

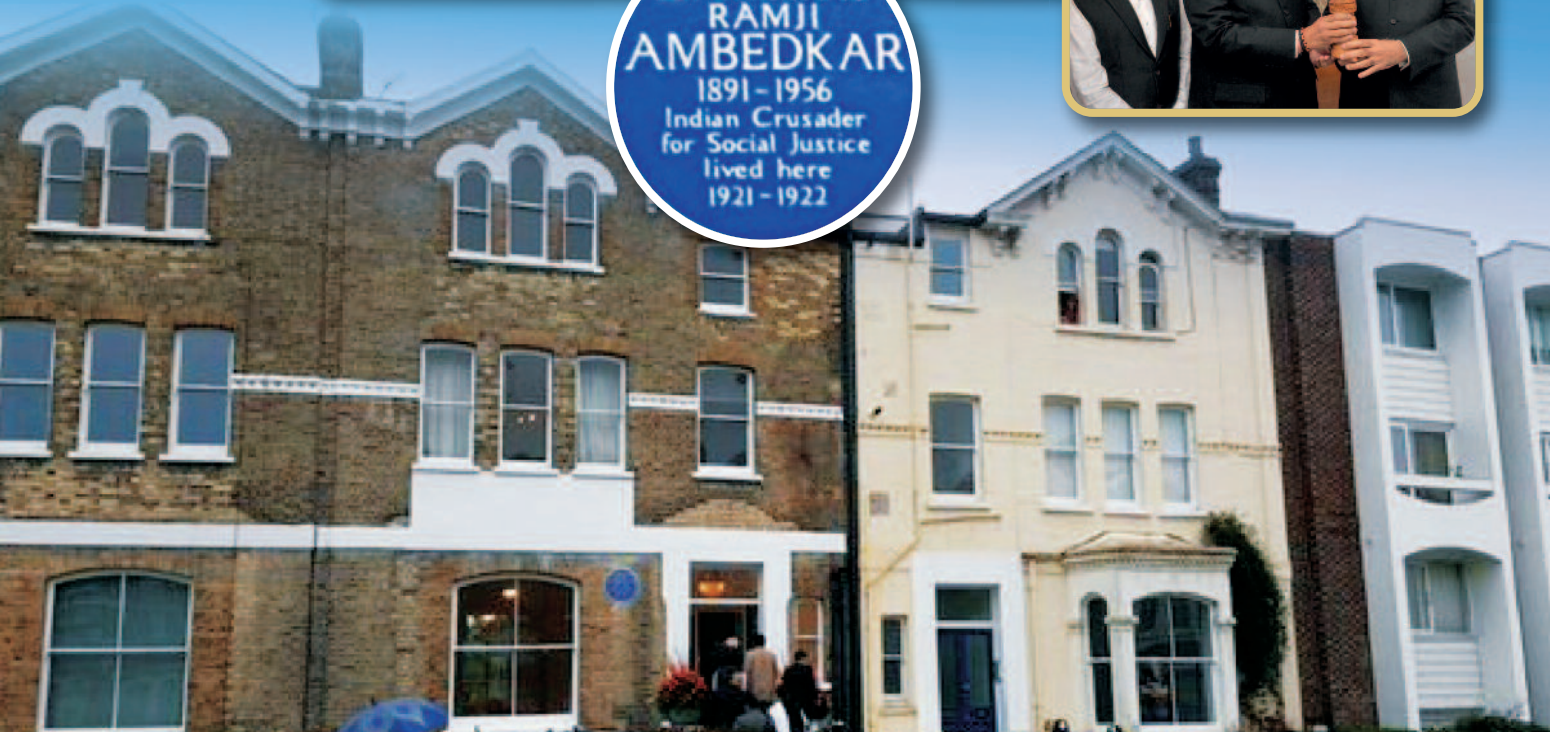
MaharashtraAhead

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GLOBAL MEMORIAL OF THE LEGEND



DR BHIMRAO
RAMJI
AMBEDKAR
1891-1956
Indian Crusader
for Social Justice
lived here
1921-1922

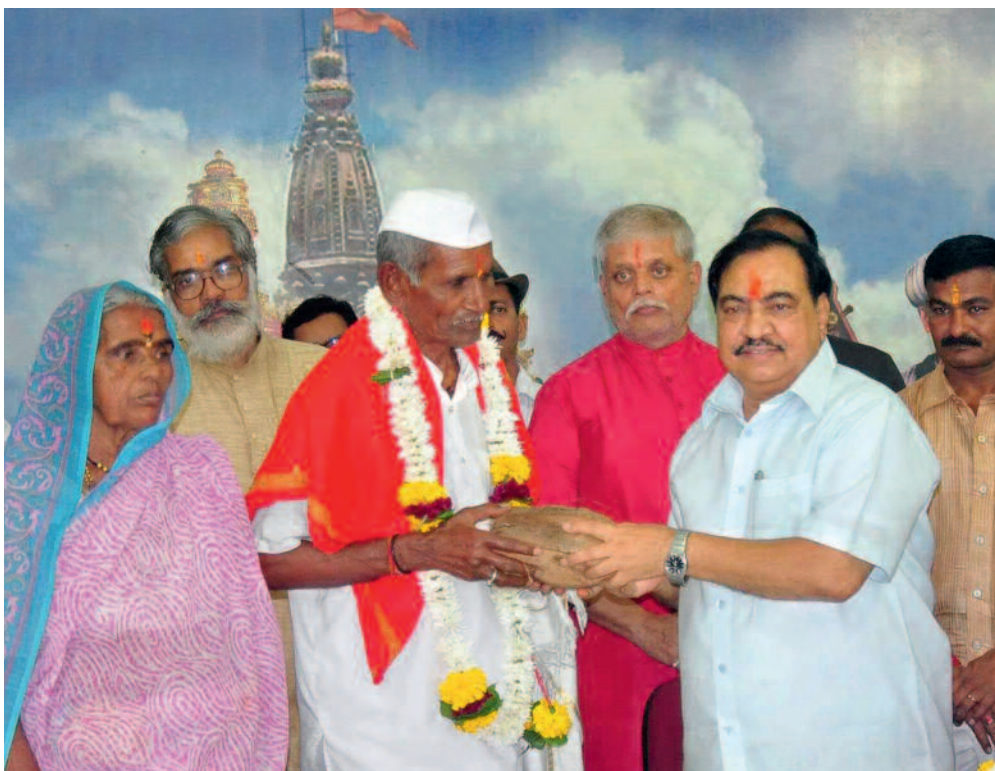




Minister for Revenue, Eknath Khadse with his wife and Warkari couple, Damodar Ratan Somase and Laxmibai Damodar Somase offer prayers at the official *puja* of Lord Vitthal-Rukmini in Pandharpur, Maharashtra

SEEKING LORD'S BLESSING

Minister for Revenue prays at Pandharpur for a drought-free, peaceful and prosperous Maharashtra



Minister for Revenue, Eknath Khadse performed a *puja* of Lord Vitthal and Rukmani on the occasion of Kartik Ekadashi at Pandharpur recently. The senior Cabinet Minister prayed to Lord Vitthal to make Maharashtra free from drought and attain peace and prosperity. The 85-year-old Warkari from Jaduwadi, Malegaon taluka, Nashik, Damodar Ratan Somase and his 78-year-old wife Laxmibai Damodar Somase performed the official *puja* with the Cabinet Minister. Thousands of devotees gathered in the holy city of Pandharpur on the auspicious occasion.



05

COVER STORY

TRIBUTE TO THE SOCIAL CRUSADER

Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to public the London house of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. The memorial is a tribute to the principal architect of Constitution of India and the leader who stood for equal rights



09

PANCHTEERTH

WHERE HISTORY WAS MADE

The five important places related to the life of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar have been declared as Panchteerth. A feature on the destinations



12

IN PERSON

CHANDRASHEKHAR BAWANKULE

Minister for Energy, New and Renewable Energy Resources in an interview talks about the work done by his department towards State's progress in past one year



14

SWACHHTA ABHIYAN

SUCCESS STORIES: SOLAPUR & NAGPUR

Solapur District Collector Tukaram Mundhe and Nagpur District Collector Sachin Kurve share the achievements of the mission in their districts



18

SPOTLIGHT

A NEW VISION FOR VIDARBHA

A multi-pronged strategy to transform the region and bring in socio-economic development covers agriculture, industries, infrastructure and tourism



24

YEAR ENDER

MAHARASHTRA 2015

A report on key developments in the State in past one year, from Chief Minister's foreign visits to Jayukta Shivar Yojana, Make in Maharashtra and Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan



30

INDUSTRY

DRIVEN BY MILL POWER

Government envisions development of Vidarbha as India's new textile hub; the textile park at Nandgaonpeth is the first step towards the vision



34

FORT

EXPLORING THE UNEXPLORED

Vidarbha is known for its historical land and hill forts. A visit to the forts to understand their history, architecture and the role they played



40

WANDERLUST

WHERE NATURE BECKONS

If you wish to get enchanted by nature's beauty, the wildlife, open meadows and grasslands, Pench National Park is where you need to head this winter vacation

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A TRIBUTE TO THE EPITOME

The month of November witnessed the historic moment of dedication of London house of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar to public by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at London. The house, where the great legend spent years during his studies in London was acquired by the State Government in August 2015. The Government of Maharashtra will now develop this as an international memorial. It will inspire students going for higher studies in London.

In October, while performing the foundation-laying ceremony of the memorial of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at Indu Mills, Mumbai, the Prime Minister had announced the five key places associated with the life of the social crusader and architect of the Constitution of India to be developed as Panchteerth. We include an exclusive article giving information of these places.

December is the month when State Assembly's winter session takes place at Nagpur.



The session is important from Vidarbha's point of view. The issue includes a special article on the various decisions taken by the Government for development of the region.

The Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan is becoming a huge success with the initiatives and awareness created by the State Government. Exemplary work has been done by many local bodies in the field. The issue has taken cognisance of excellent works done in Nagpur and Solapur under the Abhiyan. Such good works stand to be an inspiration for other districts.

To observe the accomplishments of State Government's one year in office, the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations took many initiatives. There were

special issues of *Lokrajya* Marathi and Urdu, *Maharashtra Ahead*, a booklet on one year of fulfilment of promises, booklets on all districts, tableaux and special programmes on *Dilkhulas* and *Jai Maharashtra*.

The award-giving ceremony of Best Journalism Award for the year 2014 was a special occasion. At the function, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis presented Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award to renowned columnist Padma Shri Muzaffar Hussain. Seventeen journalists were felicitated. The Chief Minister announced a new award from next year for journalists, who would work for creating awareness for Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan.

In other articles, we bring to you a jungle safari in Pench National Park, the rural folk theatre of *Khadi Gammat* and the amazing forts of Vidarbha. Enjoy the edition and let us know your feedback.

Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar

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



TRIBUTE TO SOCIAL CRUSADER

The Prime Minister having dedicated Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's London house as memorial to the public is a fitting tribute to the architect of Constitution of India who stood for social equality and fraternity



(From top) Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, M.P. Ramdas Athawale pay tributes to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at London

The London House of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar which will be transformed into an international memorial, was dedicated to people by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at London on November 14. This was indeed a historic moment and a tribute by the Maharashtra Government to the epitome of unity and brotherhood. Speaking on the occasion, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the country will progress on the principles of social equality and fraternity inscribed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in the Constitution of India.

The house where Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stayed while pursuing his studies at London was opened as memorial to public in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Minister for Social Justice Rajkumar Badole, Member of Parliament Ramdas Athawale, Former Minister Sulekha Kumbhare and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The moment the Prime Minister entered the historic house situated at King Henry Road, the atmosphere was filled with slogans of *Jai Bheem*. On the occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis paid tributes to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Prime Minister was

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said India will progress on the principles of social equality and fraternity inscribed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar



(Clockwise from top) Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Minister, Social Justice, Rajkumar Badole with a replica of Ashok Stambh; Prime Minister and Chief Minister look at the rare pictures related to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and the Prime Minister signs the visitors book at the London memorial

warmly welcomed by the Chief Minister on the occasion. The Prime Minister, while visiting the house got himself acquainted with the rare pictures and things of historic importance kept there. He not only minutely observed the objects, but also expressed his gratitude towards them.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that the principles of social justice and equality of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar will always inspire the world. On the occasion, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis penning down his feelings in the visitor's book kept at the memorial, mentioned that "this is a historic day, the house of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar where he stayed while pursuing education at London School of

Economics, has been opened as memorial to public by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The principles of social equality and fraternity given by Dr. Ambedkar through the Indian Constitution proved its importance for the development of the nation. I pay my humble tributes to the real son of *Bharat Mata* (son of soil), *Jai Bheem, Jai Bharat, Jai Maharashtra!*"

Earlier, during Prime Minister's visit for the foundation laying ceremony of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's memorial at Indu Mill in Mumbai, the Chief Minister had requested him to visit the London house. Having accepted the invitation, the Prime Minister included the programme in his London tour. The historic moment was witnessed by the entire world. [M](#)

THE INSPIRATION LIVES ON

Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was a jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who inspired a nation that was free, just and inclusive. He inspired the Modern Buddhist Movement and campaigned against social discrimination, says **Dr. Pradeep Aglave**



Freedom of mind is the real freedom. A person, whose mind is not free though he may not be in chains, is a slave, not a free man. One, whose mind is not free, though he may not be in prison, is a prisoner and not a free man. One whose mind is not free though alive, is no better than dead. Freedom of mind is the proof of one's existence. We must break the chains, once and forever.

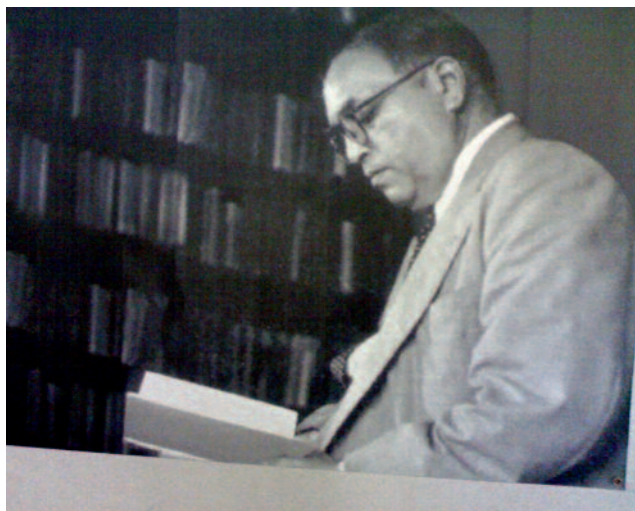
—DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR (1891-1956)

The rousing words of Bharat Ratna Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar encourage one to be free in thoughts and make a world that respects freedom of mind. Around 1947, when the golden words were said, the task was easier said than done in a country that was not only divided by castes and religions, but was also a captive for over 150 years. The scenario, however, did not deter the revolutionary driven by the agonies of his own life and the vast education he

acquired, to devise solutions to the problems people faced.

Born on April 14, 1891 to Bhimabai and Ramji Ambavadekar, an army officer stationed at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh, Bhimrao was from a lower caste and had limited rights in Indian society. The family was from the town of Ambavade, in Mandangad taluka of Ratnagiri district of modern-day Maharashtra. Bhimrao belonged to the poor, low Mahar (dalit) caste, which was treated as Untouchable and subjected to socio-economic discrimination. Although they attended school, Bhimrao and other Mahar children were segregated and given little attention or help by teachers. They were not allowed to sit inside the class and served water from someone of a higher caste from a height. It was this abject poverty and cruelty that led Bhimrao to begin his mission of changing the social, cultural and spiritual state of the backward.

Bhimrao's biggest weapon in the fight was his acumen and keenness to learn. Besides his extraordinary intellectual powers, he was gifted with an ambitious father, encouraging teachers, and a royal benefactor, all of which together helped him attend college in Bombay and then Columbia University, a first for anyone of his background. With his perseverance and grit, he raced through an MA and a Ph.D in anthropology and political economy, writing Masters and Doctoral. His feat sent him next to London School of Economics (LSE), where he began a second MA in 1916. In 1917, he was abruptly summoned back to India by the benefactor to repay the debt and work.



Coming back to India, unfortunately, brought back the same, insulting, caste-based incidents. Bhimrao was an Untouchable again. Upset and frustrated, he quit his job and went back to Bombay to rejoin his family. He was appointed as a professor of political economy at Sydenham College and soon saved enough money to go back to London to resume his studies. Between 1920 and 1923, he earned a second MA and a second PhD at the LSE, as well as a law degree from Gray's Inn in London. By late 1920s, the 32-year-old lawyer was called to the Bar. He started a practice at the Bombay High Court, began publishing his scholarly papers, was appointed professor at the Government Law College, was nominated to the Bombay Legislative Council, and ran journals and community organisation dealing with the rights of dalits. He also launched a series of agitations and campaigns to demand that dalits be allowed to access public goods such as drinking water from tanks and wells, to move freely and in a dignified manner, and be granted entry into sacred temples just like other Hindus.

