

MaharashtraAhead

VOL.4 ISSUE 7 ■ JULY 2015 ■ ₹50 ■ PAGES 68

SPECIAL ISSUE



ON THE DIVINE ROUTE



सत्यमेव जयते
Government of
Maharashtra



**A distant dream now a reality
Taking Mumbai to new heights
Approval to Coastal Road by
Environment Ministry.**

Thank you,

Narendraji Modi,

Hon. Prime Minister

Prakashji Javdekar,

Minister of State for Environment
(Independent Charge)

Salient Features of the Project

- 34 km long coastal stretch to decongest Mumbai Traffic
- Along western line-Nariman Point to Kandivali
- Rs. 10 Thousand Crore estimated cost
- Project's estimated completion period within 5-6 years
- Opportunity to create 91 hectares of open and green spaces
- Project to have two undersea tunnels to avoid construction of road in congested area
- Inclusion of Promenades, gardens, playgrounds and public spaces
- To Transform Mumbai into Global City of Repute



Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister



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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar

MANAGING EDITOR

Chandrashekhar Oak

ASSIGNMENT EDITOR

Devendra Bhujbal

EDITOR

Kirti Pande

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Kriti Lalla

TEAM CO-ORDINATION

EDITING

Suresh Wandile

(Deputy Director)

ADMINISTRATION

Digamber Palve

(Sr. Assistant Director)

SALES AND CIRCULATION

Vilas Bodke

(Assistant Director)

MEDIA TRANSASIA

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Jyoti Verma

ASSISTANT EDITOR

Pallavi Singh

DEPUTY ART DIRECTOR

Sachin Jain

CHAIRMAN

J.S. Uberoi

PRESIDENT

Xavier Collaco

Maharashtra Ahead is printed on behalf of the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Government of Maharashtra, at KALA JYOTHI PROCESS PVT. LTD. Plot No.W-17 & W-18, MIDC, Talaja Industrial Area, Talaja-410 208, Navi Mumbai

Letters should be addressed to
Directorate General of Information and Public Relations,

New Administrative Building,
17th Floor, Opposite Mantralaya,
Mumbai-400032.

Email:

maharashtraahead.dgipr@gmail.com

Please visit the website

<http://dgipr.maharashtra.gov.in>

Directorate General of Information
and Public Relations

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A COLOSSAL ACT OF FAITH

In two weeks from now, planet *Brihaspati* (Jupiter in English), the sun and moon will be in *simha rashi* (Leo in English). This auspicious time is observed as Simhastha Kumbh on the banks of holy river Godavari at Trimbakeshwar in Nashik district of Maharashtra. One of the biggest congregations in the world, Kumbh celebrates an incident from the saga of *Sagar Manthan* of the duel between Gods and demons for the divine nectar of immortality, and the victory of good. This massive act of faith is held by rotation in Haridwar, Allahabad, Nashik and Ujjain.

This year, Maharashtra has the grand opportunity to welcome millions of devotees for the Simhastha Kumbh Mela. Nashik and Trimbakeshwar have undergone a remarkable makeover from new roads to better traffic arrangements, from strong security set-up to cleanliness drives. The State Government has left no stone unturned to organise a memorable, safe, secure

and green Kumbh. Our special issue on Simhastha Kumbh covers the many aspects of the congregation and the measures taken by the administration.

In our regular pages, we bring to you a feature on public participation in State's flagship scheme Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis recently visited a few villages in the State to review the success of the Abhiyan, which is now becoming a mass

movement. Looking at the massive response and participation, he now expects the efforts to lead to a sustainable water table in Maharashtra.

It was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who gave the clarion call of International Yoga Day at United Nations General Assembly in 2014. The first International Yoga Day was celebrated on June 21 this year with great enthusiasm.

Swachhatechi Saptapadi, after Mumbai, was observed at Nagpur, Kolhapur and Nashik. With the support of State Government and participation of local leadership, the dream of a clean and green Maharashtra is set to become a reality. The other interesting features in the edition are Samadhan Shibir, Yeola Paithani and Nashik Grapes.

We look forward to your feedback on the issue.

Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar

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





Scripting a success story

Government of Maharashtra is ready to welcome over one crore pilgrims—from Naga *sadhus* to tech-savvy GenNext—expected during Simhashta Kumbh, says Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis**



(From top) A view of Nashik and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis observes the preparations of Simhashta Kumbh in the district

The countdown for Simhashta Kumbh Mela at Nashik has begun, with the district dressed its best to play host to over a crore pilgrims expected from corners of India and outside. From naked, ash-covered, bare-footed Naga *sadhus* to hi-tech Generation Next corporate czars, *dhoti*-clad farmers from remote hamlets to hermits stepping out of their jungle abode once in 12 years—all will congregate along the banks of river Godavari for the auspicious bath during the holy Hindu festival organised from July 2015 to August 2016. The invocation of spirituality through this mass Hindu pilgrimage, where individuals seek salvation setting aside their personal chores and worries finds no parallel in world. Millions of people from diverse culture and community with a single purpose participate in the Kumbh Mela in a peaceful manner, chanting devotional songs of their respective deity, thus electrifying the atmosphere with divinity.

Unlike at Allahabad, where Kumbh has a notified area spread across 4,000 acres, Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Kumbh has just 300 acres. The Kumbh, in Allahabad, takes place at the outskirts of the city along the river bank, while, in Nashik, the mega congregation is organised in the heart of the main city around a narrow *kund*. It is the geography and location that make Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Kumbh more challenging for the administration, which has left no stone unturned to ensure the comfort of pilgrims. The State has undertaken preparations on war footing, spending ₹2,500 crore for the complete makeover of Nashik.

