at Dhanora.

FLYOVER ON MALEGAON ROAD

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray instructed officials to send a proposal about a flyover on Malegaon road in Dhule to solve the traffic problem in the city. He said that all pending works of Jalyukt Shivar will be completed. He directed officials to solve the problems of Shirpur health centre and took decisions on *ashramshalas* for tribal and hostel building, facility of 100 beds at the district hospital, and filling posts in the health department and rural hospital.



Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray taking review of the districts of Nashik division during the meeting at the district headquarters.

ery MLA was given a chance to speak. Questions were directed to officials. The Secretary-level officials present in the meeting ensured some quick decisions. A summary of decisions with the assurance that the dialogue will continue and an appeal to give suggestions were made at the end.

PUNE-MUMBAI-NASHIK GOLDEN TRIANGLE

In the Nashik district meeting, the Chief Minister ordered the execution of Pune-Mumbai-Nashik Golden triangle. Major decisions like special focus on the development of Malegaon, power supply to agricultural pumps, supply of

development of Shirdi Airport, starting of the power substation at Shrirampur, and Kopargaon court building.

POWER SUPPLY TO AGRI PUMPS

When elected representatives from Jalgaon informed the Chief Minister that farmers in the district want electricity for their agricultural pumps during day time, he immediately ordered officials from the Power Department to make necessary arrangements. He also said that preference will be given to complete the pending irrigation projects in the district. He promised to allocate funds for a district sports complex. Decisions were also taken on the repair

NANDURBAR: A NATURAL BEAUTY

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that he is fascinated by the charm of Nandurbar and is keen to solve the problems of its remote areas. His announcement of ₹1.75 crore for Susri Project and ₹1.5 crore for Dhanpur Project generated a wave of happiness among locals. He also promised to take up the matter of mobile network in remote areas with the Centre and pursue it.

FIRST UNIVERSITY TO TRAIN JUDGES

The Chief Minister also attended the lawyers' conference organised by Maharashtra and Goa Bar Council. In his presence, the foundation of a new



SHIV BHOJAN THALI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited the Shiv Bhojan Kendra run by Dwarkamai self-help group at Wadala Naka and interacted with people. The interaction overwhelmed a beneficiary, Tukaram Nade, who was surprised to speak to the Chief Minister. His gentle discussion with their leader proved sweeter than the food!

building of Nashik District Court was laid. He also visited the Heritage Gallery in Nashik District Court premises.

Speaking at the conference on Towards Fast and Advanced Justice, he said, "There is a need to change the British era laws, taking into consideration people's needs in these changing times." He promised that help will be given to start India's first university to train judges. The varsity should produce best judges to give fast and fair justice like Ramshastri Prabhune, who

was fearless while pointing the mistakes of rulers.

FARMER IS MAHARASHTRA'S FOCUS

During his Jalgaon district tour, the Chief Minister gave away Padma Shri Late Dr. Appasaheb Pawar Modern Agri-Hi-Tech Award hosted by Jain Irrigation Systems. Former Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, Labour Minister Dilip Walse-Patil, Agriculture Minister Dadaji Bhuse, and Water Supply and Sanitation Minister Gulabrao

Patil also graced the occasion.

The Chief Minister said, "Farmer is the focal point of Maharashtra's policies. To free him from the clutches of loans, Mahatma Jotirao Phule Farmer Loan Waiver Scheme will serve as first aid. My Government is committed to provide them electricity, water and fair price for their crops." He also inaugurated Agri-Biotech Research and Development Facility at Jain Hills.

A HUGE RESPONSIBILITY

The farmers' meet at Muktainagar, attended by the Chief Minister, saw an overwhelming response from farmers. Speaking on the occasion, Uddhav Thackeray said, "I have been bestowed with this major task of leading the State with people's blessings and while holding the responsibility, my Government has already started working for farmers, jobless youth and women."