In 1930, he led thousands of activists to the Kalaram Temple in Nashik, demanding access to the temple. In 1932, he reluctantly agreed to Mahatma Gandhi's plea to drop the

demand for a separate electorate for dalits, in what came to be called as the Poona Pact. From 1935 onwards, Dr. Ambedkar told his followers to find justice outside the folds of Hinduism.

CONSTITUTION AND BUDDHISM

In some years, India attained freedom from the British rule. On August 29, 1947, a resolution of Constituent Assembly appointed a Drafting Committee with seven members, including Dr. B.R. Ambedkar for preparing a draft of the Constitution of independent India. It is said when drafting of the Constitution of India was embarked upon, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel thought of inviting known constitutional expert, Sir Guor Jennings. When approached for advice in the matter, Mahatma Gandhi reported to have told them, why they should be looking for foreign experts when they had an eminent legal and constitutional expert in Dr. Ambedkar. The then Law Minister, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was appointed the chairman of the Drafting Committee.

The Constituent Assembly took two years 11 months and 18 days in framing the Constitution of India. It was adopted on November 26, 1949. The Constitution heralded an era of equality, social justice and practice of equity. Yet, turbulence,

trauma and inhuman practices persisted. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, therefore, thought of political isolation and demanded a separate preserve for Scheduled Castes. With an all-pervasive vision of socio-religious realities, he struck upon the path of Buddhism and ignited the spirit of men for the attainment of equality and liberty. In the 1950s, he travelled to many countries where Buddhism flourished. On October 14, 1956, less than two months before he died, he converted to Buddhism

with about 3.65 lakh of his followers in Nagpur.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's work on the uplift of the backward not only helped India, but struck a chord with backward societies all across the world. Presidents of the Buraku, a socially exploited community in Japan, came to India to study his philosophy to act on it back home. Janos Orsos, the president of the gypsy community in Hungary, Europe, was also inspired by the leader. Just like Karl Marx led a revolution in 1917 Russia, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar re-ignited Buddhism in India by embracing it. Not less than a religious leader for the dalits, every year lakhs of followers visit *Chaityabhoomi* on the death anniversary of their hero. The day, December 6, observed as Mahaparinirvan Din, sees lakhs of Ambedkar followers gather at Shivaji Park in Dadar, Mumbai. The mass gathering displays the inspiration and belief that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was. **M**

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WHERE HISTORY WAS MADE

The five important places related to the life of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar have been declared Panchteerth. **Dr. Dhanraj Dahat** pays a visit to the places



Ambedkar Monument,
Mhow, Madhya Pradesh

Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was a noted scholar, jurist and revolutionist apart from being the chief architect of the Constitution of India. The leader throughout his life fought for the rights of socially backward classes. In the year of 125th birth anniversary of the revolutionary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has resolved to develop the five places associated with the life and mission of the great leader. Termed Panchteerth by the Prime Minister, these places are Ambedkar Monument at Mhow, Madhya Pradesh, Ambavade village in Ratnagiri district, Dr. Ambedkar's residence in Delhi, the house where he stayed in London and the Indu Mill area in Mumbai.

AMBEDKAR MONUMENT, MHOW

Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar was born to Bhimabai and Ramji Maloji Sakpal on April 14, 1891 at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh. His ancestors had been serving the army of the British Empire, and his father served in the Indian Army at the Mhow

cantonment, rising to the rank of Subedar.

A memorial can be seen at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's birthplace, which has become a place of worship for Indians at large. The memorial is in the shape of a Buddhist stupa, built at a spot where his father's quarters used to be. Located by the Agra-Mumbai Road, it is a marvelous piece of architecture made of white marble with the statue of the great leader in the facade. It houses photographs and life history of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

AMBAVADE, RATNAGIRI

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's native village Ambavade holds significance in his life. Located in Mandangad taluka of Ratnagiri district, this is where a young Bhima was named as Ambedkar. His original surname Ambavadekar comes from this village. Researchers say that his father Subhedar Ramji admitted his son at the Government High School, Satara, Maharashtra (now known as Pratap Singh High School). His

surname was changed from Ambavadekar to Ambedkar with the recommendation and faith of Mahadev Ambedkar, a Deshastha Brahmin teacher, who believed in him.

What is interesting to note is that at the time when Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was heading to London for a round table conference, the same teacher handed over a letter of appreciation to Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, which he preserved with utmost care. In his later years, when Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had made a mark for himself in public life, the teacher went all the way to meet his favourite student at Damodar Hall in Mumbai. Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar not only received him with honour and gratitude, but also humbly bowed to him with utmost respect and humility.

ALIPUR ROAD, DELHI

Spread over three acres, the house at 26, Alipur Road, North Delhi, was the last home of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He occupied the bungalow on November 1, 1951. This is where he stayed while he was independent India's first Law Minister. Historians say, this is where he penned some of his famous works, including *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, *Buddha or Karl Marx* and *Revolution and Counter Revolution*. The meetings of Scheduled Caste Federation were also held at this residence. It was here that Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar passed away on December 6, 1956.

In 2012, the Union Government took a decision to convert Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's Delhi residence, where he breathed his last, into a memorial inspired by Buddhist architecture. It would house his memorabilia and a photo gallery covering all important aspects of his life and work. The construction of the memorial is in full swing.

KING HENRY'S ROAD, LONDON

A global personality, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar travelled the world for education and Buddhism. A place where he stayed for his higher education was London. In 1913, he was selected by the Gaikwad ruler to travel to the United States and enroll at Columbia University, at a scholarship of \$11.5 per month. Winning his degree and doctorate, he later travelled to London and enrolled at Gray's Inn and London School of Economics (LSE), to study law and prepare a doctoral thesis in economics.



Ambavade village,
Ratnagiri district



(From above) The inside view of the house at Alipur Road, Delhi, where Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar spent his years as the first Law Minister of India. The new memorial is being developed at the place.

The expiration of his scholarship the following year forced him to temporarily abandon his studies and return to India.

He was able to return to England in 1920 with the support of the Maharaja of Kolhapur, his Parsi friend and his own savings. By 1923 he completed a thesis, *The Problem of the Rupee*. He was awarded a D.Sc. by the University of London, and on finishing his law studies, he was simultaneously admitted to the British Bar as a barrister. On his way back to India, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar spent three months in Germany, where he studied further in economics at the University of Bonn. He was formally awarded a Ph.D by Columbia University on June 8, 1927. His third and fourth Doctorate (LL.D, Columbia, 1952 and LL.D., Osmania, 1953) were conferred honoris causa.

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's residence in London while pursuing D.Sc. at the LSE in 1921-22, a 2,050 sq. ft. property on King Henry's Road, is a three-storeyed building. The scholar wrote papers on economics during this period. In 2015, Government of Maharashtra decided to transform the house into an international memorial-cum-research centre. In November, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the memorial. On the occasion, the Chief Minister said, "Our Government has decided to award scholarship to two dalit students every year to study at the London School of Economics."



(From left) The house where Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stayed during his study at London will be converted into an international memorial dedicated to him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a visit to the memorial in London

The 125-year-old structure in London is likely to be redesigned as per the plans drawn by the State Government and in consultation with overseas authorities. The Chief Minister said, “Today, lot of works of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar remain under wraps. We would like people who tour London (foreigners and domestic) to visit the centre. It is our endeavour to make Dr. Ambedkar’s writings global.”

INDU MILL, MUMBAI

The Dadar area in Mumbai holds significance because of

the stay of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. His residence here is named Rajgriha. A *chaitya* was later built at the spot where Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar was laid to rest, giving it the name Chaityabhoomi. Millions of people from all over India visit this place every year on December 6, his death anniversary, to pay their homage and respect to the great leader.

The State Government has taken a decision to construct a memorial on the sprawling 2.50 lakh sq. ft. area. The memorial will cover about 7.4 hectares of Indu Mill land acquired from the National Textile Corporation. The *bhoomipoojan* of the memorial was done by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in October this year, in the presence of Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The memorial will have a 150-foot-tall statue of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and comprise a stupa, 140 feet in height and 110 m in circumference. There will be an Ashoka Chakra covering the structure and a *vipassana* (meditation) hall with a seating capacity of 13,000.

The State Government plans to build a grand memorial of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar with a stupa, auditorium, guest house, museum, library, garden and a parking lot at the Indu Mills area in Dadar, Mumbai

A section, named Gallery of Struggle, showcasing important events associated with the life and work of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar will also be part of the project. The memorial will also house an auditorium, a guest house, museum, library, a beautiful garden and a spacious parking area. The memorial, to be developed at a cost of over ₹400 crore in the city where the icon and architect of the Constitution lived for several years, is planned to be completed during the tenure of the present Government. [M](#)

(The writer is a Resource person at RTM Nagpur University, Department of Dr. Ambedkar Thoughts)



(From top) Prime Minister Narendra Modi performs *bhoomipoojan* at Indu Mill, Mumbai, and the model of the memorial

Maharashtra is the first State to announce a policy for non-conventional energy resources. Solar energy is being prioritised. Electrical Inspector is being shifted from PWD to Energy Department. The work for new thermal power generation sets at Koradi and Chandrapur is almost complete, and by the end of March 2016, more than 2,000 MW of electricity will be available to the State, shares **Chandrashekhar Bawankule**, Minister for Energy, New and Renewable Energy Resources, in an interview with **Vivek Joshi**. In past one year, his department has seen sanctions of additional power distribution projects of MSEDCCL. Pending electrical connections to agricultural pumps are set to be completed by end of March 2016. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. Share with us the key decisions taken by you as State's Energy Minister.

A. Energy is one of the most important departments in the State Ministry. Around 12 crore consumers from the State have been connected and the expectations from the Department have towered. I have prioritised justice for farmers, consumers and entrepreneurs. During the year, many important decisions have been taken. I made efforts towards reducing the electricity tariff for common people and was successful in reducing the rates by 35 paise per unit.

Q. It is believed that electricity generation has stalled due to unavailability of coal.

A. It is not true. With efforts made by Union Power Minister Piyush Goyal, sufficient coal is being made available through Eastern Coal Fields Ltd. A decision is being taken to invest Government capital in electricity generation projects to rejuvenate them so that electricity generated could be supplied to people. This will make



“MAHARASHTRA IS THE FIRST STATE TO ANNOUNCE A NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY RESOURCES POLICY”

available new electricity generation centres at lower costs.

Q. Please throw light on load-shedding in the State.

A. Electricity is not available in cases of technical faults, maintenance and repairs or when the bills are not paid. Otherwise, electricity is available 24x7 for household consumers.

Electricity can be provided for agricultural pumps only for eight hours according to an Act of the State Government. The reason for not supplying more than eight hours is due to restrictions placed on lifting ground water. A load-shedding-free State is not a dream any more for Maharashtra; it is a dream that is turning into reality.

“A LOAD SHEDDING-FREE STATE IS NOT A DREAM ANY MORE FOR MAHARASHTRA; IT IS DREAM THAT IS TURNING INTO REALITY”

Q. Electricity is important



for the State and its mega projects. What are your initiatives?

A. Make in Maharashtra is not just an agenda for the Chief Minister, but a mission close to heart and a priority for every member of the State Cabinet. It is not correct to say that the electricity rates are high for the State consumers. The common man is getting electricity at ₹3-4. This is the first time after 1999 that the electricity rates have dropped by 5.82 per cent. Consumers using 0-300 units per month will receive benefits of the same. Common consumers do not use 300 units per month, thus, will not have to pay higher rate of electricity.

A committee has been constituted to go into the question of provision of electricity to industries at lower rates. The committee is studying the topic and would present their report to the Government soon. To control pilferage and losses, feeder franchisee concept has been brought in.

Q. What are the steps taken for promotion of non-

conventional energy in the State?

A. Foreign investors have come forward to invest in solar projects. The Government will soon come out with a policy on it. On this, a Government technical establishment, Maharashtra Energy Development Authority is working with full force. We are making efforts to provide 5 lakh solar-based agricultural pumps to farmers in the State. The target for power generation from non-conventional energy sources has been set at 15,000 MW. Apart from solar, wind energy based, molasses-based, agro-residue based, small hydro-based and industrial waste-based projects are being set up.

“SOLAR POWER GENERATION SETS OF 1 KW TO 50 KW CAPACITIES WILL BE INSTALLED. USING SOLAR ENERGY FOR HOT WATER IS BEING MADE COMPULSORY”

Solar electricity generation sets—of 1 KW to 50 KW capacities—will be installed on top of the buildings and on land. Using solar energy for hot water is being made compulsory. Our policy for saving electrical energy is through use of LED lights in Municipal Councils and Municipal Corporation areas.

Q. As the Guardian Minister for Nagpur, what work have you done so far?

A. I got a religious tourism development project for Koradi at an expenditure of ₹431 crore. We were following up the project for many years. The Government has sanctioned ₹1,508 crore for rehabilitation of MIHAN. Lands for eminent institutes such as National Law University, AIIMS hospital, IIM and IIIT have been approved and sanctioned by the Government. Immediate help was provided to flood-hit people during last August. I took the matter up with New Delhi for restarting of District Central Co-operative Bank. Now, the bank will start shortly.

Development works in the city and district to the tune of ₹300 crore have been sanctioned under DPDC. Sanction for ₹65 crore for tribal and ₹132 crore for remedial measures for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been provided. My target for tanker-free district under Jalyukta Shivar Yojana is set for 2018 and most of the works have been completed. A decision has been taken to make all electrical lines underground in Nagpur City.

Maharashtra is first to announce a policy for non-conventional energy resources. Solar energy is being prioritised. The work for new thermal power generation sets at Koradi and Chandrapur is almost complete, and by the end of March 2016, more than 2,000 MW of electricity will be available to the State. Additional power distribution projects of MSEDCL have been sanctioned. All the pending electrical connections to agricultural pumps would be completed by March end. In my first year in the office, I have strived to see that the contribution of energy department is maximised in the progress of the State by working around 16-18 hours a day, and I shall continue to do so in the future. **M**

“We have left no stone **unturnd** for sanitation”



Government of Maharashtra launched Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan (Urban) on the lines of Centre's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Kurduwadi and Karmala Municipal Councils in Solapur district were the first cities to be declared open defecation free in the State under the programme. Solapur District Collector **Tukaram Mundhe**, in an interview with **Vijaykumar Sonawane**, talks about his team's initiatives that brought a huge difference in terms of sanitation in the district. Excerpts:

Q. How did you encourage people to give up open defecation?

A. Making citizens take up the habit of building and using toilets at homes and, in turn, helping the number of toilets in the cities increase was the first priority of Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. People opting for open defecation were acknowledged with music and roses early in the morning in a Gandhigiri style. At places where even this was not effective, photographs of people going for

open defecation were put up on boards. Later, students used to gather to question them about the practice. To keep the grounds free from defecation, we placed flood lights there. We provided public toilets. All these measures steadily brought ODF to seven Municipal Councils of Solapur, leaving Barshi and Pandharpur. The seven Municipal Councils—Kurduwadi, Karmala, Akalkot, Dudhni, Maindargi, Mangalwedha and Sangola—are now due for an inspection by a State-level committee.

Q. What were your plans for solid waste and how far has these been successful?

A. We collected waste from houses. From January 15, 2015, we decided the routes for Ghantagadi. Its timetable was placed on every square. We created awareness among citizens about giving the waste to these vehicles only. We removed all waste bins from the city and issued stern warning to people to not place any such bins anywhere in the city. We were, thus, able to collect 95 per cent solid waste of a city daily. On a public holiday, February 22, 2015, we ran a special campaign. About 36,000 people, our team, including Mayor, elected representatives, officers and staff, participated in the programme. Within six to seven hours, we had cleaned every office under the campaign. After the success of this campaign, we organised a campaign for Pandharpur City on April 12. Here, 11,000 people with our staff and officers participated. We lifted about 145 metric tonnes of waste from the city during the campaign.



We tried everything to make people give up the practice of open defecation. We gave them roses, took out processions and placed their photographs on boards



Q. How did you plan Ashadhi Fair?

A. Ashadhi Fair is an annual festival. This year, for safe celebrations, we used Ham Radio and a hotline for the first time. A brief on the fair was sent to the Chief Minister's Control Room in Mumbai daily. The IRS system was used for the first time. With cooperation from 52 departments, we built five points at the temple, Juni Peth, Navi Peth, Sant Peth and bus depot. All the incidents in the city were recorded at these points. Connectivity is a hassle during mega events. The hotline ensured communication between the officers throughout the

fair. The HAM radio was effective in a perimeter of 100 km around Pandharpur. The main centre was at Shingnapur.