In Allahabad and Ujjain, Kumbh takes place during the



(From top) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Minister Girish Mahajan during a visit to Nashik to see Kumbh preparedness

winter season, while in Nashik, it coincides with the monsoon, throwing bigger challenges for the administration. As a result the Government with the district administration and local municipal corporation comprising 22 departments has rolled out a scientific plan, roping in the services of Union Ministry of Railway, Ministry of Urban Development, Public Works Department, Health Department, Ministry of Environment and others.

To begin with, for the first time, the State Government has notified additional 1,200 m of land for Nashik and 200 m of land for Trimbakeshwar, and has built three new river fronts or *ghats* for better crowd management during the packed days of the auspicious bath. Apart from physical infrastructure that includes one additional railway platform, there is better connectivity between the city and outside through round-the-clock buses for the pilgrims. Besides these 3,000 buses—helping 60 lakh people daily—there will be 1,000 additional buses from outside.

Apart from macro management, which is centred on infrastructure, water, power, roads and transport, micro planning to meet the nitty gritty of the mammoth festival has been painstakingly carried out. Notwithstanding the multiple agencies involved in the Kumbh project, the festival will see 16 activities well-coordinated among various departments and

sub-centres. There is a nodal system for effective coordination to ensure that no department works in isolation. It will be the responsibility of the Irrigation Department to monitor water levels at the bathing *ghats*. The Power Department needs to ensure sustained power supply. The Police will have to keep high vigil for security. The Traffic Department will ensure better crowd dispersal and availability of buses at regular intervals. The Railway Ministry has also pitched in with additional train services from across the country.

Essentially, the planning has been done in three stages—permanent infrastructure, temporary services and maintenance. The Sadhugram (centres for *sadhus* or holy persons) at Nashik will accommodate at least 2.5-3 lakh of people and at Trimbakeshwar about 10,000 people. The Public Works Department has ensured constructing 45 km of roads, 105 km through Nashik Municipal Corporation and 54 km through National Highway, and 17 km through Trimbakeshwar Municipal Corporation. The city also got two additional Ring Roads (1.5 km) and Nashik–Trimbakeshwar four lanes as part of the infrastructure expansion.



“In terms of security, three aspects have been taken into consideration—the possibility of a terrorist attack, floods and stampede. For each of these, there has been thorough planning”

various activities during the festival. The media and hi-tech gadgets are going to be handy tools to make the Mela a grand success. About 600 CCTV cameras have been installed across the Kumbh city. Lodging arrangements for pilgrims has also been organised at city hostels, dormitories and special rest rooms.

Security is going to be the most critical aspect for which 20,000 Police personnel will be deployed. There will be also Force One team and National Disaster Response Team. Three predictable aspects have been taken into consideration—the possibility of a terrorist attack, floods and stampede. For each of these, there has been thorough planning. **M**

—As told to **Shubhangi Khapre**, Senior Editor, Indian Express



“Planning and coordination will make the difference”

For a truly successful Simhashta Kumbh, not only the district administration at Nashik, but the entire State Administrative has been in action. After taking stock of the works at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar, **Swadheen Kshatriya**, Chief Secretary, Maharashtra speaks about the readiness of the administration. Excerpts:



Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya during his recent visit to Nashik

Held once every 12 years, Kumbh Mela is a celebration of eternal happiness for every devotee. Nashik is now ready to host the most ancient religious event. As devotees from all over the world pour into Nashik and Trimbakeshwar, the district and the State of Maharashtra will be closely watched by the world at large.

We regularly conduct Kumbh Mela review meetings at Mantralaya, to get updates on the status of various ongoing works. However, in order to get a first-hand review of the preparations from administrative point of view, I recently visited Trimbakeshwar and Nashik. Although the progress of Simhashta Kumbh is satisfactory, the

administration will have to be alert and must complete the works in time. On this count, the administrative machinery is shouldering the responsibility with proper coordination.

During my two-day visit to Nashik district, I inspected the work at Trimbakeshwar. Due to underground cabling in the Kushavarta area, special attention is being given to ensure that the city has proper power supply during night hours. I have issued instructions to the district administration to see that devotee routes are comfortable for movement and the information on the new *ghats* (river fronts) reach the devotees through various media. The work at Sadhugram has been satisfactory. Facilities for electricity, water, roads and other essential services have been made available. We have in place adequate drinking water and electricity and are further planning to manage the crowds. The work on Ahilya Ghat has been good.



“I am proud to say that the district administration has implemented innovative concepts in planning Simhashta Kumbh. The use of information technology is also commendable”

It is essential to maintain the water level at the *ghats* on important days during the Kumbh. The Municipal Corporation should be vigilant about the cleanliness of the river bed.

The benefits of administration's fine-tuned, micro-planning will be seen at the Simhashta Kumbh Mela. If this planning is further supported by standard operating procedures, the outcome will further get better. Issuing of identity cards to the volunteers training for Kumbh Mela can help in traffic and crowd management. Movement of devotees need to be made easy so that senior citizens do not face any inconvenience.

The residents of Nashik have joined hands with the administration and implemented a cleanliness movement. This is an excellent initiative. With thousands of citizens coming together,

Nashik is set to become more beautiful. The move also proves that Nashik and its people are ready to welcome the millions of Kumbh Mela devotees. After witnessing the status of various works, I am proud to say that the district administration has implemented innovative concepts in planning the Simhashta Kumbh. The use of information technology is also commendable. A good team has been formed under duty-bound officers, who are confident of the event's success. I would like to offer my best wishes to them and the residents for a successful Kumbh Mela. **M**

—As told to **Ajay Jadhav**



Guardian Minister of Nashik, Girish Mahajan oversees the arrangements

“Kumbh Mela will establish Nashik globally”

In conversation with *Maharashtra Ahead*, **Girish Mahajan**, Guardian Minister, Nashik and Minister for Simhastha Kumbh Mela, shares details of the mega event. Excerpts:

Nashik is industrially developed and is a land of sacred hymns. For centuries, the land has preserved tradition and culture, while soaring high in industrial development. An eminent symbol of its cultural opulence has been the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, whose grandeur stands to establish Nashik–Trimbakeshwar globally and propagate a message of integrity, spirituality and universal peace.