—Acting Deputy Director (Information), Nashik

REVAMPING KONKAN FOR A NEW MAHARASHTRA

The Government believes in quality over quantity. Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, while reviewing the development plans for the Konkan region, has assured that the entire region will be revamped in building the New Maharashtra.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray reviewed the issues of Sindhudurg district in detail. At a Cabinet meeting, he instructed the respective departments to prepare a tourism development plan in the Tillari Irrigation Project area, keeping environment conservation as a mandate. Strict law will be made against LED fishing in the State. He also advised all the departments to review vacant positions and begin



Nature's beauty, Ganpatipule

hiring for these posts immediately.

A meeting will be conducted wherein a decision regarding the Government land of 658 hectares in the Kabulayadar Gavankar issue will be taken. Batch mix instead of concrete will be used for constructing durable yet affordable coastal roads. The idea of taking Redi and Aronda Dam under Government ownership is being considered. Panbudi project will also be reconsidered. A sports complex with modern equipment will be set up in the district. Proposals need to be submitted for building memorials dedicated to poet Mangesh Padgaonkar and other revered personalities. The Chief Minister has also asked Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation to submit a tourism development plan for the district within a month.

LOAN WAIVER FOR FISHERMEN

There is a loan waiver scheme of up to ₹2 lakh for farmers. The State Government is now planning to start a loan waiver scheme for fishermen. A survey will be conducted to determine the number of fishermen in debt, type of loan, and loan amount, based on which they will be categorised for the scheme.

KANKAVLI TRAUMA CARE

The proposed trauma care centre at Kankavli will be set up soon. The virology lab will be set up by April. A proposal has to be given to research new vaccination against the Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFDD) or Monkey Fever. The work of the sub-district hospital in Vengurla has also been completed and the hospital will be functional from April. The fund required for a women and childcare hospital at Kudal will be given on priority.

FOCUS ON PENDING PROPOSALS

The Chief Minister talked about pending projects, such as Aruna, Nardave and Sea World. He informed

that projects such as Sea World can be taken ahead in partnership with private investors by providing additional capital if required. Pending irrigation projects will be restarted and completed soon. A small-scale irrigation scheme for Masure (Anganwadi) was also approved, the estimated cost of which is ₹22.12 crore. The letter for the same was given by the Chief Minister to Guardian Minister Uday Samant.

INSPECTION OF SINDHUDURG FORT

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited and inspected the Sindhudurg Fort. He also visited the Chhatrapati Shivaji



PLAN FOR GANPATIPULE DEVELOPMENT

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated the ₹102 crore development plan for Ganpatipule. He assured that the process of development in Konkan will never be short of funds. The programmes under the plan are:

Phase I: ■ Works related to Ganpatipule's famous Ganesh Temple and nearby area ■ Providing basic infrastructure to devotees ■ Works related to water supply and sanitation schemes ■ Building public washrooms and bathrooms with larger capacities ■ Marking safe areas on the beach and ensuring the safety of tourists **Phase II:** ■ Waste-water treatment and solid waste management **Phase III:** ■ An objective to complete the development plan for the roads of the village and those around the temple by March 31, 2022.

Maharaj and Bhavani Mata Temple and paid tribute.

APPROVAL FOR NEW BUSINESSES

Under Chief Minister Employment Generation Scheme, Uddhav Thackeray distributed approval letters to five young entrepreneurs from Sindhudurg in the presence of Minister for Industries, Subhash Desai. This programme is being implemented to encourage micro and small scale enterprises and promote employment generation; 102 proposals from the district were approved.

TEMPLE COMMITTEES

The Chief Minister has announced that strategic decisions will be made within a month to ensure the smooth transfer of land between temple committees in Maharashtra. He also reviewed the issues of Ratnagiri.

NOD FOR FLOOD EMBANKMENTS

In the monsoon last year, Rajapur city was flooded to an extent that water had entered even two-storeyed buildings. Similarly, water had accumulated up to 10 feet in the market areas of Chiplun. To protect these regions from flooding, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray approved the construction of flood embankments near rivers.