Q. Tell us about the amenities.

A. We created facilities for sanitation and electricity at places where the palanquins were to arrive. Once the palanquins moved, we cleaned the area within just three hours. All the potholes on the roads were repaired. Drinking water and bore wells were provided. A toll free number in case of an emergency



A FUND SET UP FOR SWACHH MAHARASHTRA ABHIYAN

On the lines of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, a Swachh Maharashtra Kosh (cleanliness fund) will be set up for the implementation of Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan (Urban and Rural). The decision was taken by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at a recent Cabinet meeting. The Chief Minister will be the chairman of the fund, which will have other members including Minister for Water Supply and Cleanliness, Minister of State for Urban Development, Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Principal Secretary, Urban Development-1, and Secretary, Urban Development-2. The State Director of Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan will be the treasurer.

The Cabinet announcement came after it was realised that the allocation from Union and State Governments for the cleanliness mission would not be sufficient. The new fund aims to achieve the objective of improving cleanliness standards in rural and urban areas. The fund has been set up for managing contributions and corporate social responsibility funds towards the mission.

was set up. Temporary toilets were built at 65 acres in Pandharpur. The devotees, therefore, did not use river bank for defecation. This also avoided health-related issues. We placed bins for waste, created a dam in 90 days to avoid open defecation, and posted vigil groups. These made the city clean and, for the first time, the devotees did not come across the foul smell in river precincts.

Q. What would be your message to Solapur citizens?

A. We are in the 21st century and in an era of information and technology. While we use smart TV and smart phones, we cannot lag behind in case of sanitation. Every home with a smart TV and a smart phone must have an individual toilet. We can not only maintain health through this, but also build a smart taluka, a smart city and a smart and clean India. **M**



DHUDNI PATTERN OF CLEANLINESS

In Dhudni village of Akalkot taluka, the Municipal Council has set up 10 groups of Balveer. These groups have children below 14 years of age. The children ask the women of the village, "Our mother makes use of toilet, what about you? Do you make use of a toilet or go for open defecation."

The recurring question has caught the attention of women and created a need to have toilets. The children have been given T shirts by the Municipal Council, creating a different identity for them. With children asking such taxing questions, people have started to rethink about building toilets, helping the cause of the Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan.



WHAT IS SOLAPUR PATTERN?

- For making villages defecation free, there is a need for constructing toilets. Without public toilets, the idea would have not been transformed into reality. Hence emphasis was given to individual toilets.
- Government assistance is one component. With people now encouraged to make use of toilets, it is not important how much Government will give; in fact, important is the demand of the citizen.

People's participation was important for Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. It was made possible by creating awareness among citizens. The awareness led to greater participation and positive results for the mega cleanliness programme

defecation were clicked and displayed. With embarrassment, people start using toilets.

- People's participation was important for Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. Awareness led to greater participation and positive results for the mega cleanliness programme.

“Awareness leads to better results”

Nagpur District Collector **Sachin Kurve** shares with *Maharashtra Ahead* the experience and early achievements of Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan in the district



Movad Municipal Council has become the first in Vidarbha to attain freedom from open defecation. The Chief Officer and executives from the Council were felicitated by the Chief Minister on October 1.

Movad Municipal Council was established in 1867 and had an area of 52 hectares. The huge floods on July 30, 1991 had cost the city 204 lives. It was later rehabilitated at 665 hectares. Majority of its population is farmers. With 4,444 males and 4,333 females, the total population of the city is 8,777. Primary, secondary and higher education in the city is under the management of Municipal Council. The State

Government has implemented many welfare schemes at Movad Municipal Council. Under these, 307 constructions have been completed under small expenses sanitation scheme, 271 constructions have been completed under Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme and 68 constructions under Ramai Awas Gharkul scheme

for Scheduled Castes and Neo-Buddhists, taking the total to 646 constructions.



A survey for Swachh Maharashtra was undertaken to make people aware about hygiene and toilets in homes. The people responded enthusiastically to the appeal



RESPONSE TO APPEAL

A primary survey for Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan was undertaken during July and August this year. This is when the citizens were introduced to construction of toilets and made aware of hygiene and toilets in homes. The campaign was taken to each doorstep.

Generally, people are aware of the importance of cleanliness and sanitation, but due to lack of funds and guidance, they compromise on hygiene and opt for open defecation. Awareness, thus, becomes important.

Citizens came forward in response to Government's appeal and filled up the forms. The citizens who had applied online were invited to a Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan meeting for detailed information. The citizens who did not have toilets were given funds for the construction of toilets.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was implemented during





September and October 2015. Secondary school students participated in the activities. An essay competition was held and all Municipal Council staff participated in cleaning the areas, gaining participation from citizens. It was due to the cooperation from residents that Movad Municipal Council could achieve cleanliness in such a short period.

PROHIBITION OF PLASTIC

Sanitation is important for humankind. One of the reasons for dirtiness in urban cities is the unlimited use of plastic bags. Plastic bags need to be prohibited, not only for sanitation, but also for protection of environment. Movad Municipal Council took up the challenge and prohibited plastic bags. A meeting of traders and businessmen was organised to implement the initiative. A powerpoint presentation on the harmful effects of plastic was shown at public places, weekly markets and Navaratri festival. **M**

—As told to *Anil Thakare*



SANGLI GETS SANITATION AMBASSADORS

Our area has 30 houses. Every home has a toilet. However, I and my sister-in-law did not have a toilet in our house. We used to follow open defecation sometimes. We used to feel bad about it. The Gram Sevak once came and asked us why we were lagging behind? We took it to heart and decided that what may come, we shall have a toilet in our home. We ventured finally. The chain was placed with the goldsmith," says Sushila Bhimrao Dudhal.

Sushila Bhimrao Dudhal is educated up to seventh standard and is a resident of Dudhal near Dhulgaon, in Sangli. She is a widow. As a farm worker, she somehow manages the family that has two sons and a daughter. Her cousin sister-in-law is Rukmini Tukaram Dudhal. Educated up to fifth standard, she has two sons. The ladies felt bad that only their homes lacked toilets. Both were stressed that their children were defecating in the open. Finally, both of them dared and pledged their jewels with the goldsmith. Today, toilets are being constructed in their homes, and they are proud of this.

On the lines of Washim, now Sangli has ladies who have come forward to construct toilets by pledging jewels. Now both of them have been chosen as district's sanitation ambassadors. Besides Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, the State is implementing Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. The response to the programme has been praiseworthy in rural areas.

—*Samprada Beedkar*



MESSENGERS OF CLEANLINESS

Famous for its cool weather, Lonavala will soon be famous for its cleanliness as well. Lonavala Municipal Council is implementing Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan with full force, taking everyone along. The civic body has made its mind to clean the city to underline its eternal natural beauty.

One of the initiatives of the Municipal Council has been with school students. It has been observed that if children create awareness about any issue—such as sanitation and cleanliness—it first impacts their parents and eventually society. In Lonavala, a competition was organised for spreading awareness. In this, students from fifth to ninth standard participated class wise and appealed to people to not create mess, spit in public places and avoid use of plastics, among others. The competition led to awareness with the future leaders drawing attention to today's problem.

“THE REGION WILL EMERGE AS AGRO-INDUSTRIAL HOTSPOT OF MAHARASHTRA”

A multi-pronged strategy for socio-economic development of Vidarbha complete with agriculture, industries and infrastructure will transform the face of cotton belt, says **Shubhangi Khapre**

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has adopted a multi-pronged strategy for inclusive growth of Vidarbha by inter-linking three critical sectors of agriculture, industries and infrastructure. With the objective to transform the face of one of the most backward regions of Maharashtra, the State Government has taken many decisions.

In a major policy shift, Devendra Fadnavis in last one year took a decision to approach the problems of Vidarbha with clinical precision by diagnosing the root cause instead of providing mere cosmetic solutions confined to agriculture. The Government unveiled a five-year road map spelling out mega-projects with timeline to be pursued relentlessly for bringing in a change that would impact about 25 crore people across the region.

In the wake of recurring drought and hailstorm, all the Vidarbha (and Marathwada) districts prone to farmer suicides were brought under food security act, free electricity, health card and free education to students, both in schools and those pursuing professional courses in public and private colleges. Across the 14 districts where farmer suicides had taken place, the special package has provided relief and covered 68 lakh farmers. The farmers are provided wheat for ₹2 per kg and rice for ₹3 per kg. Every family is given 35 kg of food grains and each individual 5 kg.

Almost 47.28 lakh new electricity connections were provided to the farmers in these 14 districts in a year. The Chief Minister is confident that all the



(Clockwise from above) The cotton production in Vidarbha, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis meets farmers at the launch of the food security scheme and during a visit to Gosikhurd irrigation Project in Gondia district





THE KEY FEATURES

- Total crop loan allocated during 2014-15 was ₹34,200 crore. In Nagpur, Wardha and Buldhana, district banks have provided ₹380 crore with financial assistance from the Government.

- Farmers are provided wheat for ₹2 per kg and rice for ₹3 per kg. Every family is given 35 kg of foodgrains and each individual 5 kg.

- To avoid the children of farmers getting affected by the crisis and their education disturbed, the Government has declared free education for them in both school and colleges.

- To provide good healthcare in districts reeling under agrarian crisis, Rajiv Gandhi Jeevandayee Yojana has been provided.

- The State Government has set up Vasantnao Naik Shetkari Swabhiman Mission to tackle the grave issue of farmer suicides

pending electricity connections would be cleared by June 2016. To avoid the children of farmers being affected by the crisis and their education being disturbed, the Government has declared free education in both school and colleges. Students pursuing professional courses in private colleges have been given exemption from annual fees.

The Chief Minister, who has embarked on the challenging mission of “zero suicide” of farmers, believes sustained economy coupled with alternative mode of livelihood extended to farmers is the only way ahead to overcome the agro-crisis in Vidarbha. To begin with, the State Government has set up Vasantnao Naik Shetkari Swabhiman Mission to tackle the grave issue of farmer suicides. A farmer activist, Kishore Tiwari, who has worked in Vidarbha, has been appointed as director of the institute. The household where a farmer has committed suicide has been given priority in jobs in State Transport Department.

Ensuring that finance does not come in the way of providing relief to farmers, the total crop loan allocated during 2014-15 was ₹34,200 crore. In Nagpur, Wardha and Buldhana, district banks have provided ₹380 crore with financial assistance from the Government.

The Chief Minister has maintained that agriculture and irrigation cannot be pursued in isolation. He believes that reforms in irrigation in terms of decentralisation of power in planning and execution of projects will help in bringing more accountability in the system and boost agricultural growth. As a result, Vidarbha Irrigation Develop-





(From top) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at Samadhan Shibir at Nagpur, at a farmer's house in Vidarbha, and inaugurating Nagpur Metro and the model of the project



ment Corporation has been accorded powers to enforce and execute the project plans. It has also facilitated quick clearance in administrative approvals and decentralised transfer of officials in the irrigation department to expedite the works in the region and around.

To mitigate drought in the 14 affected districts, 132 irrigation projects were cleared. This would bring 2.19 lakh hectares of land under irrigation. On the issue of pending works, the projects with 70 to 75 per cent work done have been given highest priority in terms of administration and finance. It has been mandated to get all these projects completed within three years so that farmers can reap the benefits.

The State Government has taken a decision to make Vidarbha the new agro-hub housing 80 per cent spinning mills and textile parks of the State keeping in

mind the cotton cultivation here. The region, which also produces one third of country's oranges, is getting a makeover with advanced processing units that would generate new small-scale sectors and provide market to farmers.

The impetus on infrastructure includes road connectivity and industries. Devendra Fadnavis believes that Make in Maharashtra cannot become a reality without addressing the regional disparity in industrial and infrastructure sectors. A mega project worth ₹30,000 crore stretched over 800 km between Nagpur and Mumbai, Communication



Super Expressway has been approved. The project, which would drastically reduce the travel time between Nagpur–Mumbai to eight hours, would also lead to development along the highway. It promises motels, food courts and other hospitality services, generating 20,000 jobs. The work will complete in 2019. The development on MIHAN has surged ahead, as long-pending hurdles related to land acquisition and affordable power tariff have been resolved.

While tapping investments for Make in Maharashtra abroad, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis simultaneously worked on a tribal development plan. A pilot project has been undertaken in a remote village, Harisal in district Amravati. A digital village project will be pursued by Microsoft in Harisal, which is the epicentre of malnourishment in Maharashtra. The decision to promote agro-industries, manufacturing and service sector in Vidarbha is part of the strategy to address the crisis in rural Maharashtra.

In Nagpur, Reliance has decided to invest ₹6,500 crore for setting up an indigenous helicopter manufacturing unit. This would help generate 20,000 new jobs. CST Tyres has made investment worth ₹1,200 crore in Nagpur. MIPL has got a nod for setting up a chocolate manufacturing factory in Khed at an investment of ₹1,005 crore.

The business sectors are also linked to a farmer's produce. Since Vidarbha is the biggest cotton-cultivating centre of the nation, the Government has emphasised on textile and spinning mills. The

The work on the ambitious Nagpur Metro project in alliance with JETRO has already begun. The metro is expected to complete in 2018. There is also an MoU signed with CISCO to develop the orange city

THE KEY FEATURES

- To remove the backlog of agriculture pumps in Vidarbha and Marathwada, State Government has allocated ₹819 crore.

- A mega project worth ₹30,000 crore spread over 800 km between Nagpur and Mumbai, Communication Super Expressway has been approved.

- The two big cities of Nagpur and Amravati have been chosen for the ambitious Smart Cities project of the Union Government. Out of the 100 cities chosen for the programme, ten are from Maharashtra and two from Vidarbha.

- The three sanctioned railway projects of Wadsa–Desaiganj–Gadchiroli, Ahmednagar–Beed–Parli Vajinath and Wardha–Yavatmal–Nanded would bolster railway connectivity in Vidarbha and Marathwada.

- In Nagpur, Reliance plans to invest ₹6,500 crore for setting up an indigenous helicopter manufacturing unit.

farm-to-fashion policy has lead Amravati to become an international textile hub. At Nandgoanpeth MIDC, 500 hectares of land has got eight industries with an investment of up to ₹2,000 crore.

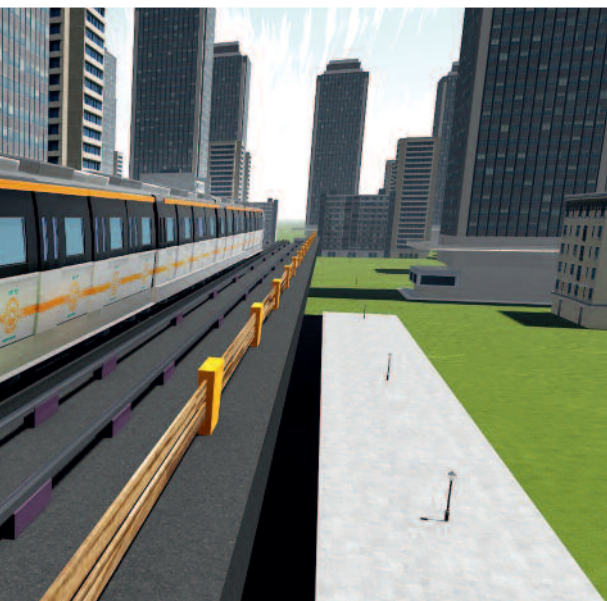
Under the mini-cluster development, micro, small and medium industries have been made provisions of ₹221.52 lakh. Up to 80 per cent of the subsidies in these projects have been extended in Akola, Amravati and Wardha. The same would apply to Osmanabad, Aurangabad, Paithan and Jalna of Marathwada.

State's first mobile social media lab has been set up in Chandrapur. E-chalan facilities have started in Nagpur rural police station. There is an effort to give Vidarbha a reckoning in the field of education. The Indian Institute of Management set up in Nagpur has already started its first batch from VNIT campus. The Indian Institute of Information Technology has got approval for Nagpur and Pune. The Nagpur institute will become operational from 2016-17. To avert failing students lose their academic year, policy changes in education has been done. It has enabled 1,07,27 failed students to reappear for tenth class examination.

The State Government has decided to promote tourism aggressively keeping in mind the socio-economic development of villagers in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli. It has decided to promote mines and mineral sector for the development of tribal belt in Gadchiroli. One-third revenue from these industries would be spent on development of the tribal region facing the Naxal menace.

A policy decision has been taken to minimise human–animal conflicts in wildlife buffer zone, which encompasses almost a third of Vidarbha. About 150 villages would be developed for which ₹40 crore has been sanctioned for 2015-16. Eco-samities have been set up in 23 villages in the forest areas. Other works include constructing two-lane roads in Gorewada–Katol road project and security walls along all water reservoirs upgraded in the forest. Allocation of ₹60 crore for promotion of bio-park, African safari and night safari with private investment has been done.

