

MaharashtraAhead

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Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan

Towards Drought-Free Villages



(From left) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with his wife Amruta Fadnavis, warkari couple Raghoji Narayan Dhande and Sangeeta Dhande from Kalamnuri taluka, Hingoli district and Minister for Revenue and Agriculture, Eknath Khadse at Lord Vitthal—Rukmini shrine in Pandharpur

A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis offered salutations at the Lord Vitthal—Rukmini shrine as part of Wari celebrations at Pandharpur while praying for a drought-free State

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and his wife Amruta Fadnavis in the wee hours offered prayers at the shrine of Vitthal—Rukmini as part of Wari, a spiritual and perhaps the world's longest pilgrimage to the holy city of Pandharpur in Maharashtra. The Chief Minister prayed for the well-being of farmers and wished for better rains. In keeping with the tradition, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis performed

the first *pooja* at the shrine early in the morning. Raghoji Narayan Dhande and his wife Sangeeta Dhande from Kalamnuri taluka of Hingoli district, participated in the Wari *pooja*. Every year, one warkari couple gets the honour of participating in the first *pooja* along with the Chief Minister and his wife.

Wari, one of the most coveted traditions in India, is undertaken annually in the month of *Ashadha* and culminates on the

Ekadashi (11th day) during the waxing phase of moon in the month. Every year, millions of devotees walk along the 450-km route from Alandi (near Pune) to Pandharpur (near Kolhapur) in Western Maharashtra. They walk with one focus and that is to reach Pandharpur and offer their respects to Lord Vitthal.

The tradition has been preserved by the pilgrims called *warkaris* for hundreds of years now. The *warkaris* carry *palkhis*

(palanquin) of various saints to the holy city from different quarters of the State in this journey, which lasts for around 20 days. A total of over 40 *palkhis* of Saint Dnyaneshwar and Saint Tukaram meet in Pune and travel together further to Pandharpur. Each *palkhi* contains a set of silver images of the *padukas* (sandals) of the saint. The group is divided into *dindi*, which is a small group. All *dindis* combined is called Wari.



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

WATER CONSERVATION IS IMPORTANT

Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is the cover feature of the issue. The ambitious integrated water conservation and management initiative of Maharashtra Government has started to bear fruits in various water-scarce districts of the State. The flagship programme launched by the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis aims to bring water empowerment to the drought-affected villages of Maharashtra. The scheme has become a mass movement. Various schemes of water conservation have been brought under the umbrella of the scheme, which helps villages retain rainwater, create decentralised water storage units and increase groundwater level for use in irrigation. The mega welfare programme is State's dream to bring an end to farmers' woes through water sufficiency. The feature presents the initial achievements of the programme and success stories from various villages of Maharashtra.

The recent monsoon session saw Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announcing relief measures to end the agrarian crisis in the State. In the next five years, various welfare programmes, with fund allocation of ₹25,000 crore, will be implemented. These will include providing food security to 22 lakh farmers,



digging of 1 lakh wells and 1.5 lakh farm ponds, and free education to children of farmers who have committed suicide.

The Central Government under its ambitious Smart City Mission proposes to develop 100 smart cities in the country in the next five years. Ten cities from Maharashtra have been shortlisted under the project. These cities are Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune-Pimpri-Chinchwad, Amravati, Solapur, Nagpur, Kalyan-Dombivali, Aurangabad,

Nashik and Thane. This initiative will ensure holistic development of these cities.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' US tour was a great success. The visit saw the State enter into several MoUs with companies like Cisco, Coca-Cola, Citibank and Blackstone. Recently, General Motors signed an MoU with the State Government. The agreement will help in generating large number of employment and self-employment opportunities in the State.

This issue, we also bring to you an interview with Minister for Forests, Sudhir Mungantiwar on the various initiatives taken by the State Government for the conservation and development of Maharashtra's forests. The other interesting features are on the annual pilgrimage of Pandharpur Wari, Sawantwadi toys, Gholvad Chikoo and a photo feature on the beautiful beaches of Maharashtra. The issue also pays homage to Former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.

At the time of issue going to the press, the news of the demise of Former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam came. With his demise, we have lost a renowned scientist, people's president and a teacher. Dr. Kalam always dreamt of making India a superpower by 2020. It will be a sincere tribute to him if we endeavour to transform his dream into reality. Team Maharashtra Ahead pays tribute to the great personality.

We look forward to your feedback on the issue.

Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar

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



WATER THE REAL SAVIOUR

The economic prosperity of a land depends on the water it holds. The fact laid the foundation of Maharashtra's flagship scheme, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, which aims to bring prosperity to its land and farmers through water conservation. The scheme has become a mass movement. Here is a first-hand account of the programme based on spot visits by **Suresh Wandile, Kirti Pande** and **Pravin Take** of Team Maharashtra Ahead

It has been three consecutive years for Maharashtra to face dry spell and drought. The difficult time, especially for its farmers, made the administration formulate a strategy to address the challenge. It was realised that creation of decentralised, perennial water storage bodies in the villages can solve the problem and empower farmers. Establishing basic infrastructure to hold rainwater was part of the plan. These and many related ideas were put together to make a programme that could help the State shift from "water scarce" to "water sufficient" in next five years. The programme was named Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan.

The key aim of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is to establish belief in a farmer that "every drop of rainwater is owned by me and it should percolate in my land"

The flagship programme launched by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan aims to bring water empowerment to 25,000 drought-affected villages in Maharashtra within next five years. With the passing time, the scheme has been going strong with villages building infrastructure and making the programme one of the largest Government initiatives in terms of public participation.

The primary objective of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is to establish the belief in a farmer that, "every drop of rainwater is owned by me and the same should percolate in my land." The belief has led the farming community along with the

Government build decentralised water reservoirs. Although Government's resolve for freedom from drought for 5,000 villages every year looked achievable, the same needed huge funding and excellent planning. The Chief Minister identified that the works can be achieved fast with public participation. Farmers from almost every village responded to his call with fervour and stood behind him firmly with everything they had.

THE NEED TO CONSERVE WATER

Factually, Maharashtra has been bestowed with adequate rainfall, perennial rivers, lakes and large streams. However, due to concretisation in last few decades, natural resources in the State have endured huge losses, driving it to situations like drought.

Any type of natural activity is in essence

The Chief Minister identified that the works can be achieved fast with public participation. Farmers from almost every village responded to his call with fervour

completely balanced. Natural streams are created as a cumulative result of various land strata such as hills and hillocks, slightly deeper stretches, plateaus and grounds as well as green cover and rainfall in the area. The water bodies, in the form of rivers, streams, nallas and smaller streams, decide the sustainability and future of the region. Urbanisation in any part of the land requires changes in the natural landscape of the region. The speed of urbanisation in the State too adversely affected the water bodies it had. Today, one cannot find a city, town or a village in Maharashtra where natural streams have not been encroached. One of the major responsibilities undertaken through Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is to rejuvenate these natural water sources.

After witnessing the tremendous works planned and carried out in drought-affected



RIVERS DEEPENED, WATER LEVEL IN THE WELLS ENHANCED

The results of bending nature according to our whims are best explained by the villagers of Telhara, a small hamlet in the foothills of Satpuda range. With good precipitation, agriculture has been flourishing here. However, every year during the rains, the villagers used to be on their toes. River Gautama flows

near the village and there was a huge encroachment on the banks. Trees were proliferating in the river bed and the river had become shallow. Every rainy season, Telhara used to get waterlogged and the farmers suffered huge losses. During the floods in 2014-15, an area of 383 ha around the village was affected.

To overcome the problem, there was a need to deepen the river bed. People joined hands and a stretch of 10 km was deepened and widened. Sediment to the extent of 5.4 lakh cu.m was removed. The farmers made use of the sediment to make their soils fertile.

The story of Divthana village in Akot taluka is similar.

The stream at Divthana was deepened by the villagers, who also carried out repairs to existing cement nalla bunding. The farmers around said that the stream used to overflow during the rainy season. This year, the month of June went without rains, but the nalla had abundant water. The farmers could save the crops by pumping water from the nalla. A total of 70 cement nalla bundings were widened, deepened and repaired in the taluka alone.

Another success story of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has been recorded at Ghusar village in Akola district. The village has 256 farm ponds. One can spot these water bodies while passing through the village. The village comes under the salt land area. There is no other way for wet farming here. The farmers are now taking up crops such as cotton, soybean and gram with the support of these farm ponds.

Sadarpur is another village, where a community lake has been built by the villagers. The lake has a storage capacity of 1.9 lakh cu. m of water. The 130 m x 150 m lake can now give a new lease of life to 450 ha of agriculture land.

villages, people were encouraged to participate, and within seven months, a total of 99,154 works were completed in 6,202 villages. The scheme helped villagers realise what they had lost over the years. To create further awareness among people, water processions were organised in various villages. In the backdrop of a celebratory mood set by these processions, the villages keenly looked at the subject, and awareness was created. Small groups took the lead and achieved participation of other villagers.

Soon, immaculate and impeccable works—deepening and widening of rivers, nallas and streams; cement check dams in series; repairs of old, small irrigation projects; joining projects of streams and nallas; maximum utilisation of medium and large project capacities; and strengthening of water supply bodies—were accomplished. When the team visited Latur and Akola to view the progress of the programme, the development was visible in almost every village.

One must point out that only 28 villages of Latur were selected under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. However, other villages too came forward to participate in the programme. Their driving force was to conserve every drop of rainwater. A visible achievement was the faith in the Abhiyan. People were now convinced that rivers, nallas, streams and lakes are their responsibility.

With huge diversities in geography, each of the village in Maharashtra had a different problem related to water, and also different politics and economics. Thus, it became imperative that the solutions of local water problems are devised by the residents. The thought led villagers unite on water issues, resulting in establishment of infrastructure. And, as Samartha Ramdas Swami once said, “If the river water just flows, it is meaningless. If it is held by dams and canals, it can be utilised for a purpose, such as for growing various crops...” Maharashtra was on the path shown by the sage.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY THROUGH WATER

Everyone has experienced erratic rains. Expected most, the rains often do not oblige, leaving people with tearful eyes. The same happened this July. There were no rains in the first fortnight of the month. Till last year, there was no solution to the problem. Fortunately, this year, the State had Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan.

In Hingna taluka of Nagpur district, the ambitious project, active for last few months, has



JALKUMBH, A FITTING REPLY TO UNCERTAIN RAINS

The farmers finally realised that they should go for reliable water storage, considering that times have changed and rains have become erratic. This was due to Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan.

When former president of Zilla Parishad, Dattatraya Bansode expressed aspiration that the drought period will end now, we were standing on the banks of Round Lake at Gangapur. The lake is a living example of what can happen through public will.

Gangapur is a village in Latur with around 7,000-8,000 households. The village requires around 1 lakh litres of water every day. The need has been fulfilled to some extent by a large lake in the village. However, the villagers suffer a great deal of water shortage during summer months.

Realising the need for water and to increase the storage capacity of the lake, the villagers decided to dig another lake. A lake of area 100 feet x 100 feet and height of 25-30 feet was built in the existing lake that has an expanse of around 52 acres.

The villagers call it as Jalkumbh.

The efforts of the village later got Government's support. The District Collector Pandurang Pole suggested the lake to be given a plastic coating from inside. He also provided plastic worth ₹8 lakh for the same. The sanction has been received and the lake will now have a plastic coating.

A major work of rejuvenating small rivers and Manjra sub-rivers was also carried out through public participation. The works started with encouragement from Art of Living activists, Lion Club members and local leaders. A sub-river of Manjra, Rena river flows through Renapur village. The trees proliferating in its river bed had almost vanished. The same story was that

of Jana river at Bamni and Tavarja river at Kavha. Jana river had, in fact, changed its course. The villagers has deepened the 8-km length of Rena and widened its river bed to 40 m. The sediment coming through the deepening has been used by the farmers to enhance the fertility of their soil. The work was done at a cost of ₹1.27 crore.

In Gangapur, a lake of 100 feet x 100 feet and height 20 feet has been built in the existing lake that has an expanse of about 52 acres. The efforts of the village have received support of the Government



WATER-FILLED DAMS, HEALTHY CROPS

In Karveer *taluka* of Kolhapur, the construction of a cement nalla bunding began in January this year. By July, the construction was done and the water stored in the dam was helping in the irrigation of the region's sugarcane crop.

Karveer today presents an opportunity to witness the huge change water can bring about in the life of people, especially farmers. Even after the absence of rain in June and before it started intensely, the benefits of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan to the villages were very much visible.

The vision of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was proved correct by the low-capacity dams in two villages of the *taluka*, as

these brought alive the dream of perennial irrigation within two months. A large project may not have completed in six months and the benefits would have accrued only a few years later.

The first dam on the nalla at Sangawade was overflowing even after no rains for a month. Farmers

around the dam were satisfied that the water level of the wells has increased due to the dam at Sangawade. As the village did not have a river nearby, the farmers were unable to do farming throughout the year. The situation is much different now.

As a work under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, it was decided to undertake an accelerated watershed

development programme in the village. The five small dams near the village were able to store a large amount of water. With a megacity like Kolhapur nearby, the farmers here were scared to take intercrops on a large scale. Today, the water storage in the dams has improved and there is ample water in the

wells. Farmers have taken up new crops such as vegetables on a large scale. The second dam can be seen at Kaneriwadi.

The sound of electric pumps and flowing water in the region present the positive change in the rural landscape. Farmers here keep talking about Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan.

The vision of the Chief Minister was proved correct by the low-capacity dams at two villages in Karveer taluka of Kolhapur district, as they brought alive the dream of perennial irrigation within just two months



WHAT THEY SAID...

Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has been adjudged as the largest movement with public participation in independent India and a movement of change for creation of decentralised and perennial water storages. The programme has become a people's movement. The sentiment that prevails among farmers is, "every drop of rainwater is owned by me and the same should percolate in my land." The villages have created storage, irrigation and decentralised water reservoirs through public participation.

—**Devendra Fadnavis**, Chief Minister



We cannot create a drop of water. However, it is in our hands to save it. Today, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is not just a Government scheme, but has

become a movement of everyone and is receiving enthusiastic response from people. The programme goes beyond dams and lakes and aims to maintain water throughout.

—**Eknath Khadse**, Minister for Agriculture

The State Government took a decision to implement Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan to overcome the water scarcity problem in the State permanently.

Through this, 5,000 villages every year are attaining freedom from drought. People are participating zealously in the campaign, and water is being made available for perennial agriculture and drinking purposes.

—**Pankaja Munde**, Minister for Rural Development & Water Conservation



seen water conservation and water storage projects of around 18-19 departments come together. With the resulting funds, works such as strengthening of water bodies, removing sedimentation, dam repairs and deepening of nallas have been undertaken.

In Ukhali village, the water level in the wells has increased than last year due to deepening of a nalla. The old cement nalla bunding was constructed in 1994-95, but due to sedimentation, water storage and flow capacity of the dam were adversely affected. A nalla under the Agriculture Department was included in the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. Deputy Divisional Agriculture Officer Sanjay Bhagat showed the photographs of this 225-metre-long nalla with huge sedimentation. After the removal of sediments, the nalla is overflowing with the June rains. With the deepening of nalla, positive result is expected in the Rabi harvest this year, and more so next year. He also added emphatically that if farmers decide, they could enhance their income by taking up crops such as vegetables.

Some of the farmers have placed the displaced sediments in their fields. This worked as fertilisers. A large-scale tree plantation is also being undertaken in some villages to avoid soil erosion. The Agriculture Department has also linked integrated watershed development programme with Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. While these works have been undertaken, the agricultural bunding has also being carried out and crops from species such as pigeon peas taken



In Hingna taluka of Nagpur district, the ambitious project has seen water conservation and water storage projects of around 18-19 departments come together

up. This year being International Pulses Year, the initiative will help in increasing the production of pulses as well. A project of construction of equi-level trenches has also been undertaken at a hillock nearby. There was huge soil erosion from this hillock during the rainy season and sedimentation used to block the nalla. Now, at many places on the hillock, local stone walls have been constructed. These walls will halt the soil going down to the nalla. Wearing a barren look now, the hillock will soon present a green cover.