CIRCULAR RECRUITMENT

There are many vacant positions in offices in Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts. A strategic decision has been made to solve this issue through which all the vacancies will be filled. The Chief Minister also informed that both the districts will have priority in the circular method of recruitment.

The bridge connecting Ratnagiri and Raigad will be completed by Maritime Board with the funds from Public Works Department. Priority will be given to Nivali Ghat near Ratnagiri and other roads, he informed.

—Team Lokrajya



RAIGAD: THE PRIDE OF MAHARASHTRA

The magnificent fort of Raigad, which has been witness to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's coronation ceremony, is one of the highlights of Maharashtra's rich history. It is not just a fort, but a symbol of pride and honour for the State. The Hirkani Buruj (bastion) at Raigad tells the tales of bravery and courage of the women of Maharashtra. Raigad, a fort with a glorious history and an example of extraordinary architecture, is nothing less than a pilgrimage for the disciples of Shivaji Maharaj and fort lovers, says Sarang Khanapurkar.

Raigad is the fort where the king of Marathas, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, who established *Swarajya* over the five Shahi rulers ruling over India, was crowned. It is the second capital of *Swarajya*. After successfully handling the charge for 25 years, Shivaji Maharaj decided to move the capital to Raigad for security reasons. Closer to the sea and not easily accessible, the Rairi Fort (earlier name of the fort) was captured by Shivaji Maharaj in 1656

from the Mores of Jawali. Observing its structure and location, he immediately decided to make it the capital. The fort was further beautified by building lakes, wells, factories, palaces and temples on it. The fort, located on a steep mountain top, blows the minds of the visitors. This fort has witnessed everything—from the glory of Shivaji Maharaj's coronation to the gloom of his last breath. Raigad is nothing less than a pilgrimage for the disciples of Shivaji Maharaj and fort lovers.

GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The height of Raigad is 2851 feet above sea level. Towards its east is Lingana, whereas Makarandgad, Pratapgad and Vasota are to its south. Kokandiva is to its north and Rajgad and Torana are to its south-east. The fort is located 25 km from Mahad in Raigad district.

PLACES TO SEE ON THE FORT

Jijamata Palace at Pachad: Rajmata Jijau had aged by the time the capital of *Swarajya* was moved to Raigad. The



FORT'S HISTORY

Raigad was originally known as Rairi. The fort also had other names such as Nandadeep, Jambudweep, Raigiri, Shivilanka, Bhivgad and Islamgad. Because of its serenity, westerners named this fort the Gibraltar of the East. The Shirke household has been in-charge of the fort since the fifth century. Earlier, it did not look like a fort. During Nizamshah's reign, it was used to keep prisoners. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj captured the fort in 1656. He was crowned here on June 6, 1674. Before his coronation he offered a three-gem gold umbrella to the Goddess of the fort. After dedicating his entire life to achieving *Swarajya*, Maharaj breathed his last in this fort. In 1689, during the rule of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj, Raigad Fort, the pride of *Swarajya*, was captured by Mughals by the betrayal of the fort's governor (*killedar*), Suryaji Pisal. After around 44 years, the fort was regained by the Marathas in 1733, under the rule of Shahu Maharaj.



wind and water on the fort did not suit her well and hence Shivaji Maharaj built her a palace

in Pachad village, just at the foot of the fort. She lived there for many years. There is a well with stairs at the palace where one can also see Jijamata's stone-made place of seating. This well is also known as Shingle well.

Khubladha Buruj: There is a bastion close to the fort when you start climbing the stairs. This bastion is named Khubladha buruj. Chit Darwaja, which was right next to the bastion, has now been completely destroyed.