While Nashik has its significance as a land blessed by the sacred stay of Lord Ram, Trimbakeshwar is identified as the origin of river Godavari and as an abode of one of the 12 *gyotirlings* (symbols of Lord Shiva’s radiance) in India. Great saint Nivruttinath went into a *samadhi* at Nashik. This year, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis gave me a huge challenge of organising the Simhastha Kumbh and an equally huge honour of serving saints, sages and devotees arriving in the district during the Mela.

The celebrations beginning July 14 will continue till August 11, 2016. This year, the devotees can take a holy dip on three major occasions during the months of August and September. The district administration has completed all arrangements to facilitate the pilgrims on these occasions. An amount of ₹ 2,378

crore has been spent on various development works. While Kumbh Mela is an event of faith, it would not be out of place to say that it is an occasion for development for Nashik and Trimbakeshwar, as many permanent developmental works are being carried out.

Many facilities have been developed in Nashik for the Kumbh Mela. *Sadhugram* has been developed on an area of 300 acres at Nashik and on an area of 17 acres at Trimbakeshwar. Seven new *ghats* (river fronts) at Nashik and three at Trimbakeshwar will facilitate the devotees. A special feature is *Bhavikgram*, a shelter shed for devotees. Special care is being taken to provide the devotees adequate water, transport and healthcare. From security point of view, CCTV and centralised public address systems are being put in place.

The administration has gone for micro-planning while creating every facility. Special emphasis has been laid on disaster management so as to avoid any mishap. Everyone part of the planning team is being trained. The routes to various *ghats* have been designated. The administration is keeping no stone unturned, as planning excellence can only make this colossal event successful.



The Green Kumbh initiative is an interesting element of this Kumbh Mela. The initiative aims to create a clean, green identity for Nashik district at the global level. Emphasis is being laid on cleanliness of the area”

Under the Green Kumbh initiative, special emphasis is being laid on aspects such as stalling river pollution levels, prohibition on plastics and cleanliness of the area. People of Nashik and Trimbakeshwar have participated in Godavari Cleanliness Campaign and cleared 375 tonnes of waste within few hours. Government offices, NGOs and citizens also participated in the campaign. Backed by such initiatives, the devotees are set to witness a clean and beautiful Nashik and carry the message of environment preservation everywhere.

Kumbh Mela is also an important tourism event. People from across the world are expected in the district to witness the celebrations. Realising the opportunity, not only the Government and administration, but also the residents look forward to welcome the devotees.

The number of devotees arriving for Kumbh has been increasing with every Mela, posing a huge challenge for planners. However, I am confident that with the cooperation of saints, sages and devotees, elected representatives, officers and staff of the State administration, organisations and citizens, we will be accomplish the mission and present the grandeur of the memorable event to the world. **M**

—As told to **Dr. Kiran Moghe**



“Role of public is important for a smooth Kumbh”

A special feature of this year's Simhastha Kumbh Mela is the combined efforts of administration and people for cleaning river Godavari, says **Dadaji Bhuse**, Minister of State for Cooperation, sharing details of the mega event. Excerpts:



Minister of State for Cooperation, Dadaji Bhuse at a meet to assess the preparations

Simhastha Kumbh Mela, a convergence of spirituality, knowledge and culture, is being held at Nashik-Trimbareshwar this year. The administration is striving hard so that the saints, sages and devotees arriving for the congregation held once in 12 years receive the best of facilities.

Government of Maharashtra has already sanctioned a development plan worth ₹2,378 crore for various works such as roads, water, health, Sadhugram, Bhavikgram, construction of river fronts and their beautification, electrification, management of public transport and other amenities. The huge, permanent developmental works undertaken for long-term use and the concept of “Harit Kumbh” being implemented for the first time can be called special features of the Kumbh Mela this time.

Apart from the physical infrastructure that includes one additional railway platform, there is better connectivity between the city and outskirts through 3,000 round-the-clock buses to ferry pilgrims—about 60 lakh daily—and 1,000 additional buses from outside. Parking, diversion of routes to avert traffic congestion and hassle-free movement for both residents and pilgrims have been meticulously planned.

The biggest ordeal is crowd management. And we are not

going to allow any vehicles, private or public, in the radius of 2 to 3 km where the Kumbh activities would take place. We have created a buffer zone and special parking lots. Almost 1,000 buses from outside would be stopped at the outskirts of Nashik and provided parking facilities.

In the inner circle, there would be 3,000 buses to ferry the pilgrims. But further down in the city, people will have to walk 2 to 3 km to reach the bathing *ghats*. To avoid overlapping of the crowd of the city and outside, route diversions within the city are planned to ensure that people moving in and out of Nashik do not face any inconvenience during the Kumbh.

With Simhastha Kumbh Mela as background and on the occasion of World Environment Day, observed on June 5, 39,000 hands of Nashik citizens spontaneously got together and cleaned rivers Godavari, Kapila, Vaghadi and Nasardi of 375 tonnes of waste. Through this campaign, the citizens have offered a warm welcome to saints, sages and devotees arriving in Nashik for the Kumbh Mela and have set an ideal. The efforts taken by the local administration for this campaign are also commendable.



