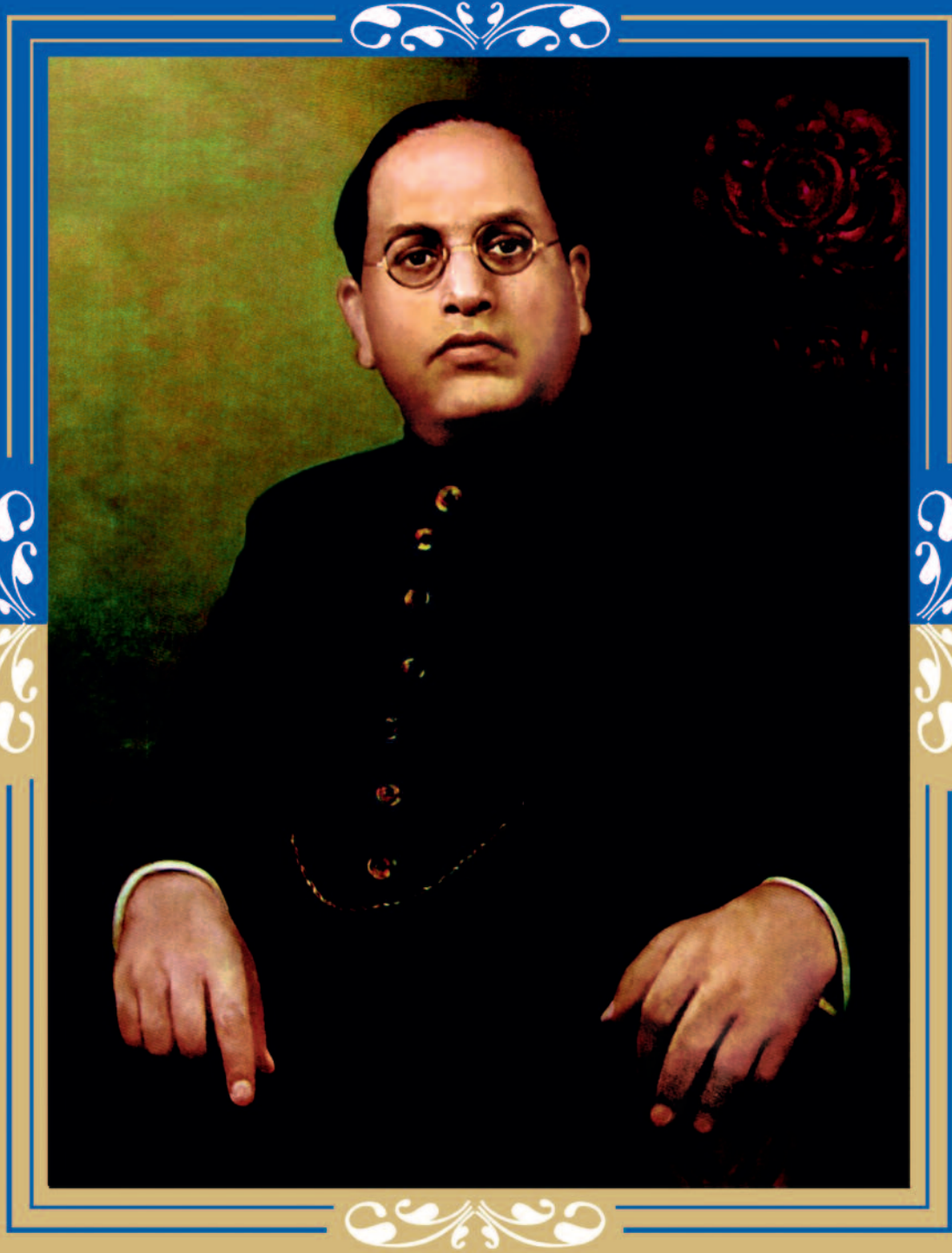


MaharashtraAhead

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A NATION BUILDER

IN A TRIBUTE TO INDIA'S FOREMOST JURIST, ECONOMIST, POLITICIAN, SOCIAL REFORMER AND SCHOLAR, WE VISIT THE LIFE OF BHARAT RATNA DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR

A joyous beginning

Gudi Padwa, the first day of the New Year, is an auspicious day to start new ventures



The advent of a New Year heralds new hopes, new dreams and opportunities of prosperity and wish fulfillment. In Maharashtra, the first day of spring is celebrated as Gudi Padwa or the New Year. The festival was celebrated on March 21 this year. Falling on the first day of the Chaitra month in the Hindu calendar, it is a time to bid adieu to the old and usher in the new, a time of rejuvenation and rejoicing.

There are many myths and folklores associated with Gudi Padwa. According to Hindu mythology, on this day, Lord Brahma created the universe. It is also believed that it was on this day that Lord Rama killed Bali. It is one of the three-and-a-half days in the Hindu calendar when each and every moment of the day is auspicious.

Gudi Padwa also marks several rituals and customs. A bamboo staff or *gudi* is erected in front of the house. A new cloth is then tied to it and a bright garlanded vessel is hung on top of it. This is symbolic of achievement and is displayed to ward off evil and invite prosperity and good luck into the house. The *gudi* is now worshipped and the *naivedyam* (offerings) is distributed among all the family members. The offering is made out of tender *neem* leaves, tamarind, *ajwain*, gram-pulse and jaggery. According to popular belief, the mixture strengthens one's immunity system.

After waking up early in the morning, people clean their homes and decorate the floors with beautifully drawn *rangolis*. Some keep a pot with coconuts, flowers and mango leaves just outside their home. They wear new clothes and make tasteful sweet dishes such as *shrikhand* and *jalebis*. Celebrations continue all day along. Sweets are distributed to neighbours and relatives. In the evening, a visit is made to the village temple and everyone prays for good rains for the season ahead. Late in the evening, people get together to perform and dance thus closing the Gudi Padwa celebrations on a high note.





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COVER STORY

A BUDGET FOR ALL

The maiden annual budget of the current Maharashtra Government lays special focus on agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and decentralised industrial development. With efforts at taking the expenditure to ₹40,000 crore, it is aimed at boosting the State economy and turning it around



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LEADER WITH A CAUSE

The principal architect of India's constitution, Bharat Ratna Dr. B.R. Ambedkar had many titles. One not much talked about is of a scholar. We visit his life to know his journey



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IN PERSON

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR

An interview with Union Environment Minister who talks about the initiatives taken by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, and how it aims at building a people-friendly image



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TARAPOREVALA AQUARIUM

Mumbai's 64-year-old aquarium makes a comeback after renovations and additions. A visit to city's famous landmark and what new it has on offer



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GIRISH MAHAJAN

Minister for Water Resources and Guardian Minister of Nashik, Girish Mahajan talks about the Government's efforts to make the upcoming Kumbh Mela a grand, environment-friendly show for all



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A GIFTED VARIETY

Ratnagiri Alphonso, the saffron coloured mango, is called 'King of fruits' due to its rich creamy taste. One of India's best exports, the variety, with the GI status, is well placed on popularity charts



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Resplendant with rich, rock-cut sculptures of Lord Shiva, the cave complex of Elephanta in Mumbai is a dynamic piece of ancient Indian architecture attracting visitors from across the world



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THE UNDEFEATED FORT

Maharashtra is home to forts built by various rulers down the ages. We visit Murud's Janjira Jal-durg in the first column of our new series on the monuments



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Ministers in the Maharashtra Government talk on women equality, environment conservation and commitment to inclusive development and the launch of Mahaop

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A PROGRESSIVE, INCLUSIVE BUDGET

At the outset we extend New Year greetings to the readers of *Maharashtra Ahead*. In Maharashtra, the New Year is celebrated on the first day of the Hindu calendar month Chaitra as Gudi Padwa. We hope our readers celebrated the festival with gaiety.

April is when India enters a new financial year. It is the time when the country and its States adopt a new Budget to serve the needs of people and to launch schemes that give wings to their aspirations.

The Budget, presented by Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar, focuses on "Together with all, Development for all." Notwithstanding the constraints of limited resources, the public debt of ₹3 lakh crore and the revenue deficit of ₹13,883 crore (revised estimates for 2014-15) the Government has expressed its resolve to take Maharashtra on the path of progress. Chief Minister Devendra

Fadnavis called the Budget "daring". He said the Budget has taken a quantum jump in capital expenditure. Farmers affected by drought are the prime focus of this Budget. Provision of ₹1,000 crore for **Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan** and irrigation projects, and funds to various welfare schemes like the **Mukhya Mantri Grameen Marg Yojana, Aamdar Adarsh Gaon Vikas Yojana, Digital Maharashtra** and **Bhagyashree Yojana**, make the Budget inclusive and supportive of State's mega programmes like Make in Maharashtra.

In other sections, we have an essay on the life of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. In her piece, historian Ananya Vajpeyi visits the life of eminent

Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Not many are aware that the principal architect of the Constitution of India was a scholar as much as a politician, and wrote several books. In her piece, she visits the many facets of his life.

The first column in the series of forts in Maharashtra, historian, writer and orator, Ninad Bedekar talks about the sea fort, Janjira Jal-durg. One of India's best exports, Ratnagiri Alphonso, the magnificent caves of Elephanta and the just renovated Taraporevala Aquarium in Mumbai make this edition a delight. Hope you enjoy the edition as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

Maharashtra Ahead, an English monthly, is effectively presenting innovative schemes and development works of the State Government outside Maharashtra. Our web portal, *Mahanews* has been visited by about two crore netizens. *Jai Maharashtra* on Sahyadri channel (Doordarshan) has so far completed 742 episodes. *Dilkhulas* programme on Aakashwani has successfully aired 2,241 episodes. Over the years, the programmes have established themselves as strong platforms taking Government's initiatives to people at large. We look forward to your feedback.

Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar

Editor-in-Chief, *Maharashtra Ahead*, DGIPR

The farmer-friendly Budget also covers other weaker sections of Maharashtra. The State Budget focuses on the slogan, "Together with all, Development for all"



(From left) Minister of State (Finance) Deepak Kesarkar and State Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar before presenting the Budget

OUTLAYS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The maiden annual budget of the current Maharashtra Government, termed as “daring” by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, lays special focus on agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and decentralised industrial development. It is aimed at boosting the State economy and turning it around. An analysis by **Team Maharashtra Ahead**

The maiden budget of Devendra Fadnavis-led Government for 2015-16 presented by Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar focuses on “Together with all, Development for all,” the slogan given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for inclusive development. Notwithstanding the constraints of limited resources, the public debt of ₹3 lakh crore and the revenue deficit of ₹13,883 crore (revised estimates for 2014-15), the Government has expressed its resolve to take Maharashtra, which continues to be the

pre-eminent State in attracting investments, on the path of progress.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has termed the budget as “daring”, and said that it will boost rural infrastructure in Maharashtra. “We were handed an economy in crisis. This Budget has taken a quantum jump in capital expenditure. We will try to take the expenditure to ₹40,000 crore. This will help boost the State economy and turn it around,” he added.

Devendra Fadnavis further said that the Finance Minister has provided adequate funds for rural infrastructure, especially roads, and efforts have been made to focus on skill development, considering half of the State population is less than 25 years.

Sudhir Mungantiwar explained that the Budget lays emphasis on giving the much needed push for the growth of State economy (which is expected to grow at 5.7 per cent in 2014-15 against 7.3 per cent in 2013-14), expedite the farm growth (which is estimated at minus 12.3 per cent) and irrigation development (command area rose to 3.26 million hectare in 2013-14 from 2.44 million hectare in 2012-13). The Government has spent ₹4,000 crore from its kitty towards compensation to farmers affected by drought and has declared that it will provide assistance to farmers hit by hailstorm and untimely rain in various parts of Maharashtra.

An outlay of ₹7,272 crore has been made for water resources development with a resolve to complete 38 irrigation projects. The Finance

BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

- Government has spent ₹4,000 crore from its kitty towards compensation to drought-affected farmers

- ₹1,609 crore has been allotted for Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, which aims at quality education and all round development of children in the age group of 6-14 years

- An outlay of ₹7,272 crore has been made for water resource development with a resolve to complete 38 irrigation projects

- Proposed implementation of Mukhyamantri Gramin Marg Yojana with an allocation of ₹350 crore

Minister has made it clear that no cut will be imposed on the proposed outlay. Nearly 700 million cubic litre water storages will be created and 69,000 hectare land will be brought under irrigation.

Further, to address the water scarcity issue, the Government proposes to implement Jalayukta Shivar Abhiyan, which aims to collect the rain-water, ensure its percolation, increase the groundwater table and thereby build up the water storage in a decentralised manner. An allocation of ₹1,000 crore has been made.

Besides, the Government has allocated ₹2,400 crore to spur rural development, while ₹970 crore has been allocated on energisation of agricultural pump sets. The Government has proposed implementation of Mukhyamantri Gramin Marg Yojana with an allocation of ₹350 crore.

As far as industrial development is concerned, the Government has clearly indicated that it should spread industries across the State and not restrict it to Mumbai, Pune, Nashik and Aurangabad. Expressing Government's resolve to carry out Make in Maharashtra on the lines of Make in India, Sudhir Mungantiwar has assured simplified and easier procedure, while obtaining various permissions. The Government has already brought down such approvals to 25 from 75. Nearly ₹200 crore has been allocated for land acquisition and rehabilitation for Mihan project near Nagpur.

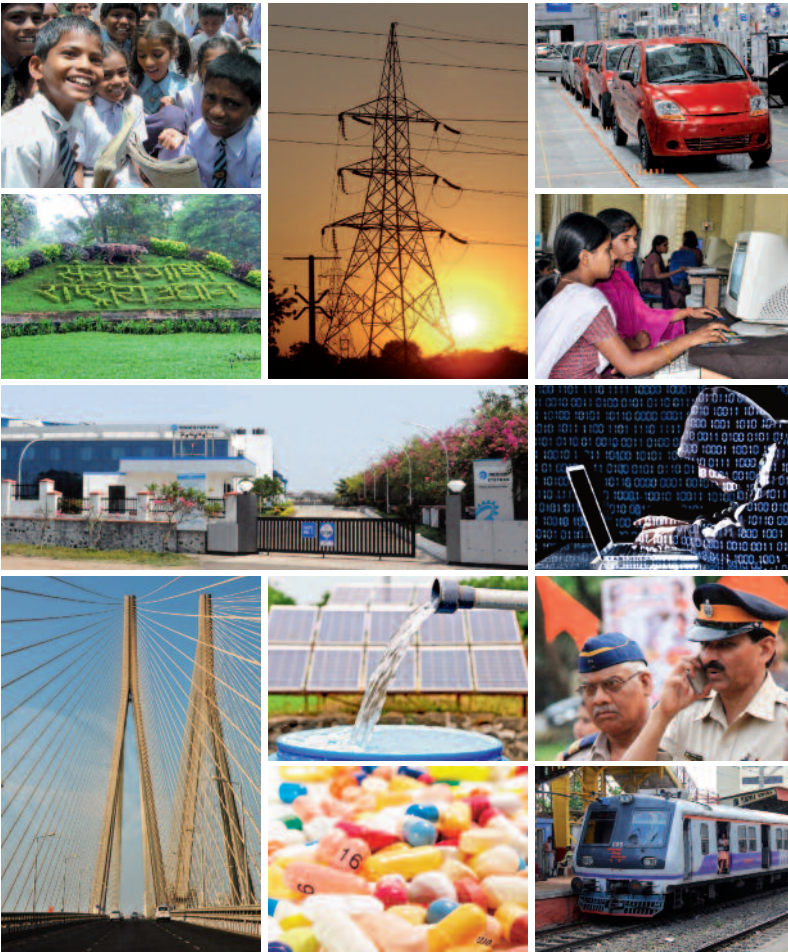
The Finance Minister has given special attention to women empowerment, especially through promotion of self-help groups and small and medium scale industries led by them. In a serious bid to improve the quality of education, the Government plans to lay emphasis on evaluation of teachers and examination system. This is necessitated as out of the 100 students who join the elementary education, a paltry 12 students pass out SSC examination on an average. The Government has assured that no child is deprived of education, and has made an allocation of ₹1,609 crore for Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan, which aims at quality education and all round development of children in the age group of 6 to 14 years.

Simultaneously, Sudhir Mungantiwar has indicated that enough attention will be paid to improve tax collection and efficiency of Government employees, reduce revenue deficit and increase capital expenditure to ₹40,000 crore, so that self revenue generating assets can be developed across the State.

The Finance Minister has projected a revenue deficit of ₹3,757 crore by the end of 2015-16 and has



(From left) State Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar with Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis before presenting the Budget



proposed new taxes worth ₹643 crore. There were no changes in stamp duty in the first Budget of the current Government. The annual plan for 2015-16 has been pegged at ₹54,999 crore against ₹51,022.54 crore. The Government proposes to monitor the utilisation of available funds through evidence-based photography by setting up a separate control room at Mantralaya. The Government proposes to rope in companies like TCS, McKinsey and Deloitte for this.