The objective of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is to make available perennial water supply to State's drought-affected villages. Perennial water can

AN ALL WEATHER RIVER

Agrani river flows through Khalapur, Tasgaon and Kavathe Mahankal taluka of Maharashtra and directly helps 21 villages on its banks. Efforts are now under way to restore the flow of the 55-km-long river and to make it all weather. The work has been undertaken in association with NGOs and public support.

Dongarwadi residents happier with Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan

The flagship water conservation initiative of the State Government has received a positive response in Sangli



Dongarwadi, a village in Miraj taluka of Sangli district, has been selected under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. The work done here with public participation has led to a rise in the groundwater level

district. Through public participation, the 141 villages taken up in the first phase of the programme will attain freedom from water scarcity. Dongarwadi village from Miraj taluka is one of these villages. The work undertaken here and the efforts of farmers have led to a rise in region's groundwater level. Now, Sangli has prepared a draft plan, with a dedicated fund of ₹358 crore, for the programme.

This year, the fund allocated to the region is ₹78.54 crore. With the amount, the 141 selected villages will become drought free by March 2016.

—S R Mane

provide regular water for agriculture, enhance the water level in the vicinity and maintain the soil moisture. The integrated effect of all these will reflect on agriculture production. Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has a latent capacity of ushering in economic prosperity through water prosperity.

BEED

Out of the 1,403 villages in Beed, 333 villages have been selected under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan for 2014-15 and 2015-16. Under the scheme, 1,074 works by Government departments in 271 villages have been completed; 1,309 works are in progress; and the approximate spend on these works has been ₹30.02 crore.

Motala *taluka* in Buldhana district has always

Only 28 villages of Latur were selected for the scheme, but other villages came forward to participate, as people were convinced that water bodies are their responsibility

been considered a drought-affected area. Its residents have always been looking for water. For solving the problem, it was decided to enhance the groundwater level. A village was selected under the Abhiyan and two dams were constructed. Soon, the water level in the dams changed. Now, the wells here have water level as high as 30-40 feet. With other such works going on, 17 villages in the *taluka* stand to benefit from the programme.

HINGOLI

In the first stage of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, 124 villages from Hingoli district were selected and various water conservation works were taken up. Today, in most of these villages, water conservation and watershed development works



JALYUKTA BRINGS DROUGHT FREEDOM TO KITA VILLAGE

Kita village is just 14 km from Yavatmal. It has a population of 800 and suffers from water scarcity. As there were no facilities for irrigation and drinking water, the farmers depended on dry land farming. A support came from Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, which, within a short time, helped the hamlet get irriga-

tion facilities and become tanker free.

In 1996-97, a cement nalla bunding was done in Kita. Thirteen mud nalla bundings were also built. However, as these bundings did not have the required capacity to store water due to inadequate depth and width, a small quantum of water was held

and the rest flowed away.

After implementation of the water conservation scheme, all the nalla bundings were deepened and widened and sediments removed. With the work, in the first monsoon downpour itself, all the nallas in the village were overflowing with water.

Kita village has 140 ha of

agricultural land, most of which is now under irrigation. The water level in the wells has also increased. Village Sarpanch Indrapal Dahane said that this is the first year when the villagers do not require water tankers. Large-scale Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan works are being carried out in Yavatmal. During the first year, a total of 16,258 works in 413 villages were proposed. Through these works, 1,02,000 ha will be brought under perennial irrigation.

—Mangesh Warkad

NANDED PATTERN

Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is being implemented in a specialised way in Nanded. The water needs of the district is being linked to public participation and novel initiatives.

Exactly 261 villages in Nanded were selected for the Abhiyan, and various systems proposed a total of 12,389 small and large works. Out of these, 3,121 works are already complete, and 471 works are in progress. Besides, District Collector Suresh Kakani insisted on works related to water recharging. He encouraged systems to go for public water sources that can be used as drinking water sources and for recharging of wells.

IMPETUS TO JALYUKTA SHIVAR ABHIYAN

Under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan works of compartment bunding, desiltation, mud nalla bunding, cement check dams, repairs of bunding, KT weirs, farm ponds and village *talao*, refilling of wells, recharge shaft, drip irrigation and sprinkle irrigation have been brought together. District-wise details of works till July 10, 2015, is as follows:

District	Villages Selected	Works started with public participation	Estimated cost of works (In crore)
Ahmednagar	279	279	2.59
Dhule	129	26	4.56
Jalgaon	232	71	5.47
Nandurbar	72	70	1.4
Nashik	229	128	11.89
Amravati	253	22	1.59
Akola	200	117	26.64
Buldhana	330	206	15.24
Washim	200	68	3.33
Yavatmal	413	46	5.46
Nagpur	313	134	0.06
Bhandara	86	86	0
Gondia	94	52	5.03
Chandrapur	218	30	0
Gadchiroli	152	58	0.69
Wardha	214	24	0.57
Pune	198	159	21.31
Satara	215	153	4.81
Sangli	141	93	1.78
Solapur	280	280	27.3
Kolhapur	69	69	0.0005
Thane	26	0	0
Palghar	50	25	0.0528
Raigad	45	1	0.5943
Ratnagiri	47	47	0.0003
Sindhudurg	35	9	0.0705
Aurangabad	228	135	18.11
Jalna	209	90	3.8
Beed	271	22	5.66
Parbhani	170	115	7.4
Hingoli	124	34	4.22
Nanded	261	85	15.97
Latur	202	162	47.85
Osmanabad	217	130	10.48
Total	6202	3993	253.9311



EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF RAINWATER

The *taluka* of Khed, Ambegaon and Junnar are hilly and inaccessible. The precipitation here is quite good, but, as there are no ways to store rainwater, the region faces water scarcity. An excellent remedial measure is now set to change the situation.

In Khed and Ambegaon, the Jalyukta Shivar Committees of Pune district administration have planned to store every drop of rainwater. One of the works is the cement nalla bunding on a stream at Vafgaon in Khed. Earlier, the height of the dam was 1 m, but with deepening and widening, it has become 3 m deep and around 160 m wide. The work has increased the capacity of the dam to store water tremendously.

The water level in the wells nearby has increased and the moisture in the soil has been maintained. The water level in the adjoining agricultural lands has also been enhanced.

With the new work done under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, even if rains are absent, the farmers will be able to sustain their crops. Some of the farmers have already

started using sprinklers to optimise the use of water stored in the nalla. Khed Agriculture Officer Laxman Hotkar said that the work has enabled the farmers to take up maximum crops.

Besides Vafgaon nalla deepening, around 12-13 works under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan are in progress at various villages in Khed. Sub-divisional Officer Himmatrao Kharade said that eight works are in progress through corporate social responsibility funds from various companies.

In Khed and Ambegaon taluka of Pune, Jalyukta Shivar Committees of the district administration have planned to store every drop of rainwater and enable the farmers to take up more crops

Staff adopts a village; donates a day's salary

Following State's vision of a drought-free Maharashtra, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has got support from various sections of soci-

ety. All the Government officers and staff of Baramati division have adopted Sonawadi-Supe village under the flagship programme. The officials have deposited a day's salary for undertaking water conservation works in the village. The initiative has proved to be an example of the social commitment of the officials.



RAJASTHAN TO EMULATE JALYUKTA SHIVAR

Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has become a people's movement in Maharashtra, and it is proving to be useful for irrigation and enhancement of groundwater level. The State of Rajasthan will also make efforts to take up the scheme for its drought-prone areas. The movement started by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with slogan, 'Use water from your village for yourself,' is definitely going to pave the way for perennial irrigation," said Rajasthan Chief Minister, Vasundhara Raje.

Speaking at a State-level workshop on overcoming water scarcity in Rajasthan, the Rajasthan Chief Minister praised Maharashtra's Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. A presentation of the programme was made at the event under the leadership of EGS and Water Conservation Secretary, Prabhakar Deshmukh. Osmanabad District Collector Dr. Prashant Narnavare and Satara District Collector Ashwin Mudgal presented the success stories of their districts. Impressed by the presentation, Vasundhara Raje announced the decision to implement Maharashtra's pattern of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan in Rajasthan as well.

are complete. With 164 mm rainfall in the district in June, the works have collected lakhs of litres of water, solving the problems of irrigation and drinking water permanently. This shows the success of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan.

SATARA

Kival village, located in the east of Karad taluka in Satara district, has achieved freedom from drought. A beneficiary of the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, its main stream and Lendori stream were joined under the programme, benefitting 180 hectares of land. It is a huge success for the



MADANI BECOMES WATER ENDOWED AND FERTILE

After years of continued scarcity of drinking water, Madani village has finally been endowed with a huge water source due to Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. With the cement nalla bunding, the question of drinking water has been resolved. Perennial water is available for agriculture. Even when there is no rain, water for the crops is being made available through drip irrigation.

Dry land farming has received a boon in terms of perennial irrigation. The villagers, who otherwise had to depend on the dam 7 km away, now have a solution to make their village fertile. The Abhiyan has helped the groundwater table rise.

The district has 74 farm ponds, soil conservation, slope dams on 12,360 ha, 77 dams, 97 km of nalla deepening and other works being

done through the Abhiyan.

There is another success story from Madani village. Under the Abhiyan and through the medium of dry land farming, two cement dams have been constructed here at a cost of ₹12.87 lakh and ₹8.40 lakh, respectively. The dams have helped percolation of water and increased the water levels in farms nearby. Both these dams will help store water to the extent of 13.05 TCM and 9.01 TCM, respectively.

Mandar Deshpande, owner of a 6-acre farm, says, "Ours has always been a scarcity-affected village. Acute shortage of water was a constant issue. We had to depend on the Borkhedi Dam nearby. With the cement nalla bunding, the water is stored. We, the farmers, are going to be the beneficiaries."

—Shyam Tarke, Wardha

Perennial water helps in irrigation, enhances groundwater level and maintains soil moisture. The integrated effect of these lead to better production

Abhiyan, as Kival was considered drought prone. The average precipitation here is 615 mm. With a geographical area of 1,704 hectares, the village does not have any large irrigation scheme.

JALNA

Jalna district has found Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan quite useful for overcoming the problem of inadequate rain by bringing in maximum land under irrigation. A total of 212 villages were selected from the district in the first phase and a large number of works were undertaken. About 2,000 works were completed. **M**



“NO RED TAPE, BUT RED CARPET FOR INVESTORS IN MAHARASHTRA”

“In the United States, I found a lot of enthusiasm about India’s growth story. It is a matter of great pride that a large number of people from Maharashtra head several big US companies. We managed to secure investments worth ₹8,000 crore that would generate 70,000 jobs in our State,” said Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis** while speaking to *Lokmat* after returning from his US tour. He explained the purpose of the visit and the gains it brought the State. Excerpts from his interview to **Dinkar Ralkar**, Group Editor, *Lokmat*:



(From left) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with Mike Manley, President and CEO, Jeep Brand, FCA-Global in Detroit and Raymond Conner, CEO, Boeing, and at the Google facility in San Francisco with Minister for Industries, Subhash Desai

Q. Please share with us the objective of your recent visit to the United States.

A. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has created an atmosphere of curiosity and enthusiasm about India throughout the world. During his overseas tours, he has been telling the world how great an investment destination India is. This has had a positive impact, as now industrialists and entrepreneurs from all over the world are desirous of investing in India. Our objective is that when they come to India, Maharashtra must be their first choice. To achieve this, I undertook the US trip as a brand ambassador of the State, and I have succeeded greatly in achieving the goal.

“ Our objective is that Maharashtra must be the first choice for investors when they come to India. I went to the US as a brand ambassador of the State, and have succeeded in achieving the goal”

Q. What efforts have you made to attract foreign investors to the State?

A. In a State with 11 crore population, there are 5 crore tech-savvy youth below the age of 25. Agriculture cannot be their means of livelihood, and there is no indication that they will turn to farming. They need value-added work. My aim is to secure jobs for them. For that, I believe that foreign investment is

the best way. Large-scale employment would be generated through such an investment. I am confident that the MoUs signed with the US companies would create more than 70,000 jobs.



(Clockwise from top) Devendra Fadnavis with Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella at Microsoft office in Seattle, New Jersey Governor Chris Christie in New York, Operations and Technology Head of Citibank, P. Jagdish Rao, and with Minister for Industries Subhash Desai at 17th biennial convention of Bruhan Maharashtra Mandal

Q. Share your experience of the US visit. What kind of atmosphere prevails there?

A. In the United States, I found a lot of enthusiasm about India's growth story. The one-party rule in India has raised the hopes of Indians there, particularly people from Maharashtra, who want the country to progress. I tried to capitalise on their positive feelings for the progress of the State. It is a matter of pride that a large number of people from Maharashtra head several big US companies. They support our efforts and are Maharashtra's brand ambassadors. We have introduced the concept of Make in Maharashtra as part of Make in India campaign and have successfully projected the State as the powerhouse and a great investment destination of India.

Make in India is not just a slogan, but a wider public movement. There is a huge shortage of skilled manpower globally, and we need to impart quality education and training to make our youth eligible for skilled jobs all across the globe. We are

“ We want to usher in a culture of rolling out the red carpet for investors in the State. We have done away with license and permit raj for industries and many in the US have appreciated that”

overhauling the administrative set-up and reducing red tapism.

Q. Which US companies are keen to invest in Maharashtra?

A. American company Blackstone alone has signed an MoU with us worth ₹4,500 crore. This will include an investment of ₹750 crore in EON Free Zone SEZ, ₹1,200 crore in Hinjewadi Pune, ₹1,500 crore in IT Park in Central Mumbai and ₹1,050 crore in other IT parks in Mumbai. This in turn would help in creating approximately 50,000 jobs. Coca Cola would invest ₹500 crore in Lote Parshuram (Chiplun). Managing Director of Citibank, Jagdish Rao said the bank would expand its network in the State and thereby create 4,000 jobs for youth. Chrysler plans to double its production capacity at its Rajangaon facility by 2018. General Motors too plans to make a huge investment. With the commencement of Digital India programme in the country, the State has taken an initiative to make Maharashtra, especially Nagpur, a smart city. For that, the State Government has signed an MoU with well-known networking company, Cisco.

DISCUSSIONS AND DEALS

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis promoted Maharashtra as an investment destination and various initiatives taken by the State Government for ease of doing business at a meeting with US-India Business Council (USIBC) in New York.

- The meet saw the presence of Taj Hotels, HSBC, Caterpillar, Cargill, Johnson & Johnson, KPMG, Baker & McKenzie, Citibank, New Silk Route and Pfizer.

- Operations & Technology Head of Citibank, P. Jagdish Rao met Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The bank has 11,000 employees in India with branches across Maharashtra. The company is planning another 4,000 employment opportunities in Mumbai and Pune.

- Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis met Mike Manley, President and CEO of Jeep Brand, FCA-Global, in Detroit. Chrysler India is present in Maharashtra through FIAT Chrysler Automobiles and plans to double the production to 2.45 lakh units by 2018.

- In California, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visited technology giants, Cisco, Apple and Google. Maharashtra signed an MoU with Cisco to make Nagpur a smart city.

- The Chief Minister encouraged start-ups with incubator promoters in San Francisco.

- Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis addressed, Invest Maharashtra Roundtable in San Francisco.



CHIEF MINISTER SPEAKS AT BRUHAN MAHARASHTRA MANDAL CONVENTION

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis addressed Maharashtra Trade Development Conference organised by Maharashtra Mandal of Detroit and Bruhan Maharashtra Mandal. Over 4,000 people packed the Anaheim Convention Center, California, to attend the 17th biennial convention of the Bruhan Maharashtra Mandal, which was inaugurated by the Maharashtra Chief Minister. Urging Indian Americans in the audience to invest in Maharashtra, he spoke of how “India is young” and that it can provide human resource to the entire world, adding that the average age of India’s population is only 25. “There will be a red carpet for investors,” he emphasised, “not red tape.”

■ **SUBHASH DESAI**
Minister for Industries

“The objective was to bring in comprehensive industrial development in the State”



The agenda for the recent tour to United States of America was to increase the foreign investment in the State and thereby acceleration of employment generation. The efforts in this connection have been successful and many multinationals are eager to invest in Maharashtra.