“**With Kumbh Mela as background and on the occasion of World Environment Day, citizens of Nashik joined hands to clean rivers Godavari, Kapila and Vaghadi, offering a warm welcome to the sages expected in the district”**

Recently, the saints and sages in Nashik and officers and staff from district administration had come together for a cleanliness campaign. This is another truly commendable initiative. Coordination between various agencies and public participation will only make this Kumbh Mela a success and an affair to remember for long.

Special attention has been given to set up medical centres complete with information on hospitals and bouquet of emergency services and ambulances on call.

Although Simhastha Kumbh Mela is being held at Nashik-Trimbareshwar, the devotees also visit other religious places in the district such as Saptashrungi, Igatpuri, Kavnai, Taked and others. The basic infrastructure facilities at these places are also being revamped and facilities such as roads, health, water and others are being constructed.

Looking at the micro-planning and appropriate implementation by the administration, I am confident that the saints, sages and devotees will definitely be satisfied. As a responsible elected representative from the district and a member of State Cabinet of Ministers, for me, successful organisation of Simhastha Kumbh Mela 2015 is a matter of pride, and I am sure, we will make this mega event truly successful. **M**

—As told to **Kishore Gangurde**

ON A SPIRITUAL DRIVE

Recognised amongst the most pious gatherings on the banks of a sacred river, the Kumbh Mela holds significance in the religious and social context. Legends combined with religious beliefs make this august fair an experience to reckon with, says **Pallavi Singh**



(From left) A sadhu participating in the Kumbh Mela celebrations and ghat in Nashik

All steps lead to Nashik and Trimba-keshwar, which is getting decked up for the most eventful and spiritual Simhastha Kumbh Mela. Trimba-keshwar is a holy town that houses one of the 12 *dyotirlings* in India. It also is the origin of the river Godavari. The Mela is held here once in 12 years and is a collective affair of millions of devotees who take a dip in the holy river in a belief that the stream would cleanse their souls leading to salvation. A ritual bath at a predetermined time and place is the main attraction of the festival. The Kumbh Mela this year is scheduled between July 14 and September 25 with the holy dips scheduled for August 29, September 13 and 25.

The celebration of Kumbh Mela depends on the position of planet Jupiter (*Brahspati*) and sun. Bathing at this time is believed to have the highest religious significance. It is said that when the Jupiter and the sun falls on the zodiac sign Leo (*Simha rashi*), the Kumbh Mela is celebrated at Trimba-keshwar and Nashik. When the sun is in Aries (*Mesh rashi*) and Jupiter in Aquarius, it is celebrated in Haridwar. When Jupiter is in Taurus (*Vrishabha rashi*) and the sun is in Capricorn (*Makar rashi*), the Kumbh is celebrated at Prayag. It is celebrated in Ujjain when Jupiter and sun are in Scorpio (*Vrishchik rashi*).

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF KUMBH

Kumbh literally means *kalash* or a pot, which is a symbol of purity, sacredness and well-being. Since times immemorial, sages, saints have honoured Kumbh as a symbol of greatness of deities, natural





wealth, material prosperity, grace of Vishnu and Lakshmi, and a storehouse of knowledge and science. There is a belief that Kumbh is an abode of the deities. In the upper part of Kumbh lives the Preserver, Lord Vishnu; the neck is where Lord Shiva stays; and at its base, there is the abode of the Creator, Brahma. The centre of the Kumbh is the abode of all deities, all seas, mountains, earth and all the four *Vedas*.

According to mythological stories and verses of epics, *amrit* or nectar of immortality had to be saved from the demons, so the Gods had to hide it at different places—*Swargalok*, *Mrutyulok* and *Patal lok*. Gods were on *Mrutyulok* (earth) for 12 days. Gods' 12 days are equal to 12 years for *Mrutyulok*, therefore, Gods were on earth for 12 years with the nectar. Hence, every 12 years, Kumbh Mela is celebrated at the four places, where a few drops of the nectar had fallen.

The legend of the Kumbh Mela credited to the *Puranas* by scholars narrates how the Gods and demons fought over the pot of *amrit*, which came out of the milky ocean after their joint churning. During the struggle, drops of the nectar fell at four places on earth, namely Nashik, Haridwar, Allahabad and Ujjain, and the rivers are believed to turn back into that prehistoric nectar at the climactic moment of each Mela, giving pilgrims the chance to bathe in the essence of purity, auspiciousness and immortality.

Another legend has it that once all the *teerthas* went to Adinath Bhagwan Shankara and following his order went to *Mrutyulok* (earth) to save all sinners on earth. In the process, they got saturated with sins committed by others. They were asked by

TRADITIONS AND RITUALS

The sacred gathering, considered the most holy of all pilgrimages, witnesses discussions, religious singing, mass feeding and get-togethers, where doctrines are debated and standardised. Generally, thousands of sacred men and women attend the divine Kumbh Mela, considered a part of the Hindu pilgrimage. The saints are seen dressed in saffron costume with *vibhuti* (sacred ash) applied on their skin in sync with primordial traditions. Some, called Naga Sanyasis, may not wear any clothes even in severe winter. Amongst the most auspicious days is that of *Bhishma Ekadasi Snan*, believed to be the day when Bhishma Pitamah, the eldest, wisest, most powerful and righteous person belonging to the Kuru dynasty, described the greatness of Lord Krishna through *Sri Vishnu Sahasranama* (thousand names of Vishnu) to Yudhishtir, the eldest among the Pandavas.

Shankara to go and live in solitude for one year on the banks of Godavari and take a bath in the sacred waters to get rid of their sins, underlining the significance of taking a dip in the river during the Kumbh.