Under Tadoba tourism—to promote the reserve that houses maximum number of tigers and wildlife in Vidarbha—there will be more open buses running between Nagpur and Chandrapur. A buffer zone tourist circuit is being developed. To provide livelihood to tribals in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli, bamboo cultivation has been undertaken. To address region's social problems, after Wardha and Gadchiroli, the Government has imposed ban on liquor in Chandrapur. **M**





FROM SUN TO FARMS

With solar energy being seen as a consistent source of power, it could be a game changer for States who can make most of it. Maharashtra is on the job, says **Vikas Adhe**

To ensure that the farmers who solely depend on agriculture for their survival are not adversely affected due to lack of electrical connections, receive affordable electricity for their agri pumps and enjoy perennial freedom from payment of electricity bills, Government of Maharashtra is implementing a path-breaking project of installing 10,000 solar agri pumps under Atal Saur Krishi Pump Yojana. The scheme is being implemented in six farmers' suicide affected districts of Akola, Amravati, Washim, Buldhana, Yavatmal and Wardha.

(Clockwise from left)
Solar agriculture
pumps being installed
in Maharashtra

Electrical load shedding is needed due to the limitations on electricity generation and ever-increasing demand. Lack of required amount of electricity for agri pumps results in obstacles in irrigation. Even with water resources available in the wells, it is a common experience to see loss of crop due to lack of power.

With limitations on traditional power generation, adverse effects such as pollution and limited availability of mineral resources, the State Government has taken a decision to develop non-conventional energy sources such as solar



energy. This will make a perennial source of energy available in the State. Distribution of solar agri pumps to farmers on a grant basis is part of this initiative.

Under the scheme, the farmers will have to pay only 5 per cent of the amount of solar agri pumps. The supplier agency will be fully responsible for maintenance and repairs of the pump for five years from installation. These 3, 5 and 7.5 HP agri pumps will be installed in agricultural lands of farmers with area of 5 acres or less.

All the farmers in the State who have accrued benefits of wells under the crash irrigation scheme, those from extremely inaccessible areas, from villages which have not been electrified by traditional methods, areas where no objection certificate is not available from the Forest Department and farmers who have made payments to Maharashtra State Electricity

Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL) but cannot be provided connections due to technical difficulties will be covered under the new scheme. It is essential that the beneficiary owns the piece of land where the solar agri pump is to be installed and the well has enough water for irrigation. A district-level committee under the chairmanship of District Collector will select the beneficiaries.

Under the Atal Saur Krishi Pump Yojana, Akola district has been given the target of installing 1,000 solar agri pumps. The pumps will be given out by the district-level committee to the farmers, who do not have power connections. The 3 and 5 HP solar agri pumps will be of AC/DC version and 7.5 HP pumps will be of AC version. Thirty per cent of the cost of the pump will come

from Government of India, 5 per cent from State Government and 5 per cent from the beneficiary. The rest 60 per cent will be a loan to be repaid by the MSEDCL in installments.

The farmers will have to pay just 5 per cent amount for solar agri pumps under the scheme. The supplier agency will be fully responsible for maintenance and repairs of the pump for five years from installation

The MSEDCL has clarified that the burden of the loan will not be placed on the 7/12 extract of the farmers. Thus, the farmers will be free from loan burden. The vendors will be paid 60

per cent on installation and 40 per cent over a five-year period, with this being linked to parameters like the performance of the sets.

This State Government scheme will provide farmers permanent freedom from load shedding and electricity bills. They will accrue dual benefits, as they will receive pumps worth lakhs of rupees in a few thousand rupees.

The solar agri pump type, capacity (HP) and amount to be paid for getting the benefits of the scheme are as follows: 3 HP AC pump at ₹16,000, 3 HP DC pump at ₹20,250, 5 HP AC pump at ₹27,000, 5 HP DC pump at ₹33,750 and 7.5 HP AC pump at ₹36,000. The scheme will be implemented on first-come-first-serve basis. The farmers need to contact the nearest MSEDCL office for more information. **M**

—The writer is Public Relations Officer, MSEDCL, Akola Circle

THE KEY POINTS

- Government of Maharashtra is implementing a path-breaking project of installing 10,000 solar agri pumps in the State.

- Distribution of agri pumps to farmers on a grant basis is part of State's solar mission.

- The Centre will contribute 30 per cent, the State Government 5 per cent and the rest will come as a loan to be repaid by MSEDCL in installments.

- The scheme aims to be a solution of load shedding and electricity bills.

THE YEAR OF GLOBAL ACTION

Year 2015 for Maharashtra was a year of achievements not just at home, but internationally. A year for development, it saw successful implementation of many programmes such as Jalyukta Shivar Yojana, Make in Maharashtra and Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis positioned the State on world's map through his visits to Switzerland, Germany, USA, China and Japan attracting foreign investments in the State. Approvals for State's key infrastructure projects such as coastal road, Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway and extension of Mumbai Metro are other noteworthy developments. The purchase of London House where Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stayed while pursuing higher studies and success of Simhastha Kumbh Mela at Nashik-Trimbakeshwar are jewels in State's crown. **Team Maharashtra Ahead** lists the key events of the year

■ JANUARY 2015



INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS AT WORK

The 102nd session of Science Congress took place from January 3 to 7 in Mumbai. It had in attendance Nobel laureate, eminent scientists, research scholars and dignitaries like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Former President of India, Late Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. During the five action-packed days, the mega city saw over 12,000 delegates from all across the globe speaking on various subjects under this year's theme, Science and Technology for Human Development.

CYBER CRIME

Government of Maharashtra announced a cyber strategy to address cyber crime. The plan involves setting up an independent machinery to curb cyber crimes, training police personnel and employing latest equipment.

ON THE WATER TRAIL

The ambitious and dedicated water empowerment scheme, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan aims to provide villages with permanent



source of water by 2019. A need of the hour, the programme has been designed to free the State from recurring drought-like situation by utilising water from natural resources and recharging water reservoirs with rainwater every

year. The programme is being implemented in the drought-affected districts of Maharashtra.

AAPLE SARKAR CONNECTING PEOPLE

State Government launched Aaple Sarkar, an interactive portal and mobile application that connects the Government with people of the State. Monitored by the Chief Minister's Office, it is a platform



for citizens to participate in discussions on Maharashtra's development. The portal is part of Government's participative governance measures with the motto, Minimum Government—Maximum Governance.



into a global financial, commercial and entertainment hub. The Maharashtra Government launched the initiative with a potential to generate a revenue of \$50 billion. Maharashtra has huge areas where it can work upon to kick-start growth. Creation of new ports, industrial corridors and tourism are some of the key areas of development.

STATE GOVERNMENT COMPLETES 100 DAYS

The Maharashtra Government set ambitious goals upon completion of 100 days in office. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis underlined that his priority is to fast-track projects and assured of action and transparency. He shared that Chief Minister's Office will fast track all projects and the War Room will coordinate between agencies and remove bottlenecks.



PANDHARPUR WARI ON RAJPATH

Maharashtra grabbed attention of the Nation when its tableau won the first prize in this year's Republic Day parade. Themed on Pandharpur Wari, the tableau left the audience dancing and chanting Vitthal, Vitthal.

■ FEBRUARY 2015

FOR A BETTER, TRANSFORMED MUMBAI

Mumbai Next was the theme of the mega conference, Transforming MMR that aimed to transform Mumbai Metropolitan Region

MAHARASHTRA AT DAVOS

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis attended the World Economic Forum Meeting at Davos from January 24-26, 2015 in order to network with international business leaders and investors, and to speak with them about the new Make In India initiative and the Make In Maharashtra drive that the State aims to embark upon.



BEST JOURNALISM AWARD

Best Journalism Award and Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award were given for the year 2011, 2012 and 2013. With

the felicitation of three senior editors, participation of 45 talented journalists and their families, the ceremony was an occasion for the media fraternity to get together.

DEMISE OF R.R. PATIL

Former Deputy Chief Minister, Home Minister of Maharashtra and a creative, people-oriented, popular leader, R.R. Patil passed away on February 16 after a long battle with various ailments including cancer. He was 57.



AWARD TO PRABHA ATRE

Veteran classical vocalist Dr. Prabha Atre was felicitated with the prestigious Pt. Bhimsen Joshi Lifetime Achievement Award 2014. The award, instituted by State Government's Directorate of Cultural Affairs, carries a cash purse of ₹5 lakh, a memento and a citation.



■ MARCH 2015

LAND FOR DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR MEMORIAL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi



MAIDEN BUDGET OF THE STATE

The maiden annual budget of the Maharashtra Government, termed as "daring" by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, laid special focus on agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and decentralised industrial development. It was aimed at boosting the State economy and turning it around. The Budget emphasised on the growth of State economy, agriculture and irrigation. The Budget announced by Minister of Finance, Sudhir Mungantiwar had an outlay of ₹7,272 crore for water resources development with a resolve to complete 38 irrigation projects. An allocation of ₹1,000 crore was made for Jalayukta Shivar Abhiyan, ₹2,400 crore for rural development, and ₹970 crore for energisation of agricultural pump sets.



witnessed a tripartite agreement between Union Ministry of Textiles, Government of Maharashtra and National Textile Corporation, for transfer of 12 acres of land adjacent to *Chaityabhoomi* at the Indu Mills compound in Mumbai for the memorial of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar.

GIRGAUM CHOWPATTY TO BE RENAMED SWARAJ BHOOMI

The Maharashtra Government decided to rename Girgaum



Chowpatty beach as Swaraj Bhoomi as a tribute to freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, who was cremated at Girgaum Chowpatty area.

MAZI KANYA BHAGYASHREE

With an aim to prevent female foeticide and promote education among girls in the State, Government of Maharashtra launched Mazi Kanya Bhagyashree on International Women's Day, celebrated on March 8, in Mumbai.



■ APRIL 2015

PADMA AWARD TO NINE DIGNITARIES

Of the total 149 Padma Awards given this year, Maharashtra received a total of nine. Two Padma Vibhushan went to Hindi film legends, Dilip Kumar and Amitabh Bachchan, one Padma Bhushan to eminent scientist Dr. Vijay Bhatkar, and Padma Shri awards to renowned film director Sanjay Leela Bhansali, music composer Ravindra Jain, lyricist Prasoon Joshi, scientist Dr. Prahlada, vocalist Shekhar Sen and to Late Dawoodi Bohra leader Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin (posthumously). The awards were distributed at the Darbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi.



AKHIL BHARATIYA MARATHI SAHITYA SAMMELAN

The 88th All India Marathi Literary Conference took place in Ghuman, in Gurdaspur, Punjab. Collaborated and celebrated as its own by the Governments of Punjab and Maharashtra, the convention endorses the stay and spiritual journey of the 13th century reformist and Maharashtrian poet, Sant Namdev in Ghuman 700 years ago. The spiritual leader spent two decades in the fields of Punjab, composing hundreds of *abhangs*—praise-poems to the Lord Vitthal.

A HAND OF SUPPORT

The Government of Maharashtra needs a pat on the back for having streamlined the process of evacuating residents of Maharashtra stuck in tremor-hit Nepal and bringing them safely back to their homeland. The Government successfully contacted 1,000 tourists from Maharashtra and made arrangements to get them back.

NEMADE RECEIVES JNANPITH AWARD

Eminent Marathi litterateur, novelist, critic, poet, academic, a relentless advocate of the literary

TARAPOREVALA AQUARIUM RENOVATED

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the renovated Taraporevala aquarium, which has around 400 species of fish, including a few from China, Singapore and Malaysia. Set up at a cost of ₹8 lakh in 1951 at Charni Road in Mumbai, the aquarium houses about a hundred species of fish. The Chief Minister believes that with renovation and value additions, the aquarium stands to become an iconic landmark for not just Mumbai, but also India.



movements and leader of the post-1960s Little Magazine Movement, Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade



was conferred the Golden Jubilee Jnanpith Award at the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Dr. Nemade, 76,

was honoured with the highest literary award for his immense valuable literary contribution.

MAHARASHTRA BHUSHAN AWARD

Balwant Moreshwar Purandare, a historian, writer and theatre personality from Maharashtra, was selected for the Maharashtra Bhushan award. The historian's major works have contributed much to the cult of Maratha warrior king, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The 92-year-old author is known as Shiv Shahir because of his bestselling narrative *Raja Shiva Chhatrapati* and *Janata Raja*.



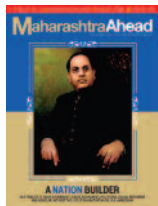
RIGHT TO SERVICES ACT

The Maharashtra Government approved an ordinance for the Maharashtra Guarantee of Public Services Act, popularly known as Right to Services, to improve transparency and delivery of services to citizens from the Government machinery. As per the ordinance, about 160 services will be covered under the Act in the first phase.

A TRIBUTE TO DR. BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR

The April issue of *Lokrajya*—dedicated to Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar—was released by Minister for Social Justice, Rajkumar Badole at Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Samajik Saptah held

at Gateway of India. The issue had special articles on the principal architect of Constitution of India, his life and contribution



SWACHH MAHARASHTRA MISSION

In May, Chief Minister administered seven vows to local body representatives and encouraged natives to make the State clean and green. He administered an oath of seven steps to cleanliness to all the Mayors, Presidents of Municipal Councils and administrative officers. Beginning with the local-body representatives working at the grassroots level in Konkan region, Devendra Fadnavis decided to carry out the exercise in Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and north Maharashtra in phases. He also linked the cleanliness drive to the Smart Cities Project, while encouraging the elected representatives to plan 25 years ahead and set the aim to clean their areas.

towards transforming India.

MAY 2015

MAHARASHTRA TURNS 55

On May 1, 1960, the State of Maharashtra came into existence and on May 2, 2015 it turned 55. The number one State of the country, Maharashtra has seen unprecedented growth in all spheres and across all its regions since its inception.

CHIEF MINISTER'S CHINA VISIT

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's delegation to China. The five-day-long forum saw discussions on various sub-



jects and agreements signed between the Asian nations. Aurangabad, in Maharashtra, and Dunhuang signed a sister cities agreement during the visit.

FIRST ONLINE LOKSHAHI DIN

This National Technology Day,

Maharashtra Government conducted the first-ever online Lokshahi Din, bringing solutions close to people. On the occasion, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis tried to address the problems of people from various districts of the State.

INTEGRATED TEXTILE PARK AT NADGAONPETH

Inaugurating the textile part at Nandgaonpeth in Amravati, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced to open integrated textile parks in eight cotton-rich districts of Maharashtra and encourage local private industrialists with financial assistance.



CENTRE'S SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched three ambitious social security schemes, relating to insurance and pension sector and intended at widening the process of financial inclusion. The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (accident insurance), Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana (life insurance) and Atal Pension Yojana were launched by Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley in Mumbai.

SAMADHAN SHIBIR AT NAGPUR

State's first Samadhan Shibir was organised at Mundle High School in South-West Nagpur. Chief Min-



MAHARASHTRA IN HANNOVER

To bolster the association between Maharashtra and Germany, the State leadership—Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Minister for Industries, Subhash Desai—led a delegation to Germany to attend Hannover Messe, Germany, world's largest industrial trade fair. The fair was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel.



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis called the initiative a platform where both administration and citizens come face to face to solve issues.

■ JUNE 2015

NEW IT AND ITeS POLICY LAUNCHED

The State Government launched a new Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology-enabled Services (ITES) policy, which aims to generate investments in the IT sector to the tune of ₹50,000 crore and generate employment for more than 10 lakh people in the State.



COASTAL ROAD PROJECT

Mumbai's coastal road project, expected to transform the city, got a green signal from the Centre, following Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' meeting with Union Minister of State for Environment and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi. A one-of-its-kind infrastructure project, it aims to decongest city's traffic and create 91 hectares of green spaces.

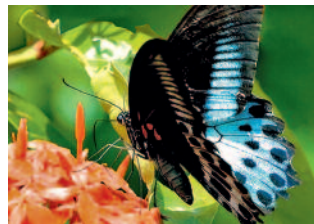


INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

Maharashtra joined the world in celebrating the first International Yoga Day. The United Nations declared June 21 to be observed as the day of yoga. The day saw nations across the globe stretching together for a good reason. The State observed the day with hundreds of events where people took part with zest.

MAHA HAS A STATE BUTTERFLY

The beautiful Blue Mormon became the official butterfly of the State. Maharashtra is home to



225 varieties of butterflies and accounts for 15 per cent of the country's estimated butterfly population.

MARATHI WORD BANK

Maharashtra Minister for Culture and Marathi Language Vinod Tawde released the 20th volume of Marathi Vishwakosh (encyclopedia) in Mumbai.

■ JULY 2015

SIMHASTHA KUMBH IN NASHIK-TRIMBAKESHWAR

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 on the occasion of Simhastha Kumbh Mela. The 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 crowd celebrating the hoisting of the holy flag. Dharma Dhwaja, at Kushavarta Teerth. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched the congregation at Trimbakeshwar.