During the tour, meetings with various industrialists were held. An industry conference was held with business representatives from New York. The industry leaders opined that the start-ups should be encouraged. We explained to them that our new policy is set to encourage those associated with start-ups.

International car makers, General Motors and Chrysler have promised to expand their operations in Maharashtra. Cisco, a prominent US-based multinational company dedicated to research, production and sales of networking products,

has decided to help us in the Smart City project. Microsoft has two data centres. They have developed a special system for security in the State and have promised to make the same available.

The industrialists in the USA have welcomed the new IT Policy announced by the State Government recently. Maharashtra can become an excellent industrial State in India.

US has taken a lead in the IT sector. An important factor behind the same is that youth from Maharashtra are frontrunners in this field. Another factor is that USA finds it more convenient to invest in India and in Maharashtra, as the Indian GDP is stable. With the steps taken by the State Government for industrial acceleration, an environment of confidence has been created in the American industrial expanse.

— As told to **Kashibai Thorat**

Q. Was there any discussion about cyber crime during the trip?

A. Cyber crimes would see a spurt in future, even in Maharashtra. In fact, white collar crimes would overtake street crimes in the next ten years. Statistics say that, as on date, 40 lakh cyber attacks have been reported across the world. The situation will worsen if we do not train our Police force to trace and nab cyber criminals. Taking steps in that direction, we have secured an assurance from Microsoft Corporation for setting up a smart industrial colony in the State and a cyber security centre in Pune. Besides, the company has assured all help for Maharashtra Government’s Digital Village project. The company has also decided to adopt a tribal village in Melghat district in order to provide tertiary health services.

Q. Have you made any efforts to prevent Boeing from shutting down its unit in Nagpur’s MIHAN project?

A. Boeing began a maintenance, repairs and operations (MRO) unit in MIHAN, but faced some difficulties. Now with the work been taken over by Air India, its marketing will be done by Boeing for which the company is in talks with Singapore Airlines. They are trying to involve other airlines too. They are going to start a training institute in Nagpur to build trained manpower and have started preparing courses for the programme. The spare parts required by Boeing will also be bought from India. **M**



IN THE SHADE OF FORESTS

Over 12,000 Joint Forest Management Committees active under State's afforestation programme are helping villages co-exist with forests, says **Dr. Surekha Mulay**

In the blissful words, "Trees and herbs from forests are our true relatives," Sant Tukaram not only spoke about a human's close relationship with the forests, but also emphasised their unique importance in our lives. We have an ancient relationship with the forests, as well as the responsibility to protect and conserve them to maintain environmental balance. The same sentiment of protecting the forests is expected from the Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs) established by the Government of Maharashtra around State's forests.

According to the National and State Forest Policy, 33 per cent of the entire geographical area of the Nation should be under forest and tree cover. Maharashtra has a geographical area of 3,07,713 sq. km and a forest area of 61,652 sq. km, which makes 20.04 per cent of its total area.

For a successful afforestation programme, the State has undertaken Joint Forest Management Committees in cooperation with the villages in the vicinity of the forests. A total of 12,661 JFMCs are already active in the State and 27,91,024 ha of area has been transferred to them. With 25 per cent of the members being women, the total number of the members of these committees exceeds 26 lakh. To enhance the contribution

of women self-help groups in JFMCs, a special action plan has been announced and women are being given work. Through a memorandum of understanding, the work is delegated to the groups registered with the JFMCs based on their capabilities.

THE BENEFITS OF JFMC

The JFMCs are activated under Section 49 of the Mumbai Gram Panchayat Act, 1958 and amendments therein. A committee is constituted in tribal habitats and *padas* through Gram Sabha and the locals and *padas* work as members. Generally, an area in the periphery of 3 km from *Gaothan* (village site) is selected for the committee. After completion of the duties related to forest protection and conservation for consecutive five years, a committee becomes eligible for the benefits from the forest produce. It can only receive benefit of bamboo production after it protects and preserves bamboo for three years on degraded land and elevated ground.

Out of the funds generated from the auction of construction materials and bamboo forest products, 20 per cent of the receipts in case of good forests and 50 per cent in case of grown on degraded land and elevated ground goes to the account of the JFMC. The rest of the amount goes to the Government

exchequer. From the fund received, two-third is sanctioned for scientific management of forests such as fire prevention, water conservation, tree plantation and cooking gas.

If an eco-tourism destination falls in the area of the committee, fee such as entrance and camera goes to the committee. Committee members and villagers are selected for facilities such as LPG connection, biogas, milk animals and nursery protection. Accordingly, LPG has been provided at concession to 26,360 beneficiaries in 2012-13 and 8,873 beneficiaries in 2013-14 under the State tribal remedial measures. Every family dependent on firewood from forests requires around 1 tonne fuel wood in a year. Under the LPG scheme, 35,233 tribal families have been provided connections, reducing the burden on forests.

The JFMCs have been recognised under the Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. To improve their working and develop a competitive spirit among them, Sant Tukaram Vanagram scheme has been initiated.

FRIENDS OF THE FORESTS

The JFMC at Gothangaon, *taluka* Kurkheda, district Gadchiroli, was established in 2008. Under the Maharashtra Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, it undertook the work of recreation of a nursery in 2012. With the funds received, the committee implemented the recreation and comprehensive afforestation in the area of 35 ha. It was successful in keeping alive more than 75 per cent of the plants.

The committee also undertook works of nalla bunding and creation of a new forest lake under the EGS. It created groups of men and women, who kept a vigil on the forests to prohibit illegal tree cutting. Besides protection from fire, prohibition of encroachments on forest lands and illegal grazing were given preference. A vigilance team regularly inspects the water bodies in the forests, which has helped in prohibiting wildlife poaching. The committee has created two lakes, one each for wildlife and birds. Two cement tanks have been built in the forest through *shramdaan* (contribution of the people), and locals make water available in these for animals.

Extending the area of the forest lake, repairs of old lakes, counting of gum and fruit trees, water reservoirs at the base of Moh tree and other works have been undertaken by the JFMCs. People participate in large numbers in general meetings, *shramdaan*, forest protection, awareness campaign and during visits of dignitaries. People now prefer non-forest fuel options.

Funds have been made available for *agarbatti* project, Palas Plate project, fly ash project and minor forest produce. Works such as repairs, construction and purchase of raw



materials are carried out through these funds. The fund is also being used to provide employment to local population. The committee in Kurkheda is creating awareness about forests through concepts such as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj era water storage systems, computer cell and library in the school, rope making, creation of a biodiversity garden and others.

PROHIBITION OF GRAZING, AXE AND POACHING

The JFMC at Dhawadewadi, district Ahmednagar was established in 2008. The forest area under the committee is 39.84 ha. In this area, various works have been undertaken. The Gram Sabha has passed a resolution for grazing, axe and poaching prohibition and is implementing the same vigorously.

While undertaking works such as soil and water conservation, protection of forest from fires and prohibiting encroachments, the committee has protected the wildlife as well. It undertook cleanliness of the village and construction of water bodies for animals. Tree plantation has been carried out on both sides of the road from Dhawadewadi to

Shidoleshwar Temple. There is cooperation from villagers in all these efforts, and people have increased use of non-forest fuels.

The village now has a number of biogas plants and people use cow-dung flakes as optional fuel. The roads in the village are lit by CFL lamps and 95 per cent of the villagers have their own toilets.

About 25 per cent of 26 lakh JCMF members in the State are women. To enhance the contribution of women self-help groups in these committees, a special action plan has been announced and women are being given work

A BAMBOO FOREST IN NIMJI

Nimji village, in Kalmeshwar *taluka*, district Nagpur, got a JFMC in 2002. With the help of the villagers, to date, it has planted 27,500 trees on 25 ha. It has been successful in keeping 80 per cent of the plants alive. Out of these, the percentage of bamboo plants is around 60-70 per cent.



The committee has carried out soil and water conservation activities at the nalla flowing through the nursery by construction of a drain. During summer, trenches are taken in the nalla so that water is available for wildlife. Due to grazing and axe prohibition, illegal tree cutting has been stopped. The sand theft has also come to a halt for the last six-seven years and the number of wild animals has also increased. Due to regular remedial measures undertaken for prohibition of fire, there has not been a single incidence of fire in last few years. There is also no encroachment in the forest.

A unique feature in the village is the permission for grazing, which is allowed in the reserved forest area. The villagers construct three to four water bodies during summer for wild animals. The committee and locals also carry out the work of watering the nursery. Two forest dams have been built with *shramdaan*. There is a total ban on manufacturing and sale of liquor in the village. The committee and people participate in events such as Forest Festival, World Environment Day, Vasundhara Day, Wildlife Week and others.

STONE DAM FACILITATES

Set up in 2003, the JFMC at Buchkewadi in Junnar *taluka*, district Pune, has resolved the issue of drinking water and agriculture by constructing stone dams. The committee has been successful in keeping 70 per cent of trees in the nursery alive. To protect the forest from illegal cutting of trees, the farmers have taken the responsibility of the forest areas connected to their fields.

The committee has a fire prevention team in readiness. Its members and villagers use mobile phones for information on forest fire. Thirteen people from the village have been given milk-yielding animals. The committee arranges comprehensive awareness programme for prohibition of wildlife poaching and

large number of students and villagers participate in the same. With the emerging possibility of horticulture, the villagers collect funds according to the produce and use the same for the development of the village.

GREEN SHIVAJINAGAR

An absolutely green village, Shivajinagar is located in Madangad *taluka* of Ratnagiri. The JFMC here has 86.55 ha of forest land under its control. Under natural recycling, in 2013-14, a nursery was established here on 25 ha. Out of the trees planted, 85 per cent are still alive. The villagers have constructed stone and mud dams on nallas and streams. This has stopped soil erosion. Water storage has also been created.

As the joint vigilance teams of committee members, forest staff and villagers patrol the area, cases of encroachments and illegal tree cutting have reduced. A fire-resistant strip around the forest area has been created with *shramdaan*. Illegal grazing is totally prohibited here. To reduce the stress on the forest, measures such as biogas, LPG and use of non-conventional energy sources have been taken. Various competitions for forest protection and conservation are arranged. With enhanced employment opportunities through Bachat Gat, the committee is on the path of village development.

OPPORTUNITIES FORESTS GIVE

A village is with people, people come with animals, with animals comes the need of fodder, and this fodder becomes a stress for the forest. The usual scene was changed by village Tidka in Morgaon Arjuni *taluka* in Gondia district. The JFMC here has 50 ha reserve forest. It has a bamboo nursery, built 100 stone dams and undertaken repairs through *shramdaan*. There has not been a single forest crime or case of illegal tree cutting. The committee has carried out the work of fire line of 8 km.

As the committee instructed villagers to cut grass from 50 ha of nursery, the danger of fire has reduced. There has been no encroachment in the forest during last eight years. Instead of depending on the forest, fodder is being produced on the periphery of the fields and barren lands. With plantation of other grass varieties, the grazing stress on the forest has reduced. The committee has also built water bodies and planted various species of trees along both sides of the road. The work of their upkeep is being carried out through *shramdaan*. Public participation has been impressive, and 19 families in the villages have biogas, 57 families have electric stoves, and other families use cow dung flakes as fuel. The committee now intends to prepare the saplings through women self-help groups.

The committees carry out soil and water conservation activities throughout the villages. Due to prohibition of grazing and axe, illegal tree cutting has been stopped. The sand theft has also come to a halt in many of the areas

RETENTION OF MOISTURE

This is the story of Dongargaon in Sindewahi *taluka*, district Chandrapur. The JFMC here was established in 2001. It undertook loose boulder structure works on 196.26 ha of forest area. Due to stone dams, the moisture was retained and villagers were able to go for Rabbi harvesting. Through Zilla Parishad School and villagers, 300 trees were planted in the village, out of which 91 per cent are alive. Groups of seven to eight people from the village patrol the forest area.

This has been useful in controlling tree cutting, poaching, fire, encroachments and illegal activities. There are two lakes and four streams along the village. The lakes have water throughout the year, which benefits the wildlife and birds. Beautification of squares and patrolling forests through *shramdaan* are novel ideas implemented here.

PENDHARI GETS RECOGNITION

The JFMC at Pendhari in Murbad *taluka* in Thane district was established in 2011. The forest area under this committee is 213.32 ha. A nursery has been created in 30 ha. With excellent work carried out from top to bottom in terms of nalla bunding, forest lake and chain dams, the ground and well water levels have increased in the village. There has not been a single forest crime reported in the village.

The village has undertaken the fire line around the forest management area of the committee through *shramdaan*. There has not been any encroachment on the forest land since 2007. There is prohibition of grazing and poaching in the area. The wildlife is provided water through water bodies. There is a forest dam in the area of the village. Through *shramdaan*, the committee has also cleaned a drinking water well. A curved dam has been built so that flood waters do not enter the village.



To recognise conservation measures such as tree plantation and individuals and institutions carrying out meritorious work, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vanashree Award is given every year

A FOREST PROTECTION FORCE

The JFMC at Shekapur village in *taluka* and district Buldana organised planned cutting of trees during tree recycling at 50 ha. The trees thus blossomed beautifully and the landscape is now green. Its groundwater level has increased with six mud nalla bunding in the forest area. The water level in wells and bore wells has also increased, helping agriculture. Prohibition of illegal tree cutting and grazing has improved the growth of

forest plants. There is regular patrolling by villagers and committee members and there has not been any incident of encroachment on forest land.

The three natural water bodies in the forest area have been repaired through *shramdaan*, making water available for wildlife and birds.

The specialty of the village is the participation of every villager in the protection of the forest. The women tour the village to spread awareness about smokeless stoves and help construct one for every family. For reducing the stress on forests, the committee members have made available optional equipment. The funds received for prohibition of forest fire was transferred to the village development department, which then created the grazing area and custard apple farm. The committee has helped bring new concepts such as blood donation camps, custard apple seed plantation, horticulture and sericulture to the village.

A NURSERY ACCELERATES AFFORESTATION

Mauje Chorjavala is a village in *taluka* and district Hingoli. The JFMC here was established in 2013. Its total forest area is 61.512 ha. During the rainy season of 2011, a total of 22,460 saplings were planted on 20.40 ha. In 2012, through Gram Panchayat, three nurseries were made. A total of 1.5 lakh saplings were distributed to 73 Gram Panchayats. Under the soil and water conservation programme, a total of five forest dams were constructed and a fire line was taken around the area. There is no encroachment on the forest lands. Grazing is prohibited. Dams have been built through *shramdaan* for making water available to animals. A tree plantation drive was also undertaken and 115 tree guards were fitted. The trees here are being watered through drip irrigation.

THE VANASHREE AWARD

To recognise conservation measures such as tree plantation and individuals and institutions carrying out the meritorious environment-friendly work, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vanashree Award is given every year. Another category of awards, Vrikshmitra, are bestowed to encourage private institutions to take part in tree plantation. **M**

“We need to believe that forests belong to each one of us”

Q. One can estimate your dedication to forest development through your words. What would you say?

A. According to the National and State Forest Policy, 33 per cent of the entire geographical area of the Nation should be under forests. We have about 13-14 per cent dense forest and the total forest area with us is around 20 per cent. Therefore, I, as the State Forest Minister, have taken steps that are needed. As the Revenue Minister, I saw to it that substantial financial provisions were made to the forests through the State budget. The provision will be to the tune of ₹550 crore—more than double the usual provision.

Around 27,000-28,000 forest officials and Indian Forest Service officers protect these forests. We are now providing scientific training in forest conservation and expansion. We are also opening a new forest academy at Chandrapur. We have established Joint Forest Management Committees in



“A HUGE EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL IS AVAILABLE IN THE STATE THROUGH BAMBOO. SHYAMAPRASAD MUKHERJEE JAN VAN SCHEME WILL GENERATE EMPLOYMENT IN VILLAGES ON THE PERIPHERY OF FORESTS”

around 12,556 villages. These committees work for the protection of forests near the village. At some places, we have provided ownership rights of bamboo and tendu leaves to tribal people. Now, we are setting up a federation, which will collect and sell forest products.