Moreover, taking a cue from the Centre, the Government proposes to link various schemes with the bank account under Jan Dhan Yojana, Aadhaar and Mobile number (JAM) and transfer the amount directly into the bank account of beneficiaries. This aims to cut the leakages and bring in transparency.

Mumbai's development has been given a due importance. In its ₹3,832 crore Budget for 2015-16, the State undertaking Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development has made an outlay of ₹2,050 crore, which is nearly 53 per cent, for works in Mumbai city, including Metro railway

corridors, the second phase of mono rail, and improvements in the Bandra-Kurla Complex and Wadala Truck Terminus.

Besides, an allocation of ₹906 crore has been made for works in fast-growing cities outside Mumbai coming under the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR). This is in line with Chief Minister's recent decision to give a necessary push for transport and physical infrastructure in the MMR under the special drive titled, MumbaiNext. Global consulting firm McKinsey has estimated that MMR is worth \$250 billion economy.

Furthermore, the Government has realised that tourism sector needs to be given a boost and has announced slew of proposals for its development in various districts. In view of a vast coastline of 720 km in the Konkan region, an outlay of ₹42 crore has been proposed for beach tourism, while the multi-crore Sea World project will be developed in the coastal Sindhudurg district. The Government will seek financial assistance from multilateral agencies, including World Bank and Asian Development Bank, for the time-bound implementation of Sindhudurg district tourism plan.

On the abolition of local body tax (LBT), which has been largely opposed by traders, Sudhir Mungantiwar has announced that it will be abolished from August 1 in 25 municipal corporations, excluding Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) where Octroi Duty exists. The Government will need ₹6,875 crore as compensation after LBT's abolition. The Government wants to make the revenue loss by enhancing rate of tax under Value Added Tax till the launch of LBT from April 1, 2016, as announced by the Centre. A revenue neutral has been recommended, considering the share of increased tax collection to be given to the areas where LBT is not levied.

However, Sudhir Mungantiwar has assured that decision in this regard will be taken after due consultation with stakeholders and experts. As far as Octroi Duty collection of nearly ₹7,500 crore annually by BMC is considered, the Finance Minister has hinted that the Government will appeal to the Centre for its continuation even after the launch of GST until a due compensation of revenue loss is ensured through legal provision.

Leading economist C.S. Despande has lauded Government's initiatives to boost growth, especially in the farm sector and skill development. However, he concludes that the Government could have outlined its vision for Maharashtra through a slew of reforms. **M**

“
We were handed an economy in crisis. This Budget has taken a quantum jump in capital expenditure. We will try to take the expenditure to ₹40,000 crore. This will help boost the State economy and turn it around.

—Devendra Fadnavis
 Chief Minister



TARGET OVER EXPENDITURE

The team incharge of Budget 2015-16 has put in months of hardwork while making the annual financial plan. **Team Maharashtra Ahead** lists a few points made by the leaders



SUDHIR MUNGANTIWAR

Minister, Finance and Planning

“IT IS A TARGET ORIENTED BUDGET, NOT AN EXPENDITURE ORIENTED ONE”

The State Government while presenting this Budget has honestly tried to make it more favourable and the handicapped, weaker sections, the dalits, the tribes, farmers, labours, the minorities should feel that the Government cares for them. The Government has kept in view the insights of the Rural Development Concept of respected Shri Tukdoji Maharaj, the social justice as per the expectations of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Antyodaya scheme based on the views of Pandit Dindayal Upadhyay and the progress of my dear sisters, the young generation which is still unemployed even after pursuing higher education,

the farmers, tribes and all.

Currently, the State bears a debt burden of over ₹3 lakh crore for which we are servicing an interest burden of over ₹24,000 crore. The revenue imbalance poses a challenge on the financial management of the State. The revenue deficit has reached ₹13,883 crore. I am quite aware that if we utilise the loans and debt for our regular expenditures, we are forcing unjust burden on the next generations. To bring the revenue balance back on track, I will definitely take some strong measures. We have to create capital assets for the new generation.

If you analyse the last year's budget, you will find that although the plan was finalised at ₹51,022.54

crore, it is a fact that the funds were not made available to that extent. Today, while presenting the plan of ₹54,999 crore, I will definitely try to make available each and every pie of it. The

utilisation of the available funds will be done with the clear view that we are the Trustees of the people of Maharashtra and therefore, today's Budget is not expenditure-based Budget but it is target-oriented Budget.

(Excerpts from the Budget Speech)

“In order to bring the revenue balance back on track, I will definitely take some strong measures. We have to create capital assets for the new generation”



DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

Chief Minister

“RESOLVE FOR AN ALL INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT ALONE”

While making a commendable enhancement in the capital expenditures in the Budget for this year, we have placed emphasis on creation of basic

infrastructure for agriculture and village development. We have considered the farmers, women, entrepreneurs and youth and have also maintained appropriate balance between rural and urban areas. Through this, the State will definitely gain economic acceleration. The apt provision of ₹7,272 crore for irrigation, ₹3,000 crore for rural road development with other development provisions for total roads amounting to ₹6,000 crore, ₹810 crore for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, ₹3,150 crore for industry-tourism community encouragement scheme has been done. With this, the Budget this year stands out as one to protect and preserve the interests of common man.



DEEPAK KESARKAR

Minister of State, Finance

“EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ENTIRE MAHARASHTRA”

This is a Budget for overall development of the State, from Chanda to

Banda,” was the reaction of Minister of State for Finance, Deepak Kesarkar. He added that the Budget has provided equal justice to entire Maharashtra and nobody has been shown injustice. “In order to stop the calamity looming on agriculture today and the setbacks of this sector, we need to create decentralised water storage, huge facilities for irrigation, disaster management plans and micro irrigation schemes. All these will accelerate the development of agricultural sector in a big way,” he said.

BUDGET IN DETAIL



GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

- Provision of stability to dry land farming, accelerated development of basic infrastructure, warding off disparity, facing rising urbanisation and emphasising creation of employment avenues
- Achieving revenue compilation and introduction of stern measures for more effective capital expenditure
- Various schemes for agriculture, positive environment for industries and business, excellent basic infrastructure, effective utilisation of funds and confidence to achieve a double-digit development rate through valid economic management.

Loan freedom from moneylenders:

Provision of ₹171 crore for freedom of loans for farmers from Vidarbha and Marathwada.



AGRICULTURAL SCHEMES

- ₹1,000 crore given to Jalyukta Shivar movement; ₹500 crore for building cement nallah dams
- Funds to the extent of ₹100 crore for maintenance of Malgujari tanks in the districts of Gadchiroli, Bhandara, Gondia and Chandrapur
- Provision of ₹330 crore for an ambitious programme of micro-irrigation
- Provision of ₹50 crore for Motiramji Lahane Krishi Samruddhi Yojana at Yavatmal district. Under this, the agro-

mechanisation and other agro schemes will be amalgamated;

- ₹700 crore for State Employment Guarantee Scheme and ₹1,948 crore for MGNREGA Scheme.

Agricultural pump sets: ₹970 crore given to energisation; a pilot project of installation of 7,540 solar agricultural pump sets to be launched. It is expected that farmers will get assured electricity supply under the scheme.

● ₹336 crore for Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana and ₹257 crore for National Food Security Mission, agricultural development, technology and horticulture movement. Financial assistance to be provided to grape farmers to purchase Shednet for providing protection from hailstorms.

- ₹140.92 crore for modernisation of Animal Husbandry Institutes and Fodder Development Programme
- Proposal to take measures to scientifically preserve and develop good-quality, traditional and locally preserved seeds by the farmers through gene bank system; ₹10 crore earmarked from the outlay undistributed under Planning Department.



IRRIGATION

Funds to the tune of ₹7,272 crore to the Water Resources Department for time-bound project implementation with accurate technical and financial planning.

FISHERIES

- Financial assistance of ₹13.25 crore for mechanisation of fisheries vessels through National Cooperative Development Corporation.

● ₹20 crore for construction of jetties under NABARD-assisted Rural Infrastructure Development Fund undertaken in the districts of Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri, Raigad, Thane, Palghar and Mumbai.



ELECTRICITY

The Finance Minister has kept aside ₹535.34 crore for electricity generation projects in the Budget. About ₹538.83 crore will be for building basic infrastructure for improving efficiency of Electrical Distribution System-2, and ₹900 crore is for hydro-electric projects. Special attention will be provided to regions of Vidharbh and Marathwada, as these areas have low level of development.



SHELTER TO ALL

- The Government has fixed target of constructing one lakh good-quality houses with toilet facilities under the schemes of Indira Awas Yojana, Ramai Awas Yojana, Shabari Adivasi Gharkul Yojana and Rajiv Gandhi Nivara Yojana using new technology; an outlay of ₹884.46 crore proposed.
- In order to provide affordable houses to slum dwellers and middle class families, the State Government will bring new housing policy. It will be the endeavour of the State Government that no person in the State remains homeless by the end of 2022; provision of

high-quality civic facilities to the population in urban areas. The Government has committed ₹810 crore for the implementation of Centre's Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan in the State.



CITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- An outlay of ₹109.60 crore proposed for the Colaba-Bandra-Seez Metro, and a special purpose vehicle (SPV) has been set up to give impetus to progress of Mumbai Metro Line 3 Project; Nagpur and Pune Metro rail projects to get ₹197.69 crore and ₹174.99 crore, respectively;
- The newly launched Smart Cities project to get ₹268 crore
- In other announcements, ₹141 crore given to repair of buses and bus stations; ₹68.6 for railway projects under construction; ₹91 crore for development, inspection and maintenance of airstrips under Maharashtra Airport Development Corporation at Ozar, Kolhapur, Akola, Shirdi, Karad, Amravati, Solapur and Chandrapur, among others; ₹200 crore for land acquisition and rehabilitation for MIHAN project.
- Municipal Corporations encouraged to use bio-fuel for transportation services; usage of E-taxis with lady drivers to be promoted for conveyance of school-going children.

INDUSTRY

- The Government has launched 'Make in Maharashtra' to retain State's premium position in industrial development and economic progress.
- 25 mega projects, which were approved in 2014-15 and created job opportunities for 13,988 persons, given ₹30,150 crore in this Budget

BUDGET IN DETAIL

MUMBAI FOCUS

₹2,050 crore given to Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development, for works in Mumbai city, including Metro railway corridors, the second phase of mono rail, and improvements in the Bandra Kurla Complex and Wadala Truck Terminus.



TEXTILES

₹59.66 crore towards interest subsidy of 5 to 7 per cent on long-term loan of the eligible textile industrial units in the State under the Textile Policy; additional ₹28 crore proposed towards 10 per cent capital subsidy on the long-term loan of eligible textile industrial units in Vidarbha, Marathwada and North Maharashtra; ₹1,232.53 crore power subsidy to powerlooms



TOURISM

- ₹3,150 crore for Community Encouragement Scheme; ₹50 crore for preservation and security of protected forts;
- Establishment of Maharashtra Nature Tourism Development Corporation;
- ₹50 crore for creation of wayside facilities for local and foreign tourists;
- Konkan Gramin Paryatan Vikas Programme: ₹42 crore for beach tourism
- ₹100 crore for development of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger integrated wildlife protected zone and tourism facilities at Gorewada and Sanjay Gandhi National Park;
- Creation of Uttamrao Patil

Forest Garden at every district; ₹20 crore given to Forest and Environment Centre and Nisarg Parichay Kendra planned for these parks

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Announcement of a new scheme, Pramod Mahajan Skill Development Programme for skill development and self-employment assistance has been made in the Budget. The Government will also set up a Research and Training Centre at Sewagram, Wardha for village industries, cottage industries and handicrafts.



FORESTS

Announcement for establishment of Maharashtra State Bamboo Development Corporation; increasing the forest cover in areas on the outskirts of wildlife sanctuaries through public participation and management of tree estates through a newly announced scheme, Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Jana Vana Vikas Yojana;



EDUCATION, HEALTH AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Funds to the tune of ₹112.5 crore given for girl hostels; Security walls to be constructed around Government girl hostels; ₹1,690 crore for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan;

- ₹1,996.48 crore for National Health Movement;
- ₹300 crore for Rajeev Gandhi

Jeevandayi Arogya Yojana;

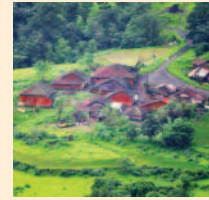
- Creation of permanent Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar Market for sale of products manufactured by women self-help groups.
- ₹200 crore given to Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree
- ₹181.36 crore for construction of health institutions in urban areas, ₹47 crore for rural hospitals, ₹112 crore for the rural hospitals under the backlog, and ₹49.56 crore for primary health centres and its sub centres, totalling ₹389.92 crore
- ₹10 crore for the modernisation of J.J. School of Art, Mumbai and other art colleges; School of Planning and Architecture of international standard to be built in Aurangabad.
- ₹20 crore for assistance to candidates training for Civil Services (Main) examination and interview to improve the success ratio of candidates from Maharashtra. The Pre IAS Training Centre at Kolhapur and Nagpur will be strengthened.
- ₹20 crore for the upgradation of post graduation medical course programme at the government medical colleges of Pune, Aurangabad, Akola, Ambejogai, Solapur, Miraj, Sangli, Dhule, Yavatmal, Latur and Nagpur.



POLICE AND COURTS

CCTV cameras to be put up in Amravati, Aurangabad, Nashik and Nagpur cities; Cyber Crime Lab to be established in every district;

- ₹18 crore for curbing cyber crimes; ₹413.6 crore for Court buildings and residences for Judges.
- Lakkadganj Police Station and colony to be developed as the first smart police station and colony.



VILLAGE SCHEMES

- The Government has proposed implementation of Mukhyamantri Gramin Marg Yojana with an allocation of ₹350 crore
- Aamdar Adarsh Gaon Yojana around 1000 villages to be developed through this scheme; ₹25 crore is earmarked for this purpose from the outlay undistributed under Planning Department.

STRENGTHENING ADMINISTRATION

Officers and staff will be encouraged to suggest new resources for income to the exchequer and innovative remedial measures for reduction of expenditure.



MEMORIALS

- ₹100 crore for the construction of Chhatrapati Shivaji memorial in Arabian Sea; similar monuments of Bharatratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Balasaheb Thackeray and Gopinath Munde to be set up in their memories;
- ₹25 crore given for renovation of memorials of brave fighters and martyrs.
- ₹11.70 crore for monuments of Hutatma Rajguru, Krantivir Lahuji Salve, Veer Baburao Puleshwar Shedmake, Samadhisthal of Shri Sant Sevalal Maharaj, Poharadevi

“IT IS A GROWTH ORIENTED, INCLUSIVE BUDGET”



The maiden Budget of State Government is growth-oriented and inclusive. In terms of sectors, the annual financial outlay is bent in favour of farmers and aims to give them a life free from drought and debt. On the other hand, the Budget chases State's aspirations with Make in Maharashtra and Smart Cities programmes. Keeping in mind its coverage of most areas and sections of society, the Budget puts Maharashtra on the path of development. In a post-Budget interaction with **Vivek Bhavsar**, Minister, Finance **Sudhir Mungantiwar** talks about Government's objectives and ways to achieve them. Excerpts:

Q. You are in favour of a separate budget for agriculture. Have you dropped the idea?

A. You are right. We have always been in favour of a separate budget for agriculture on the lines of Karnataka. But, this time, it's State Government's first Budget since the alliance came to power last year. And, we have tried to make it a rural-centric one, instead of presenting a separate one for agriculture. Keeping in mind the fact that Karnataka did not repeat presenting the agriculture budget in the consecutive year, we thought of considering the reasons behind so.

Q. What are the key announcements made on rural

development in the Budget?

A. The Budget has emphasised on dry land farming, accelerated development of infrastructure in rural areas, and removal of disparity. Rural infrastructure has been given importance. Nearly ₹5,374 crore has been earmarked for rural roads. The focus is also on completing irrigation projects and ₹7,272 crore has been proposed for completing these; ₹5,171 crore has been proposed for various agriculture schemes and measures to increase groundwater level. All these steps will provide a boost to agriculture and improve financial condition of farmers. Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has been given ₹1,000 crore for the farmers tortured by drought, unseasonal rains and hailstorms. In the winter session of Nagpur Assembly last year, we had committed to make farmers debt-free. In the Budget, we have decided to repay loans worth ₹156 crore taken by 2.23 lakh farmers from private money lenders. The State will also repay interest worth ₹15 crore on the loans.