MAHARASHTRA MEETS THE UNITED STATES

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 in New York. He successfully projected the State as a powerhouse and a great investment destination of India. The State managed to secure investments worth ₹8,000 crore that would generate 70,000 jobs in the State.

SMART CITIES MISSION

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



the State are Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Pune-Pimpri-Chinchwad, Amravati, Solapur, Nagpur, Kalyan-Dombivali, Aurangabad, Nashik and Thane.

IIM NAGPUR A REALITY

First of the six new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) that Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed last year was inaugurated by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Nagpur. It is the State's first IIM and is being mentored by IIM Ahmedabad.

DEMISE OF DR. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

Former President of India, a visionary, a renowned scientist and Bharat Ratna, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam left for heavenly abode on July 27 in Shillong after suffering a cardiac



arrest. The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly paid rich tributes to the former President.



MUMBAI-NAGPUR EXPRESSWAY

The Maharashtra Government announced an ambitious Communication Super Expressway



WORLD TIGER DAY

On July 29, the day celebrated as World Tiger Day, the State Government appealed to people of Maharashtra to come together for protection and conservation of forests and tiger. An exhibition on tiger was organised in Mumbai Mantralaya on August 4. The Tiger Protection Foundation had approved the appointment of actor Amitabh Bachchan as State's Ambassador for tiger conservation.

mega project between Mumbai and Nagpur worth ₹30,000 crore. It would connect all the three backward regions of Vidarbha, Marathwada and North Maharashtra.

■ AUGUST 2015

MAHARASHTRA BHUSHAN

The Maharashtra Government bestowed Maharashtra Bhushan, the State's highest honour, on eminent historian, writer and theatre personality, Babasaheb Purandare by Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao in Mumbai.

METRO POWER TO MUMBAI

The Government took a decision in the 138th annual meeting of MMRDA to sanction ₹35,400 crore for 118-km expansion of Metro network in Mumbai. This metro network will include Dahisar-Charkop-Bandra-Mankhurd Metro-2 corridor



(₹12,000 crore and 40 km), Wadala-Ghatkopar-Thane-Kasarvadavali Metro-4 via Wadala GPO and R.A.Kidwai Marg (₹12,000 crore and 40 km), Dahisar-E-Andheri-E-Bandra-E Metro-5 corridor (₹8,100 crore and 27 km) and Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road Metro-6 corridor (₹3,300 crore and 11 km).

LBT PARTIALLY ABOLISHED

The State Government abolished Local Body Tax (LBT) partially. The Urban Development Department

informed that from August 1, 2015, it would apply only to those dealers whose turnover would exceed ₹50 crore in a year.



JUSTICE M.L. TAHALIYANI BECOMES MAHA LOKAYUKTA

Justice Madanlal Laxmandas Tahaliyani, retired Judge of the Bombay High Court, sworn in as the new Lokayukta of Maharashtra.

LONDON MEMORIAL

The primary agreement of purchase of the London house, where Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stayed during his studies is completed. The deed of exchange by the State Government was completed with the owner, Douglas Millie. The London administration gave heritage status to the house.

TENDULKAR, THE AMBASSADOR

Cricket icon Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar will now bat to protect Maharashtra's lush green forests. In a letter to Maharashtra Finance and Forests Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar, he agreed to become the ambassador to protect forests of Maharashtra.



FOOD SECURITY SCHEME FOR FARMERS

Since August 15, Maharashtra has been providing foodgrains to the farmers of 14 drought-affected districts under National Food Security Scheme. To ensure that the producer of food for the entire world does not starve, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis took this important decision.

■ SEPTEMBER 2015

SANCTION FOR KOYNA-MUMBAI WATER LINKING PROJECT

The sixth meeting of Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers held in New Delhi gave an in-principle sanction for making a detailed project report of Koyna-Mumbai water-linking project. The meeting of interlinking of rivers was organised by Union Ministry of Water Resources at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi and chaired by Uma Bharati, Union Minister for Water Resources.

SECOND AND THIRD SHAHI SNAN

Second and third shahi snan of Simhashta Kumbh Mela took place at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. Thousands of seers, *mahants* and *sadhus* belonging to ten *akhadas* took a dip in holy river Godavari on the occasion.

MELGHAT CHOSEN FOR SMART VILLAGE PILOT PROJECT

A pilot project of Smart Village will be taken up in Harisal in Melghat, which will be digitally connected to improve healthcare. Technology can help eradicate malnutrition and build network and connectivity to provide better healthcare.



FIRST SHAHI SNAN

The first Shahi Snan of Simhashta Kumbh Mela at Nashik-Trimbakeshwar took place on August 29. Lakhs of devotees, including *mahants* of various *akhadas*, thronged the banks of Godavari for the holy dip. On the day of Shahi Snan, the royal processions of the three *akhadas* of the Vaishnava sect with *mahants* and *mahamandleshwars* atop vehicles, and flower-bedecked horses and camels, began from Laxminarayan Temple in Tapovan and reached Ramkund. At Trimbakeshwar, thousands of *sadhus* and *mahants* took royal bath at Kushavarta Teerth.



CHIEF MINISTER VISITS JAPAN

During the four-day visit to Japan, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis was able to effectively project Maharashtra's pre-eminence in attracting domestic and foreign direct investments to Japanese investors. In a bid to kick start Japanese investments, the State Government announced to have a one-stop shop to monitor all of its upcoming projects.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT TO PRABHAKAR JOG

Indian violinist and music composer Prabhakar Jog was felicitated with Lata Mangeshkar Award for Lifetime Achievement 2015, for his contribution to music. The award is a national-level award instituted to honour works in the field of music.



AMRUT SCHEME

Government of Maharashtra decides to implement Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and shortlists 43 cities for the same. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious project has provisions to upgrade 500 cities/towns between 2015 and 2019.

■ OCTOBER 2015

A BIKE RALLY FOR THE TIGERS
Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan and Finance Minister Sudhir



Mungantiwar flagged off a bike rally, covering four out of the six tiger reserves in the State, organised to support Government's Save Tiger programme. The seven-day rally passed through Melghat, Pench, Navegaon-Nagzira and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserves, with the bikers coming from the corporate sector.

SANITATION MILESTONES

Following the launch of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 2014, the State Government launched Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. The programme is being effectively implemented with provision of toilet facilities to all. In its first year, around 20 cities



achieved freedom from open defecation and had solid waste management in place.

■ NOVEMBER 2015

ATAL SAUR KRISHI PUMP YOJANA

Under the scheme, 10,000 solar-powered water pumps will be distributed to five lakh farmers in the State in the first phase. The Government plans to empower agriculture with solar power.



DR. AMBEDKAR'S LONDON HOUSE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Devendra



CONSTITUTION DAY

Maharashtra celebrated the Constitution Day on November 26. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis led over 1.25 lakh school children to recite the Preamble of the Constitution of India at a mass recitation programme organised by Ministry of Social Justice at Yashwant Stadium in Nagpur.

Fadnavis inaugurated Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's house in London during his study. The Government has decided to transform the house into an international memorial-cum-research centre.

ACCIDENT INSURANCE SCHEME FOR FARMERS

The Government of Maharashtra launches Gopinath Munde Accident Insurance Scheme for farmers in the State. The scheme, to be implemented from 2015-16, aims to provide social and economic security to farmers and their families.

MEMORIAL FOR BALASAHEB

A grand memorial of Late Balasaheb Thackeray, Shiv Sena Chief, will come up at the Mayor's bungalow at Shivaji Park, announced Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis on the third death anniversary of the State leader.



■ DECEMBER 2015 JOURNALISM AWARDS 2014

Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award for 2014 went to renowned columnist Padma Shri Muzaffar Hussain. The function hosted by Directorate General of Information and Public Relations awarded best performing journalists at State and Division level. A new award for journalists working towards spreading awareness on Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan was announced on the occasion.

NATURE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BOARD

The State plans to set up Maharashtra Nature Tourism Development Board to boost tourism in its 48 sanctuaries, six national parks and four reserved conservation areas. The board will be headquartered at Nagpur.



DRIVEN BY MILL POWER

With the mega textile park, the State Government plans to make Nandgaonpeth India's one-stop textile destination for investors, says **Chandragupta Amritkar**

Cotton has been regarded as amongst the top in the family of fibres, either natural or manmade, and is popularly known as the King of Fibres. In India, Maharashtra takes the lead in cotton cultivation. Vidarbha, which accounts for more than 35 to 40 per cent of the cotton cultivated in the country, has been facing the problem of lack of industries that could support cotton cultivators, unfortunately, resulting in numerous cases of suicide. But, the major crop of Maharashtra is finally getting its due.

With the recent inauguration of a mega textile park at Nandgaonpeth in Amravati—a major cotton-producing district—by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the State Government plans to make the location India's one-stop textile destination for investors. Led by the vision, the Maharashtra Textile Department and Industries

Department have become aggressive. This Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) initiated project will be a boon for investors, as they will have benefits of 10 per cent capital subsidy and up to seven per cent subsidy. It has seven-star facilities, including a common effluent treatment plant (CETP), and benefits such as an industrial promotion subsidy and stamp duty and electricity duty exemption incentives by the Industries Department.

The projects, which will be undertaken through public-private partnerships, are aimed at creating a textile township, which would have provisions for multiple activities—from processing to marketing—within the hub. According to Minister for Industries Subhash Desai, eight prominent industries have already started setting up their units in the Nandgaonpeth MIDC, which is bound

(Clockwise from left) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Minister for Industries Subhash Desai at Nandgaonpeth, women carrying cotton, a spinning mill and cotton plants in full bloom

to help local farmers get good price for their agriculture produce. These eight textile units, with an investment of ₹1,243 crore, will provide direct employment to 3,700 people.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has said that his Government gives special priority to providing irrigation facilities and setting up cotton-processing units in the region. “Jalyukta Shivar Yojana is a part of this endeavour. It is essential to create decentralised water storages and complete well-digging works. Unless irrigation facilities are created, a farmer’s life will not improve,” he said.

In another move that may give the much-needed push to Vidarbha’s cotton economy, four sick textile units—three from Mumbai and one from Solapur—will be shifted to Nandgaonpeth textile zone in Amravati. Devendra Fadnavis plans to shift nine more such sick units controlled by National Textile Corporation (NTC) to Vidarbha so



Eight prominent industries have already started setting up their units in the Nandgaonpeth MIDC, which is bound to help local farmers get good price for their agriculture produce. These eight textile units will be able to provide direct employment to 3,700 people.

—Subhash Desai
Minister for Industries



that the cotton grown in the region is processed in the region only and not shipped out. As per the Chief Minister, no textile mill will be allowed to close down; instead, it would be revived through relocation of the unit and its employees.

MORE TEXTILE PARKS

Government of Maharashtra has announced to set up textile parks in eight districts of the State. Beginning with Nandgaonpeth MIDC, similar parks will be set up at Yavatmal, Parbhani, Buldhana, Nanded, Beed, Jalna and Aurangabad. The cities have been selected on the basis of cotton production in last five years.

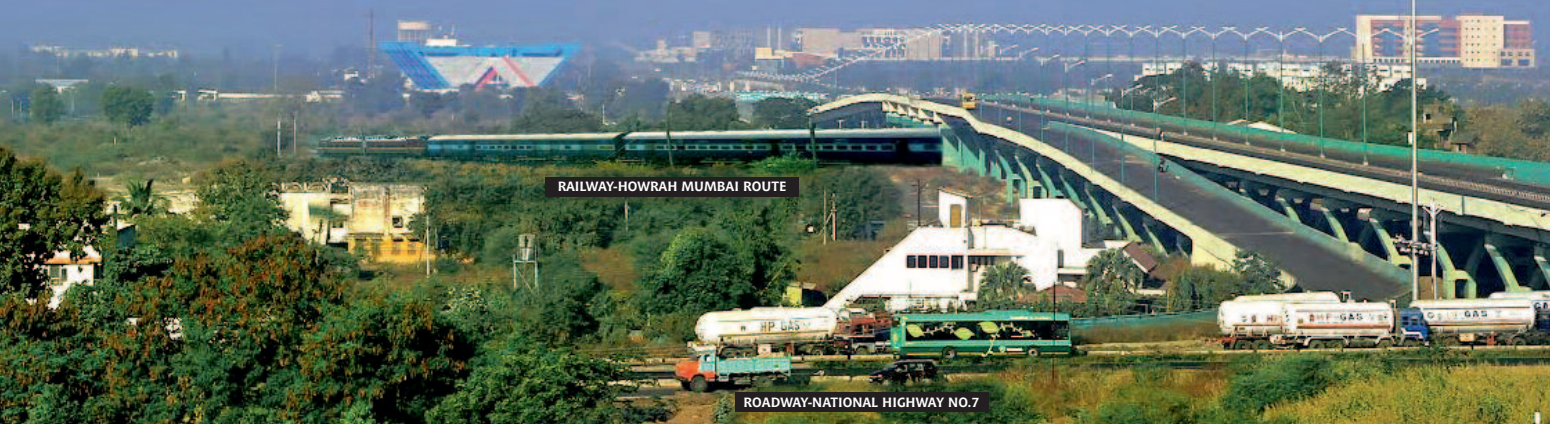
The State Government has also decided to provide financial aid to self-financing textile units to inspire them. It has been decided to set up integrated textile parks, wherein facilities such as electricity, roads, water, CETP, skill development training and processing will be provided.

In the long run, the Government plans to launch 50 more textile parks all over Maharashtra. A new textile policy is in the pipeline where there will be more and more incentives for the sector. Plans are afoot to revitalise the old spinning mills. The Government plans to set up a speciality textile park to promote organic cotton cultivation in the State. A first-of-its-kind project in the country, the project follows Government’s commitment to promote eco-friendly textile products. In the next five years, the Government foresees Maharashtra to become the textile hub of India. **M**



THE PRIDE OF VIDARBHA

With new investment to flow in, Infosys starting work on its project and TCS, Air India ventures on, MIHAN-SEZ is set to establish Nagpur on world's map, says **Sopan Pandharipande**



The Multimodal International Hub Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN) together with a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is the most ambitious project, which can transform the economy of Vidarbha. The project was initially planned in the year 2000 by Government of Maharashtra. The idea was to set up an international airport at Nagpur, which could handle passenger as well as cargo traffic and serve as a trans-shipment hub between Middle East and Hong Kong.

The concept had its genesis in the fact that as many as 400 international flights overfly Nagpur every day, and if MIHAN could attract half of them, it would provide a big boost to the aviation industry in Central India and revolutionise the economy of Vidarbha. The idea was later supported by Union Government by adding an SEZ to the MIHAN

complex. The GoM then formed a special purpose vehicle named Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) to act as a nodal agency for setting up MIHAN-SEZ. It was expected that when complete, the MIHAN-SEZ would bring in investment of close to \$500 million and provide jobs to over three lakh persons in the region.

The unique feature of MIHAN-SEZ is that it is just adjacent to the city of Nagpur, which is the geological centre of the country with air, rail and road access to all four corners of India. The entire project is spread over 4,200 hectares of land near the old Nagpur airport, which has an area of 1,300 hectares. Thus the total area covered by MIHAN-SEZ is about 5,500 hectares. Of these 2,100 hectares is dedicated to the SEZ.

The MADC has set up an excellent infrastructure consisting of a 240 MW captive power

(Clockwise from below)
Multimodal (three modes
of transport) MIHAN SEZ,
Central Facility Building of
MADC for MIHAN project
and bus stop and side
elevation view of Central
Facility Building



MADC has commissioned CONCOR for developing a full-fledged rail and road network and half a dozen property developers to build townships in MIHAN-SEZ for taking care of the housing needs of the people working in the complex

THE KEY FEATURES

- MIHAN-SEZ is just adjacent to Nagpur city, which is the geological centre of the country with air, rail and road access to all four corners of India.

- The total area covered by MIHAN-SEZ is about 5,500 hectares. Of these 2,100 hectares is dedicated to the SEZ.

- Eight companies have started commercial operations, and nearly 2,000 people are employed at MIHAN-SEZ.

- Anil Ambani's ADAG Group has lined up \$1 billion (₹6,500 crore) investment in defence production ventures in the MIHAN-SEZ.

- Aviation major Boeing Inc has also set up a maintenance, repairs and overhaul (MRO) facility for aircraft in the MIHAN-SEZ. Of these companies, TCS and Boeing have already begun their operations, while Infosys and Tech Mahindra have started civil construction of their projects.

plant for interrupted electricity supply, water treatment plant for clean drinking water, captive broadband network for faster Internet connectivity and a network of well-paved, four-lane roads that stretch up to nearly 65 km. The MADC has also commissioned Container Corporation of India (CONCOR) for developing a full-fledged rail and road network and half a dozen property developers to build townships in MIHAN-SEZ for taking care of the housing needs of the people working in the complex. India has nearly 600 SEZs, but nowhere the world-class infrastructure amenities like MIHAN-SEZ are available. That makes MIHAN-SEZ number one SEZ in the country.