Q. What are the steps taken for wildlife protection?

A. Protection of wildlife and stopping illegal hunting are important issues for us. We have provided weapon licenses to Forest Officers and wireless sets to tiger projects. Special Police Force has been created in some tiger projects. The compensation provided to the wounded or dead person in case of a man—animal conflict also have been increased. In case of

Protection and development of forests in the State is now a priority of the Government of Maharashtra, says Minister for Forests, **Sudhir Mungantiwar**. The senior minister, who also has the charge of departments of Finance and Planning, underlines the importance of Joint Forest Management Committees in the complete development of forests. In an interview with **Dr. Surekha Mulay**, he talks about the various initiatives taken by his department for the forest cover in Maharashtra. Excerpts:



death due to an attack by a wild animal, the compensation to the family is ₹8 lakh. This is highest in India. We have also increased the compensation for losses incurred due to wild animal attacks on agriculture and horticulture.

Considering that people go to forests to collect firewood and get attacked by wild animals, we have provided 64,609 gas connections with subsidy. Another important decision is Bamboo Mission. A huge employment potential is available in Maharashtra through bamboo. To accomplish this, we brought in Shyamaprasad Mukherjee Jan Van Scheme in the Budget. The scheme will encourage employment generation in villages on the periphery of forests, making them *Vanagams* (forest villages). Tendu leaves bring revenue of around ₹150 crore to the State exchequer. We distribute the entire amount to tribal people and tendu leaves collectors. Part of this is paid as labour charges and the rest as bonus.

Q. Tell us about the forest academy and Bamboo Research and Training Centre.

A. Bamboo is a fast-growth grass species. Around 160-167 products can be produced from bamboo; 40 per cent of



“WITH 1,500 SPECIES OF TREES, 800 SPECIES OF FLOWERING TREES, 170 SPECIES OF BUTTERFLIES AND 45 SPECIES OF MAMMALS, SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK HAS A HUGE DIVERSITY ON SHOW”



population of around 3.5 crore. With 1,500 species of trees, 800 species of flowering trees, 170 species of butterflies, 45 species of mammals and 43 species of crawling animals, this park has a huge diversity on show. However, we have not been able to provide an international identity to this precious forest estate. Mumbai International Airport receives 40 per cent of tourists from world over and 32 per cent of them move further to other tourist destinations within 24 hours. We have not been able to entice them to the nearest Sanjay Gandhi National Park. We have made a Budget provision of ₹191 crore for the National Park, Tadoba and Gorewada Zoo. We are going to work with zeal to provide these three destinations their legitimate international status.

Q. You plan to develop a botanical garden at Ballarpur and are interested in developing Sindhudurg as a tourist destination.

A. The botanical garden at Ballarpur will be developed on the lines of Bengaluru, as we have 97 ha land available there. Students must know about plant species, their uses and importance of forest wealth. At Sindhudurg, we are developing a sea world. Forest and Revenue departments have lands in every district. We are going to implement the concept of Nakshtra Garden in Sindhudurg. Directorate of Social Forestry is now merged with the Forest Department. Through this, we are creating a high-tech nursery in every district.

Q. What precautions have been taken to stop wildlife poaching?

A. The struggle between man and wildlife is on the rise due to increasing urbanisation. To address this, we thought to have an authority similar to that of Indian Board of Wildlife. The body will enable proper care of animals. Joint Forest Management Committees are proving effective in avoiding tiger poaching. If these report any suspicious activities to the Forest Department, we award them. We have surveillance cameras at some places. We have established a special Tiger Protection Force. This takes care of tiger poaching. We are making efforts to improve green belts not only in the forests, but also in other areas. Nature paths and footpaths are being considered. I wish to approach corporate houses for CSR funds for this initiative. But the most important factor to make the mission successful is public participation. **M**

building materials can be created from bamboo; and bamboo provides excellent wood. However, we did not have a bamboo policy. We sanctioned the same in December 2014. Under this, we will offer scientific training for bamboo plantation.

About 90 per cent of the bamboo production in Maharashtra is concentrated at Gadchiroli, Chandrapur and Melghat. We are setting up a centre at Chichpalli, a village in Chandrapur. With financial assistance from the Union Government, the centre will provide training on scientific plantation of bamboo, creative product design, machine operation and skills for marketing bamboo products. The registration of bamboo workers, which was closed since 1997, has begun, and we have also exempted the workers from taxes. Except two species of bamboo, the farmers will not need any transit pass for bamboo transportation now.

Q. What efforts are being made to encourage young generation for nature tourism?

A. We plan to establish Nisarg Paryatan Vikas Mandal, to promote tourism in forest areas, conservation of biodiversity and improve livelihood of locals. Sanjay Gandhi National Park is the only park, located in the midst of an urban

“Loan waiver is not a solution”

Committed to bring relief to the farmers of drought-affected districts, Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis** shares the key steps planned by the Government

Investment in agriculture is essential for the perennial development of the sector in the State, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis while addressing the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly recently. For this, the State Government has planned to spend ₹5,000 crore each year for the next five years. The fund, only to be spent on agriculture, will be raised through additional taxes, if necessary, he added.

In the new initiatives launched to bring relief to the farmers going through agrarian crisis in Maharashtra, the State Government plans to provide food security to the suicide-affected districts and farmers of Vidarbha and Marathwada. The districts are Wardha, Amravati, Yavatmal, Akola, Buldhana, Washim, Aurangabad, Jalna, Beed, Parbhani, Nanded, Hingoli, Latur and Osmanabad. The farmers will be provided wheat at the rate of ₹2 per kg and rice at the rate of ₹3 per kg. The Government has also decided to bear the total cost of education for the children of farmers, who have committed suicide. The farmers will be provided medical benefits under Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayee Arogya Yojana, for which all the requirements will be relaxed and additional premium will be paid by the Government. More hospitals in these districts will be brought under the purview of the welfare scheme; medical specialists will be appointed on contract basis in the district hospitals and free treatment will be given to the farmer families.

These new initiatives also cover the important aspect of irrigation, as the State Government plans to build 1.5 lakh farm ponds in the next three years across the drought-affected districts. One lakh wells will be created at the rate of 35,000 per year. Under the assured irrigation facilities, 8,000 *Dhadak*/Jawahar wells will be completed. The fund allocated to water conservation has been increased from ₹800 crore to ₹2,200 crore. More than 47,000 agricultural pumps of the farmers in these 14 districts have



been provided connections since November 2014. Target for other deferred connections will be completed by March 2016. Out of 1.66 lakh paid pending pumps in the State, 93,216 are from Vidarbha and Marathwada. This is adding to farmers' difficulties, and there is a demand for 1 lakh more pumps. To fulfill this, the State Government plans to organise special campaign for electrification.

As irrigation facilities in dry land farming areas are limited, services will be provided on rental basis to small farmer groups registered under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan in the selected 5,000 villages. Under this, five diesel pumps complete with pipelines and portable sprinklers will be provided in each village. This will provide employment opportunities to 25,000 youth and help in increased agriculture production on 17.50 lakh ha of land in a month. This will be achieved with an expenditure of ₹138 crore for 5,000 villages.

In case there is not enough rainfall in these

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The four committees appointed to find reasons and remedial measures in connection with farmer suicides suggest loan availability, irrigation facilities, health services, food security, allied businesses and marketing to be provided to farmers to overcome the ongoing agrarian crisis
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needs self-evaluation,” he added.

The Chief Minister underlined that loan waivers also lead to wrongdoings, with cases reported of eligible beneficiaries being deprived of waivers, debt-ridden institutes benefitted instead of eligible beneficiaries, wrong methods of loan waiver adopted, and banks gaining dual benefits out of the waiver. “The four committees appointed to find reasons and remedial measures in connection with farmer suicides suggest loan availability, irrigation facilities, health services, food security, allied businesses and marketing as essential services to be provided to farmers,” he added.

In order to provide farmers freedom from the debt trap, Maharashtra Government has already taken a decision of conversion of crop loans to the tune of ₹6,000 crore to 20 lakh farmers from 25,064 villages. All the banks have been instructed to disburse loan to farmers immediately. Post these instructions, loan disbursement to the extent of ₹17,317 crore to 30 lakh farmers by June 2015 was done.

The institutional loans available to State’s farmers from cooperative sector have been adversely affected. The Government aims to strengthen the network of cooperative societies so that farmers get institutional loans. Freedom from loans will be considered after the farmer becomes empowered. To provide appropriate price for agriculture produce, a strong marketing system will be put in place. Efforts will also be made to get guaranteed rates for milk. The State Government is following up the matter with the Government of India.

The State Government plans to make efforts to establish agriculture-based industries on a large scale. Textile parks will be established at the nine cotton-producing districts of the State. Efforts will also be made to build an international standard, export-oriented mango processing plant in collaboration with Jain Irrigation and Konkan Krishi Vidyapeeth.

Sugar Mills will be provided a loan of ₹2,000 crore, as per Union Government’s package for sugarcane fair and remunerative price (FRP). The State Government will bear the interest of the loan for next four years to the extent of ₹400 crore. Six products have been brought to the value chain so far to do away with the uncertainties of agriculture. In the last eight months, the Government has helped 1.03 crore farmers to the extent of more than ₹7,000 crore. Out of this, ₹4,785 crore has been transferred to them directly through banks. **M**

areas, farmers will be helped with repeat sowing assistance at the rate of ₹1,500 per ha. For this, the State Government is expected to spend ₹360 crore.

Under Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, an amount of ₹25 crore has been provided for fodder crops. A contingency plan has been prepared considering the anxiety among people about rains in the State. The Government will also encourage ancillaries, and aims to spend ₹100 crore for poultry farming on contract basis in the 14 districts.

In his address, the Chief Minister made it clear that the Government does not see loan waiver as a solution to the ongoing agrarian crisis in the State. “There is no history of farmers being benefitted on a large scale through loan waivers, as farmer suicides have increased in the State despite loan waivers. Even if given, the benefits can only go to one-third of the farmers in Vidarbha and half of the farmers in Marathwada. Once there is freedom from the loan, the farmer again gets debt-ridden within six years. The concept of loan waiver

SALIENT POINTS

- A programme worth ₹25,000 crore announced for agriculture development in next five years
- Food security to be provided to 22 lakh farmers in 14 suicide-prone districts
- Free education for the children of farmers who have committed suicide
- Substantial provision for medical treatment of farmers
- Crash programme for 1.5 lakh farm ponds and 1 lakh wells in the drought affected districts



“Abundant
food
grains
for everyone
is our
objective”

The State Government has taken proactive steps that are in the interest of people. **Girish Bapat**, Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection, Food and Drugs Administration and Parliamentary Affairs, in an interview with **Surendra Pataskar**, senior journalist, *Daily Sakal*, Pune, shares his views on the Government’s journey so far and the direction it plans to take in next five years. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. The State Government has initiated plans for the people. You are at the helm of affairs at important departments such as food and civil supplies. What has been your experience?

A. After forming the government, we initiated policies, and have adhered to them in the journey we began late last year. There are obstacles on the path, but we are sure to overcome them. The State

Government has taken decisions that are in the interest of people, especially farmers, contributing to development and enhanced productivity.

In connection with food and civil supplies, I can share that my Department has taken total care to see that no one in the State is deprived of food. We have taken up works such as threshold delivery system, biometric system, tracking of food grain transport, updated lists of beneficiaries, computerisation of ration cards, construction of warehouses and others. All these will be streamlined during the next seven to eight months.

Q. What are the measures taken for taking ration food grains to needy people?

A. All warehouses—from Food Corporation of India to *taluka*-level entities—will be connected through computerisation. GPS system will also be

used. This will, in turn, control the wrongdoings during transportation of food grains. The process of computerisation of ration cards is also going on. Hence, all double entries will be deleted and a proper list will be available. With computerisation of all the offices involved in distribution, food grains will reach the beneficiaries.

Q. Incidents of black marketing of food grains have been reported. How do you plan to control these?

A. Earlier, the distribution system of food grains and entries for the same was manual. Hence, practices such as over-writings and changing of registers existed. Now, the whole system is being computerised. With this, the entries of distributing food grains will be noted on the main office servers. No one will be able to change these entries. Kerosene tankers will be fitted with GPS system, facilitating their tracking. Ration cards will be linked to Aadhar Cards. Now, the system has changed. Corruption will also be terminated and hoarders will be tried under Maharashtra Control of Organised Crimes (MCOCA).

Q. The laboratories for checking adulteration were made in 1980s. The Government has announced to improve these and to increase their number. What is the progress on this?

A. The Union Government has launched a programme for this, and we are receiving funds as well. However, new recruitment exercise was not undertaken after the staff in these labs retired. New posts will have to be sanctioned for establishing new labs. We have begun work on this. It takes around 18 to 24 months for setting up a new laboratory. Inspection system and laboratory establishment have been prioritised. We are also looking at mobile laboratories, which will be activated during the next year. Presently, there are laboratories at Nagpur and Aurangabad. We have a policy for a laboratory on divisional basis. This will be implemented soon.

Q. Even after prohibition, hidden sale of gutkha continues. How do you plan to control this?

A. We are appointing flying squads for the work. Called Vigilance Squad, each of these squads will have 25 members. If we act under IPC 328, hidden sales can be controlled. We have issued instructions to the Department to register non-bailable arrests in such cases. On the other hand, we are also strengthening the concerned State Act. Out of the

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All warehouses, from Food Corporation of India to taluka-level entities, will be connected through computer GPS system



We have taken up works like threshold delivery and biometric system, tracking food grains, computerisation of ration cards and construction of warehouses, etc



All the constructions within 10 km of large cities must adhere to DC Rules. Only those constructions adhering to these rules will be permitted

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Central laws governing pharmaceuticals, Para 272 to 276 convey the rights to modify them to the States. Such modifications will be carried out and placed before the Legislature. A modified version of the same will then be sent to the Centre for ratification. This will ensure proper implementation of prohibition of *gutkha* sales.

Q. You are the Chairman of PMRDA. There are issues such as that of traffic and those related to IT sector and unauthorised construction. How will you overcome these challenges?

A. We have started to draft a development plan for Pune under the Pune Metropolitan Development Authority (PMRDA). It will take around one year. I would be proposing the expansion of limits of PMRDA, as the present limit was set about 15 years ago. We have seen a setback of around 18 years. We have to overcome this lag and plan for the next 18 years. Adequate funds will be made available for this. The development will be secured through PPP or BOT options. While doing this, we plan to take both Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporations with us.

Construction regulations are being formulated in a new way. All the constructions within a perimeter of 10 km of large cities must adhere to development control (DC) rules. Only those constructions adhering to these rules will be permitted. As a policy, we shall not tolerate unauthorised construction on Government land. We will eliminate them. Pune will soon have metro and will definitely see a planned development.

Q. What is the development plan for Pune over next five years?

A. In next six months, we will prepare the PMRDA plan and Pune metro will be on stream. We will strengthen the public transport plan to make Pune an ideal city, a self-sufficient city, a green city, a clean city and a safe city.

Q. There is an issue of generic drugs not being available. What are you doing about it?

A. Doctors are expected to prescribe generic drugs to their patients. This does not seem to happen always. My Department plans to start 300 shops of generic medicines at the *taluka*-level. The list of generic medicines has 243 drugs at present. This list will improve further. A chain of generic drug stores will be set up in the State. The concept is, basic infrastructure for these shops will be provided by the Government and the shops will be run by NGOs or individuals. ■



(Clockwise from above) Drenched in devotion: Pilgrims marching with flags, women devotees walk with basil plant pots on their head, a sea of people, horses believed to be carrying Gods, Lord Vitthal–Rukmini shrine, pilgrims blowing the trumpet and chanting hymns in honour of Lord Vitthal, and a ceremony during Pandharpur Wari

MARCH OF THE PILGRIMS

One of the longest pilgrimages in the world in honour of Lord Vitthal to Pandharpur is actually an out-of-the-world experience. Text and photographs by **Saurabh Chatterjee**

In the Hindu calendar month of *Ashadha* (corresponding to June/July in the Gregorian calendar), the holy shrine in Pandharpur, Western Maharashtra, hosts one of world's longest pilgrimages. Wari, a coveted tradition in India, is undertaken on the day of *Ekadashi* (eleventh day) of *Ashadha*, when millions of devotees walk along the 450 km route from Alandi (near Pune) to Pandarpur (near Kolhapur) to offer their respects to Lord Vitthal (reincarnation of Vishnu in the form of Krishna). The tradition has been preserved by the pilgrims, or *warkaris*, for hundreds of years now. Singing sacred songs, the devotees carry palanquins of various saints

to the holy city from different quarters of the State in the journey, which lasts for about 20 days. A total of over 40 palanquins of Saint Dnyaneshwar and Saint Tukaram meet in Pune and travel together further to Pandharpur. Each palanquin contains a set of silver images of the *paduka* (sandals) of the saint. During the course of the *yatra*, the *warkaris* lead an austere life, stick to a vegetarian diet and observe fast on *Ekadashi*.