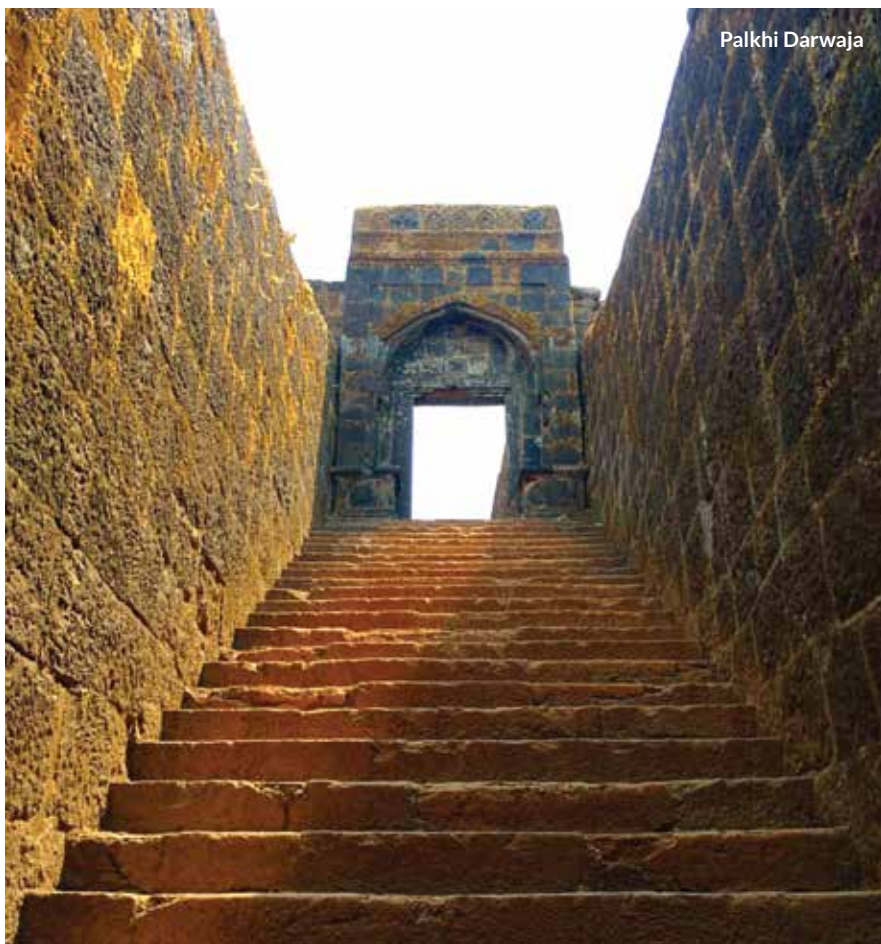
Nana Darwaja: Nana Darwaja or Nane Darwaja means a small door. Inside the door there are two rooms for the watchmen. These rooms are called Devdya.

Masjid Morcha: There is an open space ahead of the Chit Darwaja. Towards one side there is Madanshah's tomb and two more structures next to it. One of them is a room for storing food grains, while the other is for security guards. A little ahead one can see three caves carved in the rock.

Mahadarwaja: There are two giant bastions at the Mahadarwaja of heights 75 feet and 65 feet, respectively. One can see lotus carvings on both sides of the door. These carvings are symbols of Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Saraswati. Just next to the door are holes to attack the enemies. This provision continues till *Takmak Tok* (a scenic point) in the left and *Hir-kani Tok* in the right. There is also a hidden pathway (Chordindi) through which one can come to the door.

Hatti talao, Ganga Sagar talao: Moving a little further into Mahadarwaja, there is Hatti talao or lake. There used to be a Gajshala (school of elephants) on the fort. The water from this lake was used for bathing the elephants and also for their drinking. A little ahead of Hatti talao is the Ganga Sagar talao, another lake. There are two towers to the south of Ganga Sagar talao, which are known as *Stambha*.