Attracted by the world-class infrastructure, as many as 70 companies have acquired land in the MIHAN-SEZ. IT majors like TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, DLF and Cassandras have acquired

land here. Aviation major Boeing Inc has also set up a maintenance, repairs and overhaul (MRO) facility for aircraft in the MIHAN-SEZ. Of these companies, TCS and Boeing have already begun their operations, while Infosys and Tech Mahindra have started civil construction of their projects. As many as eight small companies have started commercial operations and close to 2,000 people are employed at MIHAN-SEZ.

However, compared to initial estimates, the progress of MIHAN-SEZ has been sluggish. The major reasons of this have been that MADC office is situated far away in Mumbai and for every petty decision entrepreneurs are required to visit Mumbai. Coupled with this, bureaucratic hurdles posed by complex rules have proved to be a major dampener for progress of the project.

Last year, the State got a young, dynamic and visionary Chief Minister in Devendra Fadnavis who decided to usher in changes to attract investments in the State. His first move was to cut down the number of clearances required for setting up industrial units. In past, as many as 76 clearances were required for setting up an industrial unit. Many of them were unnecessary and some had become redundant. Devendra Fadnavis did away with all these clearances and brought the number down to 26, providing ease of doing business.

The second step the Chief Minister took was to delegate powers to local officers to take decisions in local issues, sparing the head office of MADC for major decisions only. Thus entrepreneurs no longer are required to visit Mumbai for petty decisions, as they are resolved at Nagpur itself.

The third initiative was the forceful marketing of the MIHAN-SEZ wherever the Chief Minister went. As a member of Prime Minister's delegation to industrially developed countries, Devendra Fadnavis promoted Maharashtra, its manufacturing potential and trade belts in countries such as USA, Japan, the UK and China. The net effect of this marketing was that MIHAN-SEZ had started looking up and several new companies have decided to set up their units here. The most prominent among them is Anil Ambani's ADAG Group, which has lined up \$1 billion (₹6,500 crore) investment in defence production ventures in the MIHAN-SEZ. The company is planning to manufacture helicopters and aircraft for military and civil use. Chinese contract production major, Foxconn has also committed to invest \$5 billion in Maharashtra and efforts are on to divert major portion of this investment to the MIHAN-SEZ. **M**



EXPLORING THE UNEXPLORED

Vidarbha is known for its historical land and hill forts. **Dr. Sachin V. Joshi** writes on their history and architecture

Located on the north-east part of Maharashtra, Vidarbha is close to Satpura hill range. The range connects and divides the two States of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and is home for Bhilla and Gond communities. The hill range is in the northern region of Vidarbha, with Melghat forest, near Amaravati, at the southern end. Geographically divided into two parts, Eastern and Western Vidarbha, the region boasts of two different types of forts, land and hill forts. Ambagad, Tipagad, Bhivgad, Pratapgad, Manikgad, Surjagad, Rajoli, Mahurgad, Gawilgad, Narnala and Devgad are Vidarbha's eminent hill forts, while Umred, Nagardhan, Balapur, Aamner, Deolapar, Pawani and Ballarpur are the land forts seen here.

Devgad is the oldest fort built by Gond dynasty. The fort was a capital of the dynasty in medieval period. The prosperity

of Gond kings can be estimated by the magnificent construction of this fort. Structures such as gateways, bastions, palaces, religious structures and *nagarkhana* (music gallery) proudly stand inside the fort to date. These structures were built with stones and bricks, with lime as a cementing material.

Nagpur is the central place of Vidarbha and assumed to be its capital. Remains of a big land fort can still be seen in the military area at Nagpur near Sitabardi. These remains underline the struggle and achievements of Nagpurkar Bhosale. In 19th century, Mudhoji Bhosale (II), a descendant of Nagpurkar Bhosale, constructed a land fort at Sitabardi. Forty six bastions and eight gateways were built at the fort, with names given to each and every gateway. British officer Blackers prepared a map of the fort at the time of the attack on the fort in 1818. To date, the area of the fort can be identified only with the help of this map. The map showed many structures—old palace, new palace, citadel and well, among others—most of which were demolished during Nagpur's urbanisation at Nagpur.

Vairagad, Surajagad, Rajoli and Tipagad are the important forts located in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts in Vidarbha. With thick forest and Naxalite area around, it is not possible for one to visit the forts easily. Chandrapur, Ballarshah and Chandankheda are fortified cities, with Surajagad and Rajoli forts situated on the mountain. The zenith of the Surajagad fort is almost flat and



(Clockwise from below) A view of the Gavilgad Fort at Chikhaldara; Asadgarh Fort or Akola Fort, Ramtek Fort, Achalpur Fort and Narnala Fort are all a part and parcel of the various land and hill forts in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra built by the Gonds, Bahamani rulers and Nagpurkar Bhosle

has a temple of local God, Thakurdev. According to local historians, Surajagad was constructed by a warrior, Surjan Balavayak. The ruins of its structures such as fortification wall, gateways, religious structures and residential complexes are covered with thick forest today.

Tipagad is an important fort located 80 km away from Gadchiroli, surrounded by small hills. Its name comes from Gond language and means island. Gond king Puramshaha ruled it in 15th century. He captured the region around Chhattisgarh and constructed water tanks on the fort. Gond king, Karnshaha annexed the fort in 16th century.

Another historically important land fort in the region is Pawani. During an excavation by Department of Archaeology, evidences of early historic settlement and many antiquities such as shell bangles, beads and coins were recovered from the site. Pawani was also fortified in medieval period with bastions and gateways. Its main gateway is still in good condition and decorated with sculptures. The fort is surrounded by a moat filled with water. Today, its internal area is occupied by modern settlement.

Gawilgad and Narnala are two important hill forts located in the dense forest of Vidarbha. Their maximum height from

the base is about 450 m. Narnala fort is located near Akot and its base village is Shahanur. Two gateways were constructed to enter the fort. The climb starts from Shahanur and after crossing the five gateways, one can enter the fort. Every gateway of the fort has a name, such as Shahanur Darwaja, Mendha Darwaja and Mahakali Darwaja. Four water tanks

are located on the top of the fort. Sakkar talav is the largest tank here. The most interesting feature of the fort is Naugaji Tof, a huge cannon made from forge-welding technique in medieval period. According to historical text, *Gulshane Ibrahimi*, the fort was constructed in Bahamani period. The twin forts of Gawilgad and Narnala were built in Satpura to defend the kingdom against the enemy coming from north. Situated at a height of about

The topmost portion of Surajagad Fort is nearly flat and a temple of local god Thakurdev is seen on the plateau. It was built by a warrior named Surjan Balavayak

500 m, Gawilgad is located near Chikhaldara and was built by Bahamani king Ahmedshah in early 15th century. Five strong gateways can still be seen on the fort, decorated with sculptures such as elephant and lion. **M**

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

THE GOLDEN BAMBOO

To make Jalyukta Shivar Yojana further successful, golden bamboo can be used to avoid water getting carried away and erosion, says **Arun Patankar**

To provide perennial water for drinking and irrigation, Government of Maharashtra has been implementing Jalyukta Shivar Yojana on a huge scale. The programme aims at storing rainwater and absorbing the same in the soil to improve the groundwater level. The flagship scheme involves digging agricultural lakes, de-sedimentation of rivers, lakes, *nallahs* and streams and widening and deepening them, and constructing mud-barrages for the streams. Since the fertile soil often gets eroded due to floods and rains, the scheme controls erosion through cement dams. Considering these dams are expensive and not eco-friendly, it is advisable to construct mud-dams along water reservoirs.

An effective remedial measure, thus, is planting trees. Bamboo by far is the best among all trees when it comes to controlling soil erosion. Three species of bamboo are well known to hold the soil. Gray bamboo, also known as Henon, is one of these. The other is Sasa bamboo, which covers the soil with its leaves. Both are not available in the State. While Maharashtra also lacks the third species, Golden bamboo, due to its stunning beauty, the species is now widely planted in the State. Golden bamboo holds the soil with its thorny and horn-shaped roots and sub roots. Planting Golden bamboo on the periphery of water reservoirs can be extremely beneficial. Once the plantation is done, it continues to grow from 6-7 years to 40-50 years, and produces 10-15 bamboo every year on an average. The produce can enhance the income of farmers, as the crop is available to them.

KNOW THE GRASS

Around 125 years ago, botanists D. Brandis, R. S. Trup and J. S. Gamble conducted a detailed research on all the tree species under British rule and wrote a huge volume on bamboo. The book has details of 74 sub-species of bamboo from India. According to them, bamboo is a type of grass with height ranging from 4-6 inches to 130 feet. Most importantly, a lone plant rises from a shoot to tree and reaches its height in 40-50 years when is ready for cutting. Bamboo is not like this. Once the shoot

A UNIQUE PLANT

● The nomenclature of bamboo is also interesting. *Bambusa Nigra* means black bamboo. The name comes from the Latin word *nigra* for black. The species where the parts are lesser in diameter above and larger in diameter below are called Buddha's belly bamboo.

● Bamboo is a type of grass with height ranging from 4-6 inches to 130 feet. Once the shoot of the bamboo is planted, new shoots grow every year. Its shoot reaches natural height within just three months.

● A regenerative forest wealth, the plant creates 10-20 new bamboos every year for 40-50 years. it can be produced either from shoot or seed.

● Golden bamboo grafting is hugely successful and can be planted on a larger area. It is the most apt for social, urban and individual forestry



of the bamboo is planted, new shoots grow every year. After coming out of the soil, the bamboo shoot reaches its natural height within just three months. For example, if a Golden bamboo tree is more than 15 years old, a new shoot will reach its natural height of 30 feet/360 inches within 90 days.

The bamboo species that is seen growing on the banks of rivers and streams—known as *Katang* in Vidarbha and *Kala* in Western Maharashtra—is thorny and grows up to 100 feet within 100 days. The hardness, strength and breaking point of this bamboo is equal to mild steel. Once a tree is cut, the whole story ends. However, this does not happen for bamboo, as the species creates 10-20 new bamboos every year for 40-50 years; hence, it is a regenerative forest wealth. Bamboo can be produced either from shoot or seed. However, the species needs around 40-100 years for flowering and seeding.

A STUNNING SIGHT

Although bamboo blossoming filled with flowers is a stunning sight, it is also the death for the plant. However, before dying, the plant leaves innumerable number of seeds to generate bamboo plants. Sometimes in the jungles, the whole plot of land with bamboos is seen flowering, which means death in case of gregarious flowering. However, these bamboo species resorting to community suicide also leave behind millions of seeds. As the event happens just a few times in a century, the seeds of bamboo are rarely available. The other method is to replant the shoots during rainy season. However, most of the time, the shoots are hurt while taking out and re-plantation becomes unsuccessful.

The third method is grafting a part of bamboo plant in a trench and watering it constantly.



Commonly, very few of the species can be grafted in this fashion. Golden bamboo grafting is hugely successful and, therefore, it is possible to plant the same on a larger area. Golden bamboo is, thus, most appropriate for social, urban and individual forestry.

BENEFITS OF BAMBOO

Bamboo has many uses. Even today, there is an option for scaffolds for construction and repair of high-rise buildings. The *pandals* of Durga Pooja and Ganesh Festival also use bamboo. The wonder grass is used to make makeshift boats for helping people during floods. Some boats use bamboo masts. It is also used for creating window screens. Burud community still makes use of the plant for



(Clockwise from top)
Bamboo plantation,
the plant being used in
various household items
and as an object that
brings in luck



Bamboo
has many uses.
From homes in
earthquake-prone
areas to scaffolds
for constructing
high-rise
buildings, cuisine
and lifestyle
goods such as
furniture,
it can be seen
everywhere

making containers. Bamboo is used to make the walking stick and musical instrument flute.

In far-east countries of Japan, China, Vietnam, Cambodia, Korea, Indonesia, Taiwan and others, bamboo happens to be an important part of the social life. The earthquake-prone areas have houses made of bamboo. Rural areas in Assam, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura and others also have bamboo huts. The beautiful animal, panda's daily diet consists of leaves and shoots of bamboos. The bamboo pulp is the main source for making paper. The tender shoots of the plant are edible and used in soups and other eatables. Manipur produces aphrodisiac liquids from bamboo shoots. The hard eye between the parts of the bamboo plant, known as Vansh Lochan, is a known Ayurvedic medicine. **M**

—The writer is a retired IAS Officer



A BALLAD OF THE HINTERLAND

The folk theatre form of Khadi Gammat is both entertaining and enlightening. The ballad showcases people's stories while delivering a social message, says **Dr. Pramod Munghate**

Dandhar and Khadi Gammat are prime presentations in ancient folk art from Maharashtra. A heritage of Vidarbha, the latter is an independent folk dramatic form that has been entertaining and enlightening people from time immemorial. According to linguist and critic, Dr. Harichandra Borkar, Dandhar and Khadi Gammat have parallels and both are presented by masses. He cites a new theory that suggests that Dandhar was the prime folk drama in 12th century and was initially called Khari Gammat and later Khadi Gammat. In Western Maharashtra, under the Muslim rule, Khadi Gammat came to be known as *tamasha*. This might have happened before 700 years.

Khadi Gammat has its individual characteristics. The ballad writer or *shahir* pens dialogues and songs that capture emotions of people. The dialogues on contradiction in social transaction, conversation with pun, manifestation of mystic, deep and spiritual metaphors and instances from rural public life make the form culturally enriched and conscience based. Dramatic expressions of Radha, *Gopika*¹, Krishna,

(From left) The artists performing the folk theatre form of Khadi Gammat in Maharashtra

The ballad writer or shahir pens dialogues and songs that capture varied emotions such as aspiration, anger, greed and desire. Its people-oriented creativity and indigenous musical instruments make it different from others

*Mavashi*² and *Songadya*³ have breathed new life in the folk theatre. *Sutradhar*⁴, *nachya*⁵, *gamtya*⁶, *dholkya*⁷ and *chonkya*⁸ are other important constituents of the art form.

CHARACTERS OF KHADI GAMMAT

The *shahir* is a poet and an actor in a Khadi Gammat presentation. He is the one who is familiar with legends, myths, historical events and day-to-day happenings and has a grip on *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat*, folk literature and saint literature. Co-shahir is an associate of shahir and is there to continue the performance that shahir has left incomplete, increase the pitch of shahir's voice and give a break to his senior in a performance, by singing. Kashewar bhau Vishvanath, Kishor bhau Rajendra, Deorao bhau Vitthal, Vaman bhau Natthu, Sakharam bhau Namdeo are eminent pairs of shahir brothers.

Gamtya is the one who brings in humour. He wears a short *dhoti* and is an affable character. Spectators connect with him. When *gaulan*⁹ begins, *gamtya* transforms into *Mavashi* for a brief time.



She covers her head with the saree and makes fun of herself. *Gamtya* does not rely only on verbal humour, but also make use of gestures. He also performs the role of king's friend with humour.

The female character, *nachya* has received wide popularity in Khadi Gammat. He is a fair-looking male actor, dressed in nine yard attire, and someone who can express feminine emotions and feelings. *Dolkya* is the character who plays drum, the indigenous musical instrument. He responds to *shahir's* words, *gamtya's* jump and *nachya's* performance. *Chonkya* is the *tuntune* player. *Talkari* with cymbals in hands is another important character. The instrument currently used in the performance is clarinet. It helps to continue the rhythm created by *shahir*.

AN INSTRUMENTAL ROLE

In Khadi Gammat, often the one-tuned *dholki* is used. At each side of *dholki's* circumference are nine holes, and in them there is provision to tie small ropes. Tightening the small rope tunes the sound of *dholki* to crest and trough. Though *dholki* is important in the art, *daf* or *halgi* also hold conspicuous place. *Core daf* is octagonal or hexagonal. *Chang* is also a type of *daf* and is circular. *Halgi* is smaller than *daf*. Among them, smaller is *dafli* or *khanjeri*. The *shahir* has a *daf*. He plays on the *daf*, accompanied by the *dholak*, *tal* and *chonke*.

Tuntune or *chonka* is an instrument with

THE VARIOUS ATTRIBUTES

● Khadi Gammat is presented with narratives to highlight various social problems and Government schemes.

● In Western Maharashtra, under the Muslim rule, Khadi Gammat came to be known as *tamasha*. This might have happened before 700 years.

● *Gamtya* is the one who performs humour. He wears a short *dhoti* and is affable character.

● The female character, *nachya* has received wide popularity.