Q. What schemes have been announced for Mumbai?

A. The Budget has proposed an outlay of ₹109.60 crore for Mumbai Metro Line-3 project, which is the Colaba-Bandra-Seepz metro project. A special purpose vehicle company has been set up to give impetus to the progress of this project. We have also proposed an outlay of ₹197.69 crore and ₹174.99

crore for Nagpur and Pune Metro rail projects, respectively. To cope up with urbanisation and to attract investments, it is necessary to develop smart cities. These cities will require physical and social infrastructure. Hence, we have proposed an allocation of ₹268 crore for smart cities.

Q. Are there any schemes for other cities?

A. Apart from metro cities such as Mumbai and Pune, we have focused on growth of small and developing cities. We have suggested developmental works for such cities. Air transport is one of the major aspects of development. Hence, ₹91 crore has been set aside for the development, inspection and maintenance of the airstrips of Ozar (Nashik), Kolhapur, Akola, Shirdi, Karad (Satara), Amravati, Solapur and Chandrapur airports under the Maharashtra Airport Development Corporation. For land acquisition and rehabilitation for the Mihan project at Nagpur, ₹200 crore has been proposed.

Q. What are the schemes for women?

A. Women welfare is another area of attention. We have increased the Professional Tax limit to ₹10,000 for women. Earlier, the facility was available only to women receiving salary below ₹7,500. The increase will benefit around 1,50,000 women. Mahila Bachat Gat will be provided a permanent Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar market at district level, and ₹200 crore will be spent on this. The Government has also made a provision of ₹200 crore for Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree. We will also provide better remuneration to Aanganwadi staff. To reduce the drop out rate among girls in secondary education, ₹112 crore has been made for building hostels. Within next three years, all the Government girl hostels will have security walls. Funds to the tune of ₹25 crore have been provided for this.

Q. Tell us about the Adarsh Gram Yojana.

A. Inspired by Centre's Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, a parallel



Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar and Minister of State Finance Deepak Kesarkar giving final touches to the State Budget

scheme for Member of Legislative Assembly and Council has been announced in the Budget. Under the new Aamdar Adarsh Gram Yojana, around 1,000 villages will be developed in the next five years. Considering the opportunities for Maharashtra tourism, emphasis has been laid on tourism development and creation of employment avenues.

The Budget has set aside ₹320 crore to implement Swachh Bharat Abhiyan in urban cities of the State. To implement the scheme in rural areas, an outlay of ₹490.49 crore is proposed.

Q. You have announced outlays for memorials of leaders.

Who are these leaders?

A. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj memorial in the Arabian Sea that has been discussed for many years is one of the memorials. An outlay of ₹100 crore has been given to this memorial. State's respectable leaders Balasaheb Thackeray and Gopinath Munde are other leaders whose memorials will be built. Balasaheb Thackeray's memorial will be built in Mumbai

and a Chair of his name will be created in Mumbai University. The memorial of Gopinath Munde will be built at Aurangabad.

Q. The abolition of LBT will come into force from August 1. Are trade bodies upset with you?

A. Local Body Tax would be abolished from August 1, 2015 instead of April 1. With this, compensation of ₹6,875 crore would be required to be given to the municipal corporations, excluding BMC. This loss of revenue will be compensated by enhancing rate of tax under Value Added Tax Act. The enhanced rate of tax will apply to the whole State. A revenue-neutral rate has been recommended considering the share of increased tax collection to be given to the areas where LBT is not levied. The Government is firm on abolishing the LBT, and is ready to discuss the concerns of trade organisations.

Q. What are the ways to increase State's revenue?

A. Instead of thinking how to increase the income, I have focused on how to save State's fund, which either remains unused or is not required. I have saved more than ₹2,000 crore from the State exchequer in last week of March. Government offices have a tendency to spend the balanced outlay of the concerned department by March 31 on unwanted items, to stop the fund from being lapsed. Other option they have is to return the unutilised fund to the State. We have found out five to six sources of revenue generation through enhancing FSI, enhanced taxation on country liquor, and other ways. The Budget has tried to reduce the revenue deficit from that of last year, and efforts for expenditure control and thrift are being made from here onwards. **M**

A LEADER FOR EVERY GENERATION

Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was an Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who inspired the Modern Buddhist Movement and campaigned against social discrimination of Dalits, women and labour. The principal architect of the Constitution of India, was an intellectual whose scholarly aptitude saw him accomplishing graduate degrees from Columbia University and the London School of Economics. Apart from a double MA and PhD and a degree in law, he also penned several learned books. **Ananya Vajpeyi** writes a piece on his life



Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar is one of those figures in the history of modern India about whom many people know a little bit, and very few understand anything much. Most educated Indians are aware that he played a prominent role in the making of India's liberal Constitution of 1950, as a member of the Constituent Assembly and the Chairman of the Drafting Committee. Fewer Indians might also know that Ambedkar founded a sect of protestant Buddhism, Navayana, the New Way or the New Vehicle.

The phrases "founding father" in the American sense, and "maker of modern India" have become popular in the last 5-7 years, signalling—without really substantively deepening—our casual perception of his historic role. Those who follow him, as Dalits, as Neo-Buddhists, as political activists—the faithful, if you will, whatever the reason for their adherence to his persona and his ideas—refer to Dr. Ambedkar as "Babasaheb", an address used with as much respect and affection as "Mahatma" and "Bapu" for Gandhiji.

Many who do know of him believe in him passionately, and speak of him with the kind of fervour normally reserved for religious figures—prophets, saints, those who uttered revelations and those who brought deliverance. Babasaheb Ambedkar is one of the most luminous figures in modern Indian history.

Ambedkar's life was punctuated by a series of setbacks and disappointments, each of which propelled him towards loftier goals, more difficult challenges, and stronger assertions of the will to overcome inimical circumstances and a hostile world. He was born in April 14, 1891. He was gifted



(From top) Dr B.R. Ambedkar addressing a conference at Ambedkar Bhawan, Delhi and while working

with extraordinary intellectual powers, an ambitious father, encouraging teachers, and a royal benefactor, all of which together ensured that he went to college in Bombay and then won a scholarship to Columbia University, a first for anyone of his background.

But despite these talents, advantages and lucky breaks, and despite his innate drive, Ambedkar's childhood and early youth were marred by visceral experiences of the prejudice, bigotry and violence of an untouchable existence. He couldn't sit next to his upper caste classmates; he was denied food and water for long days at school because his very touch was considered

Dr. Ambedkar raced through an MA and a PhD in anthropology and political economy, writing Masters and Doctoral theses that would be published as his first scholarly article and book, respectively

polluting; he was not permitted to study Sanskrit because of his ritually debased caste status; and his everyday life was riddled with insults, segregation and physical abuse.

Nevertheless, at the recommendation, interestingly, of a couple of his Brahmin professors, the scion of the nearby princely state of Baroda, the Gaekwad Maharaja, decided to fund his higher studies. In the late summer of 1913, the young man found himself in Morningside Heights, on West 114th Str. between Broadway and Amsterdam, in Manhattan, New York, very far indeed from India and its cruel and senseless humiliations.

With the perseverance and grit so characteristic of his temperament, Ambedkar raced through an MA and a PhD in anthropology and political economy, writing Masters and Doctoral theses that would in very short order be published as his first scholarly article and book, respectively. His advisor was Edwin Seligman, but as luck would have it, who should be spending those years on Columbia campus but John Dewey, the great American educationist, pragmatist and liberal philosopher. Dewey remained an important influence on Ambedkar to the very end of his life (they both died two years apart in the mid-1950s). Ambedkar's amazing progress sent him next to the London School of Economics (LSE), where he began a second MA in the fall of 1916.

Things only got worse, though, when he arrived in Gujarat to serve as the Maharaja's military secretary. No one would rent him a room or a house; no one wanted to share office space with him; once more he got no water to drink nor tea, nor lunch with colleagues nor dinner from his landlord (who only admitted him to his boarding house under a false identity as a Parsi gentleman). He couldn't even get a lamp at night to be able to read in his room after the workday was done. For all his qualifications as the most educated individual in the whole principality of Baroda, he was right back where he had started—an Untouchable.

The story is that one day he was discovered and thrown out of his hostel, and spent the night in a municipal park, under a tree, burning with humiliation very much like the young Gandhi 30 years earlier who was off-loaded from a train at Petermaritzburg station in Natal, South Africa, on a winter's night in June 1893 for being a black man—even if a qualified lawyer and the owner of a first-class ticket. Gandhi had faced the white colonial master's racism; Ambedkar was insulted by his fellow-Indians, fellow-Hindus. Neither man



Dr. Ambedkar being administeaered the Oath by the first President of Indian Republic Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru looking on

ever forgot the lesson he learned on that fateful night, and both these experiences proved to be life-changing in each case.

Upset and frustrated, Ambedkar quit his job and went back to Bombay to rejoin his family. Fortunately, he was appointed as a professor of political economy at Sydenham College and soon saved enough money to go back to London to resume his studies. Between 1920 and 1923, he earned a second MA and a second PhD at the LSE, as well as a law degree from Gray's Inn in London. He even spent a few months at the University of Bonn, in Germany, working towards a PhD in Indology—the very same subject he had been disallowed from studying as an undergraduate 15 years earlier because Sanskrit was supposedly off-limits to persons of low caste.

This over-compensation reveals the extent to which he took his shoddy treatment in India to heart, and also suggests a desperate desire not to have to go home and deal with the reality of discrimination that wasn't going anywhere no matter how firmly Ambedkar turned his back, no matter how high above his birth he climbed through the sheer dint of hard work. Later on in

Between 1920 and 1923, Dr. Ambedkar earned a second MA and a second PhD at the LSE, as well as a law degree from Gray's Inn in London. He even spent a few months at the University of Bonn, for a PhD in Indology



one of his writings he described Hindu society as a tower divided into floors of caste, without windows to look out and without stairs to carry one up or down from the level at which one happened to be born. He could have added that there were no doors, either, for entry or exit. By mid-1923, Ambedkar really did run out of time and money, and came back to Bombay.

In the remainder of the 1920s, the ridiculously over-qualified 32-year-old was called to the Bar, started a practice at the Bombay High Court, began publishing his various scholarly dissertations, was appointed professor at the Government Law College where he would eventually become a named chair and later Principal, was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council, and ran more than one popular journal and community organisation dealing with the rights of Untouchables.

Ambedkar became the face of a social group that was at last awakening to its political identity—but really, he was the one who, almost single-handedly, was defining the contours of this identity and aggressively politicising it, at least in the city of Bombay and the Bombay Presidency. He was determined to deploy the surfeit of his own

qualifications and capabilities to make up for the collective backwardness—reinforced by centuries of oppression—of his most wretched brethren.

Ambedkar launched a series of agitations, mobilisations and campaigns to demand that Untouchables be allowed to access public goods like drinking water from tanks and wells; that they be allowed to move freely and in a dignified manner, without threat to life or limb in public spaces like roads and parks; and that they be granted entry into sacred temples to exercise the right to worship therein just like other Hindus.

Predictably, caste Hindus, even liberal, educated and Anglicised urban people, were

Dr. Ambedkar became the face of a social group that was at last awakening to its political identity—but really, he was the one who was defining the contours of this identity and politicising it, at least in the city of Bombay



A profile picture of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

intransigent. Ambedkar would take one step forward and have to backtrack two steps—temples were claimed to be private property; tanks were ritually “purified” after Untouchables had taken water from them.

Subsequently Ambedkar found himself giving evidence before various Government commissions and committees, introducing radical bills in the Bombay Legislative Council, and appointed as the representative of the Untouchables at the three historic Roundtable Conferences held between 1930 and 1932 to enable the British, the Congress and other third parties, like himself, to sit down and discuss increasingly voluble Indian demands for self-determination.

Matters came to a head when Ramsay MacDonald proposed a “communal award”, creating separate electorates for Muslims on the one hand and Untouchables on the other. Ambedkar was in favour; Gandhi was opposed. Ambedkar saw Untouchables as a type of minority, like Muslims; Gandhi felt that British machinations had already divided Indians into Hindus and Muslims, and now threatened to further break Hindus up into upper castes and so called “depressed classes” or lower castes and Untouchables. Neither man yielded.

Gandhi raised the stakes by going on a fast unto death if his views were not respected. He pledged to educate, harangue and shame caste Hindus until they ceased and desisted from practicing Untouchability. He proclaimed himself the spokesman of Untouchables. Public opinion and political pressure were unequivocally in Gandhi’s favour; Ambedkar had to back down and enter into the “Poona Pact”, in September 1932, to keep Untouchables together with other Hindus within joint electorates. This agreement broke Gandhi’s fast, but it also broke Ambedkar’s faith in Gandhi, in the Congress, and in caste Hindus.

In October 1935, at Yeola, outside the city of Nashik in northern Maharashtra, Ambedkar declared at a public meeting that he might have been born a Hindu, but he would not die one. He did not himself fully know yet what exactly this statement implied or entailed, what it was that he could or would do, concretely, to redeem his vow, but he put it out there, and he never looked back. **M**

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Currently, she is writing a book on the life and ideas of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visits Maharashtra's drought-hit regions to discuss crucial matters with the farmers. A stay at a farmer's house makes the visit special for everyone

(Clockwise from left) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis interacting with farmers, sharing a meal at a farmer's house, and taking stock of the situation in drought-hit villages

It was a field visit planned differently. It had the heat of grave issues that limit a big Indian State to grow holistically and must be discussed in person. The location was the village of Pimpri Buti in drought-hit Yavatmal and the issue was farmer suicides in the district.

A similar meeting of the Chief Minister had taken place in January, when he boarded the Mumbai local train during evening peak hours. The commute led to valuable suggestions and brain-

storming sessions to help the train service overcome its limitations and serve the commuters better. This time, the field visit included interactions with widows of farmers apart from dinner and night stay at a farmer's residence. "It is a matter of shame for everyone that farmers continue to commit suicide. There is an urgent need to address basic issues like improving irrigation facilities. Unless that is done, there can never be a solution to farmer suicides," said Devendra Fadnavis, who was on a three-day visit to drought-hit villages in the State.

Yavatmal has seen maximum farmer suicides recorded in Maharashtra. To investigate the reasons behind the suicides and reach a permanent solution, the Chief Minister visited three villages in the district. He was accompanied by Guardian Minister, Yavatmal, Sanjay Rathod; MLA Madan Yerawar; MLA Dr. Ashok Uike; MLA Raju Najardhane; Principal Secretary Pravin Pardeshi.

During the visit, Devendra Fadnavis held many discussions with key people. Sharing details of his discussions, he said, there is no better potion than irrigation facilities to help the grave issue of



A DINNER WITH BHARIT AND BHAKARI

The special dinner at Vishnuji Rangrao Dhumane's residence was rather a simple one, with Bharit and Bhakari. Devendra Fadnavis had his meal sitting on the ground flanked by Dhumane, Guardian Minister Sanjay Rathod, MLA Raju Najardhane and MLA Dr. Ashok Uike on either side. The meal consisted of Bhakari, Dalbhaji, Thecha and rice.



farmer suicides. A long-term plan is being implemented for this. "For immediate relief, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has been undertaken through which farmers are provided perennial irrigation facilities. The results of the scheme can be seen by June," he said.

“**There is an urgent need to address basic issues like improving irrigation. Unless that is done, there can never be a solution to farmer suicides. Removing the irrigation backlog can help solve the problem.**

—**Devendra Fadnavis**
Chief Minister

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The past few years have seen delays in completion of irrigation well works in few districts of the State. The Chief Minister is hopeful that by June, all of these pending works will be done. These wells will be provided with electrical connection. He assured farmers of fulsome support.

The proportion of expenses is more compared to production in case of agriculture. The Government is implementing an experiment to know how agriculture can be made more profitable. A system will be created where the farmers provide their product straight to the processing industries. Non-availability of loan supply institutions in rural areas is troublesome for the farmers. To counter this, a network of credit supply institutions will be created all over the State in near future. A satellite system will also be set up to check the implementation of various welfare schemes. The plan includes micro-survey of families. New schemes will be based on the information gathered from the survey and efforts.

With a population of 1,600, Pimpri Buti lies around 22 km from Yavatmal. Before leaving for Ratchandana village, the Chief Minister had a compassionate dialogue with widows of farmers at the Zilla Parishad School in Pimpri Buti. He gathered all information about the problems of the widows and came to know that about ten families did not receive any kind of help from the State. He immediately issued instructions to the concerned officers to find out the schemes through which these families could be helped.