In *Shiva Purana*, there is a story explaining the importance of Simhastha Kumbh Mela. Sage Gautam got salvation of his cow-killing sin from Lord Shiva after a long penance. As a result, river Ganga descended down on earth to alleviate the sin of the sage. After some time, the river wanted to go back but the sages and Gods requested her to stay back on earth to ensure prosperity. She agreed to stay back only after taking a promise from Lord Shiva that all the sages present and Gods will stay with her. The saints and Gods promised her that during the period when Jupiter and sun will be in the zodiac sign Leo, they will stay on earth. Another legend has it that Lord Ram with his guru, Kashyap stayed in Trimbareshwar for one year. During this period, he performed all the religious rites like *yatra* and *shraddha* near Kushavarta.

Though the Kumbh Mela finds reference in holy scriptures *Narada-Puranas*, it is difficult to say when it exactly started. Some scholars say that the congregation started in 3464 BC, which implies that it is a tradition existing 1,000 years prior to the Harappa and Mohenjo-daro culture. In 2382 BC, sage Vishwamitra had pointed out the importance of having a holy bath on the day of *Magh Purnima*. In 1302 BC, Maharshi Jyotish laid down the importance of a holy bath on this auspicious day.

Interestingly, Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang has also made a mention of the Kumbh Mela in his book. There is description of his journey taken in 629 BC as *Bharatyatra* wherein there is a mention of a Hindu fair at Prayag in the kingdom of Emperor Harshvardhan.

Recognising the importance of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, Shri Shankaracharya appealed to the disciples of his Vaidik *dharma* to assemble during the Kumbh Mela. Following his appeal, till date, devotees, pilgrims and people of various sects and religions gather together for the Mela. The year 1515 saw the presence of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu from Bengal. Foreign nationals also join the fair with enthusiasm and heightened spirits.

SOCIALLY RELEVANT

Kumbh Mela, which is the largest human gathering on earth, is attended by millions of people from





Jubilant members of an *akhada* dance in celebration during the Kumbh Mela

across the world irrespective of all worldly barriers of caste, creed and religion. Followers of Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism also participate in the fair. The Kumbh Mela wields a mesmeric influence over the minds and the imagination of the ordinary Indian. Devotees believe that simply by bathing in the river, one is freed from past sins (*karma*), and thus becomes eligible for liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

During the Kumbh, tourists can also go for the healing therapies of Ayurveda, Acupressure and meditation that is explained as well as taught here. Emphasis is laid on the philosophy of Yoga, Vedanta and Tantra that help to purify one's soul.

A tour during the Kumbh Mela is an opportunity for one to understand the most idealistic yet baffling Indian culture. One needs to come and enjoy every bit of this largest world event, as it helps reveal some of the unexplored beliefs and rituals.

ON THE RIVERFRONT

River Godavari holds significance to Simhastha Kumbh Mela, as scores of people take a holy dip in it for salvation. But, not many would know that river Ganga should only be visited after one has visited the Godavari, as say the *Puranas*.

Legends who have taken a dip in the holy waters include Baladeva (5,000 years ago) and saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (500 years ago).

According to *Ramayana*, Lord Rama made Nashik his home during his 14 years in exile. At Panchvati, on the bank of Godavari, Rama and his brother Lakshman had cut off the nose of Surpanakha, sister of demon king Ravan, thus

giving the place its name (*nasika* means nose in Sanskrit). Both Ram and Lakshman are believed to have taken the ritualistic bath in Godavari upon hearing about the demise of their father, King Dasharath. Among other references to the *Ramayana* seen here is of the Sita Gumpah caves, from where Sita was abducted by Ravan.

Another legend has it that Lord Indra had once embraced Ahilya, the pretty wife of sage Gautama. Angered by this act, the sage cursed his wife to turn her into a stone and cursed Lord Indra to a life full of diseases. The curse to Ahilya was later absolved by Lord Rama. Lord Indra's curse was absolved after he took a dip in the holy waters of Godavari and practiced extreme penance.

River Godavari holds significance to Simhastha Kumbh Mela, as scores of people take a holy dip in its sacred waters for salvation. But, not many would know that river Ganga should only be visited after one has visited the Godavari, as say the *Puranas*

STATUS UPDATE

The Maharashtra Government is gearing up to receive over 10 million pilgrims for this year's Kumbh Mela. Preparations are in full swing to provide all type of infrastructure and amenities—lodging and boarding, public conveniences, water supply and sewage disposal, roads, bridges and transportation and smooth arrangements for the holy dips—for pilgrims. A budget of ₹2,378 crore has been allocated for the arrangements, which includes creating a *Sadhugram* to facilitate the stay of devotees expected to arrive here. Usually, people who come for the Kumbh Mela also visit nearby places like Shirdi, Shani-Shingnapur, Bhimashankar and other locations. The State is making ample arrangements to cater to the additional burden expected at these places apart from the tight security that would be needed. **M**



FOR A SMOOTH EXPERIENCE

All arrangements with respect to civic amenities, infrastructure, health, safety, disaster management and information for the Kumbh Mela are in place to ensure an easy and enjoyable experience for everyone present



IMPORTANT DAYS (NASHIK AND TRIMBAKESHWAR)

Hoisting of auspicious flag (Dhwaja Parv)	Tuesday, July 14, 2015
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SHAHI SNAN (AUSPICIOUS BATH) OCCASIONS

NASHIK	First	Saturday, August 29, 2015
	Second	Sunday, September 13, 2015
	Third	Friday, September 18, 2015
TRIMBAKESHWAR	First	Saturday, August 29, 2015
	Second	Sunday, September 13, 2015
	Third	Friday, September 25, 2015

With devotees from all corners of the world thronging to Nashik at Trimbareshwar for Simhashta Kumbh Mela, it is pertinent that essential services such as healthcare, transport and law and order are in place so that devotees can participate in the auspicious mega event with fervour and zeal. Considering the mega event is during the rainy season, planning has been done for control of epidemic, viral diseases and water-borne diseases. The possibility of accidents, fire, jamming of crowds and other disasters has also been kept in mind and necessary measures have been taken.