● Though *dholki* is important in the art, various types of *dafs* have been used named as *daf*, *halgi*, *chang* and *dholak*, etc.

specialties. It is also called *chaundak* and is made of a hollow cylindrical wooden box whose upper end is open. At the base of box, sheep's skin or monitor lizard's skin is used as a cover. From the base, two to two-and-half feet bamboo stalk is fixed. A string from the base is tied to a peg on bamboo's stalk at upper end. This string can be tighten or loosen to tune *dholki*.

In Marathi culture, as in other folk forms such as *bhajan* and *kirtan*, *tal* has a significant place in folk dramatic forms like *tamasha* and Khadi Gammat. *Tal* is the core indigenous musical instrument. Cymbal or *Jhanj* is comparatively bigger in size than *tal* or *manjira*, and both are made of brass. Clarinet is the modern form of *sarangi*, a stringed instrument. In the initial phase, clarinet was used in Tukadoji Maharaj's *bhajan*, but later became part of Khadi Gammat.

THE MESSAGE

The presentation of Khadi Gammat has two major divisions—exposition and denouncement. In exposition, *gan*, *gaulan* and prayer are presented, and in denouncement, *batavani*, *lavni*¹³, *powada*¹⁴ and *wag*¹⁵ or narrative from history legend are showcased. In the new form, Khadi Gammat is presented with narratives to highlight various social problems and Government schemes.

Khadi Gammat concludes with the prayer to the sun. From this standpoint, it has link with Vedic practice of salutation to the sun. In Bhandara and Gondia, there are performances of Khadi Gammat on wider scale, and in them, the folk artists from different castes, keeping aside their differences, come together to perform. The Government has given an impetus to Khadi Gammat to enlighten masses in the context of social issues. For survival of Khadi Gammat or any other folk art form, it is important that the new generation connects with it and is made conscious of indigenous cultural heritage. **M**

FOOTNOTES: 1. *Gopika*: cowherd's wife, 2. *Mavashi*: an elderly woman, 3. *Songadya*: the one who creates humour, 4. *Sutradhar*: narrator 5. *Nachya*: a female character performed by a male who dances, 6. *Gamtya*: one who performs mimicry, 7. *Dolkya*: one who beats drum, 8. *Chonkya*: the one who performs the one-stringed instrument, *tuntune*, 9. *Gaulan*: a presentation related to Krishna and cowherd's wives in Mathura, 10. *Patlya*: a thick and broad golden ornament, 11. *Tuntune*: a one-stringed indigenous musical instrument, 12. *Talkari*: one who plays *tal* cymbals are bigger than *tal* or *manjira*, 13. *Lavani*: a Maharashtrian folk dance form with romantic import and titillating gestures, in which the main dancer is accompanied by a group of dancers, 14. *Powada*: a ballad form with narrative content; folk, narrative song, and 15. *Wag*: dramatic dialogues in *tamasha*.

WHERE NATURE BECKONS

If you wish to get enchanted by nature's beauty, the wildlife, open meadows and grasslands, Pench National Park is where you need to head this winter vacation, says **Pallavi Singh**



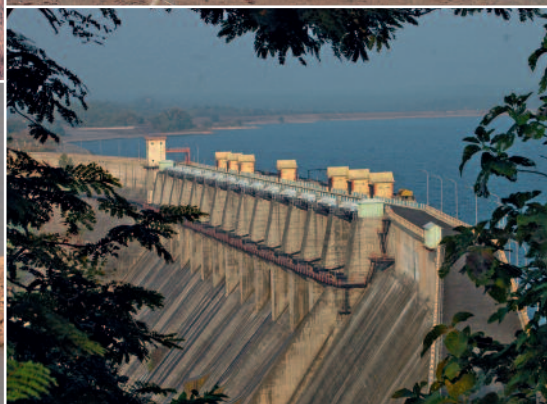
Sitting by the bay window as I sipped my cup of hot coffee while planning a holiday, my eyes fell on a poem by Bhawani Prasad Mishra, *Satpura ke ghane jungle, neend mein doobe hue se unghte, unmane jungle*. The beautiful lines transported me to a land of wilderness and a place where nature's bounty is at its best. Our family holiday destination was decided—Pench National Park.

Who can forget Mowgli, the pint-sized child and his adventures with Sher Khan and Bagheera of Rudyard Kipling's best-seller *Jungle Book*? Teaming with exotic wildlife, this land inspired the acclaimed author to pen his most famous work. Spread over an area of 750 sq km, Pench National Park—located on

the border of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, at a distance of 70 km from Nagpur—nestles in the lower southern reaches of the Satpura mountain range and is named after Pench river flowing through the park. The park lies between Chhindwara and Seoni districts of Madhya Pradesh, and in 1992 became India's 19th Project Tiger.

Days passed, bags got packed, goodie bags and accessories loaded, cameras and iPads in place, the family set out on an adventure-filled trip. Having left our cars behind, special open-topped vehicles took us to the tent houses located in a picturesque setting. Birds of varied hues flitted through the trees overhanging our rooftops, even as the monkeys chattered excitedly in the dense foliage.

(Clockwise from top) A captivating view of Pench National Park, a cheetah, peacock atop a tree, tent houses, water reservoir, migratory birds, tourists on a jungle safari and tiger, the star of the Park



The sounds of the jungle filter through the night, as you drift off to sleep to the distant yipping of jackal. Get ready to have a surprise visitor in the form of a sambar deer at your doorstep in the morning.

An early morning gypsy safari in the national park is a fun-filled activity. As you set out on your tiger trail through the dense forest, scanning the vast stretch of open meadows and grasslands, you are bound to come across herds of cheetal or the spotted deer, sambhar, langurs, barking deer, jackals, fox, chinkaras, wild dogs and hyenas, to name a few. Keep your ears open to hear the alarm calls of the jungle natives for they may announce the entry of Sher Khan when it is least expected.

A birding heaven, Pench is home to over 250 species of migratory and resident birds that include the beautiful Indian roller or the blue jay, Malabar pied hornbill and the grey-headed fishing eagle.

Take time to savour the beauty of the jungle—fawns suckling, baby langurs playing and tumbling over each other, *gaur* munching their way through the sal trees. There are peacocks everywhere, and bee-eaters and rollers, and if one looks carefully, owls sleeping through the day can be spotted in the nook of a branch.

You have the option of enjoying an elephant safari in Pench. Elephants have the ability to wander into non-motorable territory and surround the tigers, thus, enabling closer sightings of the forest's king.

Navigator

GETTING THERE

By Air: Nagpur is the nearest airport and has air links to Mumbai and Delhi. From Nagpur, drive to Khawasa (80 km) from where Pench's Touria gate is just 12 km away.

By Railway: The nearest railhead is Nagpur (92 km).

By Road: From Nagpur (80 km) and Jabalpur (190 km), one can drive on NH 7, and reach Khawasa, from where the park is just 12 km.

Pench was the co-star with a family of tigers in a BBC documentary that was filmed in the jungle and narrated by well-known English broadcaster and author Sir David Attenborough

This viewing on elephant back is called Tiger Show. The hour just before sunset is pure bliss. The light is perfect for photography; the air gradually gets cooler and all around you have the sights and sounds of the jungle.

Pench Jungle Camp, a clean and well-run camp, is a five-minute ride from the Touria Gate. It offers air-conditioned tents, a swimming pool and a pleasant garden for candle-lit dinners. The resident naturalist is happy to take you on nature walks. You can while away the afternoon break between the two game drives at the small library full of wildlife books and videos. There are mountain bikes and horses for adventure lovers.

Tiger is the obvious star of Pench, but bear and Indian wild dog, *dhole*, are also high on the list of any keen wildlife enthusiast. However, nothing can be as romantic as sleeping on open rooftop *machan* or covered platform and waking up to the chirping of birds and chatter of monkeys. The jungle's night noises follow you back to your tents along lantern-lit sawdust paths.

Remember to take binoculars, camera with the longest lens you have, water, identification books or animal and bird guidebooks, and a notebook to keep a game list when you travel to Pench. Carry loose and comfortable clothes apart from a hat, especially if you are travelling in summer. The best time to visit is October to February. **M**

CENTRE'S NOD TO MEGA PROJECTS

Chief Minister holds a string of meetings with Union Cabinet Ministers in Delhi to take forward State's ambitious projects such as Mumbai's coastal road and Pune Metro



(Clockwise from below) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in a meeting with Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Union Minister for Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation M. Venkaiah Naidu, Union Minister for Railways Suresh Prabhu and Union Minister for Environment Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi

The proposed mega projects of Maharashtra such as Mumbai's coastal road and Pune Metro have got approval from the Centre, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The Chief Minister had discussion with Union Minister for Urban Development, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, M. Venkaiah Naidu on Mumbai Metro, Pune Metro and Smart City. He said that approval will be given to Pune Metro Rail Project soon after the revised DPR from the State Government is submitted and clearance is granted.

The final notification for the coastal road project will be issued soon, said Union Minister for Environment, Prakash Javadekar in a meeting with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The Ministers had discussion on various projects, including the upcoming Mumbai Trans Harbour Link and the conservation of Western Ghats.

In other meetings, a special purpose vehicle will be established shortly to handle and speed up all pending railway projects across the State, said the Chief Minister after a meeting with Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu. The meeting had

discussions about Karad-Chiplun, Vaibhavwadi-Kolhapur, Ahmednagar-Beed-Parli and Lonand-Phaltan-Baramati routes. The work on Wadsa-Desaiganj-Gadchiroli route is expected to start by March 2016.

In 2014-15, the Railways commissioned 50 km of new tracks in the State. This is expected to go up to 127 km this year

In the current year, the Udhna-Jalgaon (86 km) doubling, Kasu-Roha (26 km), Godhani-Kolumna (6 km) and Hotgi-Tilati (9 km) are due to be commissioned. Union Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu suggested that nodal officers from the Ministry and the State Government meet every week to review the progress of the work.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis also met Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley over setting up a financial services centre in Mumbai. He said that financial services centres exist in many countries and one such centre can be created in Mumbai too. He said that a proposal will be submitted soon. **M**



ONLINE GOVERNMENT SERVICES NEED OF THE HOUR

Online Government services are the need of hour and can be made possible through Jan Dhan Aadhaar Mobile (JAM), expressed Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis at Delhi Economics Conclave 2015. The conclave was organised by Union Finance Ministry at Vigyan Bhawan. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis stressed the need of technology to bring greater connectivity with people across the country. He said through JAM, Government welfare schemes can reach the last person. So far, Government of Maharashtra has registered 1.25 crore bank accounts under Jan Dhan Yojana. Union Minister for Finance Arun Jaitley, Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh Dr. Raman Singh, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Chandrababu Naidu, Union Minister of State for Finance Dr. Jayant Sinha, Union Minister of State for Petroleum, Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister for Finance Sudhir Mungantiwar were present on the occasion.



MAHA AIMS INVESTMENT OF ₹5 LAKH CRORE; SCORES BIG AT IITF

In the next four years, Maharashtra aims to attract investment of ₹5 lakh crore and generate 20 lakh employment opportunities, expressed Subhash Desai, Minister for Industries, while inaugurating the Maharashtra Pavilion at India International Trade Fair 2015 (IITF) at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Minister of State for Industries Praveen Pote-Patil, Principal Secretary, Industries, Apurva Chandra, Resident Commissioner, Abha Shukla, Protocol Commissioner, Lokesh Chandra, and Director, Maharashtra State Small Scale Development Corporation, Shivaji Daund were present on the occasion. Speaking further, Subhash Desai said that during past one year, the State has taken many initiatives to boost the industrial sector. Conducive atmosphere has been created for investors.

During the year, investment of ₹80,000 crore has been made, generating 50,000 new employment opportunities. Favourable atmosphere has been generated for small scale industries. To boost small scale industries, ₹200 crore has been made available as capital through SIDBI, while ₹75 crore have been provided by Maharashtra Government.

The Government has reduced number of permissions to start industry to 25 now. The Government in past one year has taken 47 industry-related decisions. The work of Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor is in progress. For this, about 4 hectare land has been made available. Soon work of Shendra-Bidkin Industrial estate will start.

NATIONAL SERVICE SCHEME AWARDS

President Pranab Mukherjee conferred the Indira Gandhi National Service Scheme Awards for the year 2014-15 to individuals and organisations for their active role in tree plantation, blood donation and social awareness camps. The award is a recognition of outstanding contribution of the university NSS cells, programme officers, college and plus two NSS units and NSS volunteers to social service.

The awards were presented by the Ministry of Youth Welfare and Sports at Darbar Hall, Rashtrapati Bhavan on the occasion of the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Late Indira Gandhi. The winners included programme coordinators of five universities, programme officers of ten colleges and coordinators of 32 universities of India rendering excellent services through NSS. Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports (Independent Charge), Sarbananda Sonowal and Secretary Rajiv Gupta were present on the occasion.



3,839 KM STATE ROADS TO BE NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

The Ministry for Transport has given approval to 3,839 km of State highways to be widened and upgraded to National Highways. This will help in boosting development of tribal areas and pilgrimage places in the State. The highways chosen for the work include State highways of Marathwada, Vidarbha and Western Maharashtra. Maharashtra got the approval in a meeting held with Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways and Shipping, Nitin Gadkari and Maharashtra Minister for Public Works, Chandrakant Patil. Maharashtra Minister for Energy, Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Additional Chief Secretary, PWD, Anand Kulkarni, Secretary, P.G. Ganvir and Managing Director, MSRTC, R. Mopalwar were present on the occasion.

—**Dayanand Kamble**, Deputy Director, MIC, New Delhi

GRAND MEMORIAL OF BALASAHEB THACKERAY AT MUMBAI MAYOR'S BUNGALOW

A grand memorial for Balasaheb Thackeray, Shiv Sena Chief will be built at the Mayor's bungalow in Shivaji Park area, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Chief Minister said that a public trust under the State

Government will be set up to work out modalities for the memorial. The trust will be headed by Uddhav Thackeray and will include Chief Secretary and senior Government officials. With the help of trust, the framework of memorial will be prepared. With the construction of the memorial, the Government will try to form the State of his dreams and take the benefits of development to each citizen, added the Chief Minister.



MAHARASHTRA TO GET 50 DIGITAL VILLAGES BY 2016

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has said that the State will build 50 digital villages by the end of 2016. The Government's first such project is at Harisal in Melghat, where Microsoft will help the State.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was speaking at the Microsoft Future Unleashed Conference held in Mumbai recently. With the help of Microsoft's ICT-based smart project, the State Government will

create the first digital village at Harisal and overcome its problem of malnutrition. The Chief Minister said that the integration of technology will help enhance healthcare facilities, education, energy and other services in rural areas of the State. He also underlined the positive impact of the increasing number of Government e-platforms in the State that have simplified a lot of processes.

On the occasion, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella also discussed ways to empower the lives of billion-plus Indians with technology. He also shared how local data centres will allow businesses to expand in India.

GOPINATH MUNDE FARMERS ACCIDENT INSURANCE SCHEME LAUNCHED



The Government of Maharashtra has launched Gopinath Munde Accident Insurance Scheme for farmers in the State. The scheme aims to provide more social and economic security to farmers and their families. To be implemented from 2015-16, the scheme will bring each farmer ₹2 lakh annual insurance cover. The Government will

pay the premium of ₹27.25 crore for the scheme.

The accident insurance scheme will benefit 1.37 crore farmers in the 10-75 year age group. The term of the current scheme ends on November 30, 2015. The new scheme will cover farmers who are victim of accidental death and those left handicapped by road and rail accidents. Eventualities like snake bite, murder, electric shocks, scorpion bites, Naxal attacks, animal attacks and lightning strikes are also covered under the scheme. According to a Government circular, farmers whose names have been registered on 7/12 land extracts would be able to avail the benefit of the scheme.



MUMBAI, NOW SAFER AND SMARTER WITH CCTV SURVEILLANCE

Chief Minister of Maharashtra recently launched the first phase of Mumbai City Surveillance Project, covering south Mumbai from Colaba to Worli, where 1,381 cameras have been installed of over 6,000 CCTVs. The whole project will be completed by next year.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that CCTV network would

boost crime prevention, early response, detection, prosecution and conviction. The State Government's endeavour is to ensure optimum use of manpower with technological intervention for effective policing. "We plan to complete all the three phases before November 26, 2016. The entire city of Mumbai would be under digital camera surveillance," he added.

APJ ABDUL KALAM AMRUT YOJNA FOR TRIBAL AREAS OF THE STATE

Government of Maharashtra has approved a revised scheme, APJ Abdul Kalam Amrut Yojna for expecting and lactating women in the tribal areas of the State. The scheme will provide at least one full, nutritious meal to every pregnant lady and lactating mother. The scheme will benefit around 1.9 lakh women in the first year and will be implemented through Anganwadis. Each meal given is estimated to cost ₹22.

Under the scheme, a free,



nutritious meal would be served at the Anganwadis. The meal will include pulses, fruits, vegetables, rice and boiled eggs and milk on few occasions. The meals will be provided for six months beginning from a lady's third trimester of pregnancy to three months after delivery.