The star feature of Chief Minister's visit to Pimpri Buti was his dinner and stay at farmer Vishnuji Rangrao Dhumane's home. Dhumane has 13 acres of dry land, where he is growing soybean and cotton. Guardian Minister Sanjay Rathod and MLA Madan Yerawar were with the Chief Minister when he visited the farmer. **M**

—Written by Mohan Rathore



(From above) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis addressing the farmers in Lyahari village in Hadgaon, Nanded, and participating in *bhoomipujan*

SELF-RELIANCE IS THE KEY

Severe drought conditions have proved fatal for Maharashtra in ways more than one. The launch of the ambitious Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis can go a long way in making the State water surplus while speeding up the process of development

Helping the farmers of Maharashtra become self-reliant by way of making the villages of the State water surplus is the key to economic growth. In keeping with this sentiment, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis launched the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan (providing villages with permanent source of water) at the outskirts of Lyahari village in Hadgaon taluka of Nanded district as part of his two-day tour of Vidarbha and Marathwada.

Speaking at the farmers meet held at Lyahari, the Chief Minister said that the Government has firmly resolved to bestow drought freedom to 5,000 villages in the State under the new Scheme within a year. Making an announcement, about an amount of ₹4,500 crore been transferred directly to the accounts of 55 lakh farmers, Devendra Fadnavis emphasised on the fact that “the Government will never shy away from its duty to help distressed farmers in every possible way.”

With several parts of Maharashtra still reeling under conditions of drought, the State Government has launched the scheme to address the problem on a permanent basis. All the existing schemes on water conservation will be accumulated under this programme, which aims to end the drought-like situation in the State in the long term. Expressing confidence in the new scheme, the Chief Minister said, “The Government has begun to bring a change by designing various schemes for farmers. If the farmers also contribute to this change, it will have a positive effect.”

Devendra Fadnavis, who has been on a marathon tour of the State, has been inspecting the agricultural lands facing uncertainties due to untimely rains. “Farmers are in trouble and they are facing natural calamities for last few years. Based on this realisation, the Government has taken a stand to help them. We have provided huge funds to assist the farmers. The calamity is grave, but the Government is trying to help and firmly support them. All the District Collectors have been issued instructions for survey of the losses due to unseasonal rains,” he said.

Stating that the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is an effort towards removing obstacles in agriculture and drinking water problems of villages in Maharashtra, the Chief Minister explained how various works have been undertaken with a view to maintain water available in a village.

The Chief Minister’s Transformation Office (CMTO) will monitor the scheme, while NGO Delivering Change Foundation will supervise it on the ground level and post aerial photographs of the

The Abhiyan will get Maharashtra freedom from drought: Diwakar Raote

Nanded District Planning Development Committee (DPDC) has approved the draft plan proposals to the extent of ₹240.14 crore for the financial year 2015-16 and re-planning for the financial year 2014-15. The DPDC meeting was held under the chairmanship of Transport Minister and Guardian Minister Diwakar Raote. He appealed for a resolve to attain drought freedom for villages through Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. He expected that all DPDC members would actively participate in the scheme, and public participation would enhance its results. He added that maximum efforts should be made for utilisation of the funds kept for the programme.

Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan covers 261 villages from Nanded. Diwakar Raote stressed on the fact that the Committee members should be called on to participate



while the planning for the scheme is being carried out. "The members should ensure that the entire fund available for the project is used properly, and public participation in the project is encouraged. The officers are

required to guide and participate wherever necessary," he said, adding "We have resolved to attain drought freedom for 5,000 villages. Now, we have a window open till June for work under this scheme. There-

fore, efforts for making it successful should be made by all the constituents, elected representatives and people of the villages."

Diwakar Raote issued instructions on being vigilant with respect to water supply schemes in rural areas and said that Sub-Committees of Committee members should be created to control various development works in the district. He insisted that the water-scarcity exigencies from villages other than those covered under the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan should also be attended to with the same promptness and sensitivity. He expressed satisfaction on the speedy execution of the toilet construction work. Congratulating the Zilla Parishad and CEO Abhimanyu Kale for their efforts, he said more funds will be made available for these projects and a request for the same will be placed with the Government of India.

area in the public domain before and after completion of the project. This will enable the public to see for themselves whether the work has actually been done.

Emphasis will also be laid on the creation of processing industries for agricultural products such as cotton and soybean. Speaking at the farmers' meet, Devendra Fadnavis expressed confidence that the change will definitely arrive. He said that the Government has taken decisions worth ₹7,000 crore in the interest of farmers within the last three months. "The Government will never back out from helping the farmers. Our efforts are aimed at bringing a change in their lives and empowering them to contribute to various schemes meant for them," he added. The Chief Minister also received representations from



The Government will never back out from helping the farmers. Our efforts are aimed at bringing a change in the lives of farmers and empowering them to contribute to various schemes"

—Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister

farmers' delegations and others on the occasion.

Earlier, the Chief Minister participated in the foundation stone laying ceremony of an agricultural lake at Lyahari. Secretary, Agriculture, Prabhakar Deshmukh; Divisional Revenue Commissioner Dr. Umakant Dangat; Principal Secretary Pravin Pardeshi; District Collector Dheeraj Kumar; DSP Paramjit Singh Dahiya; CEO Nanded Zilla Parishad Abhimanyu Kale; Additional District Collector Dilip Swami; Agricultural Officer Sanjay Padwal; Former Members of Parliament Subhash Wankhede, Chaitanya Deshmukh, and Ad. Shivajirao Jadhav graced the occasion with their presence. Various senior Government officers and farmers from Lyahari were also present at the meet in large numbers. **M**

—Written by Mohan Rathore

Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has taken many initiatives to speed up clearances that industries in India want. The Ministry also aspires to build a people-friendly image. Its other priorities are fast-track clearances that have been pending for a long time and making the process transparent. MoEF is also open to launch new policy initiatives. In an exclusive interview for Maharashtra Ahead with **Rohit Chandavarkar**, Union Environment Minister **Prakash Javadekar** shares MoEF's key moves. Excerpts:

Q. Please tell us about the important policy decisions or changes you have initiated since you took over as the Minister of this department.

A. Unfortunately, the MoEF developed a negative image in the last few years. It represented licence permit raj and was seen as a roadblock in the path of development and growth. We have taken up steps now to change this image. Firstly, we have brought in fast-tracking of project clearances; secondly, we have brought transparency; thirdly, we are going for policy review and changes in approach; and fourthly, we have decided to have expert appraisals wherever certain issues are seen to be complicated. While fast-tracking clearances, one of the elements is to take the process online. Today, we are processing over 2,200 project proposals online and that also means that there is transparency in it. MoEF is no longer a license permit roadblock, but a people-friendly facilitator.

Q. What kind of policy review related to environmental clearances do you have in mind?

A. We have to think whether we should be running a licence



“Development without destruction is our target”



permit system or be facilitators of development, and at the same time also protect the environment. One of the reasons behind the delay in clearance was that, after an applicant submitted the terms of reference, it required three months to process that part itself. We have now decided that this period will be cut short, and as soon as the environmental impact study is submitted, we will process the application for approval. An example is of defence sector. Earlier, every major project of the defence department was stalled by the MoEF. Now, we are doing a review of whether the blocking was necessary. We have taken a decision that all roads being built by the Border Roads Organisation should be given approval. All roads being built in the 100 km range of the border should be built under standard guideline. Similarly, coastal regulation zone (CRZ) restrictions are a big issue. In brief, I can say that our target is industrial growth without destruction.

“WE ARE PROCESSING OVER 2,200 PROJECT PROPOSALS ONLINE. MOEF IS NO LONGER A LICENSE PERMIT ROADBLOCK, BUT A PEOPLE-FRIENDLY FACILITATOR”



Q. What is the plan on CRZ, as it is a major concern in cities like Mumbai and Chennai? It puts many restrictions, which are sometimes not practical.

A. We are going for a review of CRZ, especially on various defence projects that are getting affected by it. We have decided to give permission to coastal outposts of the Coast Guard. This clearance was pending for a long time. Similarly, we are positive about Mumbai's coastal road project. We are only concerned about preserving the present high-tide line. Once that is done, we can proceed on clearing the project.

Q. You have fast-tracked some project clearances, but that has led to the criticism that you are not doing enough to protect the environment in eco-sensitive areas.

A. That is not true. I am happy to announce that recently MoEF has identified 17 sectors that are critical for the protection of environment. These are the sectors that are likely to cause pollution or damage the environment. We have now decided to make it mandatory for all the projects and plans of these sectors to monitor their effluents on a 24/7 basis. Similarly, we will be launching a new concept of

monitoring air quality index in 20 cities of the country. We want to make all these activities people-centric and allow development without damaging the fragile ecosystem. Our target is to have development without destruction and to protect nature from any possible degradation.

Q. Many States, particularly in the South India, are facing problems in giving clearances to investors, as there is no clarity on MoEF's policy on Western Ghats. What is the latest on this?

"THERE ARE CASES TO SHOW THAT IF A RIVER IS NOT PROTECTED, IT CAN LEAD TO SEVERE DAMAGE. WE MUST KEEP A RIVER'S ENVIRONMENT SAFE"

A. The implementation of Kasturirangan report is due. We have asked seven States, which have ecosensitive zones to take up a study of sustainability at the ground level. We have asked them to go to village level and do a study of how development will be sustainable vis-à-vis environment protection. A lot will depend

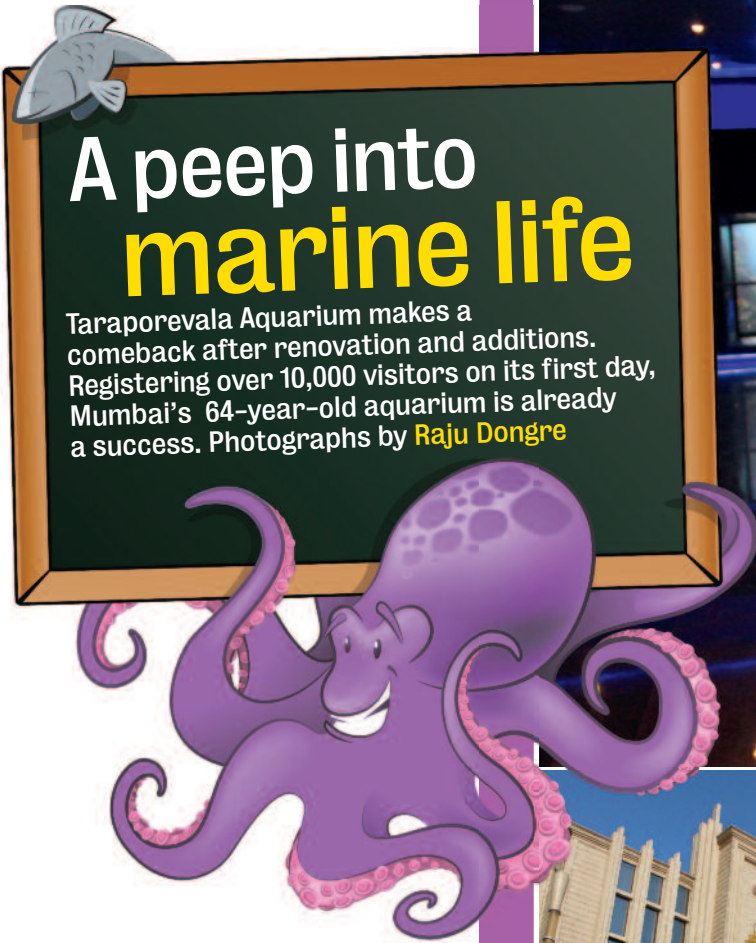
on what the States say and what they want.

Q. The cleaning of Ganga is an ambitious project. Other Indian rivers also face serious problems because of industrial effluents. The Maharashtra Government has scrapped the river regulation zone restriction for setting up a new industry. What is your view?

A. We find river contamination to be a serious problem, which can only be solved by simultaneous action on several fronts. Sewerage and industrial effluents have to be controlled. We have launched sewer-processing plants in several places. We are speaking to industries such as cement to ensure that they go for zero-distil discharge. We are also launching an educational drive through students to convince people about how to protect the rivers. As far as scrapping of river regulation zone is concerned, we are a bit concerned. Cases in States such as Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir show that if a river and its environment are not protected, it can lead to severe damage. There has to be some mechanism in place to ensure that river's environment remains safe.

Q. What is the agenda for Paris climate summit considering the expectations from India?

A. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said during President Obama's India visit that there is no pressure on India to commit anything, but still there is pressure to save the environment because we feel that it is our responsibility towards the future generations. I remember Mahatma Gandhi's statement that we should not just think that we have inherited this earth from the earlier generations, but we should always remember that we have borrowed it from the future generations. So in that sense, we have to work towards saving the environment and ensuring that carbon emissions are the lowest in our country. ■



A peep into marine life

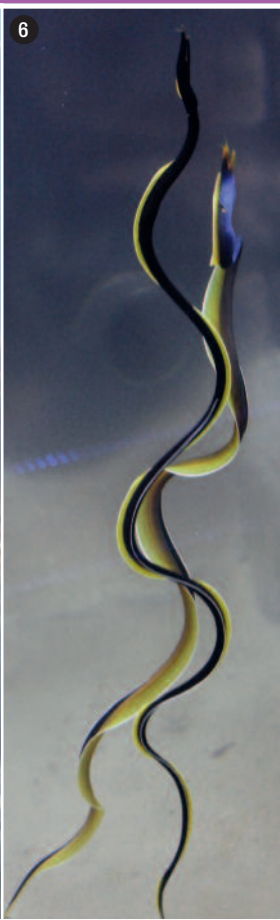
Taraporevala Aquarium makes a comeback after renovation and additions. Registering over 10,000 visitors on its first day, Mumbai's 64-year-old aquarium is already a success. Photographs by **Raju Dongre**



ALL THINGS AQUATIC

Taraporevala Aquarium was set up at a cost of ₹8 lakh in 1951 at Charni Road in Mumbai. It has attracted families over six decades. The aquarium has housed about a hundred species of fish, including coral, sharks, rays, starfish, and a variety of other marine life and rare sea shells. With renovation and value additions, the aquarium stands to become an iconic landmark for not just Mumbai, but also India, believes Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The Chief Minister inaugurated the aquarium in March and called it a destination that will drive tourism in a big way. The renovated aquarium has around 400 species of fish, including a few from China, Singapore and Malaysia. The rare species include damsel, butterfly and squirrel.





1. and 2. Inside and outside view of the renovated Taraporevala Aquarium in Mumbai; 3. and 4. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis with his Cabinet colleagues visit the Aquarium; 5. Landscaping at the aquarium; 6. Ribbon Eel; 7. Star Fish; 8. Flower Horn; 9. Turtle; 10. A young visitor; 11. Indian Major Carp Fish; 12. Gold fish



PHOTO FEATURE

TARAPOREVALA AQUARIUM



1. Kombada, Lion and Turkey (has flamboyant frilly spines with venom glands at their base), 2. Seahorse, 3. Tiger barb, 4. Singaporean turtle (or Red eared sliders are turtles often reared as pets), 5. Damsel fish, 6. A child at the aquarium 7. Popat fish, 8. Oscar Chiclid Tropical (a South American fish) 9. Trigger, 10. Koi fish 11. Angel fish, 12. Piranha, 13. Giant Gourami





Taraporevala Aquarium now houses around 400 species of fish brought from world over. The rare species include damsel, butterfly and squirrel. The upcoming features include a touch pool, where visitors will be able to touch harmless marine animals such as the sea urchin, sea cucumber, starfish and turtle



GLASSY GLASSY

The just renovated aquarium showcases marine life in a grand way. The tanks—slightly bigger than the old ones—are fitted with 110 mm flexi glass that gives better clarity, and will be lit by LED or metal halide lamps to enhance the colour of fish.

At the entrance, there is an oceanarium—a first-of-its-kind in India—that gives one the feeling of being under the sea. The huge tunnel aquarium will display saltwater fish in 180 degrees. A special tank for jelly fish has been created. The upcoming features include a touch pool, where visitors will be able to touch harmless marine animals like the sea urchin, sea cucumber, starfish and turtles. Visitors can also watch a documentary or educational film on the marine life at the 50-seat amphitheatre.



IN A STATE OF PROGRESS

A historical-yet-modern district, Aurangabad is pacing ahead as a world-class industrial destination. The proposed smart city of Shendra Bidkin stands to add to its glory, says **Jyoti Verma**



The divisional head of Marathwada, Aurangabad showcases a perfect blend of history and industry. The gateway to the World Heritage Sites of Ajanta and Ellora, the city is also one of the most industrially developed districts of Maharashtra. Many companies in the sectors of automotive and auto components, pharmaceuticals and breweries, consumer durables, plastic processing, aluminium processing, agriculture and biotech have their manufacturing base here. The combination makes Aurangabad an international tourism and investment destination.