Having heard so much about the pilgrimage, we decided to participate in the Wari this year. We began with the Ringen ceremony—an important aspect of Wari, where one of the



SOULFUL HAPPINESS

Considering the congregation at Pandharpur arrives without any invitation, the district administration expects greater number of people every year. This year, planning was carried out under the supervision of National Disaster Management Authority through the Incident Response System (IRS). With Solapur District Collector Tukaram Mundhe as mentor and proper planning in place, the event was a huge success. All the systems worked under a single umbrella, resulting in excellent co-ordination.

Micro planning was done at the arrival and departure points of the palanquins. Emphasis was laid on repairs of roads, cleaning of paths, maintaining palanquin parking spaces, clean drinking water, health services, toilet facilities and overall cleanliness of the city. Accommodation for devotees was arranged on 429 plots, each with an area of 1,000 sq. ft. There were drinking water taps at every 100 m, toilet blocks, electrification, 24x7 health services, ambulances, fire brigade and a police control room. A State Transport Depot was also established. A team of officers from 11 departments headed by Deputy Collector Dinesh Bhalerao helped in allotting the space. The District Collector was in constant touch with the devotees.

Constructed in a record time of 99 days, Vishnupad Dam on Chandrabhaga river was meant for the sacred bath of devotees. Comprehensive cleanliness activities were undertaken within the city. Traffic congestion was reduced.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expressed satisfaction on the arrangements done for accommodating devotees in 65 acres of land and for bathing in the river. He promised that a time-bound programme will be made so that better facilities are available to devotees next year.

—Govind S. Ahankar,
District Information Officer, Solapur

sacred horses is believed to carry the soul of Saint Dnyaneshwar. The pilgrims follow the palanquin, which is led by their leader in a special uniform, so that he is easily recognisable. Many men carry saffron flags. Some women carry pots of basil (*tulsi*) plant on their head for the entire course of the journey. A major attraction of the Wari is the traditional folk dance, *Fugdi* in which both men and women participate with enthusiasm.

We saw a few devotees singing songs in the praise of Lord Vitthal. They are said to belong to a nomadic tribe of Maharashtra and roam around temples, villages and cities singing songs of Krishna. Their distinctive hat made of peacock feathers and *dhoti*, the traditional men's wear, made them stand out of the millions gathered at the venue. I was surprised to see a person carrying his old parents on his shoulders, in a palanquin. Wondering as to how he was able to carry the weight of two persons on him, I recalled the saying that faith can move mountains.

Finally, after a long wait, the ceremony started. The horses, believed to carry the gods, went galloping in circles around the crowd of people. Each man seated on the horse carried a flag. It was an amazing sight, and continued for about half-an-hour.

For some, it was now time to move on to the next destination, Pandharpur, for the final leg of the journey. For others, it was time to keep singing *abhangs* or hymns in praise of the Lord. It was evening and we were tired after spending an entire day in the hot sun. Besides, we had to take rest and keep ourselves ready for the real show the next day, i.e. *Ekadashi*.

After reaching Pandharpur, it is customary for the *warkaris* to take a dip in Chandrabhaga river and visit the Lord Vitthal temple. The temple witnesses huge crowds during the pilgrimage, and it generally takes two full days for one to get a glimpse of the Lord. Adequate arrangements by the State administration this year has led to an increase in the number of visitors. For us, Wari was an experience of a lifetime. The sounds of the dance and the music still echo in our ears. **M**



(From left) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis addresses the gathering at the inauguration of IIM Nagpur and the first batch of students at the institute

IIM Nagpur will bring laurels to the country: Chief Minister

The Indian Institute of Management, Nagpur will emerge as one of the best institutes of the country, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, while speaking at the inauguration function of Indian Institute of Management, at Chitnavis Centre, Nagpur. The first batch of IIM Nagpur has 60 students and its first session has started. Minister for Energy, New and Renewable Energy and Guardian Minister, Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Director, IIM Ahmedabad, Ashish Nanda, Principal Secretary, Higher and Technical Education, Sanjay Chahande, Divisional

Commissioner, Anup Kumar, Dean, IIM Ahmedabad, Prof. Ajay Pandey, and others were present on the occasion.

Chief Minister said that students from IITs and IIMs have made India proud and he hoped that students from IIM Nagpur too will bring laurels not only to the State, but to the entire country. "In the globally changing scenario, we have to create more human resource. If we look back, we see that the entire manufacturing cycle was based in the USA and Europe for years. But today, India has more viable atmosphere for trained manpower. It is time for us to make the dream of

Prime Minister Narendra Modi of Make in India come true," he added.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that India has a large population of youth and the country can serve the global hunger for human resource. "Our youth have excelled globally; our IITs and IIMs have also done wonders. India is a pool of talent. We need to build institutions like Indian Institutes of Management."

The Chief Minister said that it will take two to three years to build the infrastructure, but to build an institution of national repute like IIM or IIT is a real challenge. He also said, investors are showing positive response for investing in the State and are willing to set up industries in MIHAN. "It is a proud moment for us that out

MoU signed with Bosch for upgrading ITIs

Government of Maharashtra has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bosch to upgrade the standards of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in the State. The MoU was signed between Plant Commercial Head of Bosch, Thontesh H. B. and Prof. M. S. Chakor, Principal, Nashik ITI, in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Minister for Higher and Technical Education, Vinod Tawde, Minister of State for Higher and Technical Education, Ravindra Waykar, Principal Secretary, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, S. S. Sandhu, Principal Secretary, Higher and Technical Education Sanjay Chahande, Deputy Secretary Vocational Education, R. G. Jadhav and others were present on the occasion.

During the Germany tour, the Chief Minister had held discussions with Bosch officials at Hannover, following which Bosch accepted the proposal to conduct



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at the signing of MoU between Bosch and Nashik ITI

employment-oriented training programme at 25 ITIs in Maharashtra. The company also accepted to provide employment to these trained youths. Accordingly, BRIDGE (Bosch's Response to India's

Development and Growth through Employability Enhancement), an employment-oriented programme will now be conducted at the ITIs in the State. The programme will run at 25 ITIs under a



of the six approved IIMs this year, IIM Nagpur is the first one to open," he said.

Addressing the audience, Guardian Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule said that the launch of IIM Nagpur will be followed by the foundation of Central Power Research Institute in Nagpur. He hoped that the latter will play a pivotal role in promoting non-conventional energy sources. Director, IIM Ahmedabad, Ashish Nanda said that IIM Nagpur will be developed as IIM Ahmedabad and his team will extend full co-operation to the institute. Principal Secretary, Higher and Technical Education, Dr. Sanjay Chahande; Divisional Commissioner Anup Kumar and Director, VNIT, Dr. Vishram Jamdar also spoke on the occasion.

public-private partnership (PPP) model. The MoU aims to enhance the standard of training in ITIs and help weaker sections and drop-outs to get into skilled jobs.

Already active at ITI, Nashik, the

BRIDGE, an employment-oriented programme to be conducted by Bosch at 25 ITIs in the State, will run under a public-private partnership model

programme will soon start in other 24 ITIs. The programme will cost ₹5,000 per individual, out of which, ₹500 will be paid by the candidate and the rest, ₹4,500 will be made available by Bosch from the bank. The company

will provide a learning kit worth ₹2,500 free for the first six batches.

Under the MoU, a two-day soft skill training programme will also be implemented for the trainees, who will be given 15 days on-the-job training and internship in various companies.

MSMEs, an important component of State's growth

While granting permission to big companies from abroad and other States to set up their units in Maharashtra, the State Government is asking them to ensure growth of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Speaking at the inauguration of the train-

countries are coming to Maharashtra."

Eknath Shinde, Minister for Public Works (Public Undertakings) and Guardian Minister of Thane; Navi Mumbai Mayor, Sudhakar Sonawane and Chief Executive Officer, MIDC, Bhushan Gagrani, were also present on the occasion.



Subhash Desai, Minister for Industries, inaugurates the training centre of MIDC at Navi Mumbai

Minister for Industries Subhash Desai said many companies from India and abroad have shown interest to invest and set up their plants in Maharashtra. "As per State's new industrial policy, while inviting big industries, we do not want to neglect the MSMEs; in fact, we aim to help their growth. Hence, some conditions are laid. These would enable the growth of local small industries," he said. The Minister also said that the new industrial policy of Maharashtra is pro-industry, and by scrapping the River Regulatory Zone Policy, the path of a number of industries has been cleared.

ing centre of Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) at Mahape in Navi Mumbai, Minister for Industries, Subhash Desai said, "Industries from Maharashtra are not moving outside. In fact, industries not only from other States, but also from other

Speaking about smart cities, Subhash Desai said, "Business enterprises had been demanding land around Mumbai, Thane, Pune and Nashik, and we have persuaded them to invest even in backward areas."



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis during the signing ceremony of the MoU with General Motors

General Motors to invest ₹6,400 crore in Maharashtra

A Memorandum of Understanding was recently signed between the Government of Maharashtra and General Motors in presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Under the agreement, the global car maker will invest an additional ₹6,400 crore in the State. A delegation of General Motors led by Chief Executive Mary Barra met the Chief Minister. Minister for Industries Subhash Desai, Minister of State for Industries Pravin Pote, Principal Secretary, Industries, Apurva Chandra and CEO, MIDC, Bhushan Gagrani were also present.

GM will invest the amount in its existing Talegaon facility in Pune for further expansion and to export its various models. The company has contributed largely to the industrial growth of the State. The plant has a capacity to manufacture 1.7 lakh units annually, and it has invested ₹4,300 crore to produce a range of cars, including Beat, Sail and Spark. The company, after catering to the domestic market, commenced export in 2014 with a shipment to Chile. The facility, built over 300 acres, had generated initial employment for 1,000 people.



LAND OF THE SAPOTA

Besides being an ideal hideout, Gholvad has the secret of India's best chikoos, says **Sameer K**

It is just a three-hour train ride away from Mumbai—quiet, unassuming with its sprawling Parsi–Irani bungalows and vast chikoo orchards. The Parsis have since long gone, a few settling abroad and a few giving into the bustle of cities. Gholvad, however, continues to retain its old-world charm, a place where you would want to get away when you need peace and of course give into the succulent temptation of chikoos, the fruit that rules the region and has given it the much-needed recognition on the Indian map.

These chikoo orchards were planted by the Iranis, many of whom cleared the grass-covered tracts with their bare hands when they arrived here a hundred or so years ago. Gholvad is on the road to Bordi, on the coastal highway after you turn left from Kasa Khurd towards Dahanu. Every evening during the season, trainloads of chikoos depart from the station for Mumbai, from where it enters the

Navigator

Gholvad and Bordi are located in Dahanu tehsil of Thane district.

GETTING THERE

By Air: The nearest airport is Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport, Mumbai. There are no regular flights from other major Indian cities to Gholvad.

By Train: Gholvad is a small station on Western Railways and is well connected to major Indian cities

By Road: Gholvad is three-hour away from Mumbai, at 154.8 km, and about five-hour away from Pune, at 285.6 km

fruit and vegetable markets and goes up for sale. Earlier, the Gholvad and Dahanu chikoo farmers had three crops of the fruit every year, in November, April and September. Now, with environmental changes, which many blame upon the BSES' thermal plant on the Dahanu coastline, the chikoo season has become unpredictable.

Elsewhere in the world, the chikoo is known as sapodilla. The drab, oval fruit traces its origin to Central America. India is said to have got the fruit from Spain. The ripe fruit has rough, light-brown skin outside, a honey-coloured, sweet and luscious core inside with inedible, hard-black seeds.

It takes up to 12 years before a chikoo tree is ready to bear fruit that can be commercially sold. The fruit starts growing from the third year of the tree's life, but is not fit for the table. The chikoo tree is sturdy and rugged and can survive in the harshest conditions without any special care. At one time, the economy of Dahanu and Gholvad survived on the chikoo. Despite the environmental changes, soil, climate and proximity to sea and mountains have favoured the growth of chikoos in the area.

Gholvad region has about 1,350 ha under

chikoo plantation. This area produces chikoo of the sapota variety, an all-season fruit. The production is over about 12,000 tonnes of fruits per year, giving a yield of 9.20 tonnes/hectare. Farmers here receive an average rate of ₹12 per kg, says Prabhakar Save, one of the founder members of Maharashtra Rajya Chikoo Utpadak Sangh (MRCUS) and Chikoo Utpadak Sahakari Panan Sanstha, Bordi.

Most of the farmers practice organic farming. Some follow mixed practice. Pesticide spraying is almost negligible, he says.

Although chikoo tolerates varied climate, it thrives in the warm and humid climate of Gholvad. The rainfall is moderate and soil is well drained and rich in available calcium contents. And, therefore, the fruit here has a special flavour.

Gholvad chikoo is mainly exported to Gulf countries, as a part of a mixed consignment, by exporters from Vashi APMC market. At present, there is a cooperative society, Gholvad-Bordi Chikoo Utpadak Sahakari Panan Sanstha. Farmers here market chikoo in consumer pack of 2 kg through Pune Grahak Peth.

Farmers have also tried to deliver to Delhi market, but could not get good rate, he said. "We tried auction, but traders took advantage and we



Gholvad region has about 1,350 ha under chikoo plantation. This area produces chikoo of the sapota variety, an all-season fruit. The production is over about 12,000 tonnes of fruits per year, giving a yield of 9.20 tonnes/hectare.



suffered loss," he added. At present, most of the fruits are sent individually by farmers to Vashi.

Right now three private companies in Dahanu are in chikoo trading. These companies and some individual traders collect fruits and sent to Mumbai and other cities or States.

Chikoo is a delicious and nutritious fruit. Rich in fructose and fibers, it is considered an instant energy fruit. "Unfortunately, we have not preserved it properly in the market. We need collective and professional approach in this regard," says Save. There is also a need to work on consumer packaging. Almost all the produce is packed in bulk packages, farmers say.

Recently, small quantities of fruits were processed as dry fruits. Consumer response has been excellent, say the farmers. Chikoo in the form of dry fruit, powder, pickle, jam, milk shake, ice cream are preferred by consumers. "If we market it as a health product, chikoo has bright future," says a farmer. There is a need to develop technology for bulk processing and packaging. Good sugar content and flavour also make it ideal for wine making but it has not been attempted so far. Chikoos have a very short shelf life and hence, there are limitations in marketing it in remote areas.

Gholvad chikoo industry has been facing problems due to increasing production cost. Mechanised operations, establishing pruning and density plantation techniques/models along with product development and processing can bring back the fading glory of Gholvad chikoo, say experts.

Since the last three years, the Kokan Bhumi Krushi Paryatan Sahakari Sanstha with assistance of MTDC has been organising Chikoo Utsav event at Bordi. This is an attempt to promote chikoo tourism and create direct marketing opportunities for farmers and rural entrepreneurs for marketing fruits and processed products, interact with consumers and understand their expectations. The festival is also a forum to establish contacts with consumers and retailers.