STATE NATURE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BOARD TO PROMOTE TOURISM

To promote nature tourism in the State, the Government has decided to set up Maharashtra Nature Tourism Board in forest areas to ensure protection of 48 sanctuaries, six national parks and four reserve forests.

The Board will ensure development of forests and natural resources in Maharashtra and tourism around these locations

The board will have regulatory and executive authority with its head office at Nagpur. Minister for Forests will be its Chairman and the Principal Chief Conservator (Forest Resource) as its Executive Chief.

The board will ensure development of natural resources and tourism facilities across the State. According to recent statistics, around 10 lakh people visit wildlife areas in the State annually. In last few years, people have been attracted to national parks, forests and sanctuaries.

QUALITY SERVICES AND SMART LEADERSHIP

To make Smart Cities a success, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has called for empowering Mayors to enable better performance. "If we want a Mayor to perform, it is important to empower one with enough powers," he said, while speaking on Smart Cities Project at Prabodhan Leaders Conclave 2015 in London.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that Smart Cities is not merely about technology, but about involving people and understanding their needs, and Maharashtra is moving in that direction. He also stressed on the importance of quality of life. "We have to create jobs, provide newer services and give better quality of life to people. We are building a new city, NAINA, which will be bigger than Mumbai," he said.

During an interaction with Chief Executive Officers, the Chief Minister assured that, while creating infrastructure, there won't be any hurdles in terms of land acquisition, and cited the Navi Mumbai model of development. The best use of services will definitely bring down the cost, which is the main objective. This will be achieved by the State Government by creating Smart Cities, he said. The Chief Minister further said that one needs to put water and power supply into smart grid to keep a count of every drop of water and every unit of power.

During the conclave, the Chief Minister interacted with the gathering on the subject of urban infrastructure, public-private partnership, powers of Mayor and new technologies.



ADITYA VIKRAM BIRLA AWARD TO PT. SHIV KUMAR SHARMA

Asserting that the city of Mumbai is not just the financial capital of India, but also the cultural capital of India, Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao expressed the need to create a 'culture dis-

trict' in Mumbai. "Such a district will serve as a democratic platform for artists and musicians from India and abroad, where they will be able to perform and showcase their talent," he added.

The Governor was speaking after presenting the Aditya Vikram Birla Kala Shikhar Award for Lifetime Achievement to santoor maestro Pandit Shiv Kumar Sharma in Mumbai. Director of Birla Group, Rajashree Birla and Honorary Secretary of Sangit Kala Kendra Lalit Daga were present on the occasion.

Mentioning that Mumbai has music corners in suburbs, the Governor said such platforms should be 'identified, supported and strengthened' to make them dynamic centres for propagation of art.

The Governor presented the Aditya Vikram Birla Kala Kiran Awards to Murad Ali Khan (sarangi) and Satyajit Talwalkar (tabla) and Special Jury Award to Sanjeev and Ashwani Shankar (both shehnai).

HOME TOILETS MUST FOR CONTESTING CIVIC POLLS IN STATE

In a welcome move, the State Government has made home toilets must for those willing to contest polls of Municipal Corporations, Councils and Panchayats by making suitable amendments to the Civic Acts pertaining to these. The initiative has already been implemented at

the village level for contesting local bodies elections.

On the lines of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan is being implemented in the State with the aim to make toilets available for each family and to do away with the practice of open defecation.

According to the 2011 census, the urban population of Maharashtra is around 5.8 crore comprising 1.8 crore families. Of these, around 8 per cent, i.e. 8.32 lakh fami-

lies are without toilets in their homes and need to be provided the same.

To end open defecation in cities, October 2, 2017, has been set up as deadline. For this, the Government has already initiated Mission Mode in 366 urban centres. For the success of the mission, cooperation of elected representatives is crucial. Hence, it is imperative that people's representatives must first have and make use of toilet facilities at their homes.



A MANUAL THAT HELPS ONE BECOME PROGRESSIVE

Maharashtra, by following the principles of Constitution, will emerge as the most progressive State in the country, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The Chief Minister said this while paying tribute to Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on the occasion of Constitution Day observed throughout the country on November 26.

Taking a pledge to commemorate the day, the Chief Minister said that the State Government has and will always be governed by the Constitution given to the nation by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. "He always strived for the socio-economic uplift of the oppressed and suppressed sections of society, and the Constitution laid the very foundation of social justice and equality. The Preamble of our Constitution gives direction to the nation on how democracy would ensure justice to the last human being," said Devendra Fadnavis.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister led over 1.25 lakh students from various schools to recite the Preamble of the Constitution at a mass recitation programme organised by the Ministry of Social Justice at Yashwant Stadium in



Nagpur. Minister for Social Justice Rajkumar Badole, Minister for Energy Chandrakant Bawankule, Minister of State for Social Justice Dilip Kamble and City Mayor Pravin Datke were also present.

RST Nagpur University's Vice-Chancellor Siddhartha Vinayak Kane and Registrar, Purnan Meshram presented a copy of the action plan of the varsity for the 125th birth anniversary celebrations of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar.

The Samvidhan Divas was observed all across Maharashtra on November 26 with public reading of the Preamble at Gov-

On the occasion of Constitution Day, the Chief Minister led over 1.25 lakh students from various schools of the State to recite the Preamble

ernment, semi-Government and educational institutions. The Constitution of India was adopted on this day in 1949 before it came into force on January 26, 1950. The day is being celebrated as Samvidhan Divas for the past several years in the State. In Mantralaya, Minister for State for Home, Dr. Ranjit Patil participated in a programme of public reading of the Preamble.

AWARDS GALORE FOR SCRIBES

The Best Journalism Awards 2014 ceremony saw laurels bestowed on journalists and the announcement of a draft bill to stop attacks on media being in the final stage



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Secretary, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar and Director General Chandrashekhar Oak during the Best Journalism Awards 2014 ceremony, in Mumbai

A draft bill to prevent attacks on journalists in Maharashtra is in the final stage. Speaking at the Best Journalism Awards ceremony 2014, honouring journalists from all across the State, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis said that the draft will come into final shape after discussions with various journalists' organisations. The function was organised by the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPR), Government of Maharashtra, at Sahyadri Guest House in Mumbai.

The Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award for 2014 was awarded to renowned columnist Padma Shri Muzaffar Hussain. The award comprises a shawl, coconut, scroll of honour and ₹1 lakh in cash. Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar, Secretary, DGIPR, Chandrashekhar Oak, Director General, DGIPR and Shivaji Mankar, Director, News and Public Relations, DGIPR, were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister said that besides implementation of an Act to prevent attacks on journalists, the State Government is considering pension schemes for scribes. Various Government

STATE-LEVEL AWARDS

- **Acharya Balshastrji Jambhekar Award (Marathi):** ₹51,000, memento and certificate: Jhanvi Vinod Patil, daily, *Tarun Bharat*, Ratnagiri
- **Anant Gopal Shevade Award (English):** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Ananya Dutt, daily, *Times of India*, Pune
- **Baburao Vishnu Paradkar (Hindi):** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Mukesh R. Sharma, daily, *Lokmat Samachar*, Gondia
- **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Award (Urdu):** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Sheikh Pyar Mohammed, evening daily, *Nanded Rahebar*, Nanded
- **Yashwantrao Chavan Award, Government Category (Marathi):** (DGIPR): ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Prashant

- Annadrao Satpute, Information Officer, Satara
- **P.L.Deshpande Best Story for Television Award:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Santosh Madhukar Lokhande, *Zee 24taas*, Buldhana
- **Tolaram Kukreja Best Newspaper Photographer Award:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Vidhyadhar Raghunath Rane, daily *Sakaal*, Mumbai
- **Keki Moose Best Photographer Award, Government Category:** (DGIPR): ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Vijay Vijaynath Appa Hokarne, Photographer, District Information Office, Nanded
- **Social Media Award:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Ashish Chandorkar, Chief Sub-Editor, *Maharashtra Times (Online)*, Pune

developmental works reach people through them. The Jalyukta Shivar Yojana became successful with the help of media. He also announced a new award for journalists, who would work for creating awareness for Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan from

“**Media plays a very important role in preventing wrong things in society, especially in administration by criticising them. There are many noble people in society as well as in administration doing constructive and positive work.**—**Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar**

next year. The Government will endeavour to include more and more scribes while signing new agreement for mediclaim, he said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis expressed happiness on presenting a separate award for social media category, which was declared last year. “Like the mainstream media, social media should also be responsible in its functioning,” the Chief Minister said.

The recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award, Muzaffar Hussain said, “I am indeed very proud to receive this award in

the name of a great personality like Lokmanya Tilak. Different languages make Maharashtra a rich State. For me, this award by Government of Maharashtra is a blessing of Mata Sarsawati.”



DIVISION-LEVEL AWARDS

- **Dadasaheb Potnis Award, Nashik Division:** ₹51,000 (of this ₹10,000 awarded by daily *Gavakar*), memento and certificate: Charusheela Subhash Kulkarni, Senior Reporter, daily, *Loksatta*, Nashik
- **Annatrao Bhalerao Award, Aurangabad Division (Including Latur):** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Hari Ramkrishna Tugavkar, daily *Sakaal*, Latur
- **Acharya Atre Award, Mumbai Division:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Sanjay Krishna Bapat, Special Correspondent, daily *Loksatta*, Mumbai
- **Nansaheb Parulekar Award, Pune Division:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Yogesh Sopan Borate, News Reporter, daily, *Maharashtra Times*, Pune
- **S.M. Paranjape Award-Konkan Division:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Dilip Shantaram Shinde, daily *Sakaal*, daily *Pudhari*, Thane
- **G.G. Jadhav Award-Kolhapur Division:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Indumati Ganesh (Suryavanshi), Reporter-Sub-Editor, daily *Lokmat*, Kolhapur
- **Loknayak Bapuji Anne Award-Amravati Division:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Harshnandan Suresh Wagh, Correspondent, daily, *Lokmat*, Buldhana
- **G.T. Madkholkar Award-Nagpur Division:** ₹41,000, memento and certificate: Praveen Shreeram Lonkar, daily *Maharashtra Times*, Nagpur

Speaking on the occasion, Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar said, “Media plays a very important role in preventing wrong things in society, especially in administration by criticising them. There are many noble people in society as well as in administration doing constructive and positive work. Media should cover these diligently. The awards for the year 2015 will be presented before May 1, 2016.”

Chandrashekhar Oak, Director General, DGIPR, said, “The function is organised to felicitate the journalists giving positive direction to society through constructive writings.”

The committee members for the evaluation of the Best Journalism Award 2014, Chandan Shirvare, Anurag Tripathi, Surendra Gangan and Deepak Bhatuse were felicitated on the occasion. Shivaji Mankar, Director, News and Public Relations proposed the vote of thanks. The programme was compered by Pradeep Bhide. M.L.A. Raj Purohit, Director, Administration, DGIPR, Devendra Bhujbal, senior journalists and various eminent people were also present. **M**

MAHANNEWS

The all-inclusive news portal

Mahanews is a news portal of Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPR), Government of Maharashtra. The portal has been carrying news on Government decisions, schemes, initiatives and programmes to the media and people of the State since 2008. Keeping up with the rise of social media, the portal has seen upgrades over the years. Today, Mahanews is useful to people and media while making efforts to increase people participation. With appropriate planning by DGIPR Secretary Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar, Director General Chandrashekhar Oak, Director

Devendra Bhujbal and Director Shivaji Mankar, the column ‘First step of fulfilling assurances’ has now become niche. With the Government implementing many people-oriented decisions, schemes and initiatives, the common man, farmer and agricultural labour all consider the Government as their own.

Information on Our Government, Service Guarantee Act, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan and success stories and waterlogged areas have been shown through photographs. Digital Maharashtra, LBT-free Maharashtra, 19 lakh tenements within five years, Shiv Arogya Seva, Indradhanush, Operation Kayapalat, Amrit Aahar, purchase of the house where Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar stayed in London during his study, Government’s decision to build a memorial of



MAHARASHTRA AHEAD

Special issue on Government's one year in office

On the occasion of Government's one year in office, special issues of *Lokrajya*, *Maharashtra Ahead* and *Lokrajya* (Urdu) for November 2015 were released by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at Sahyadri Guest House, Mumbai. A dialogue with the Chief Minister was

Special issues of DGIPR publications were released by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. A dialogue with Chief Minister was organised by Mantralaya Ani Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh

organised by Mantralaya Ani Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh.

On the occasion of completion of one year, all the Departments of Government of Maharashtra contributed columns by respective Ministers for the DGIPR publications, sharing the important decisions taken and work done over the past one year.

Director General, DGIPR, Chandreshkhar Oak, Media

Advisor to the Chief Minister, Ravikiran Deshmukh, President of the Mantralaya Ani Vidhimandal Vartahar Sangh Chandan Shirwale and Secretary Chandrakant Shinde were present with other office bearers at the launch of the special issue.



A TABLEAU BASED ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis gave a green signal to the tableau created by Nagpur-Amravati Division of DGIPR to celebrate Government's one year in the office. In the backdrop of the Kalidas Festival, a photo exhibition was held in the precincts of

Deshpande Auditorium, Nagpur.

The exhibition had relics from the six divisions of Nagpur and was inaugurated by the Chief Minister. Along with the exhibition, Nagpur District Information Officer, Anil Thakre created a pictorial informative tableau, where information on various schemes of the Government was shown through

LED lights. Guardian Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, M.L.A. Anil Sole, Divisional

Commissioner Anoop Kumar, District Collector Sachin Kurve, Director Mohan Rathod, District Information Officer Anil Thakre, Anil Gadekar, Manisha Savle, Vivek Khadse and others graced the occasion.

The pictorial, informative tableau from Nagpur carries information on various schemes of Government of Maharashtra launched in past one year

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar at Indu Mill compound in Mumbai were topics covered on the portal.

The State Government's decision to provide wheat at ₹2 per kg and rice at ₹3 per kg to 68 lakh farmers in the suicide-affected districts was publicised through articles in *Mahanews*.



With citizens confident of the welfare programmes, their participation in the projects has increased. On the occasion of completion of one year of the State Government, the DGIPR published a separate booklet for each district.

— **Dhondiram Arjun**

URDU LOKRAJYA

GHALIB AWARD TO DGIPR EDITOR



The coveted Ghalib Award from Ghalib Institute bestowed on an author with huge contribution to Urdu literature has gone to Aslam Parvez, Sub Editor, Urdu Lokrajya. The award carries a cash prize of ₹75,000 and has a certificate and memento. The award has been given for Aslam Parvez's special contribution to Urdu drama. The award will be given by Lt. Governor of Delhi, Najeeb Jung at the inauguration of International Ghalib Festival to be held in New Delhi.

A FIGHT AGAINST TERROR

Maharashtra shares with the world its security measures post 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks at Strong Cities Network, New York. A report



(Clockwise from top) Minister of State (Home) Dr. Ranjit Patil during the Strong Cities Network meeting organised by the United Nations in New York

All the major cities of the world are currently under the shadow of danger from terrorist organisations. Mumbai has already experienced the pangs of such an attack. In order that big cities of the world are ready to protect themselves from such attacks, an international meeting was held recently in New York. The Strong Cities Network (SCN) is a group of 25 cities of the world brought together on one platform by the United Nations to pool in their strategies to combat terrorism and violent extremism. The network was formally launched at the U.N. in a meeting held recently at New York and chaired by U.S. President Barack Obama. Mumbai was represented at the meeting by Minister of State (Home) Dr. Ranjit Patil.

During the meeting, Dr. Ranjit Patil shared with the audience Maharashtra Police's best practices to counter terrorism and violent extremism, including Force One, various successful strategies of Mumbai Police and Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS), Maharashtra, local functioning of Mohalla Committees and the proposed de-radicalisation strategies for peace-building among the citizens. On this international platform, he requested best practices in technical expertise of all the countries for the use

of modern technology, especially cyber security towards countering violent extremism.

President Obama, in his opening remarks at the summit, said the world faced "a grave challenge in the form of terrorism."

Active round the clock, the Force One squad of the Mumbai Police has been trained at a global level to counter any attack and protect common people

He predicted that terror groups like ISIS would lose the global battle because these have nothing to offer other than suffering and death. He said that terrorism cannot come to an end in one night. Everyone needs to toil day and night for it to happen. He announced the setting up of International Steering Committee of the SCN. Dr. Ranjit Patil was chosen as a member of the Committee.

To save the country from 'lone wolf attacks' and keep the intruders away, Dr. Ranjit Patil suggested to strengthen the mindset of citizens so that they do not fall prey to violent groups like ISIS. Sensitising the youth, building awareness among them, and educating, skilling and employing them are equally important, he added. [M](#)



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