Interestingly, all of these were not achieved in recent years. Aurangabad's geographic location and connectivity with other industrially developed districts of India established it as a trading hub four centuries ago. The city lies on a major trade route that was used to connect north-west India's sea and land ports to the Deccan region. In 1889, a cotton-spinning and weaving mill opened in the city, employing 700 people. The Hyderabad-Godavari Valley Railways, set up in 1900, led to several ginning factories. In 1960, Marathwada

(Clockwise from left) Industrial projects of Premium Stephan, Wockhardt, Glenmark and NRB Industrial Bearings in and around Aurangabad

The Shendra Bidkin Mega Industrial Park will be developed as part of the DMIC project. It will be equipped with world-class industrial infrastructure and will have support infrastructure such as residential, commercial and institutional facilities

was merged with Maharashtra, and its industrial development began. Later, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) began acquiring land and setting up industrial estates.

Aurangabad's central location and seamless connectivity to the ports make importing of raw materials and exporting of goods much easier and cost effective. Major infrastructure projects undertaken over the years have helped it get further access and acceptance. The Nagpur-Aurangabad-Mumbai express highway that will soon be completed will provide a great advantage to Aurangabad and will help industries significantly save time and cost on the logistics front.

MEGA PROJECTS, SMART CITY

Aurangabad is bordered by Nashik, Jalgaon, Jalna and Ahmednagar. Shendra Bidkin, Chikalthana and Waluj MIDC Industrial Areas are prominent industrial zones situated on the outskirts of the city. It has many mega projects and five Special Economic Zones in automotive, pharmaceuticals, aluminium and renewable energy. Aurangabad is



the third city in Maharashtra after Pune and Nashik to host an auto cluster, namely Marathwada Auto Cluster. Electrical goods major Siemens has set up a plant for manufacturing of train coaches, including superior-quality bogies for locomotives, electric multiple units and metro coaches at Shendra MIDC Aurangabad.

One of the early-bird projects along the Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), Shendra-Bidkin after completion will be about 80 sq km stretch dedicated to manufacturing. Under its proposed “100 Smart Cities” project, Government of India plans to take up seven places in the first phase. It has identified two places—Dholera in Gujarat and Shendra-Bidkin in Maharashtra along the DMIC, where the actual ground work will kick off. Spread over 903 hectare, the industrial area is just 20 km from Aurangabad City, located along National Highway 211.

Touted as a game changer by industry captains and bureaucrats, the first milestone—acquiring of land from farmers—is already achieved. The State Government expects to double employment, triple

THE SMART MOVE

As a beginning, the Shendra-Bidkin Industrial Area development entails an investment of ₹17,391 crore to cover 84 sq km of area. Initially, 32 sq km will be developed. The project covers Shendre-Bidkin Industrial City, multi modal logistics park at Karnad, exhibition-cum-convention centre at Aurangabad and water supply scheme for Shendra. These projects are expected to create 3,30,000 jobs.

industrial output and quadruple exports from the region in five years. Of the nearly 4,000 ha that will comprise Phase One, 845 ha are in MIDC's possession, with the remaining due for acquisition in May. The agency is now racing ahead with master plans, concept plans, skill development initiatives and detailed consultations.

Another priority is building infrastructure. Apart from four-lane roads connecting Shendra and Bidkin to NH 211 and two flyovers, various consultants are focusing on plans for sewerage operations, water supply and other built infrastructure. The acquired land will also have a multi-modal logistics park at Karnad—4 km from Shendra and near to the proposed JNPT dry port—that can make a possible exports promotion zone.

The Shendra-Bidkin Mega Industrial Park (MIP) will be developed as part of the DMIC project. The MIP—estimated to be 5,000-10,000 hectares in size—is envisioned as a new satellite community to the city of Aurangabad. The park will be equipped with world-class industrial and support infrastructure. **M**



Signed copy of the MoU being exchanged between Apurva Chandra and M.V. Natarajan, General Manager, Mars Chocolates India. Devendra Fadnavis, Subhash Desai and Ehab AbouOaf are also seen

Chocolate major Mars lands in Pune

In a big boost to manufacturing in Maharashtra, Mars International India, a wholly owned subsidiary of leading global chocolate maker Mars Inc, will be investing ₹1,005 crore in a greenfield project to make chocolates at Khed, near Pune. This is one of company's largest projects for a local market anywhere in the world.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU), signed between the State Government and Mars International India, will give Maharashtra a third chocolate factory after Cadbury and Ferrero Rocher. The MoU was

signed by Apurva Chandra, Principal Secretary, Industries and M.V. Natarajan, Managing Director, Mars International India (Chocolate) in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Minister for Industries Subhash Desai. "With Ferrero Rocher and Cadbury already present, Pune is fast emerging as a chocolate manufacturing hub. Yet another step towards @makeinindia..." Devendra Fadnavis tweeted later.

The Mars project is expected to generate direct and indirect employment opportunities for over 1,200 people.

Korea to enhance participation in 'Make in Maharashtra'

Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Mumbai, Seok-Gu Jang has said that Korea is actively participating in the 'Make in India' programme with a number of Korean companies already manufacturing in India, particularly in Maharashtra.

Mentioning that Korean companies, including steel major Posco, electronic consumer good giant LG and elevator maker Hyundai are already manufacturing in Maharashtra, the Consul General assured that Korea's participation in Maharashtra will increase further, as investment climate in Maharashtra is improving. The Consul General was speaking to the Governor of Maharashtra Ch Vidyasagar Rao at Raj Bhavan, Mumbai during a courtesy call, recently.



Strengthen ITIs for skill development among the youth

To increase the number of entrepreneurs in the State, along with organising Skill Development Shibir at each district, Industrial Training Institutes will be strengthened, said the Chief Minister while distributing Udyog Ratna Awards at a programme hosted by World Marathi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Minister for Industries Subhash Desai, Chairman of Chambers and former Chief Minister Manohar Joshi, MP Shivajirao Adarao, Secretary General of Chambers Sudhir Sawant



Subhash Desai, Minister for Industries, Maharashtra

and others were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister said, to give proper direction to the capability of youth, the Government has taken up the Skill Development Programme zealously. The Government is emphasising on ease of doing business in the State to attract investments. Government is also emphasising on the need to improve the raw material production sector.

Subhash Desai said, the Government has chalked out various schemes to give impetus to small industries besides big industries.

Chairman of Jaika Group, Praful Kale, Chairperson of Sugi Group Nishant Deshmukh, film producer and director Mahesh Kothare, textile entrepreneur Pradip Marathe and art director Chandrashekhar More were felicitated with Udyog Ratna Award.

The Consul General informed the Governor that the Gangui Province of Korea has a sister-state relationship with Maharashtra. He said that 1,500 Koreans are working in Maharashtra, mostly in Pune and Mumbai, in as diverse areas as shipping, finance, trading and construction. Seok-Gu Jang assured that he will make serious efforts to further enhance the trade, commerce and cultural relations between India and Korea. Welcoming the assurance of the Consul General of Korea to enhance participation of Korea in

(From left)
**Consul General,
 Republic of
 Korea in Mumbai,
 Seok- Gu Jang
 with Maharashtra
 Governor, Ch
 Vidyasagar Rao
 at Raj Bhavan in
 Mumbai**

'Make in Maharashtra' initiative, the Governor told him that Maharashtra has tremendous potential for tourism, and felt that, apart from trade and commerce, student exchange and cultural exchange should also be promoted.



Encouragement to small and medium enterprises



Dignitaries at the launch of Microplast Polytex Industries at Samdrapur

To encourage educated, unemployed youth set up businesses in rural areas, the Government will provide infrastructure to small and medium enterprises (SMEs), said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The Chief Minister was inaugurating Microplast Polytex Industries at Samdrapur. Union Minister for Surface

Transport Nitin Gadkari was also present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister said, "SMEs generate maximum local employment, hence, there is need for special policy in this regard." For Vidarbha and Marathwada, self-employment opportunities will be made available for unemployed youth through Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Department. "By implementing special programme, skilled manpower will be generated," he added.

Nitin Gadkari said, instead of seeking employment opportunities, Vidarbha's youth should themselves become entrepreneurs and create job opportunities. Sons of farmers should come forward and create employment opportunities by starting processed industries based on cotton, soybean, pulses and other agriculture produce. While giving impetus to industrial development in Vidarbha, efforts are being made for development of Hyderabad-Nagpur Industrial Corridor.



Union Minister for Telecommunications and Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad awards the winners from Maharashtra



National Award to e-Sahakar and e-Tendering portal

The Union Minister for Telecommunications and Information Technology, Ravi Shankar Prasad presented the Illrd Web Ratna Awards to various government departments recognising their sustainable initiatives for e-Governance for better delivery of information and services at New Delhi.

For Innovative Use of Technology, the silver award was won by E-Sahakar, an online cooperative society process management system of Maharashtra Government. Maharashtra also bagged the platinum award for Comprehensive Web Presence-State category for the year 2014.

The third edition of Web Ratna Awards 2014 was jointly organised by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Department of Electronic and Information Technology under the ambit of India Portal (<http://india.gov.in>).

The Director, Information Technology Department Virendra Singh accepted the

platinum award for e-tendering. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Information Technology Department of Maharashtra Government is continuously doing exemplary work in the sector. The State has become an ideal in IT for other States. The e-tendering portal proves the transparent and speedy functioning of the Government.

The Commissioner, Co-operation, Chandrakant Dalvi, while accepting the e-Sahakar award, said, the portal provides information of all cooperative institutions of the State. The portal is the result of the efforts of former Principal Secretaries, Co-operation Rajgopal Deora and Shailesh Kumar Sharma. It has information of 54 types of cooperative institutions and 2.39 lakh cooperative institutions. The portal provides information about yearly elections of cooperative institutions, their registration and audit.

Ikea to invest ₹600 crore in Maharashtra

Ikea India, the Indian subsidiary of Swedish furniture retailer Ikea, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Maharashtra Government to invest ₹600 crore for setting up two-three outlets in the State, creating around 1,000 jobs per outlet. Welcoming the MoU, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said it will boost local industry and export, besides employment generation and giving prominence to the State globally.

“We aim to establish Kumbh Mela as a green mela”



The biggest religious event for Hindus, the Kumbha Mela will begin in the auspicious land of Nashik and Trimbakeshwar in July. The District Administration is trying its best to remain ahead of the times and ensure that there is no stone left unturned in presenting a grand spectacle. The preparations have gained momentum in last few days, thanks to Minister for Water Resources, Khar Land and Nashik Guardian Minister **Girish Mahajan**. The Minister has been visiting Nashik every week to take stock of the situation. His regular contacts with the officials, swift actions and quick decisions have put the preparations in a fast gear. Senior journalist **Vivek Bhavsar** meets Girish Mahajan to know more about the efforts being made by the State Government to make the Sinhastha Kumbh Mela a success. Excerpts:

Q. Please tell us about the preparations done for the Kumbh Mela.

A. Organising the Kumbh Mela is not really a challenge for us. We are sure that millions of people and holy saints

expected to be in Nashik and Trimbakeshwar July onwards will not face any difficulties. There would be no complaints. I believe that we have to pass this test with 100 per cent, and my team is committed to it. Of course, it's only possible with the joint efforts of everyone.

Q. Tell us about the stay arrangements at the shrines.

A. The Sinhastha Kumbh Mela is being held at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar for years. There are three sects or camps of Vaishnava followers at Nashik and 10 camps of Shaiva followers at Trimbakeshwar. Sadhugram will be built in Nashik on 283 acres. In the same city, there is huge land that belongs to religious organisations. We will use 33 acre of this land to accommodate sadhus and mahants. At Trimbakeshwar, 10 *akhada* or camps have their own land. Besides, Sadhugram will be built on 15 acres of land. On the lines of Sadhugram, Bhavikgram will be built for devotees so that the crowd is evenly distributed.

Q. How many devotees are expected to be present in both the places? Tell us about the planning done.

A. During the event, we expect 50 lakh devotees to visit the shrine cities of Nashik and Trimbakeshwar everyday. On the day of Shahi Snans, more than a crore devotees are expected to be in the city. Hence, we have planned minutely to ensure that the transport system does not collapse. We are taking special care so that local population does not face the stress of pilgrims. There will be private vehicles available to devotees to reach Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. For devotees who will reach by public transport, 3,000 buses of Maharashtra State Transport Corporation will be available. I am sure the service will benefit at least 50 lakh devotees everyday.

Q. Presence of lakhs of visitors can pose sanitation and health problems. Do you have any planning for these?

A. We plan to build 22,000 temporary toilets for devotees and saints. Another point worth mentioning is that the corporate sector has shown keen interest in providing facilities of public utilities, including toilets. The big names include Mahindra and Mahindra, Godrej and Reliance. Internal roads in Sadhugram, water supply, toilet, bathroom, electric lights and hospitals are other facilities that will be available to the visitors.

Q. How will you solve the problem of pollution?

Taking a dip in the holy river of Godavari is a subject of faith

to many. To provide the devotees the facility, we have decided to build pier (*ghat*) on the banks of the river. The berths will be 3,990-metre-long in Nashik and 950-metre-long in Trimbakeshwar. At the same time, we will also take care of the beautification of the river. The administration has been given instructions to promote the campaign of pollution-free river among the devotees.

Q. Water supply and bed capacity in hospitals are other areas of concern. Do you have any plans on expanding these facilities?

A. Of course, we have. Nashik Civil Hospital will see an increase in bed capacity with 200 additional beds. We are transforming the rural hospital at Trimbakeshwar, so that extra beds are available. A water supply scheme has been undertaken at Gautami Godavari dam at Trimbakeshwar to facilitate additional and ample drinking water. A water purification system is being built at Kushawart. We have planned to provide 472 MLD water per day.

Q. Tell us about the parking arrangements.

A. Three parking lots are being developed in Nashik, four parking lots are being built at Trimbakeshwar and one at Kavanai. In addition, there are two and six internal parking lots being developed at Trimbakeshwar and Nashik, respectively. All outsider vehicles will be parked at these lots. Devotees will be provided public transport system to enter the cities from these parking lots. State Transport Corporation is repairing and developing bus stops. Construction of Deolali Bus Depot and repairing of sheds and Mahamarg Bus Depot are in progress.

Q. Law and order will be a big responsibility. What are the precautionary measures taken?

A. That's true. Gathering of millions of devotees will be a major challenge before the security forces. I have given instructions to take all necessary steps to maintain security of the devotees and citizens. The CCTV systems will be put up at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. Besides, watch tower,



Girish Mahajan (extreme right) in conversation with mahants in Nashik

COMMITTEES IN ACTION

High-Level Committees: To ensure systematic planning and supervision of works, an apex committee chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has been constituted. Another district-level committee has been instituted under the Guardian Minister. A third high-level committee led by the Chief Secretary is being made. The district-level committee take reviews of development activities every Tuesday.

Coordination Committee: The State Government has constituted a committee to coordinate the works of Kumbh Mela chaired by Anand Kulkarni, Additional Chief Secretary, PWD. Dr. Nitin Kareer, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department; Arup Patnaik, Managing Director, Police Housing Department; Vandana Krishna, Director General, Rajmata Jijau Women and Child; Manisha Mhaisakar-Patankar, Principal Secretary, Urban Development Department; Nashik Divisional Commissioner; Commissioner of Police, N.B. Ringane; Under Secretary of Finance Department, Dattatrya Thube; Superintendent Engineer of Design and Layout Department, Retd. IG T. S. Bhal; and Treasury Officer, B.G. Nirmal are other members of the committee.

AUSPICIOUS DAYS (NASHIK AND TRIMBAKESHWAR)		
Hoisting of auspicious flag (Dhwaja Parv)		Tuesday July 14, 2015
SHAHI SNAN (AUSPICIOUS BATH) OCCASIONS		
Nashik	First	Saturday August 29, 2015
	Second	Sunday September 13, 2015
	Third	Friday September 18, 2015
Trimbakeshwar	First	Saturday August 29, 2015
	Second	Sunday September 13, 2015
	Third	Friday September 25, 2015

barricades, bomb detection squad, wireless communication systems and public address systems will be made available during the Kumbh Mela.

Q. What is the amount allocated for Kumbh Mela?

A. The State Government has sanctioned ₹2,378.78 crore for the shrine; ₹476.26 crore has been provided by the Department of Urban Development and the Mantralaya has provided ₹898.90 crore.