HEALTHCARE

Dr. Sushil Wakchaure, District Health Officer, Nashik says that special arrangements have been made for the upcoming Kumbh Mela at municipal

THE CARE UNITS

Site ICU will be established at significant points in Nashik and three points in Trimbareshwar where crowd is heavy and exits are difficult during key events. These ICUs will have trained expert teams 24x7 (in two shifts).

Nashik Municipal Corporation Area:
Ramkund, Datta Mandir, Balaji Ghat, Ayurved Mahavidyalaya, Dashakriya Vidhi Mandap, Kannamwar Bridge, Tapovan Ghat, Nasardi Sangam, Dasak Ghat
Trimbareshwar Area:
Kushavarta Teerth, Swami Samartha Teerth, Brahma Valley School

corporation hospitals, temporary dispensaries, mobile dispensaries and Government health institutions. Beds in the district hospitals have been increased, 550 beds have been kept ready at the district hospital, and another hospital with 200 beds will be pressed into service soon.

Major hospitals will have control room and emergency medical teams with trained manpower. Special healthcare services will also be available at Divisional Reference Hospital and Employees State Insurance Hospital. During the major event, medical teams will be active 24x7 at 32 crowded places at Nashik and 12 at Trimbareshwar.

The planning has been done keeping in mind the rush of devotees expected on key dates at Trimbareshwar. In Trimbareshwar municipal area, a 100-bed hospital with medical staff and all primary healthcare facilities is in place.



HOW TO REACH NASHIK

By Road: Distance between various locations:

- Mumbai to Nashik-168 km
- Pune to Nashik-210 km
- Aurangabad to Nashik-182 km
- Shirdi to Nashik-88 km
- Dhule to Nashik-158 km
- Indore to Nashik-420 km
- Daman-Diu to Nashik-156 km
- Surat to Nashik-234 km
- One can reach Nashik directly from Mumbai by taking the National Highway NH3 via Thane-Kasara-Igatpuri by a state transport bus or a private vehicle. From Pune, one can reach Nashik via Sinnar. One can take the NH3 for travelling from Dhule to Nashik. Apart from this, one can reach Nashik from Aurangabad via Yeola and Niphad.
- Semi-luxury and normal buses of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation ply from Mumbai Central, Parel, Dadar and Borivali Bus Depot to Nashik. Shivneri Travels buses and semi-luxury buses ply from Shivajinagar Depot at Pune to Nashik.

gar Depot at Pune to Nashik.

● State Corporation buses arrive direct at the highway bus depot or new bus depot, Thakkar Bazaar.

By Railway: Distance-188 km

● Tapovan, Panchvati, Sewagram, Vidarbha, Pushpak, Geetanjali, Nandigram and other Express trains from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Jan-shatabdi from Dadar Railway Station and Godavari, Rajarani, Pawan, Darbhanga, Kamayani, Gorakhpur and other Express trains from Lokmanya Tilak Terminus, Kurla can be used to reach Nashik.

● Alight at: Nashik Road Railway Station

● From the bus station outside Nashik Road Railway Station, many State Transport Corporation buses are available to reach Panchvati. The distance between Nashik Road to Nashik city is around 8 km

● Railway trains such as Devgiri, Tapovan, Nandigram and others are available between Aurangabad and Nashik.

● Railway route is a better option to arrive from Nagpur. Vidarbha, Sewagram, Geetanjali Express trains halt at Nashik Road Railway Station.

By Air: As passenger transport has not yet started at Ozar Airport at Nashik, tourists from India and abroad can reach Mumbai by flight. From here one can reach Nashik via road or the railway.

■ Where to stay at Nashik

Accommodation at Nashik is available in various categories from small lodges to five star hotels. Making reservations in advance instead of facing difficulties at the eleventh hour is always better. Accommodation can also be reserved at the *dharamshalas*. Such *dharamshalas* are located on the Godavari river bank at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar.

■ Route from Mumbai

Outer Parking: Rajur Bahula

Inner Bus Stand: Mahamarg

Route: Vadala Naka

Corner-NDCC Bank-Dwarka Circle-Takali Bypass-Godavari MIDC Road-Haji Mithai-Lakshmi Narayan Ghat

Return: MSEB Substation Road-Godavari MIDC Road-Kothawade Company-Mumbai Road-Mahamarg Bus Stand

■ Route from Trimbakeshwar

Outer Parking: Dugaon Phata

Inner Bus Stand: Satpur Bus stand

Route: Sakal Circle-ITI Signal-ABB Circle-Old CTB Signal-Bhavani Circle-Civil Hospital-New Thakkar Bazar Stand-Trimbak Mela Stand-CBS Signal-Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Statue-MG Road-Dahipul-Nehru Chowk -

Dehli Darvaja-Rokdoba Maidan

Return: Nav Darvaja-Budha Halwai-Badshahi Corner-Shalimar-Left of Shivaji Road-CBS Signal -

New Thakkar Bazar Stand-Bhavani Circle-ABB Circle-Satpur Bus Stand

■ Route from Peth Road and Gangapur Road

Outer Parking: Thakkar Maidan

Inner Bus Stand: Sharad Chandra Pawar Market

Route: Gokul Dham-Makhmalabad Dream Castle Corner-(From left) Hanumanwadi Road-Ashok Stambh-Bhendi Bazar Road-Left of Ramsetu Bridge-Gandhi Tank