From a turnover of ₹5 lakh in the first year, the turnover has now gone up to ₹28 lakh. Farmers are expecting more revenues next year. Visitors are on the rise since they get to experience farm life, while getting to relax on the sprawling beaches here. Bordi is an idyllic beachfront. With the region hopeful of obtaining the Geographical Indication (GI) status soon, Gholvad is slowly but surely on its way to establishing itself as India's chikoo destination. **M**

(From facing page)
A chikoo tree, a crate full of chikoos, Chikoo Utsav at Bordi, chikoo delicacies, and the delicious and nutritious fruit on display



Of heritage and glory

The traditional Sawantwadi craft is characterised by three distinct styles and widely acclaimed for its rich repertoire of products, says **Aaryanshi Mohan**



In a day and age where children are occupied with their tablets and smartphones, one wonders about the toys the yester generations played with. Led by this curiosity, I grilled my mother about the toys she had as a child. After much pursuing, she finally shared her childhood stories built around the neatly carved, colourful horses and elephants set in wood. The toys were bright, attractive and came in a variety of shapes and sizes, she said. Much different from the Chinese toys that we see on retail shelves these days, the wooden toys were sturdy. The description was enough to drive me to know more about them.

Sawantwadi, a small town in Konkan is well known for its handcrafted wooden toys. The craft has been in India for centuries. Sawantwadi, a quaint town located in the southern-most point of Sindhudurg district in Maharashtra, welcomed lacquerware around the late 17th and early 18th centuries. It is actually about applying lacquer on wood in pleasant colours to create a distinctive appeal. This craft and the community of artisans, flourished under the patronage of the rulers of Sawantwadi.

The art can be divided into three categories. First, turned lacquerware,

THE ART IS IN THE DETAILS

- The craft is marked by three distinct styles, namely Chitrakatha, Temple and Ganjifa
- The wood is coated with priming made of tamarind seed powder for long-lasting appeal
- A coating of *shado* (a white mud paste) is applied five times to raw wood items along with turmeric powder and then sandpapered to rub off the bumps.
- The best-selling toys are chess sets, board games, candlesticks, fruits and vegetables, and dolls



wherein coloured lacquer is applied on an object, which is turning on a lathe, and then polishing and buffing it by means of a *kewda* leaf. Second is of painting floral borders and motifs on objects. This is done with water-based moderate colours, after which the object is given a finish to preserve and enhance the colour. Third is painting of mythological figures on the surface in the styles of Chitrakatha, Temple and Ganjifa. The images in the Chitrakatha style are bold, with a few depicting action. The Temple style shows deities in a sitting position. Ganjifa is more stylish and depicts the incarnations of Lord Vishnu. This style is especially seen in the famous Ganjifa cards made during the 18th and 19th centuries. The creativity and safety of Sawantwadi toys have made it popular both in homes as well as schools, as the art can be seen on vegetables and fruits decorating the living rooms and visual aids helping children learn.

WHAT IT TAKES

The technique of lacquer painting is quite sound. The surface of the object, which is to be decorated with paintings, is prepared by the *chitaries* (painters). First, they cover the object with a layer of stucco (chalk or zinc oxide mixed with gum), which they would smoothen



out. In the case of articles made of bamboo strips, they would first cover the surface with a cotton cloth, sticking it down carefully and then applying the stucco paste. This way the painters even out the surface to create impenetrable foundations on which colours retain their richness and glow. Pangara wood is generally used to make these toys. This wood is not locally available anymore, making it difficult for people to buy it as raw material. The artisans are then compelled to buy wood for about ₹7,000-8,000 per cubic metre. The wet wood is left untouched for a year before the artisans take over. A coating of *shado* (a paste of white mud) is applied five times to the raw wood items along with turmeric powder and

(Clockwise from top left) A low wooden table with Sawantwadi craftwork, children's toys, a home decor piece, foreign tourists at Shilpgram, an artisan at the craft fair and kitchenware

then sandpapered to rub off the bumps. Then come water colouring and lacquering for sheen. Alternatively, spray painting is also done.

The art of lacquer painting of Sawantwadi is in the process of revival. The new generation of *chitaries* is engaged in creating all traditional craft objects. On the other hand, Government of Maharashtra is trying its best to revive the craft by way of setting up Shilpgram—a craft village, where local artisans can manufacture handicrafts and tourists are able to see them and interact with the artists—and fairs to give exposure to the various art forms from the State and help artists earn a living. **M**



A LOW-TIDE WALK THAT STAYED

Just a stone's throw away from Mumbai is Alibaug whose beaches make it one of the best weekend and quiet getaways, says **Gouri Agtey Athale**

The drive to Alibaug, undertaken soon after the monsoon, was a pleasure—thick greenery, dense forests, pools of water near the town of Pen (famous for its Ganesh idols) and lotuses blooming—amidst the landscape that is otherwise rustic and idyllic. I thought this India had all but disappeared but the trip reassured me that it's still there; one just needs to take the time to go and look for it.

We had visited Alibaug more than a decade ago and the family wanted to revisit it, see the changes, recall memories of beautiful beaches and of course, gorge on all that catch, now that the *narali pournima* (signalling the end of the fury of the monsoon) was over, after which fishermen take their boats



out to sea. There were constant references to the last visit—how the town and beach had become more garish and clean, respectively. After all, the beach was where we wanted to be, although the town has its own little known stories and tales.

The first tale centres on the name of the town itself. Its original name, Kulaba, morphed into Alibaug, came from a rich Bene Israel Jew who had orchards (*baugs* in Marathi, so Ali's *baug* became Alibaug). Bene Israeli was a vibrant community in the past and was locally called *shaniwar teli* (Saturday being their Sabbath). There is still a synagogue here and a lane called *Israel aali*.

Alibaug has a strong maritime tradition not merely because it is on the coast. It was home to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's fleet, the sole Indian fleet on the western coast. Kolaba Fort was built by the Maratha leader to counter the prowess of the Siddis of Murud—Janjira, in addition to the Portuguese, Dutch and English forces. In the 18th century, it was the headquarters of Kanhoji Angre, the legendary admiral of the Maratha fleet. The British and Portuguese repeatedly tried to capture this port but were unsuccessful. In 1721, Kulaba

(Clockwise from top left) Sunset at a beach in Alibaug, tourists rejoicing on the beach, old cannons at the Kolaba Fort and driving along the seashore





was the scene of a joint Anglo-Portuguese attack on the Marathas, being also the first-ever major battle of the great Peshwa, Bajirao I. The Peshwa earned his spurs here under the tutelage of Sardar Pilaji Jadhav combined with the naval prowess of Kanhoji Angre and this effectively routed the Europeans. It took the British a century to venture another attempt on this historic fort, leaving much for history buffs to explore.

The Kolaba Fort is located just across the Alibaug beach on a rock jutting out into the sea, and completely dominates the landscape. While the town has come down close to the black-coloured sand on the beach, the fort is accessible in low tide by just walking across the sands or taking horse rides to the fort. The edifice of the fort is 900 ft long and 350 ft wide. It has 25-foot walls with 17 bastions and many shrines such as the 18th-century temple Ganesh Panchayatan. The low-tide walk to reach the fort is the most memorable part of Alibaug.

The prospect of coming to Alibaug from south Mumbai is still alluring, and we took a boat trip to Bhaucha Dhakka, the pier in south Mumbai. I have friends who travel this way cutting down

Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: **Nearest airport is Mumbai 140 km**

By Railway: **Nearest railway station is Panvel**

By Road: **Mumbai-Panvel-Pen-Wadkhal-Alibaug-130 km; Mumbai-Panvel-Pen-Wadkhal-Karle Khind-125 km, Pune-Alibaug-150 km**

By Sea: **There are mainly three service operators extending services viz PNP, Ajanta and Maldar.**

YOU MAY ALSO VISIT



Check out Kihim, a great beach just 12 km away which makes for a great day trip. It is a great place to do some bird watching and you can even spot some rare butterflies. The coconut groves all along the beach make for a welcome respite from the sun. Visit Varsoli Beach, a quiet beach on the outskirts of Alibaug. The sands are silvery white and the shaded casurina groves give it an idyllic setting.

The long stretches of white sand, coconut palms waving their fronds a good 500 m or so inland, sun shining brightly and water glistening make the place appealing

travel time from south Mumbai to their getaway homes here. We had gone with the firm intention of exploring the region, and adventure led us to discover some of Konkan's best kept secrets—long, white isolated beaches. The long stretches of white sand, coconut palms waving their fronds a good 500 m or so inland, sun shining brightly and water glistening made the place appealing.

At high tide you might think there is no beach in Alibaug. The water rushes against the concrete embankment that separates the sea and shore. Once the water recedes, one witnesses the stairs of the embankment looking out to the ocean and the black sand beneath. At some beaches south of Alibaug, like Kihim or Naigaon, we parked in lanes close to the beach and walked on a pine needle-strewn path to the beach. Sitting on the sand, watching the tide come in gradually, to later, watching it ebb away when the real owners of the place, the crabs and other natives crept out was a visual delight. The beach came alive with shells, clams and sea animals.

If you are really keen on history, it's not a very long journey to Janjira, where the near-impregnable sea fort of the Siddis is located. Enroute, there are other sights to be taken in. It might be best to go without a fixed plan, as some of the lesser known, but beautiful places can make you stop and spend some time there. Of course, it cannot be only about the beach and the sea. There are temples and restaurants too. The cuisine here is distinct, with most items having coconut base. On demand, one can get the steamed coconut-jaggery stuffed dumplings, called *ukadiche modak*, drowning in *ghee* (remember to ask for the *ghee*!) at most eateries. The best eateries are often the small ones tucked away in homes.

There is a variety of options for staying here, depending on an individual's budget and deals one can swing. The one we had chosen was a cottage attached to a bungalow and where we could get all our meals if we gave advance notice. It was basic, but clean and hospitable. **M**

KONKAN CALLING

Konkan, the coastal part of Maharashtra till Goa border, boasts of many beautiful beaches. Perfect places to be with family and friends, Ganpatipule, Diveagar, Tarkarli, Harihareshwar, Sagareshwar and Shriwardhan are ideal spots for one to unwind, says **Pallavi Singh**



Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: The nearest airport is Kolhapur, connected to all major cities of the State

By Rail: The nearest railhead is Bhoke, on the Konkan Railway, though Ratnagiri is a more convenient station.

By Road: Distance between Mumbai and Ganapatipule (via Mahad) is 375 km, Pune and Ganpatipule (via Satara) is 351 km, and Kolhapur and Ganpatipule is 144 km

Ganpatipule AN IDYLIC GETAWAY

Approximately 375 km from south of Mumbai, in the Ratnagiri district along the Konkan coast, lies the beautiful beach of Ganpatipule. The beach is famous for the Ganpati idol that sprung up from the soil here

about 400 years ago. This idol faces towards the west unlike the rest that face towards the east, establishing Ganpati as the protector of Western Ghats.

Ganpatipule has abundant flora. The clean beach and golden sand makes it a perfect place to relax. People through the place during the Hindu calendar month

of Magh (January/February in the Gregorian calendar) on the occasion of Gauri Ganpati and *Magh Chaturthi* and in September for Ganesh Chaturthi. About 35 km away from Ganpatipule is Jaigad Fort that rests on a cliff and is at the entrance of river Sangameshwar. Ganpatipule offers a variety of local delicacies such as *ambapoli*

(thin pancakes of crushed and dried mango) and *phanspoli* (thin pancakes of dried and crushed jackfruit). Try the fish curry and *kokam kadi* (pink coloured digestive drink). Vegetarians can feast on a tasty fare of *dal*, vegetables made with a coconut base and *modak*—a sweetmeat favoured by Lord Ganesh.



Diveagar A CLEAR-WATER BEACH

Approximately 170 km south of Mumbai is Diveagar beach, about 15 km from Shriwardhan Taluka in Raigad district. Situated here is the famous Diveagar Ganpati Temple, called Suvama Ganesh (Golden Ganesh). According to legends, Suvama Ganpati's idol was buried here to save it from Arab invasion. The beautiful idol, set in southern style from Shilahar with unmatched carving, suddenly appeared in 1997.

Diveagar beach, facing the Arabian Sea, is approximately 4 km long, clean, lush with wild greenery and with fewer crowds, making it a perfect place to relax and soak in the nature. It is a quieter place than Shriwardhan or Harihareshwar in the neighbourhood. The pleasant, clear-water beach has options of water sports. The coconut cultivation that runs across the beach makes it a lovely place during the sunset. The Diveagar beach is full of life in September around Ganesh Chaturthi. One must visit the place for its beaches and temples, fishing villages like Bharadkhol, Bagmandala beach and the nearby Bankot Fort.

Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: The nearest airports are at Mumbai and Pune
By Rail: The nearest rail heads are Mumbai and Pune
By Road: At about 4–5 hours drive from Pune and Mumbai, Diveagar is about 40 km off the NH17 from Mangaon. There are regular buses from the big cities to Shriwardhan, which is just 6 km from Diveagar

Shriwardhan TOWN OF THE PESHWAS

One of the oldest towns in Maharashtra, Shriwardhan is known for its amazing beaches. Gentle winds, soft sands and inviting waters make the place irresistible for beach lovers. The Bhats of Shriwardhan—later known as Peshwas—witnessed the rise and fall of the Maratha Empire.

The town has the famous Shri Laxminarayan Temple, which is considered the main temple of Peshwas and built in Hoysala architecture style. The other temples in the town are of Kusumdevi, Somjai, Bhairavnath and Jivaneshwar.

If one enjoys seafood, there is no shortage of delicacies to sample here. Adventure seekers can even take a small boat to the north side of the Shriwardhan bay and explore a land where the Peshwas originally resided. The Peshwa Smarak is another interesting place to visit.

Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: Nearest airport is at Mumbai
By Rail: Mangaon railway station on Konkan Railway is the nearest
By Road: Tourists can get taxis to reach the place comfortably. Visitors can take regular bus services from Mahabaleshwar, Mumbai and Pune

Gentle winds, soft sands and inviting waters make Shriwardhan irresistible to beach lovers. If you relish sea food, this is a place to feast





Tarkarli THE QUEEN BEACH

Along the coastline of Malvan *taluka* of Sindhudurg is the beautiful beach of Tarkarli. The beach is located at the junction of river Karli and Arabian Sea. On a clear day, one can see its seabed till a

depth of 20 ft. The lush green Suru trees (Casuarina) in the background present a panoramic view. The wide river, bringing it the title of Queen Beach of Sindhudurg, beautiful sailboats and small settlements add to the beauty of the beach.

Tarkarli has India's first international scuba diving

institute and a number of water sport activities such as boating, scuba diving, dolphin seeing, golden rocks and snorkelling. If one wants to swim, but don't know how to, there are floats available. One can also visit the many forts located nearby. While at Tarkarli, do make a point to taste the special Malvani food

The major attraction of Tarkarli is the long, narrow stretch of beach with pristine waters. On a clear day you can see the sea bed through a depth of 20 ft

Sagareshwar IN PRISTINE SETTINGS

Sagareshwar is an exotic beach situated near Vengurla in Sindhudurg district. Vengurla is known for this beautiful beach and cashew nuts. A pristine, clean beach with white sands and deep blue water, Sagareshwar can be accessed by trekking. In the north of the beach, there is a hillock with light house that can give you a great view of the sea and small islands on it. The place also has a number of religious points that make it more enchanting. The huge stretches of shiny silvery sand dunes get visitors to Sagareshwar looking for outstanding travel experiences. A small temple of Sagareshwar

(Lord of the Sea) is situated on the beach. Well-known temples such as Redi Ganesh temple and Vetoba temple are other renowned places of worship. Travellers make it a point to visit the beach during sunset and sunrise for an amazing view. Ideal for swimming, Sagareshwar has recreational and adventurous activities such as snorkelling, swimming, diving, water surfing and parasailing. Boating and fishing can also be enjoyed.