Palkhi Darwaja





Ganga Sagar Tank

A unique location in Sahyadris, Raigad Fort offers many trekking circuits for both amateurs and professionals. **Torana, Sinhagad, Lingana and Rajgad are approachable fort destinations via passes that go through dense forest and terrain that poses thrilling challenges.**

HOW TO REACH RAIGAD?

Raigad is equidistant from Pune, Mumbai and Satara. One can travel to Raigad from the three cities on a two or four-wheeler or by a bus.

From Mumbai: Raigad is at 24 km distance from Mahad on the Mumbai-Goa highway.

From Pune: There is a road going towards Kolad village after crossing the Tamhini Ghat. Taking a left as soon as the ghat ends, Raigad is 25 km away on the road towards Nijapur via Pachad.

There are two ways to reach:

Ropeway: There is a ropeway facility at the foot of the fort. It takes you to the fort in just 4 minutes. For those who cannot climb the fort on foot, this service comes in handy. There is a ticket for the ropeway.

Roadway and stairway: There is a road to Raigad Fort through Pachad Valley. There are around 1,400 steps to reach the fort. It takes about 2 hours to climb to the fort on foot. However, if the fort has to be explored well, it is advised to stay in the fort overnight. There is a stay facility in the fort.

Palkhi Darwaja: To the west of the towers is a wall. After climbing the stairs near the wall, you reach Palkhi Darwaja. There is an uneven road ahead of this *darwaja* (gateway). Further ahead, there is Mena Darwaja. There was a queen's palace to the right of the Mena Darwaja, the remains of which can be seen even now. You can go to the Balekilla through the Mena Darwaja.

Rajbhavan: There were servants' quarters in front of the queen's palace, the remains of which are still there. There is a wall behind the remains. There is a door in the middle of the wall which opens up to a *Chauthara* (raised platform) in Balekilla. This was Maharaj's Rajbhavan. The *chauthara* is 86 feet long and 33 feet wide. There is also a *talghar* (cellar) in the open space to the right of Rajbhavan. This is the *Jawahirkhana*. It is assumed that gems and jewels must have been stored at this place.

Rajsabha: The Rajsabha is 220 feet long and 124 feet wide. The place can

accommodate around 5,000 to 6,000 people. The place faces east. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj was crowned here. A throne of gold was made for the ceremony. There is a statue of Shivaji Maharaj here. The most surprising feature of this place is that even the softest whisper here can be heard in the areas around.

Nagarkhana: There is a huge door in front of the throne. This is the main entrance door for Balekilla.

Bazaarpeth: When you come out of *Bazaarpeth* (marketplace), there is Holicha Maal towards the left. Even here, there is a statue of Shivaji Maharaj. Right in front of the statue, there are two rows of stone-made *chutharas*. There is a 40-foot-long road between the rows.

While some people claim that this is the *bazaarpeth* from Shivaji Maharaj's time, some scholars believe that this road was built as an exit road for revered guests and Sardars.

Shirkai temple: There is a small

Hiroji Indulkar was the chief architect of Raigad Fort. The fort has an inscription dedicated to him.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Samadhi



temple of Goddess Shirkai to the right side of Shivaji Maharaj's statue. Goddess Shirkai is the deity of the Shirke clan who are in charge of the fort now for many years. The temple that can be seen now is not the original one, but the idol inside belongs to olden times. The temple was originally located at Holicha Maal.

Jagdishwar Temple: The temple is situated down the slope to the east of *Bazaarpeth* ahead of Brahmanvasti and Brahman Talao. There is a huge and gracious idol of Nandi at this temple. Currently, it is in a ruined state. There is a hall at the temple. A huge idol of Lord Hanuman is carved inside the sanctum. Under the stairs of the entrance to the temple, there is an inscription dedicated to Hiroji Indulkar, who was the chief architect of the fort.

Shivaji Maharaj's Samadhi: The octagonal platform to the east of Jagdishwar temple is Shivaji Maharaj's Samadhi. Here, one automatically bows down in respect remembering the great leader.