Return: Ekmukhi Datta-Ganga Ghat-Ghas Bazar-Raje Sambhaji Garden-Hanuman Mandir-Sanap Dairy-Ramwadi-NMC Panchavati Div. Off.-Madhmalabad Road-Sharad Chandra Pawar Market

Outer Parking: Adgaon

Inner Bus Stand: Nilgiri Baug

Route: Pawar Farm-Sanap Dairy-New Bridge-STP Filteration-Takali Sangam Ram Ghat

■ Route from Dhule Road

Outer Parking: Adgaon

Inner Bus Stand: Nilgiri Baug

Route: Pawar Farm-Sanap Dairy-New Bridge-STP Filteration-Takali Sangam Ram Ghat

DOS AND DON'TS

■ TOURISTS

- Contact Police officials about genuineness of any rumour
- Obey the instructions issued by Police officials on public addressing system as well as in person
- Contact Police officials regarding any doubt or complaint
- Contact Police officials or nearest Control Room, if any unidentified objective is seen
- Missing person's relatives or

missing persons should contact Missing Person Cell for help

- Follow the queue rules for facilities provided
- Give priority to children and senior citizens in use of facilities
- Every person should carry one's identity proof and relative's contact number.
- A citizen should carry a slip of his illness and medicines for emergency
- Make use of dustbins
- Pilgrims are requested to use

ghats that are authorised by the Mela administration for the safety and security

- Don't believe in rumours and don't promote and don't panic
- Don't take eatables from strangers and don't distribute free clothes, etc., in crowd
- Parents should take care of their children
- Washing of clothes on the river banks should be avoided
- Use of soaps while bathing in river should be avoided

- Avoid overcrowding of boats
- Avoid throwing worship or ritual material in river

■ HEALTH

- Dispose wastes at designated points only and use cloth bags
- Dispose *nirmalay* (worship material) at *Nirmalay Kalash* only
- Use handkerchief while sneezing and coughing
- Use public lavatories for urination and defecation
- Please visit nearest public



Return: Left Ramp-Takali Sangam Bridge-New Road-Godavari Mangal Karyalaya-Jejuri Farm-Aurangabad Mirachi Dhaba Corner-Nilgiri Baug

■ **Route from Dindori**
Outer Parking: Mhasrul
Inner Bus Stand: Lakshmi Narayan Trust Hanuman Nagar
Route: Left of Over Bridge-Kannamwar Bridge-Shahi Muskan-Dwarka Circle-Under Overbridge-Agra Road-Left of Kannamwar Bridge-Talkuteswar Ghat
Return: Ramp of Ghat-Amardham Road-Nanawale Couki Tractor-Service Road-Dwarka Over Bridge-Ramp Near Sunflower Hotel K.K. Wagh College

■ **Route from Aurangabad Road and Odha Railway Station**
Outer Parking: Madsangavi
Route: From Right to Nandur Naka-Shri Sant Janardan Swami Bridge-Nandur Ram Ghat
Return: Sulabh Toilet-Manur Gao-Vitthal Rukhmini Temple-NMC School No. 88-Hambare Vasti-Aurangabad Road T Point-Madsangavi

■ **Route from Pune and Nashik Road Railway Station**
Outer Parking: Chincholi
Inner Bus Stand: Sinnar Bypass Market Yard
Route: Shivaji Statue-Bitco Signal-Jail Road-Currency Note Press-Left of Water Tank-Sailani Baba Dargah Corner-Shri Sant Janardan Swami Bridge (From Right)-Dask Ram Ghat
Return: Near Smashanbhumi Shed-Vamandada Kardak Study Centre Road-Jail Road-From Left Sailani Baba Dargah-Kothari Girls School-Bitco Signal-Nashik Road Police Station-Sinnar Bypass Bus Station

HOW TO REACH TRIMBAKESHWAR

● The distance between Nashik and Trimbakeshwar is 28 km and buses are available for journey to and fro, between 4 hr to 22.30 hr. The buses start from the Mela bus depot at Nashik. During the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, additional buses have been planned on this route. Devotees and tourists travelling from Mumbai to Trimbakeshwar can travel via Ghoti as well. One can reach Trimbakeshwar from Mumbai, a distance of 225 km via Thane, Kasara, Khodala, and Jawhar as well.

■ **Route from Brahma Valley/Nashik**
Outer Parking: Khambale
Inner Bus Stand: Brahma Valley
Route: Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Road (Right side)-Tupadevi-Pegalwadi Bypass-Bada Udasin Akhada Ghat
Return: Bada Udasin Akhada Ghat (Left side)-Pegalwadi Bypass-Tupadevi-Brahma Valley Inner Bus Stand

■ **Route from Mumbai-Ghoti**
Outer Parking: Pahine,
Inner Bus Stand: Pegalwadi
Route: Pegalwadi Bypass-Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Road-Shri Swami Samarth Kendra Ring Road-Shri Swami Samarth Kendra-Niranjani Akhada (Right Side)-Gorakshanath Ghat
Return: New Tehsil Office-Trimbakeshwar-Nashik Road-New Jawhar Bypass-Pegalwadi Bypass - Pegalwadi

■ **Route from Rohile/Girnare**
Outer Parking: Talwade
Route: Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Road (From Right Side)-Pegalwadi Bypass-Bada Udasin Akhada Ghat
Return: From Left Takint
U-Turn - Pegalwadi Bypass-Tupadevi Bypass



A newly built hospital in the Trimbakeshwar Municipal Area

Dispensaries will have specific vehicle parking lots. The health teams will be available with ambulance support during the event.