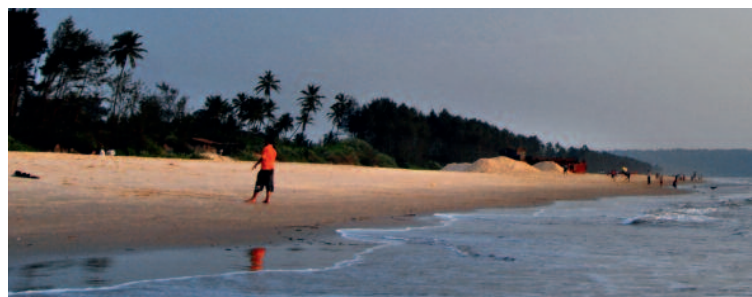
Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: The nearest airport is Dabolim Airport, Goa

By Rail: For Vengurla, the closest railhead is Kudal

By Road: Vengurla is 522 km from Mumbai



Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: The nearest airport to Tarkali is Dabolim Airport, Goa. Dabolim is well connected to many Indian cities.

By Rail: The nearest railhead for Tarkali is Kankavli, on the Konkan Railway.

By Road: Malvan is 514 km away from Mumbai and 200 km from Ratnagiri

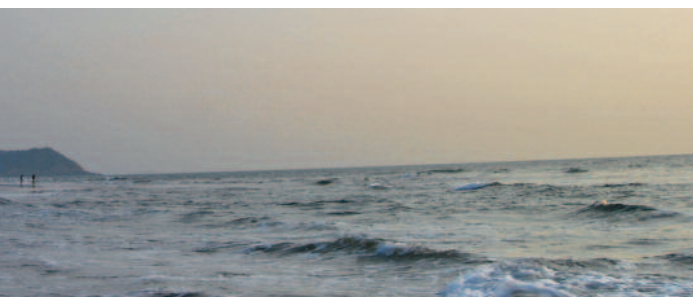


with a variety of fish items and *kombadi vada*, a *vada* served with traditional chicken curry.

Just 20 km south of Tarkali is Nivati, which is famous for its fort. The fort has on sides the Nivati and Bhogwe beaches. Nivati Fort is a popular point in boating circuits from Tarkali.

About 80 km from Tarkali is

Amboli, a hill station located in the south of the Sahyadri, known for its amazing waterfalls. A bird watchers' paradise, Vengurla Rocks or the Burnt Island is an island off the coast from Malvan. The island is a traditional roosting and nesting site of the Indian Swiftlet, the edible nest swiftlet, and many more bird species.



Harihareshwar

A PIOUS LOCALE

Harihareshwar, exactly 18 km away from Shriwardhan, is a prolific tourist destination in the Konkan region. Shriwardhan and Harihareshwar are called the twin cities. Located about 130 km from Pune, Harihareshwar is circumscribed by four hills named Harihar, Harshinachal, Bramhadri and Pushpadri. It is also known as Dakshin Kashi and is quite popular among tourists. Besides its beautiful beaches, Harihareshwar is known for its temples. One of the ancient temples located here is the Shankar temple that dates back to the Pandava era. Another temple located in close proximity is of Somaja Devi. Harihareshwar temple complex is a prime attraction of the city and a trip to this place is not complete without a visit to the temple complex. The presiding deities in the temple are Trimurti—Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, along with Devi Parvati. It is customary to visit the Kal Bhairav temple before visiting any other shrine here. The Harihareshwar temple opens upto a long stretch of beach on its northern side.



Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: Nearest airport is Mumbai (215 km)

By Rail: Nearest railhead is Mangaon (65 km on Konkan railway)

By Road: Mumbai—Harihareshwar, 230 km via Panvel—Mangaon—Goregaon Phata on Mumbai—Goa Highway; Shriwardhan—Harihareshwar, 20 km; Bangmandala—Harihareshwar, 4 km

THE GEMS OF MARATHA EMPIRE

A series of annexations by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj led to fortification of Western India, paving way for a strong Maratha empire, says **Dr. Sachin Vidyadhar Joshi**



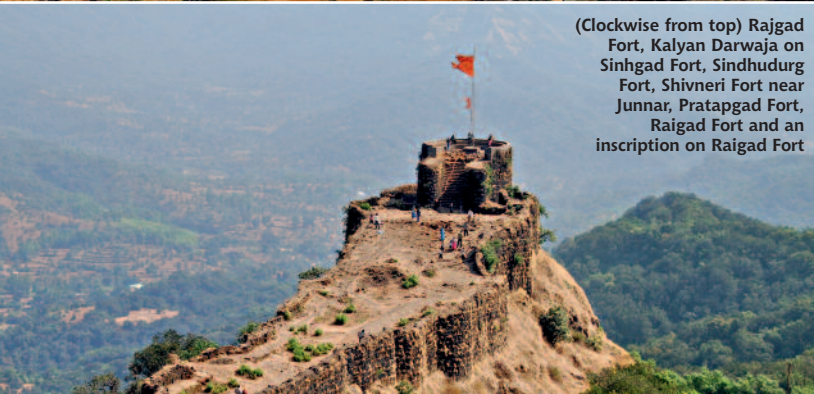
Forts played a key role in the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The Maratha leader was born and brought up in the Shivneri Fort and breathed his last in his capital fort of Raigad. His association with forts during his lifetime brought him the title of Man of Forts. However, it is to be noted that a majority of the forts he ruled over once belonged to Adil Shah dynasty of Bijapur (from 1490-1686) and Nizam Shah dynasty of Ahmednagar (from 1490-1636), who were ruling over most parts of the Deccan at that time. The Maratha ruler not only took possession of forts from these rulers, but also reconstructed many forts in the region. Historians share that Shivaji carved out an enclave from the declining Adil Shahi Sultanate to found the Maratha Empire. In 1674, he was formally crowned as *Chhatrapati* (meaning monarch) of his realm at Raigad.

The hills of Maharashtra offered excellent sites for constructing forts. Under Shivaji's rule, the entire region was secured by a network of forts. Forts such as Lohgad, Tung and Korigad were built during the period of Nizam Shahi and Adil Shahi dynasties. After the end of the Nizam Shahi rule, some forts were taken over by the Adil Shahi dynasty. Many of these forts were later captured by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj during the rise of the Maratha power. Forts that were in dilapidated state were the first ones to be annexed.

Before the launch of *Hindavi Swarajya* campaign (around 1645–46) by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Pune, Supe, Chakan and Indapur regions were the *jagirs* of Shahaji Maharaj. About 12 small river basins in the Pune region were commonly called as 12 *maval* (a Marathi word that means west). A very small part of these was under the hold of Shahaji Maharaj. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj began annexing the region and the forts located here. His first aggression came at the age of 16, when he seized the Torna Fort of Bijapur. By 1647, he had gained control over Kondana and Rajgad forts and Pune region. The Rajgad Fort that falls in the Gunjan *maval* (Gunjavani river basin) was chosen as the first capital of Maratha Empire because of its arduousness.

During his reign, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj constructed forts in the Sahyadri main range, Konkan region and nearby islands. The difficult terrain suited the guerilla techniques of Maratha fighters and enabled them to outsmart the mighty generals of Aurangzeb and Bijapur.

Post the defeat of Chandrarao More, the chief of Mahabaleshwar, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj decided to construct a strong fort in the region. A high hill, locally named as Bhorappa was selected for the construction. Shivaji's Chief Minister, Moropant Pingale started construction of a new fort, Pratapgad. One of the most important forts to get



(Clockwise from top) Raigad Fort, Kalyan Darwaja on Sinhgad Fort, Sindhudurg Fort, Shivneri Fort near Junnar, Pratapgad Fort, Raigad Fort and an inscription on Raigad Fort



reconstructed was Raigad. It was here that Shivaji was crowned king on June 6, 1674. It was a safe residence, as the natural defence it offered by way of ramparts and bastions were further strengthened by vertical scarps. Chief architect and engineer, Hiroji Indulkar was entrusted with the responsibility of constructing many structures on the Raigad Fort. The fort had water cisterns, tanks, towers, gateways, administrative offices, residential structures and roads.

Marathas built seven island forts on the western coast of India. Small islands such as Kurate, Kansa and Khanderi were chosen for building Sindhudurg, Padmadurg and Khanderi forts, respectively.

Sabhasad bakhar, a chronicle written nearly 15 years after the demise of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, mentions that the Maratha leader captured 49 forts. Few forts in Pune, namely Sinhgad, Sudhagad, Purandar, Ghanagad together with Rasalgad, Mahuli and Jaigad forts in Konkan come under this list. However, by 1663, he had lost most of his conquests to the Mughal army and handed over 23 forts as per the terms of Treaty of Purandar.

In the next few years, Shivaji Maharaj again began seizing

Gateways at fort Raigad, Torna, Padmadurg and Sindhudurg cannot be seen from outside. Semicircular paths and hidden gateways were important features of Maratha architecture

forts of Mughals and Bijapur in the region. In January 1670, he launched an attack on Mughal garrisons and within six months, he won back most of his lost empire. During 1670-1674, he expanded his empire and constructed new forts. *Sabhasad bakhar* puts the number of these new forts at 187.

According to some original letters, chronicles, English and Dutch records, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj constructed approximately 100 new forts. He changed the concept of

defence architecture in the Sahyadris. The gateways seen prominently in Islamic architecture were not part of the Maratha architecture.

The end of 1676 saw Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj launching attacks in southern India. He constructed forts in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Goa

during his southern sojourn. According to *Sabhasad bakhar*, 79 forts were built during this campaign. Some of these were Sajara, Gojara, Madonmattagad and Krushnagiri. It is said that, the Maratha leader conquered 130 forts and built 111. At the time of his death in 1680, he possessed about 240 forts across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Goa. [M](#)

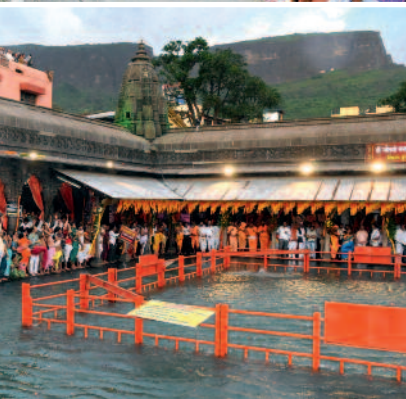
—The writer is a Researcher at Department of Archaeology, Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute, Pune



Holy flag, hymns and prayers

At the crack of dawn on July 14, at 6:16 am to be precise, the twin temple cities of Nashik and Trimbak reverberated with chants and prayers of thousands of *sadhus*, who took a holy dip in river Godavari, as part of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela. The Kumbh Mela was inaugurated by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who hoisted the holy flag in Nashik amid the sounds of conch shells, recitation of hymns and flowers showered from a helicopter. The scene was equally enchanting at Trimbakeshwar, with the entire crowd celebrating the hoisting of the holy flag, *Dharma Dhwaaja*, at Kushavarta Teerth. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched the congregation at Trimbakeshwar. Simhastha Kumbh will go on till September with three auspicious dips to be held at each of the holy cities.





"This
 Simhastha will be remembered as Harit Kumbh. The citizens and devotees should maintain the sacredness of the event. They should vow not to litter and keep river Godavari clean"
-Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister



STREAMS OF KNOWLEDGE

Maharashtra in the recent months has bagged a lot of achievements. Paying special heed to education, sanitation and literature, it moves forward with a vision that has something in store for everyone



(From left) State Election Commissioner J.S. Saharia, Abhimanyu Kale, Dr. Kanchan Jagtap and Amit Kumar Banerjee

DILKHULAS

Treasures and achievements

On the backdrop of Gram Panchayat elections in the State, an interview with J. S. Saharia, State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra, was organised in *Dilkhulas*. Elections in the 15,000 Gram Panchayats will be conducted in two phases. The State has 15,000 Gram Panchayats, out of which 9,000 go for elections during July-August, while 3,000 Gram Panchayats will go for elections during October-November. On July 25, general and bye-elections took place in Kolhapur, Nanded, Yavatmal,

Bhandara, Gondia, Sangli and Beed. On August 4, elections will be conducted in 22 districts, including Ahmednagar, Jalgaon, Pune, Satara, Aurangabad, Parbhani, Osmanabad, Hingoli, Buldana and Chandrapur. The Election Commission has started the online nomination process and is undertaking Constitutional responsibility for fearless and transparent voting. The amendments to the voter list will be carried out through online changes.

Abhimanyu Kale, Chief Executive Officer, Nanded Zilla Parishad spoke to *Dilkhulas* about Nanded taking a lead in construction of toilets under the Swachh Maharashtra campaign. At the same time, in order to enhance quality of

JAI MAHARASHTRA

Wide spectrum of topics reviewed

Jai Maharashtra reviewed a wide spectrum of topics from politics, education, literature and cleanliness during the month of July. This month's invitees were Minister for Water Resources, Girish Mahajan; Chairman Bharat Vikas Group, Hanumantrao Gaikwad; Vice Chancellor, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Dr. Manikrao Salunkhe; author and winner of Yuva Sahitya Academy award, Veera Rathod and others.

A spiritual celebration of Indian culture and traditions, Kumbh Mela is held every four years at Haridwar, Allahabad, Nashik-Trimbakeshwar and Ujjain. This year, Kumbh Mela is being held in Nashik district from July to September, where lakhs of devotees are arriving. On the auspicious occasion, development works to the tune of crores of rupees have been undertaken. Minister for Water Resources and Guardian Minister of Nashik, Girish Mahajan provided information about the mega event and an overview of the preparation and planning done by the State administration.

Hanumantrao Gaikwad, responsible for establishing India's biggest non-listed company providing jobs to 60,000



(Clockwise from top left) Minister for Water Resources Girish Mahajan, Hanumantrao Gaikwad, Veera Rathod and Dr. Manikrao Salunkhe

education in schools, it has implemented Happy School initiative. The officer shared that the district has been able to accomplish an initiative of constructing 60,000 toilets in just three months. "Under this, 84 per cent of public toilets are constructed and being used by people. As per a survey conducted in schools, 1 lakh parents had made a written request for construction of toilets. As of June 1, 82,000 toilets had been constructed in Nanded," he said.

“
Through
Happy School, an
effort has been
made so that
children outside
schools get
interested in
education and
cultivate a habit
through the
mediums of music,
sports and study
—Abhimanyu Kale

Abhimanyu Kale also provided information on activities such as Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Educational Quality Enhancement, *Lakshvedhi Namaskar* and others. The initiatives have led to an increase in Zilla Parishad schools.

During her talk, Dr. Kanchan Jagtap, Joint Director, Public Health shared the initiatives of the Public Health Department of the Government towards fighting and eradicating rainy season diseases. She spoke about the symptoms of leptospirosis and care to be taken to avoid dengue. She can be reached at 022-26684550.

Amit Kumar Banerjee, Chairman, Balgram Sanstha, Lonavala, while speaking in *Dilkhulas*, said that children are worst affected in cases of accidents and calamities. Balgram Sanstha takes care of such children, showers them with affection, and gives them a family atmosphere.

—Meera Dhas

youth through the medium of cleanliness, was invited to *Jai Maharashtra*. He started a mechanical housekeeping concept in 1999. Thousands of his workers are active at various institutions.

With the slogan, *Dnyanganga Gharoghari*, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU) has been active in building India's human resource. Dr. Manikrao Salunkhe, Vice Chancellor, YCMOU shared with viewers information about latest courses available at the university, admission process, examination system and places students should contact in their district.

Youth Literary Awards from Sahitya Academy have been announced. For Marathi, the honour was bestowed on Veera Rathod, a poet from Marathwada, for his collection *Sen Sayee Yes*, meaning to bestow welfare on everyone in Marathi. *Jai Maharashtra* aired an interaction with the young poet. During the interview, he thanked his collection, through which he was able to bring before the world the life and culture of the Banjara community.

—Atul Pande



MAHANNEWS

Blend of news and content

Mahanews, a web portal of Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPR) is unique, as apart from news, it also provides visitors interesting content on a variety of topics through its columns. The daily activities of the Government are published in the form of news. The present Information Secretary, Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar has done excellent parenting of *Mahanews* in terms of columns on various topics on the portal.

Although the titles of many columns have changed over a period of time, the work carried out still conveys the actions of the Government to the people. Success stories of individuals, *bachat gat* (self-help groups) and organisations benefitted from Government schemes are, in fact, an acknowledgement of an active Government. The objective of publishing these success stories is to encourage others to emulate and surpass the success levels achieved by others. It is essential that we take such stories to the people.

Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan can be cited as one of the best examples of such schemes. In its first stage, the campaign has helped many villages at the State to develop water storage units. The information and success stories related to the campaign are being published on *Mahanews*.

Interviews with Ministers and Secretaries through *Net-Bhet*, photographs of special events through Photo Gallery, Video Gallery, employment opportunities listed on Job Search and a link to *Lokrajya* magazine are all proving to be immensely useful to the visitors.

To restrain the content from becoming monotonous, *Mahanews* has tried to bring in some changes in recent months. Information about the universities in the State is being provided through the column, *Vidyapeethe*, and information about tourist destinations through *Mahabrahamanti*.

The major responsibilities of DGIPR include publicity of Government initiatives. *Mahanews* carries on this work through the medium of Main News and News from Mantralaya and Maharashtra. Content from various columns is also published. Information Secretary, Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar has taken this on and the same is being carried on by Team Mahanews.



—Brijkishore Jawhar

ON THE PATH OF PROGRESS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the Second Meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog in New Delhi. The Council held consultations on the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act. Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis was in the Capital to participate and share his views on States' role in it



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Union Ministers, Rajnath Singh and Arun Jaitley, and NITI Aayog's Arvind Panagariya, and on the sidelines on the meeting



(From left) Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar, Punjab Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in New Delhi

Rural infrastructure and defence sector should be exempted from Social Impact Assessment (SIA), asserted Devendra Fadnavis. The Chief Minister of Maharashtra was speaking at the second meeting of NITI Aayog chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi recently. Chief Ministers from 16 other States were also present in the meeting. Addressing the Governing Council of NITI Aayog, Devendra Fadnavis said that the original Land Acquisition Act 2013 was unjust to States, as under Section 105, Central projects like highways and coal were exempt from social impact from consent

clause, but similar State projects were forced to go through delayed process of SIA and consent. He added that the amended ordinance of 2015 empowers States to take up rural infrastructure and defence and exempts them from SIA and consent, and so will speed up development. The 2013 Act states that if land remains unutilised for five years, it has to be returned to the land owners. Devendra Fadnavis said that every project

The political deadlock over land acquisition is impacting rural development, including building schools, hospitals and other projects

has a life cycle, which can be more than five years, and hence, the land should be allowed to be retained under acquisition till the full life cycle of the project. Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley noted the suggestions made by Devendra Fadnavis.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that Centre and States must work together to end poverty. The political deadlock over land acquisition is adversely impacting rural development, including building of schools, hospitals,

road and irrigation projects. The Prime Minister also said that there are no differences in the stands of the Centre and States for paying enhanced compensation. The other Chief Ministers shared their views that either the Centre must evolve a consensus or give enough flexibility to States to frame their own land law. **M**

HR CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

India should emerge as the 'human resource capital' of the world, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while launching the Skill India Mission in New Delhi. India has the potential to provide workforce to the world, if the capabilities of its citizens are honed through proper and dynamic training in skills, and the Government is focussed on this aspect, he added.

The Prime Minister unveiled the National Skill Development Mission, National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2015, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) scheme and Skill Loan scheme on the World Youth Skill Day. He also awarded skill cards and skill certificates to trainees who completed training under the pilot phase of PMKVY. Through the mission, Centre together with the States, wants to fulfill people's dreams, said the Prime Minister. Union Ministers Arun Jaitley, Suresh Prabhu, Manohar Parrikar, Rajiv P. Rudy, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and other State Chief Ministers also attended the event.



(From left) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben Patel and Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh at launch of National Skill Development Mission in New Delhi



Minister for State for Water Resources, Water Conservation, Vijay Shivtare (fourth from right) during the meeting of Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers in New Delhi

MAHARASHTRA SHOULD GET WATER FROM UKAI DAM

The Minister for State for Water Resources, Water Conservation, Vijay Shivtare said that Khandesh region from Maharashtra should get 16.5 TMC water from Ukai dam in Gujarat. The Minister was speaking at the fifth meeting of the Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers (ILR) in New Delhi. Union Minister of State for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, and President of Interlinking River Project, Sanwar Lal Jat chaired the meeting. The discussion also addressed the Par—Tapi—Narmada, Damanganga—Pinjal and Wainganga—Gosikhurd projects. Maharashtra will get 28.5 TMC water from Par—Tapi—Narmada project. Out of this, 16.5 TMC water will go into the sea. Gujarat has demanded that the said quantity of water which will go into sea be given to it. In return, Maharashtra has demanded equal quantity of

water from Ukai dam for Khandesh region, shared Vijay Shivtare.

The Minister of State for Water Resources, Water Conservation, also said that the demand of the height of Pranhita irrigation scheme to be reduced to 148 m from proposed 152 m, as it may cause submergence of 30 villages of Maharashtra (22 of Chandrapur and eight from Gadchiroli), has received positive response from Telengana.

The detailed report of Damanganga—Pinjar river link project has been prepared. The State Government has suggested some changes to the project, which will fulfill Mumbai's water requirement till 2050, said the Minister of State for Water Resources. After the completion of this project, around 21 TMC of potable water will be available. Excess water from the project should be lifted and diverted to Godavari irrigation project, and the project should be given national status, said Vijay Shivtare.

MUMBAI-NAGPUR SUPER EXPRESSWAY TO CONNECT FOUR CITIES

Soon, people from Mumbai travelling to Nagpur by road will be able to reach in half the time as the State Government will build an 800-km-long expressway between the two cities, announced Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. With the Government planning to spend ₹30,000 crore on the project, the new expressway will connect four major cities of Maharashtra, Mumbai, Nashik, Aurangabad and Nagpur. The Government plans to



develop IT parks, smart cities and education complexes along it.

This six-lane expressway will be undertaken by the Union Ministry of Highways and Surface Transport and State Government with Maha-

rashtra State Road Development Corporation as the implementing agency. The expressway, which will traverse through Ghoti-Aurangabad-Amravati and touch Nagpur, is expected to slash travel

time to Mumbai to just 10 hours. It will pass through three regions and connect four divisional headquarters with Mumbai. It will primarily connect Mumbai, north Maharashtra, Marathwada and Vidarbha and will boost development of Maharashtra by going beyond the Mumbai-Nashik-Pune golden triangle. It will have CCTVs and will be equipped with fibre optic cables, said the Chief Minister.

The expressway would be undertaken in two phases and will be completed in a time-bound manner by 2019. The expressway will help in creating another industrial and agro-industries hub in the State.

TREE PLANTATION DRIVE IN RAJ BHAVAN



Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao during the tree plantation drive

Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao launched a tree plantation drive at Raj Bhavan, Mumbai by planting a mango sapling. Wife of the Governor, Vinodha and granddaughter Rhea also planted a mango sapling on this occasion. The tree plantation drive has been organised by Dr Nanasahab Dharmadhikari Pratishtan. Volunteers of the Pratishtan will be planting 205 trees in the present drive. According to the latest tree census conducted by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Raj Bhavan has 5,590 trees. With the launch of the present tree plantation campaign, the green cover in Raj Bhavan is expected to grow further.



SUCCESS OF CHIEF SECRETARY

Maharashtra State Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya recently completed his Bachelor of Law. At the age of 58, when many prefer enjoying the fruits of life, the senior bureaucrat has showed that if one has strong will and determination, there is nothing that cannot be achieved. It also proves that for learning, age is no bar.

The LLB adds to the list of many degrees the Chief Secretary has. Despite being the busiest bureaucrat of the State, his desire of knowledge led him to the course. An IAS officer of 1980 batch, Swadheen Kshatriya has handled several important departments and varied field postings in the State. Determination and time management are the keys to his success.

NEW TECHNIQUES OF FILMING

To keep growing in the age of gadgets, and making good use of technology in the functioning of the Government, is the need of the hour. Office bearers must be trained in order to update their knowledge. As part of this, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPR) recently organised a State-level training workshop on filming with the latest technology in Mantralaya.

The workshop was inaugurated by Chandrashekhar Oak, Director General, DGIPR in the presence of Devendra Bhujbal, Director, Information-Administration and Shivaji Mankar, Director, News and Public Relations.



Chandrashekhar Oak, Director General, DGIPR, guiding at the workshop. Also seen are (R) Devendra Bhujbal, Director Information-Administration and (L) Shivaji Mankar, Director, News and Public Relations

Deepak Sharma, Cameraman, Doordarshan, Nagraj Revankar, Cameraman, Films Division, Vijay Deshmukh, Senior Cameraman and Amitabh Kumar, Project Head, Sony India shared their experience and guidance. They

gave useful tips for work such as the right angle for shooting, background of the function to be shot, presenting an effective Government scheme within 60 seconds and related information.

—Meenal Joglekar



THE SMART ONES

Ten cities of Maharashtra have been shortlisted under the Union Government's ambitious Smart Cities Mission. The focus of the programme is sustainable and inclusive development

The innovative Smart Cities Mission of the Union Government proposes to develop 100 smart cities in India in next five years. The State Cabinet recently gave approval to the implementation of the programme in Maharashtra. A high-powered committee was set up under Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya to select ten cities and prepare a detailed project report. The ten cities shortlisted under the project include Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune-Pimpri-Chinchwad, Amravati, Solapur, Nagpur, Kalyan-Dombivali, Aurangabad, Nashik and Thane.

The Smart Cities Mission will be implemented in 100 cities with an outlay of ₹48,000 crore and each selected city would get Central assistance of ₹100 crore per year for five years. An equal amount, on a matching basis, will have to be contributed by the State/Urban local bodies. Special Purpose Vehicle will be set up for effective implementation of the scheme. By setting up Smart City Forum, co-ordination of various

The objective of the mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment and application of smart solutions

sections will be sought. In the second stage of the competition, each of the potential Smart Cities will have to prepare their proposals for participation in the City Challenge. For monitoring the mission at State level, a high powered steering committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary has been constituted. The Secretary, Urban Development (2) will work as Director of the State Mission.

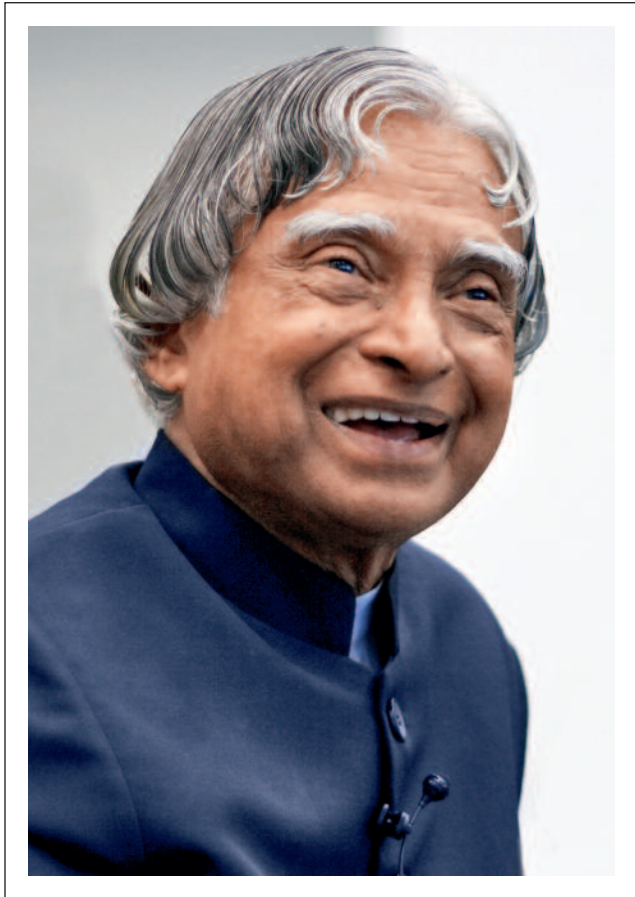
The development of Smart Cities Mission aims at comprehensive development of physical, institutional, social and economic infrastructure and improving the quality of life and attracting people and investments to the City, setting in motion a virtuous cycle of growth and development.

The objective of the Mission is to promote cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens, a clean and sustainable environment and application of 'smart' solutions. The core infrastructure includes adequate water supply, assured electricity supply, sanitation, including solid waste management, efficient urban mobility and public transport, affordable housing especially for the poor, robust IT connectivity and digitalisation, good governance, especially e-Governance and citizen participation, sustainable environment, safety and security of citizens, particularly women, children and the elderly, and health and education. **M**

—Team Maharashtra Ahead

THE PEOPLE'S PRESIDENT

Former President of India, renowned scientist and Bharat Ratna, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam passed away recently. Team Maharashtra Ahead pays tribute to the legend



"We should not give up and we should not allow the problem to defeat us"

—Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

The noble words of Former President of India, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam are for those striving to achieve their dreams, and for those scared to begin their journey. It was his knowledge, faith in fellow Indians, openness and smile that established him as a People's President. During his time as the President of India, from 2002-2007, Dr. Kalam mentored India to become a global superpower. The Bharat Ratna, eminent scientist and visionary left for heavenly abode after suffering a cardiac arrest on July 27 in Shillong.

Son of a boat owner, Dr. Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam was born on October 15, 1931 in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu. He began working at an early age to supplement his family income. In his school years, he had average grades, but

was a bright and hardworking student with a strong desire to learn. He spent hours studying, especially mathematics. In 1955, he moved to Madras to study aerospace engineering.

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam always aspired to become a fighter pilot, but narrowly missed his dream of joining the Indian Air Force. After graduating from Madras Institute of Technology in 1960, he joined the Aeronautical Development Establishment of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as a scientist. He started his career by designing a small helicopter for the Indian Army, but remained unconvinced by his choice of the job at the DRDO. Dr. Kalam was also part of the INCOSPAR committee working under renowned space scientist Vikram Sarabhai.

“Kalam *saheb* taught us to dream big and made us believe that dreams can come true. He led us on the path of making India the superpower. Kalam *saheb's* demise is a huge loss. My humble tributes to Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam”

—Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister

In 1969, Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam was transferred to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), where he was the project director of India's first Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV-III), which successfully deployed the Rohini satellite in near-earth orbit in July 1980. Dr. Kalam was considered the brain of India's missile programme, bringing him the title of Missile Man of India.

As Chief Scientific Adviser to Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then Prime Minister of India, Dr. Kalam was instrumental in the Pokhran nuclear test conducted in 1998. He played a major part in developing many missiles, including Agni and Prithvi. His extensive service to India brought him Bharat Ratna, Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan. He also received the Von Braun Award from the National Space Society for excellence in management and leadership of a space-related project.

Dr. APJ Kalam meditated, played veena, taught children and adults, looked after plants, found enough time to write relentlessly and author 20 books. He parted his hair in the middle, wore simple clothes, and had a child-like smile capable enough to beat all the weapons he developed as a scientist. As President, he utilised every opportunity that came his way to encourage students and youth to dream big.

The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly paid rich tributes to former President. Education Minister Vinod Tawde said the State Government will celebrate Dr. Kalam's birth anniversary on October 15, as *Vaachan Prerna Diwas* in schools. The initiative will help inculcate reading habits among children. **M**



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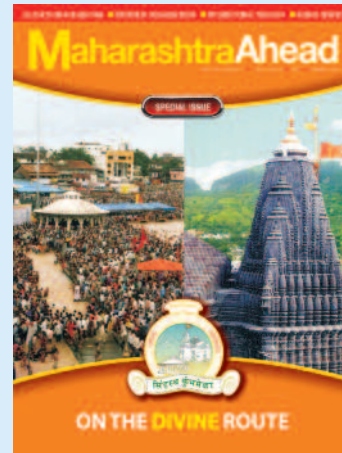
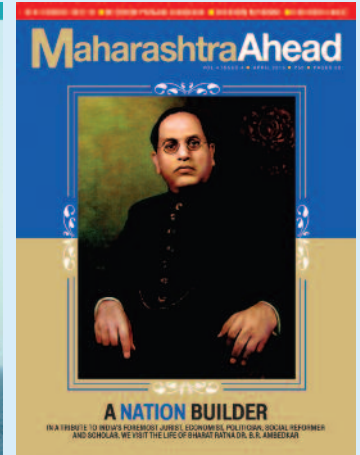
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