Q. Are there any special features too?

A. It's our attempt to establish Kumbh Mela as a 'green mela'. Environment-friendly growth is our goal. We are working on the concept and have taken measures to keep the river clean and pollution free. On the occasion of Kumbh Mela, foreign tourists will visit Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. Hence, Department of Tourism will provide information of prime tourist places in the State to attract tourists. Besides, repair works are being taken by Department of Archaeology to protect the ancient temples at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. I am sure, Kumbh Mela will not only give a global identity to Nashik, but will also benefit Maharashtra. It's an opportunity for development. **M**



A GIFTED VARIETY

There is nothing *aam* about the *khaas* Alphonso. The variety grown in Ratnagiri has global footprints due to its outstanding quality, says **Sameer K**

Every year, from March to July, India produces more than 1,000 varieties of mango. But none of them are as succulent and tasty as the Alphonso. Loyalists swear by its rich creaminess. Its flesh is saffron-coloured and without a hint of fibre. The taste is exquisitely sweet unlike any other variety of mango, which has a hint of sourness and tartness in flavour aptly lending it the title of ‘King of fruits’. The fame of Alphonso, known locally as Hapus, has spread so far and wide that consumers from markets like the USA hanker for the fruit.

Come summer and there is a rush for Hapus. Cartons are delivered to near and dear ones, for which courier companies like DHL run special services like Mango Express. Newspapers begin a series of anxiety-ridden articles about the health of the crop. Such mango mania serves to make the Alphonso one of the most expensive mangoes. During the peak season, people do not mind spending as much as ₹1,000 for a dozen. Of all the Alphonso varieties, the mango from Maharashtra’s Konkan region is by far the best and tastiest.

According to Ajit Gogate, Chairman, Devgad Taluka Amba Utpadak Sahakari Sanstha, a society of 700 farmers growing Alphonso in Devgad taluka of Sindhudurg, Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg districts alone produce 1.15 lakh tonnes of Alphonso that fetch a premium in both domestic and export markets. “The Hapus tops in quality for obvious reasons. The climate coupled with soil quality lends the mango the right weather



(Clockwise from top) The journey of Alphonso: From farm to shelves in Maharashtra

required at the right time. As a result, every mango is around 225-250 gm, the skin is thin, and flavour, colour and taste are unlike any other mango in the world,” he says.

The season for the Alphonso begins in February–March and ends by May 15. Gogate estimates the total mango production to be around 2.5 lakh tonnes all across Konkan. Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and Raigad together have around 1,30,000 hectares dedicated to its cultivation. Mangoes grown in Ratnagiri district, the largest producer, carry the Geographical Indication tag.

In these districts, Alphonso is much more than a fruit. Besides farmers, hundreds of thousands of people are employed as support staff, transport operators and workers in processing and canning factories that process the fruit to make products like pulp, pickles and drinks. In Devgad, which comprises the largest chunk of production within the two districts, Alphonso grows on over 45,000 acres and reaches 50,000 tonnes of production in an average year. Over 5,000 farmer households and 2,000 other families depend on the Alphonso in the *taluka*. This year, mango growers hope to cross the mark of ₹1 crore through online sales. The Society had also begun mango bonds to entice more mango lovers into the net. In this, mango buyers can purchase a mango bond, worth say ₹5,000, and purchase the amount's worth of mangoes in the entire season. Retail chains have also emerged as major buyers.

A 'MADE IN INDIA' BRAND

This season, mango producers from Maharashtra expect to export around 45,000 tonnes to overseas markets, senior officials from the State Horticulture Department say. Around 2,500 growers have registered themselves on Mangonet, the new online initiative from Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) to be eligible for export. According to APEDA, around 41,280 tonnes of mangoes were exported to the Middle East, South-East Asia and the US last year. Around 1.86 lakh hectares are under mango cultivation, and accordingly, around 2,000 Alphonso growers and 500 Kesar growers have registered on Mangonet. Exports to new markets such as Mauritius and Australia are also likely to begin from this season.

Last year, mango export had run into trouble when the European Union (EU) decided to ban the Indian Alphonso over concerns of high-level contamination. This year, EU has lifted the ban, but the exporters need to give mangoes hot water

OF EXPORT QUALITY

● Total mango production is estimated to be around 2.5 lakh tonnes all across Konkan.

● Ratnagiri—the largest producer—with Sindhudurg and Raigad have 1,30,000 ha dedicated to mango cultivation.

● India exports mangoes to 72 countries and mango pulp to 141 countries. The major exports are to the Middle East, South-East Asia and the US.

● Last year, maximum quantity of mangoes were exported to France, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland and the UK.

● With mango bonds, buyers can buy a bond of a certain amount and purchase mangoes worth it in the entire season



“**The Hapus tops in quality for obvious reasons. The climate coupled with soil quality lends the mango the right weather required at the right time. As a result, every mango is around 225-250 gm, the skin is thin, and flavour, colour and taste are unlike any other mango in the world.**

—Ajit Gogate
Chairman, Devgad Taluka Amba Utpadak Sahakari Sanstha



treatment before exporting. The National Plant Protection Organisation (NPPO)—the phytosanitary certification body authorised by the Centre—has now made it mandatory for mangoes to undergo the treatment. According to APEDA, a sensitisation programme has been organised at Ratnagiri. Exporters are also part of this initiative to help growers understand the needs of export.

Officials say, the country exports mangoes to 72 countries, while mango pulp is exported to 141 countries. This year, in addition to EU, growers are looking at Bangladesh, UK, Saudi Arabia and Nepal. A recent study said that EU imports over 224 million kg of mangoes with a value of approximately 265 million euros. The Gulf accounts for 20 per cent of the Indian export market. Significantly, last year, maximum quantity of mangoes went to France, Germany, New Zealand, Switzerland and the UK. Other markets include Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Singapore, the UAE, Hong Kong, and Bahrain. **M**

Beauty in stone

The cave complex of Elephanta, a protected heritage site off Mumbai, got a boost when it was mentioned in the Union Budget to be allocated resources for development of tourism, says **Pallavi Singh**

In 2010, I finally accomplished my first trip to the commercial capital of India. Mumbai was the first halt in our Western India sojourn, which clearly had favoured Goa more than any other spot. Two days were allocated to Mumbai travel and we had to cover as many destinations as possible before we head to Goa. We began with the Taraporevala Aquarium, followed by feasting on Maharashtrian food at a local restaurant in Bandra, and steadily moved to Gateway of India. It was afternoon by the time we reached the monument. Having fed the pigeons that mark the area in abundance and done with our photo-sessions, we decided to take a tour of the celebrated Elephanta Caves that lie approximately 10 km from the monument.

The seventh century cave complex was the most manageable caves for us to see during the trip. Considering one needs to be in Aurangabad to see Ajanta and Ellora, Elephanta's nearness to Mumbai helped pressed-for-time tourists like us. Our driver said that it will take us an hour by ferry from Apollo Bunder to reach the Elephanta Island. Once on the island, visitors need to climb over 1,000 stone steps to get to the caves. While the children get a toy train ride up to the caves, the commute becomes slightly tiring for the elderly. The entire trip to the caves takes about five to six hours, the driver said.

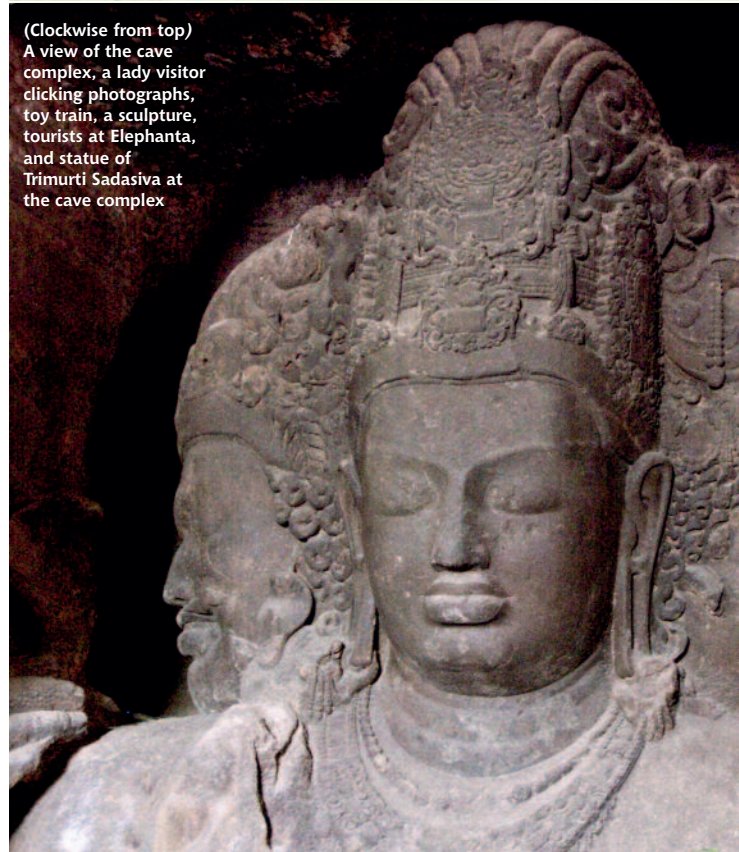
A HERITAGE SITE

Though it started as plain sightseeing, Elephanta turned out to be much more. The World Heritage Site houses magnificent rock-cut temples dedicated to Lord Shiva dating back to the 5th-6th century. Originally called Gharapuri—the Portuguese renamed it Elephanta after they found a large stone elephant near the place they landed—the temples had been built by carving out rocks to create columns, internal spaces and images.

The complex covers an area of 60,000 sq. ft. and consists of a main chamber, two lateral chambers, courtyards and several subsidiary shrines. It also has religious motifs, which depict various forms of Lord Shiva. There are seven caves dedicated to Shiva's avatars, namely Andhakasuravatha (the demon of darkness), Kalyanasundara (the gentle loving god), Ardhanarishwara (Shiva and Shakti as one), Nataraja (Shiva as cosmic dancer) and as Ravana Anugraha (destroyer of enemies).



(Clockwise from top) A view of the cave complex, a lady visitor clicking photographs, toy train, a sculpture, tourists at Elephanta, and statue of Trimurti Sadasiva at the cave complex



The most famous sculpture here is of Trimurti Sadasiva form of Lord Shiva. The statue rises up to a height of 20 feet and is carved as a three-headed Shiva. The right face represents the God as a youth with sensuous lips, signifying life and vitality. The right half of the face resembles that of Lord Brahma, the creator of Uma or Vamadeva, the female form of Shiva. The left half-face of the statue is that of a young man who has moustache and displays anger, signifying Aghora Bhairava, the destroyer. The face from the front seems to be in a meditative pose as a Yogi, presenting Shiva praying for the protection of humanity.

The heritage site had been threatened by rapid industrial development in the vicinity for years. Picnickers littering the surroundings, incidents of tourists perching atop structures and vandalism by visitors to the site had brought damage to the



Once an abode of Lord Shiva, the cave complex covers an area of 60,000 sq. ft and has a main chamber, two lateral chambers, courtyards and subsidiary shrines. Its motifs depict various forms of the God

monument. Putting all these woes behind, the world's oldest island caves are in the process of getting a new lease on life. The India National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has teamed up with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to spruce up the caves and protect them from further decay and degeneration. The joint efforts of Government of India, INTACH and UNESCO aim to clean up the surroundings, prevent tourists

from pilferage and protect the caves from vandalism. The recently announced Union Budget has brought good news for Elephanta with the Finance Minister announcing plans to refurbish the site, provide helipad facilities and power to the cave complex.

A visit to the caves left me with a marvellous feeling for the deeply developed skills of the sculptors and architects of yore, who left no stone unturned, and quite literally so, to create a marvel in stone. Not to mention a sense of pride for our revered past. The island is a naturalist's paradise, with a quiet and picturesque facade amidst light green foliage, a place steeped in history, and a place that attracts the young and the old alike. The annual dance festival held at the Elephanta Island complex every February is an added attraction. Did you hear me say, it's a must visit? Yes, I certainly said so. Bon voyage! **M**



JACQUARD SPREAD

Maharashtra's rich tradition of weaving Solapur chaddars has attracted worldwide attention. It is set to grow further, as the Government is upbeat about reviving the handloom sector in Solapur, says **Deepika Khurana**

We often love to hold onto things that evoke memories of our cherished past. No matter how old they get and how deep we dig them in our grandma trunks, but the fact that they still belong to us makes us feel secure. It's the same feeling of nostalgia that hits me with some good old memories when I see the Solapur chaddar with a beautiful peacock pattern tucked neatly inside my bed box. It's a tattered piece of cloth though, still, to me it feels as cozy as it used to be almost four decades ago, when my grandparents bought it for us as a souvenir on their way back from Maharashtra. It may not be a rich bedcover, but definitely it's one of those "very peculiar" chaddars that one will never find elsewhere in the world. In fact, those days, even before we were exposed to the international brands, all other bed sheets were considered inferior quality than the Solapur ones,

not just for their design, but also because they outlived all the other varieties. Probably it is the reason Solapur chaddar and towels are still world famous, though the original art is fading away.

Once a bustling textile town, Solapur enjoyed the status of being the leading centre for cotton mills and power looms in India for a very long time. Apparently, it used to be world's second largest and Asia's number one city with maximum power mills, which is why it was often compared to the northern city of Manchester in the UK.

History says it was Srimant Madhavrao Peshve who invited weavers from Andhra Pradesh to Solapur for establishing the industry and since then the city has thrived on the handloom venture. Actually, its geographical location also plays a pivotal role because even though Solapur is located in south of Maharashtra, it happens to be a gateway to Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.



VARIETIES OF SOLAPUR CHADDARS

When it comes to trends in Solapur chaddars, there are many varieties, which are categorised according to weaving methods such as Jacquard chaddars (in which the fabric has intricately woven or an elaborate pattern), pick by pick chaddars, also known as Mayurpankh chaddars, and Dobby chaddar, which usually has geometrical patterns. Based on the demand, chaddars are manufactured with a variety of yarns and materials like cotton, filament, rayon, velvet and cashmilon. The bedsheets can also be categorised as per size, which may vary from regular to large and king-size sheets.

Matching the pace of technology-driven world, Solapur city too has seen advancement in textile industry, as most of the traditional power looms are now replaced with rapier looms and air jet looms. With the upgrade, there is more flexibility in the product range and increased productivity at reduced cost. Production of these bedsheets may vary as per the quality and the type of machine it is weaved on. For instance, on a rapier more than 50 chaddars can be produced per shift, whereas on traditional power loom only 15 to 20 chaddars can be manufactured.

REVIVAL OF A DYING ART

With the chaddars now manufactured as per



KNOW SOLAPUR

- Solapur is a city in southeastern Maharashtra, near the Karnataka border. Considering its location, the city is a transport hub connecting Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. A melting pot with a confluence of Marathi, Telugu and Kannada languages, the town has many small and medium scale industries, especially cotton mills and power looms.
- Solapur is known for its historical, religious, industrial and commercial importance. Ground Fort, Siddheshwar Temple, Mallikarjuna Temple, Parasnath Temple, Adinath Temple, mosques, churches and Agyari are its attractions. The Vatavriksha Temple of Shri Swami Samartha and Akkalkot Swami Math are important religious places, which are visited by many. Pandharpur, the city of Pandhavi Vithoba, is another important pilgrimage centre here.

The new textile policy aims at a single-window approval process, 20 to 40 per cent subsidy for setting up textile mills, easier pollution norms, reduced power tariff and all facilities to convert "fibre to fashion"



customer's requirements, there are many new designs that have come to the bedsheets, but have failed to take away the heritage of Solapur chaddars. Though the chaddar received Geographical Indication in 2004, the number of mills making the home furnishing dwindled and many looms moved out of the town. According to the local residents, the handloom industry is in bad shape and needs attention and aid. On an average, if 8,000 to 10,000 power looms producing Solapur chaddars existed a decade ago, today the city has just 3,000-4,000. Reasons vary from duplication of their original art form, to competition from China or even to their old-fashioned Jacquard looms, which could not keep up with the changing consumer tastes.

But amidst all this, the Maharashtra Government is upbeat about reviving the handloom sector in Solapur. The new proposed textile policy to boost the State's economy aims at a single-window approval process, 20 to 40 per cent subsidy for setting up textile mills, easier pollution norms, reduced power tariff and all facilities nearby to convert "fibre to fashion." The initiatives aim to woo industrialists and entrepreneurs to invest heavily in the sector so that the State can become a textile mega-hub once again. **M**



THE UNDEFEATED FORT

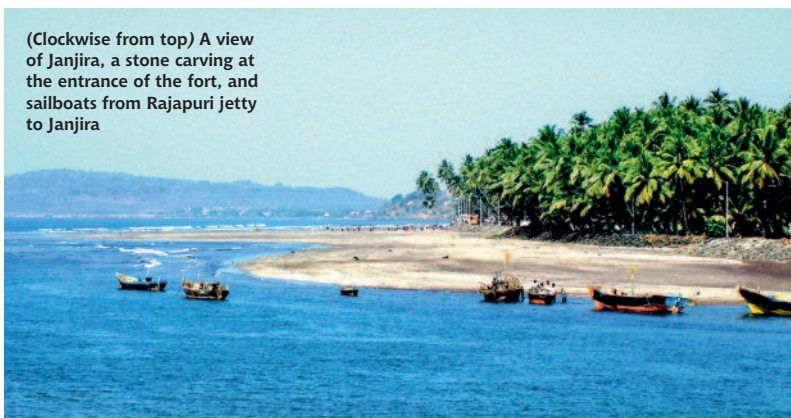
Nowhere in the world is a place as Maharashtra that has seen forts built by various rulers over centuries. In our new series on these power-packed monuments, we begin with the most impressive Janjira Jal-durg. Words by **Ninad Bedekar**



Cast an eye on the sharp peaks of the Sahyadri, one sees a multitude of forts built by the freedom-loving people of the land. The sight will convince the observer that this indeed is a land of citadels, along the *ghats* and the long sea coast. Besides the 85 sea forts, Maharashtra could perhaps have nearly 500 forts in its once martial territory.