Wagh Darwaja: The road to the right of Holicha Maal passing through the Kushvarta talao leads to Wagh Darwaja. This door was one of the emergency exit routes from the fort.

Takmak Tok: Takmak Tok is a point situated ahead of Bazaarpeth. The way to it gets narrower as we move closer to the point. In olden times, criminals were punished by pushing them off the cliff from this point. This was one of the deadliest punishments as the height of this point is 2,500 ft above ground level.

Hirkani Tok: There is a way from the right side of the Ganga Sagar Lake, which takes you to Hirkani Tok. This point was considered to be an important part of the fort, as the cannons placed here could cover a wide range of land. There is also a cave to the left side towards Pachad village, which looks like tiger's eyes. This cave is believed to be extremely ancient. The sight of Rajgad from this point coupled with strong winds is worth experiencing.

—The writer is a journalist from Sakal



Mahadarwaja

“LOAN WAIVED OFF, WELCOME TO MY DAUGHTER’S WEDDING”

*“Sir, as loan waiver amount is being deposited, I am no longer worried about my daughter's wedding. I welcome you to her wedding...” This was an affectionate invitation from Vitthalrao Garud from Parbhani to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. In another response, Popat Mukte, a farmer from Ahmednagar, told the Chief Minister that it was the first time that he did not have to make a number of trips to get loan freedom. Both these responses underline the successful implementation of Mahatma Jotirao Phule Farmer Loan Waiver scheme, says **Ajay Jadhav**.*



Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Minister for Cooperation Balasaheb Patil, Minister for Public Works Ashok Chavan, Minister for Revenue Balasaheb Thorat and Minister for Agriculture Dadaji Bhuse release the first list of farmers eligible for Mahatma Jotirao Phule Loan Waiver Scheme.

The auspicious beginning of bestowing the benefits of Mahatma Jotirao Phule Farmer Loan Waiver scheme was accomplished by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. On this occasion, the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister established a dialogue with the beneficiary farmers from Parbhani, Ahmednagar and Amravati districts through video conferencing. The first list of the eligible farmers was published on this occasion.

DID YOU HAVE TO MAKE TRIPS?

The Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister asked the beneficiary farmers about troubles they faced accessing the scheme, the number of trips they had to make to Government offices, the amount of the loan, the crop for which the loan was availed, and the difference

they found between the earlier scheme and the current scheme. Popat Mukte from Ahmednagar said he was satisfied 100 per cent about the scheme. He also said that earlier he had to make five to six trips, but this time it was just a thumb impression that was needed.

BEST WISHES TO A COUPLE

Vitthalrao Garud from Pingli, Parbhani, said that the scheme has freed him from worrying about the loan repayment. He shared with the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister the happy news of his daughter's marriage. Ajit Pawar enquired about the new relationship and bestowed best wishes on Garud's daughter and son-in-law. Touched by this conversation, Vitthalrao Garud immediately invited both the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister to the marriage celebrations.

IT IS THE SUCCESS OF THE ADMINISTRATION

The credit of the success of the huge loan waiver scheme, which relieved many farmers from the worries of loans within just 60 days, goes to better administration. “Do not consider that you are obliging the farmers in any way while implementing the scheme. We are earning the blessings of farmers through this scheme and so we are also the beneficiaries. The farmers should not feel unhappy if they observe certain discrepancies in implementation at some locations,” said the Chief Minister. On this occasion, he also suggested that everyone working in the system needs to be patient while understanding the issues before farmers and should not hurt them in any way.