There are records of caves and forts built during the Satavahana era to those erected by the Vakatakas, Kalchuri, Chalukya, Abheer, Sendrak, Gond, Shilahar, Yadavs and Marathas later. The forts were put to their best use by the singular genius of Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Besides these dynasties, the Bahamanis too built forts and so did the Portuguese, French and the English. The Abyssinian Siddis built forts like the unconquered Janjira near Murud. It is to Maharashtra's credit that forts were built by such a rich diversity of

(Clockwise from top) A view of Janjira, a stone carving at the entrance of the fort, and sailboats from Rajapuri jetty to Janjira





nations and rulers that it is difficult to find a parallel anywhere in the world.

These forts have a rich history, as rich as the diverse fort architecture. Tanaji Malusare, Murarbaji Deshpande and Baji Prabhu Deshpande's stirring deeds are well known, but the exploits of Ramaji Pangera, Layaji Koli Sarpatil, Kondaji Farzand are not as well known. Murarji Anjurkar, Baji Bhivrao and Yesji Kamthe's stirring deeds will perhaps be known to very few.

The story of Layaji Koli stands apart. Janjira was a fort built by the Siddis for the Nizamshahi between 1567 and 1571 and was unconquered. Surrounded by water and with 22 bastions mounted with guns, it was a challenge accepted by Shivaji Maharaj. Layaji Koli, a bold young man from Alibag, was given the onerous responsibility of placing ladders against the well-guarded walls of Janjira. To place ladders on these walls was not different from placing one's hands in the jaws of a tiger. Once the ladders were in place, the plan was to have Moropant Pingale bring the Maratha navy to attack Janjira. The expedition was fraught with immense danger.

Layaji set out with the ladders on his boat, riding the familiar waters of the sea, and reached Janjira unobserved by the guards. With his team, he unloaded the ladders and managed to place them against the fort walls, and began waiting for the armada. But the ships could not reach the fort! Waiting all night, Layaji returned with his ladders as day broke.

Shivaji Maharaj learnt of this daring exploit and summoned Layaji. "You have performed a heroic deed. You have the heart of a tiger. Pant, Layaji must be given a *palakhi* (palanquin)." But Layaji demurred. "We are men of the sea. What will I do with a *palakhi*?" Then the king ordered Moropant to build Layaji a ship and name it Palakhi.

This valiant history of the Maratha navy can be erected and immortalised by a sound and light show. The navy restricted the Europeans and the Siddis on the coast, and protected it. Commemorating this

AN ARCHITECTURAL SPECTACLE

📍 Situated on an oval-shaped rock near the port town of Murud, 165 km south of Mumbai, Janjira is one of the strongest marine forts of India. The word Janjira is a corruption of the Arabic word *Jazeera* for island. The fort is surrounded by water on all sides and that is why is also referred as island fort or Jal-durga. This amazing structure was built by Malik Ambar, who was an Abyssinian minister in the court of the Sultan of Ahmednagar. Janjira was built during the end of the 17th century and has withstood the tests of time. It stands at an impressive height of 40 feet, bounded by high walls on all sides. It has endured the lashes of the sea waves through ages and still stands strong.

The fort has 19 rounded bastions, still intact. There are many canons of native and European make, rusting on the bastions. Now in ruins, the fort in its heyday had all necessary facilities, such as palaces, quarters for officers, mosque and a big fresh water tank, among others. On the outer wall flanking the main gate, there is a sculpture depicting a tiger-like beast claspng elephants in its claws. This sculpture, its meaning difficult to interpret, appears on the many fort-gates of Maharashtra.

rich chapter from our past will inspire our youth.

The English have not forgotten Horatio Nelson, their foremost Admiral. On October 21, 1805, near the port of Trafalgar near Spain, Nelson led the English navy against the French and Spanish and defeated them. Before the battle, from Royal Navy's most famous warship HMS Victory, he flashed a famous message to his ships, "England expects every man will do his duty!" The message spurred his men to fight spiritedly and win the battle. Nelson was shot from a gun from a French ship, and as he lay dying, he heard of his famous victory. His last words were, "Thank God I have done my duty!"

The English have immortalised Nelson by preserving his ship HMS Victory at Portsmouth

Visits to the seaforts of Janjira, Sindhudurg, Vijaydurg, Khanderi, Suvarnadurg, Arnala, Alibag and Vasai can inspire India's youth. All we need to do is to share their legendary stories

along with all its medieval weapons and contents. On October 21 every year, the famous victory is celebrated with sound of bugles. A parade is held, and led by the historical event at Trafalgar, the youth are inspired to serve their country.

We can achieve the same at Janjira Jal-durg. At Vasai, we can show the exploits of the brave men under Chimaji Appa. Angre, Dhulap and Gujar were Sarkhels of the Marathas who struck terror in the hearts of foreign powers. The Marathi gurab, galbat, galley, batela, fattemara, mahagiryra, manja, tarandi, kothe and paal were various kinds of warships that ruled the sea. The age-old axiom, "One who has a Navy will rule the seas" can be carved in stone on these historic shores. **M**

—The writer is an eminent historian, writer and Chief Advisor for Fort Restoration Committee. The article is co-authored by Dr. Uday S. Kulkarni



(From left) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis (centre) speaking at the India Today Conclave and a packed-house at the event in New Delhi

CENTRE-STATE TEAM FOR A PROSPEROUS INDIA

Work as Team India. When Centre and States go hand-in-hand, India would prosper,” said Devendra Fadnavis at the India Today Conclave organised in New Delhi recently. The Maharashtra Chief Minister was candid and confident about his governance and implementation of policies for State’s welfare. Emphasising his point of view on some of the major gutsy decisions taken by his Government, he went all out to prove that the decisions are backed by dignified intentions and in the wider interests of people.

A man with serious and sincere intentions and all set to lead Maharashtra to prosperity, Devendra Fadnavis participated in the State Chief Ministers’ session during the conclave organised by the India Today Group annually. The session, moderated by Group’s Consulting Editor, Rajdeep Sardesai, witnessed varying thoughts from State leaders. The distinguished panel included Chief Ministers Manoharlal Khattar (Haryana), Dr. Raman

Singh (Chhattisgarh), Harish Rawat (Uttarakhand), and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

A volley of questions was thrown by Sardesai. However, Maharashtra Chief Minister floored the audience with his firm-yet-cool style. As an opening batsman, he batted well to prove his point. For answering a developmental issue—whether the State of Gujarat has an edge over other States—Devendra Fadnavis was chosen to open the match. The Chief Minister, with great poise, said that the race for acquiring the ‘numero uno’ position amongst the States should be looked upon as a healthy practice and not otherwise. Rather, the States should work in tandem and develop a sense of fair and healthy competition. This would not only breed a sense of performing better for one’s State, but would also try to emulate healthy practices and effective models amongst them. “Our focus should be the prosperity of our respective States

NATIONAL WORKSHOP ON PUBLIC RELATIONS IN GOVERNMENT

A first-of-its kind public relations’ workshop was organised by Maharashtra Information Centre in New Delhi from March 2-4. The workshop held at the YMCA Hostel was meant to provide an insight into the advanced media technology and trends in social media and its effective usage by Government officials. Senior Information and Public Relations Officers from Maharashtra and other Indian States and Union Territories were invited.

Union Minister of State with Independent Charge for Environment and Forests and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the workshop. Addressing the gathering informally, he said, “The influence of emerging social media trends has increased by the day; it needs to be welcomed as an opportunity and not as a challenge.”

Underlining the importance of new emerging trends of media, he shared his varied and valuable experience of a brief stint as Union Information and Broadcasting Minister.



MoEF Minister Prakash Javadekar (centre) addresses the workshop

MARATHI BHASHA GAURAV DIN OBSERVED

If we expect our mother tongue to stay alive forever, then it becomes our duty to speak in the same language with our children without any inhibitions. The sentiment was echoed on the Marathi Bhasha Gaurav Din by Member of Parliament from Delhi, Mahesh Giri at Maharashtra Sadan. The event was organised by Maharashtra Information Centre.

Marathi Bhasha Gaurav Din is celebrated on the birth anniversary of eminent Marathi poet Kusumagraj. The first Marathi-speaking MP elected from Delhi was very clear in voicing his concerns on mother tongue and its legacy, and went further to say that the education of a child should be in one's mother tongue. This would make him a confident person. Member of Parliament Ramdas Athavale seconded Mahesh Giri's sentiments and added that the Dalit literature has gone a long way in making Marathi literature strong.

MAHARASHTRA HEALTH MINISTER SEEKS CENTRE'S ASSISTANCE ON SWINE FLU

The State sought a financial assistance of ₹100 crore from the Centre to ouster swine flu outbreak, informed Public Health Minister Dr. Deepak Sawant. In Delhi, Dr. Sawant met Union Health Minister, J.P. Nadda to deliberate on the issue. Joining him were Members of Parliament, Rahul Shewale, Dr. Shrikant Shinde, Dr. Pritam Munde, D. Heena Gavit, Shrirang Barne, Arvind Sawant and Krupal Tumhane. Later informing about the discussions, Dr. Sawant said, the Union Minister assured that medicines to control the outbreak would be provided in sufficient amount. Centre's instructions on the usage of masks have been suitably followed by the State. These include mask N-95 to be used by patients and swine flu vaccination to be injected to the health workers treating the patients. To control the situation, surveillance mechanism has been strengthened in rural areas and 100 ventilators have been requested from the Centre.

He advised the Public Relations Officers to act as fire-fighters of the Government and build a strong rapport between the Government, media and the target audience. He said that perception management should be the objective and one should speak in people's language. Periodical reviews should be undertaken, which would prove as an asset to the Government in the long run. "Excellent public relations can be achieved and maintained when we disseminate information using simple and lucid language. Out-of-the-box thinking is necessary and should be applied while facing unusual incidents. In the era of modern technology, effective and brisk transmission of information is the need of the hour and one should catch up with this to be fit to survive," he said.

Maharashtra State Director General of Information and Public Relations, Chandrashekhar Oak said that such a workshop is the best platform for exchanging Government's functions with other States. "This would go a long way in building a strong relations amongst States and transforming the image of the Government in a better way," he added.



NTC GIVES LAND FOR BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR MEMORIAL; PM TO ATTEND THE *BHOOMIPUJAN*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi witnessed a tripartite agreement between Union Ministry of Textiles, Government of Maharashtra and National Textile Corporation, for transfer of 12 acres of land adjacent to the Chaityabhoomi in the Indu Mills Compound in Mumbai, where the last rites of Babasaheb Ambedkar were performed.

The agreement, signed at the initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, paves the way for resolving the long-pending issue of transfer of land from the National Textiles Corporation to the Government of Maharashtra to enable construction of a befitting memorial for Bharat Ratna Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis, and Union Minister of State for Textiles, Santosh Gangwar, who witnessed the agreement signing in New Delhi, thanked the Prime Minister for his initiative in removing the hurdles in transfer of land. Devendra Fadnavis said a beautiful memorial would now be constructed for Babasaheb. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured his presence in Mumbai for the *bhoomipujan* of the memorial.

aiming at nation's prosperity," he said.

Welcoming NITI Aayog's recommendation of cooperative federalism, he added that the concept would help in attaining competitive federalism. He said that Maharashtra Government has put its best foot forward to attract more and more investments and generate maximum employment.

Asserting his point on whether the States are fiscally responsible, Devendra Fadnavis said that every State has to work as per its set priorities. "Climatic conditions, demographic conditions, agriculture and other trade-related activities define a State's priorities. Accordingly, my priority would be to improve the adverse agrarian crisis," he said, adding, "Providing subsidised electricity, provision of basic amenities to farmers and bringing about balanced regional development are some issues on my priority list, which needs to be executed with immaculate planning, immense determination and grit, calling for fiscal responsibility." **M**

—Amarjyot Kaur Arora, IO, MIC, New Delhi

A NEW PORTAL FOR BILLS

An innovation, Maharashtra Government's Bill Portal is a one-stop destination when it comes to bills



Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar (centre) launches the Bill Portal in Mumbai

Tapping information technology in a progressive manner is the call of the day and Maharashtra Government has set the ball rolling. In a significant move, the State Government has launched a new portal for all Government-related bills. Inaugurating the Bill Portal, Minister for Finance, Maharashtra, Sudhir Mungantiwar said, "For balanced development in the State, there is need to make use of latest information technology."

The portal is an online service developed by

The portal has been launched keeping in mind its usefulness in terms of bringing efficiency, speed and transparency in the functioning of the State. The new technology aims to serve the last man

the Director, Accounts and Treasury (DAT), with the help of the National Informatics Centre (NIC). The Minister informed that the portal has been launched keeping in mind its usefulness in terms of bringing efficiency, speed and transparency in the day-to-day functioning of the Government. Congratulating the officers of DAT on the online utility service, he stressed on the need of technology to be used for serving the last man. He appealed to all to strive hard to ensure that the State remains at the top in the field in future as well.

The launch saw the presence of Minister of State for Finance, Deepak Kesarkar; Principal Secretary, Finance, Vijaykumar; Secretary, Accounts and Treasuries, Radhika Rastogi; Director, A.M. Naqvi; Shrikant Deshpande, Shri Vyas, Nandini Kshirsagar of NIC and other eminent dignitaries. "The technology has made the Government administration more powerful, bringing in transparency and efficiency in its functioning," said Deepak Kesarkar.

ABOUT THE BILL PORTAL

The Bill Portal software is a thoughtful innovation meant to generate all types of bills in electronic format for the Drawing and Disbursing Officers, DDO. Barring salary and pension bills, all other types of bills will be generated electronically in this system. Bill portal is an integral part of BEAMS system.

The DDOs will have to log in to the Bill Portal for generating any bill. A DDO will fill the minimum required information. Most of the details will be captured initially as master data files, the data from which will be recalled for the generation of the bill. Budget availability will be watched by the system. This is a bill-cum-authorisation slip. Initially, the system will provide print-out of bills, which DDO will submit to treasuries. However, the bill data will be automatically transmitted to treasuries for audit purpose. Most of the interactive audit checks are added in this system, so that correctness of each claim is ensured. In the next phase, paperless bill concept will be implemented if A.G. so permits.

Each bill here is divided into five parts: accounting information, core portion of the bill, payee details and certification by DDO, space for Treasury, and working space for A.G. office. Bill history will be stored permanently on this portal and made available to any stakeholder as and when required. **M**

HELP, A CALL AWAY

Public Health Department of Maharashtra launches a toll-free helpline for the benefit of adolescents

The Public Health Department of Maharashtra has launched a toll-free helpline to guide adolescents on issues related to health as well as their personal, social and psychological matters. Adolescent girls and boys across the State can now call 18002332688 anytime between 10 am and 6 pm for any issue and grievance. The helpline was inaugurated by Amruta Fadnavis, wife of Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Speaking at the launch, Minister for Public Health, Dr. Deepak Sawant said, "The Maharashtra Government has launched the helpline to counsel adolescent boys and girls on their various needs and problems such as social, physical and psychological."

The helpline has been set up under the aegis of National Adolescent Health Programme



FEATURES OF THE HELPLINE AND ITS BENEFITS

- Expert counsellors, one male and one female, will be available between 10 am and 6 pm on the toll-free number 18002332688.
- The service can be accessed from anywhere in the State.
- Identity of the callers will be kept secret, and will allow the youth to freely discuss their issues with the counsellor in complete confidence.
- The helpline will be a useful platform for teenagers, who are too shy or embarrassed to talk about their problems with their parents, siblings or friends leading to serious consequences
- The experts will guide adolescents in the age group of 10-19 on issues of exam stress, harmful side-effects of drugs, tobacco and alcohol, reproductive health, sexual harassment and others

(Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram), which was launched as a part of the National Health Mission. The Minister of State for Public Health and Family Welfare, Prof. Ram Shinde was also present on the occasion.

Adolescence is a phase of rapid physical growth, psycho-social development and transformation. The Government on its part realises that information regarding such changes may not be available in schools and colleges, and any sort of wrong information could lead to misunderstanding about the preventive aspects. Many adolescents face pressures from friends and family. While some have to face issues of poverty and parental problems, others could be concerned about issues like gender roles and dealing with past trauma such as sexual abuse. Conflicts often lead to



“The Government has launched the helpline to counsel adolescent boys and girls on their various needs and problems such as social, physical and psychological”

—Dr. Deepak Sawant
Minister for Public Health

violent behaviour amongst these teenagers.

The helpline aims to protect the youth from being misguided by quacks while encouraging them to seek guidance on all reproductive health-related issues from an authentic source. This helps prevent complications with respect to an unwanted or early pregnancy and bring down infant and mother mortality rate.

Currently, Maharashtra has about 500 adolescent clinics at sub-district, rural and women hospitals. These clinics are set up under Rashtriya Kishor Swasthay Karyakram in nine districts of Dhule, Nandurbar, Jalgaon, Aurangabad, Jalna, Hingoli, Beed, Nanded and Gadchiroli. **M**





Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis (centre) with Maharashtra ministers during the launch of Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree

DREAMS FOR DAUGHTERS

This Women's Day, Maharashtra Government launched a scheme that aims to curb female foeticide and empower girls in the State, says **Irshad Bagwan**



With an aim to prevent female foeticide and simultaneously promote education among girls, the State Government launched Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree on International Women's Day (March 8) in Mumbai. The welfare scheme is a revised version of Sukanya scheme launched earlier by State's Women and Child Welfare Department. A sumptuous financial provision of ₹200 crore has been made for the new scheme.

The number of girls per thousand in comparison with boys has been on the wane. It has come to State's notice that the reason for the gap is female foeticide. Maharashtra Government has enacted an Act for comprehensive remedial measures for

prevention of the menace. A comprehensive awareness campaign has also been undertaken so that the people welcome birth of a girl child. Various schemes have been started with a view to encourage girl students towards education. Part of these has been the Sukanya scheme. The scheme caters to girls from below poverty line (BPL) families. Under the scheme, the Government was supposed to deposit an amount of ₹ 21,200 in bank for a girl child born in a BPL family. The scheme was committed to provide ₹1 lakh to the girl when she turns 18. Launched in 2013, the ambitious welfare scheme aimed at encouraging education among girls from economically weak backgrounds. Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree, on the other hand, would be linked to Centre's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme.

"Participation from everyone is essential in the efforts to prevent female foeticide. We are also responsible for education of girls and empowering them apart from just giving birth to them. All the countries who received cooperation from women in their development process are today developed nations. For achieving total development, we must also seek fullest cooperation from women. If we implement the developmental process taking women along with us, we can achieve twice the speed in development," said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who launched Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree.

Pankaja Munde, Minister, Women and Child Development, said, "The right to be born as a girl child should be bestowed by her mother herself. Through Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree, the State Government will provide a girl child her right to be born and support her to be educated."

At the same event, the Government announced better remuneration for Aanganwadi workers. The enhanced rates of remuneration to Aanganwadi and support staff will be implemented from April. The Chief Minister praised the Aanganwadi workers for helping in building a malnutrition-free, healthy Maharashtra. The increase in percentage of women in State police force has empowered the force, he shared.

Film actress Bhagyashree Patwardhan, the brand ambassador of Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree, said that instead of earmarking a single day for women, they should receive honour and equality-based attention throughout the year. **M**



NAGPUR DRINKING WATER SYSTEM TO BE IMPLEMENTED ACROSS INDIA

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has said that the measures taken by Nagpur Municipal Corporation (NMC) in improving water distribution system will be implemented in other parts of Maharashtra as well. The Chief Minister was speaking at the unveiling ceremony of Pench Phase-4 Water Supply Project of NMC. The Union Minister for Urban Development Venkaiah Naidu dedicated the Nagpur Augmented Water Supply Scheme in the premises of water purification station in Godhni Bhonsala Military School Road, Nagpur.

Union Minister for Surface Transport and Shipping, Nitin Gadkari, Guardian Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, and Nagpur Mayor Pravin Datt and others were present on the occasion.

Union Minister Venkaiah Naidu said, "Water is most precious part of life. By undertaking water conservation today, we can avoid perilous situation tomorrow. We must give a thought to manage leaking, sewage and wastage of water to make our tomorrow better. Everyone should participate in rainwater harvesting. The successful

project of Nagpur will be implemented across the country as a role model."

Chief Minister said that with the creation of Nagpur Metro Region, there will be a huge need of water. The growing population requires 1,400 MLD of water. But at present only 700 MLD of water is available. The NMC had prepared a scheme with the help of Madhya Pradesh Government to meet the additional requirement by the end of 2062. Now, the need is to pursue the scheme in order to reap the fruits in future.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari in his address said that Nagpur is the only city in India that supplies water to citizens throughout the day. Though some wards get 24-hour water supply currently, the entire city will get it in coming six months, he assured. He further said that the Pench Phase-4 Water Supply Scheme has been prepared by using the best technology in the world. However, since the water is being supplied through canals, a lot of water was wasted by leakage and evaporation. But the problem has been solved by supplying the water through pipelines, saving water in larger proportions, he said.

400 DROUGHT-PRONE VILLAGES UNDER JALYUKTA SHIVAR ABHIYAN

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis appealed to corporate houses to make the State drought free by participating in State's flagship programme, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. By 2019, the State Government has set a target to make 25,000 villages drought-free. He made the appeal during a conclave jointly organised by the State Government and Delivering Change Foundation in Sahyadri Guest House, Mumbai.

Minister of State for Water Conservation Vijay Shivtare; Chief Secretary Swadhin Kshatriya; Principal Secretary, Water Conservation, Prabhakar Deshmukh; and Chairman, Delivering Change Foundation Abhijit Pawar were present on the occasion.

Devendra Fadnavis announced that corporate

houses helping the Government under the scheme will be given all the credit for playing an important role in making these villages drought-free. The Government also plans to link this project simultaneously with various schemes under one umbrella, which would result in faster growth and development of the villages, he said.

Around 400 drought-hit villages were adopted by the various companies. Temple trusts like Siddhivinayak in Mumbai and Shirdi Sansthan, assured to donate ₹34 crore each for the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan—thus, each trust earmarking ₹1 crore for each of the 34 districts. The companies, through corporate social responsibility have accepted Chief Minister's appeal and promised to help the State Government wholeheartedly.

Ambuja Foundation, JSW Foundation, HUL Foundation, Reliance Foundation, Finolex, Asian Paints, Larsen and Toubro, Mahindra and Mahindra, Coca-Cola participated in the conclave.



MAHARASHTRA GETS ₹2,000 CRORE DROUGHT RELIEF FROM CENTRE

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis thanked the Centre for sanctioning ₹2,000 crore relief package as drought relief to the State. It is the highest ever for drought-affected farmers.

However, the Chief Minister



said, the State Government had already disbursed relief to farmers without waiting for Centre's aid. So far, relief has been given to 80 per cent farmers, he informed.

The relief package was announced by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh after a decision taken at a meeting of the high-level committee of National Disaster Management. Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh said that the

amount has been sanctioned by the Committee under National Disaster Response Fund. Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitely was present at the meeting.

The amount is almost four times the amount of about ₹500 crore sanctioned for the year 2013, when the State has faced drought. The drought of last year was severe due to poor monsoon, affecting crop yields and drinking water supply.

FOR AN EQUAL, GREEN WORLD

March was an action-packed month at the various platforms of Department of Information and Public Relations.

Maharashtra Ahead lists a few noteworthy interviews and sections

JAI MAHARASHTRA

“A woman is no longer weaker”

Women today are working shoulder to shoulder in areas which once were monopolised by men. In a true sense of the word, women today have made an indelible mark of their abilities in every field in the era of information technology and social networking. Recognising these capabilities, March 8 is celebrated world over as International Women’s Day. To observe the day, *Jai Maharashtra* invited Maharashtra Minister for Women and Child Development, Pankaja Munde for an interview.

Women and Child Development is identified as one of the most important departments of the Government. Preparation and implementation of various schemes for helpless women, women without shelter and distressed women and children, and working for women development are the main responsibilities of this department. Pankaja Munde spoke in detail about the implementation of Centre’s Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme, Manodhairya scheme, Jijau Hostel scheme, Government-level efforts for prevention of Devdasi system, and State



Commission for Women and the areas it addresses, besides other important issues.

The Sukanya scheme, meant for girls from BPL families, has been relaunched with certain changes as Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree. Welcoming the arrival of a girl child, prevention of foeticide and improvement in the birth rate of girl child are the main objectives of this scheme. The Women and Child

Development Minister informed that Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme will also be implemented through this medium simultaneously.

Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, an initiative to enhance water level in water scarcity affected villages, was another scheme Pankaja Munde talked about. The scheme also aims at relieving women of carrying water vessels over their heads. “Women today are on the forefront in every field. She is not weaker anymore. She has become empowered,” she said, adding that Women and Child Development Department will be laying major emphasis on women empowerment.

Environment is everyone’s business

“Environment is an important topic that affects everyone. Its importance today is realised more due to challenges like global warming, said State Environment Minister Ramdas Kadam, while speaking on environment protection in a *Jai Maharashtra* episode. The Minister was on the show around the festive occasion of Holi.

“Deterioration of environment is a manmade phenomenon. The hills have been bared and the



trees have been slaughtered and grounded on a large scale. The Government is going to take strong steps to stop this

menace,” assured Ramdas Kadam.

The Government is also taking steps to reduce pollution, as air pollution is

another big challenge, and sort out the issue of waste water.

“If Municipal Councils and Municipal Corporations spend 25 per cent of their funds on pollution control and waste water management, the pollution could be controlled to a great extent. It is essential that waste water and effluents from companies must come out of their campuses only after purification. A comprehensive public awareness campaign has been undertaken on this. However, its positive results will not be available in two-three years,” he said.

—Atul Pande

MAHANEWS

Click here for jobs

With a view that youth of Maharashtra are guided in right direction, the then Director General, Information and Public Relations, Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar, while launching Mahanews, thought of a lyrical counterpart of the portal to provide information on employment opportunities. The thought led to the launch of Mahaop (currently called, Search a Job). While the section completes six years, its acceptance is continually touching new heights.

The youth are always looking for a flight path when it comes to their career. The world today has something new happening all the time. Hence, what the youth needs most is proper guidance. While many

avenues exit, accurate information about those must reach the candidates. Search a Job, on Mahanews portal, serves this need.

The column posts current vacancies in Central Government, State Government, Public Sector Undertakings, autonomous institutions, universities, railway, banks, Staff Selection Commission and other areas. The information on number of posts, department, levels, eligibility requirements, and last date for application are provided in a simple way. The website of the concerned department is also shown in the hyperlink, making the posts one-stop information destination for aspirants. The increasing number of visits has made the column one of the most popular sections of Mahanews.

Over the years, Mahanews has maintained providing accurate information. In the words of Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar, now Secretary, Information and Public Relations, Mahanews is a pledge, which has to be maintained under every circumstance. The journey has continued.

—Dheeraj Khadse



(From top) Minister of Social Justice Rajkumar Badole and Kalpana Saroj on *Dilkhulas*

DILKHULAS

Committed to inclusive development

The Government is making an all out effort at all levels for overall development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, educationally backward constituents of society, including differently abled and senior citizens. In addition to remedial measures on a variety of issues, the Government is committed to inclusive development of all factions. This was reiterated by Minister of Social Justice and Assistance Rajkumar Badole in *Dilkhulas*.

Informing listeners about new initiatives, he underlined the usage of technology, such as in depositing the scholarship amount to students' bank accounts directly. "There were illegal practices while issuing caste certificate or verifying caste. To make the process transparent, work is slated to be streamlined and computerised. The Department is considering issuing of a smart card in the name of the head of the family instead of a caste certificate," he said.

Quality of hostels for girls from backward classes, guidance for competitive examinations, employment avenues and freedom from addiction are on priority. On addition, the Minister said, the mindset of society needs to be changed. "For this, the Government will create old age home or support home in every district. To provide employment opportunities to youth, full-time competitive examination guidance centres will be established at Nagpur and Pune," he said.

Another interesting interview on *Dilkhulas* was with entrepreneur Kalpana Saroj. A rags-to-riches story, Saroj started as a social worker, earning just ₹2 a day! An ordinary girl from Akola, she was married into a joint family at the age of 10-11. The household work and domestic violence that followed could not take away her determination and desire to learn. The Padmashree winner shared her inspiring journey with the listeners.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Acclaimed welfare activist, Chandraprabha Bokey has been honoured with the Mata Jijabai Award in recognition of her exceptional contribution to society



Chandraprabha Bokey of Maharashtra was amongst the proud recipients of Stree Shakti Puraskar 2014. The activist received the Mata Jijabai Award from the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee at a ceremony held at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi.

An organic agriculturist by profession, Chandraprabha Narendra Bokey has earlier been honoured with Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule Award, Pandita Barabai Shinde Award and Punyashlok Ahilyadevi Holkar Award. She has held eminent positions across social organisations in Maharashtra since 1960. The veteran social worker has relentlessly worked towards the rehabilitation of girls and boys both in India and abroad under the adoption scheme as the President of Children Welfare Board, Amravati.

(From top) Chandraprabha Bokey receiving award from President Pranab Mukherjee and with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and fellow winners of Stree Shakti and Naree Shakti Awards 2014

Bokey led an initiative focusing on uplift of women from BPL families. She provided them assistance in procuring loans, starting enterprises and helping them become financially stable

For the past 45 years, Chandraprabha Bokey has been working for the uplift of women in various fields. Spearheading the initiative focusing on women belonging to the below poverty line (BPL) families, she provided them assistance in procuring bank loans and starting small and medium enterprises while helping them become financially stable. Women have been made computer literate and trained in organic farming.

As a member of the Maharashtra Organic Farming Federation (MOFF), Pune, Bokey undertook awareness and promotion of organic farming for better health and nutritional status of children and women. Training programmes and technology transfer for organic farming were conducted, especially in the six distressed districts of Vidarbha where maximum cases of farmer suicides has drawn national as well as international attention. Besides curtailing suicides among farmers in the region, MOFF is engaged in marketing of organic produce of the farmers.

Congratulating the winners of the Stree Shakti Puraskar, President of India, Pranab Mukherjee said, "We must make the required effort to remove structural and institutional barriers that inhibit the economic and social transformation of women in India. We should remind ourselves that the empowerment of women and their equality, liberty and dignity are not a distant goal or fond aspiration of the women of our country. It is one of their sacred rights. It is not a privilege that they should seek. It has been a key element in the code of conduct that our ancient societies prescribed for themselves more than 3,000 years ago."

Stree Shakti Puraskar is a series of India's national honour conferred on individual women for their exceptional achievement. The award given in six categories by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, recognises the courage shown by women in difficult circumstances, either in their personal or professional life. It also recognises pioneering contribution of an individual in empowering women and raising women's issues. Instituted in the year 1991, the award is conferred every year on International Women's Day (March 8) and carries a cash prize of ₹3 lakh and a citation. **M**



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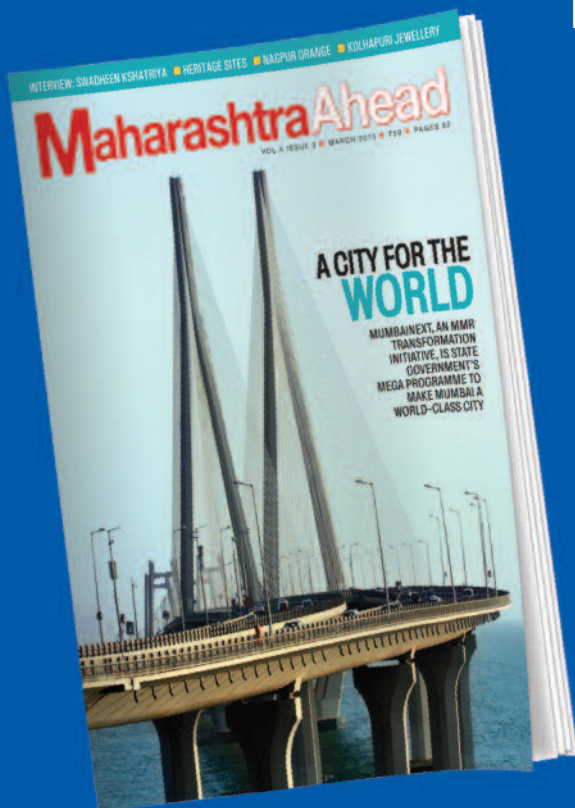
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Maharashtra Ahead

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