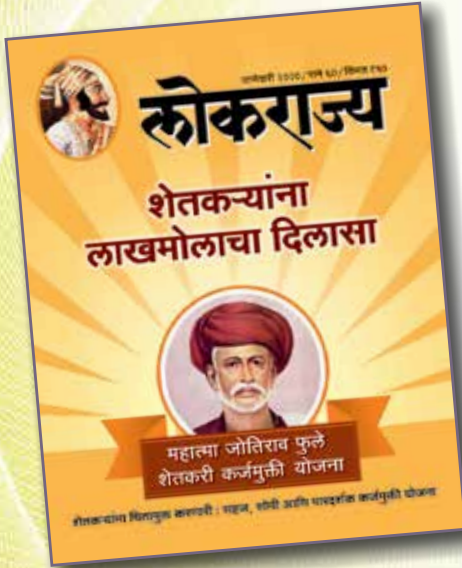
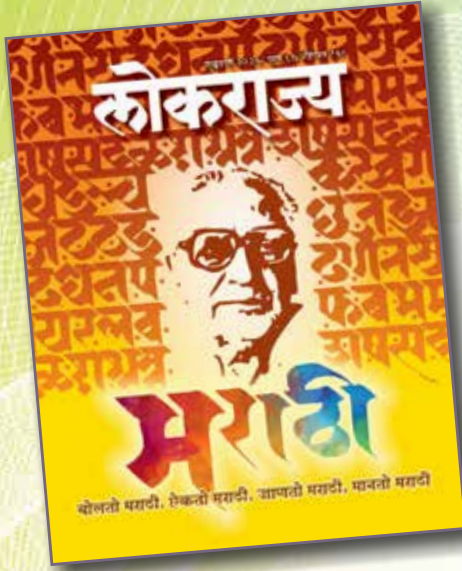
SCHEME FOR LOAN FREEDOM

“Our efforts are for our farmers to attain loan freedom. We started this scheme with the same sentiment. The Government has brought this scheme so that once free from loan, our farmers can reap a fine yield from the lands,” said Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, adding that the Government is interested in seeing that the farmer is happy and his children are getting proper education.

INFORMATION OF 35 LAKH LOAN ACCOUNTS COLLECTED IN 35 DAYS

On this occasion, the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister also established a dialogue with Suresh Kotekar, Smt. Sarita Gadhe and Babarao Damodar from Amravati. Under the scheme, the information on 35,83,908 farmer accounts has been received. A list of 15,358 farmers has been published. Information on these 35 lakh loan accounts has been collected within 35 days and audited within 15 days. The complete implementation of the scheme is being carried out through a computer system. The amount will be credited to the accounts of the farmers only after they approve the same. The farmers are being provided a receipt after the verification of their Aadhaar.

—Departmental Liaisoning Officer



GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA

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Government of Maharashtra
Cooperation Department

**MAHATMA JOTIRAO PHULE
FARMER LOAN WAIVER SCHEME**


2019

● PUBLIC APPEAL ●

The lists of farmers under Farmer Loan Waiver Scheme are being announced. The farmers whose names appear in the list should get Aadhaar verified. The benefits of the scheme are only for needy farmers. Hence, if the names of the persons ineligible as per the criterion mentioned below appear in the list announced, they are hereby publicly appealed to not avail of the benefits under the scheme:

Following persons are not eligible for the benefit of the scheme:

- Present/Former Ministers/Ministers of State, Present/Former Members of Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha, Present/Former Members of Legislative Assembly/Legislative Council.
- All the Officers and Staff of Union and State Government (except Class IV staff) with a combined monthly salary of more than ₹25,000).
- Officers and staff of the State Undertakings (such as Mahavitaran, ST Corporation, etc.) officers and staff of aided institutions (with a combined monthly salary of more than ₹25,000).
- Individuals paying income tax on income other than from agriculture.
- Pension holders whose monthly pension is more than ₹25,000 (except ex-servicemen).
- Officers of APMC, cooperative sugar factories, cooperative spinning mills, urban cooperative banks, district central cooperative banks and cooperative milk federation (with a combined monthly salary of more than ₹25,000) and office-bearers (Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Board of Directors).



Uddhav Thackeray, Chief Minister

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