Ambulances for reference service will be available for patients in case of accidents, cardiac arrest, paralysis, snake bite and other emergencies. The service can be reached by dialling telephone number 108. Currently, 46 ambulances equipped with 108 contact number are available in Nashik district. Additional 44 ambulances will be available for the Kumbh Mela. In case of any emergency, the medical officers from these ambulances will provide OPD care to the patients. Mobile dispensaries will ply on five major routes. A total of 132 ambulances at the Primary Health Centre, Rural Hospital and Sub-District Hospital level have been arranged and can be reached by dialling 102 for providing reference services to patients.

If required, help from private hospitals and dispensaries at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar will also be sought. Additional beds have also been reserved at important private hospitals in Nashik district. A total of 54 private laboratories, 12 diagnostic centres and 15 blood banks have been kept ready.

With four types of training on State and district levels, about 200 officers and staff have been trained for the Simhastha Kumbh Mela. Guidance for this training was given by expert doctors and officers from Center for Disease Control (C.D.C.) Atlanta, USA, National Centre for Disease Control (N.C.D.C) Delhi, Yashada, Pune, Red Cross Society, Nashik and National Disaster Reserve Force, Pune. To resolve any healthcare issue, experts will be available on toll-free number 104.

health dispensaries/hospitals for medical emergency

- Do not litter, spit, burn wastes
- Do not throw *nirmalaya* in river
- Do not defecate or urinate in open
- Don't use plastic carry bags of less than 50 micron thickness
- Don't store water for more than seven days
- Don't eat uncovered food

■ FIRE

- When you notice a fire, try to attract others' attention to the scene of fire

- One who reaches first at the scene of fire should ensure no life is trapped
- Try to put off the small fire with the nearest fire extinguisher
- Switch off the power supply in case of fire due to an electric spark
- Do not tamper with any machinery during firefighting, leave them for authorised handling
- Do not use water or oil on electrical fire
- Do not flood the area affected with water unless required
- Do not crowd the scene of fire



IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS AT NASHIK

POLICE CONTROL ROOM, NASHIK	100/2570333/34
POLICE COMMISSIONER OFFICE	2570183/2352122
POLICE HEADQUARTERS	2570448
FIRE BRIGADE	MAIN FIRE STATION 2590871 PANCHVATI FIRE STATION 2512919 NASHIK ROAD FIRE STATION 2561379 SATPUR FIRE STATION 2350500 CIDCO FIRE STATION 2393931
DISTRICT GENERAL HOSPITAL	02563-2573936/2576106
TRIMBAKESHWAR RURAL HOSPITAL	02594-233065/233029
AMBULANCE	108
BUS DEPOT	NEW CENTRAL BUS DEPOT 2309308 OLD CENTRAL BUS DEPOT (CBS) 2309310/2309306 NIMANI (PANCHVATI) BUS DEPOT 2629695 NASHIK ROAD BUS DEPOT 2465304 TRIMBAKESHWAR BUS DEPOT 02594-233126
RAILWAY STATION	RAILWAY ENQUIRY NASHIK ROAD 131,139, 0253-2461274 RAILWAY RESERVATION 127, 0253-2541229
MUNICIPAL CORPORATION HELPLINE	0253-6642300/8390300300
DISASTER MANAGEMENT CONTACT	1077



(Clockwise from below left) A panoramic view of Nashik all decked up to welcome visitors, police control room in place, Godavari river in full flow at Nashik and a newly constructed ghat ready to welcome devotees

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

For the convenience of the commuters, 3,000 state transport buses from 21 bus depots will ply during the Kumbh Mela. More than 6,000 employees, including drivers, conductors and others have been appointed. During the festival, attention will be paid to clean each bus after every 8-10 hours. With the concept of Green Kumbh, bus depots and nearby areas will be kept clean. In order to create awareness about Green Kumbh, 200 parrot-green coloured buses will become part of the State Transport Corporation.

During the festival, a pass of ₹100 can be bought for a day. The pass will help devotees visit Nashik and Trimbakeshwar throughout the day without requiring a ticket. A four-day pass of ₹478 is also available for one to visit Nashik, Shirdi, Saptashrungi, Bhimashankar and other places. The pass will be available at all bus depots. If a bus is reserved by 40-50 people for tourism or a holy visit, the concept of 'Somewhere to Some Place' will be implemented. About 21 Outer Parking and Inner Bus Stands have been arranged.

ROUTE-WISE INDEPENDENT GHATS FOR BATHING BY DEVOTEES

Considering the huge crowds of devotees arriving for auspicious bathing this year, the administration has made arrangements for independent *ghats* for bathing on mega event days. With these independent *ghats*, it will be easier for the devotees to take an auspicious bath in peace. As the devotees arriving for a bath at the seven *ghats* at Nashik and three *ghats* at Trimbakeshwar travel through a route pre-



planned by the administration, crowd controlling will be easy. To avoid over crowding during the mega event days, the bathing has been planned at seven *ghats* at Nashik and three *ghats* at Trimbakeshwar. Arrangements for bathing have been made at Talkuteshwar Bridge to Kannamwar Bridge, area below Kannamwar bridge, area above the Laxminarayan Bridge, Laxminarayan Bridge to Kapilasangam, Nasardi Godavari Sangam in Takli area, Janardan Swami Bridge at Dasak area at Nashik. At Trimbakeshwar, the devotees will be able to take a bath on three *ghats* namely Ahilya Ghat, Bada Udasin Akhada Ghat and Gorakshanath Ghat.

The length of the *ghats* compared to Simhashta Kumbh Mela held in 2003-04, has been greatly increased. The *ghats* at Nashik, which had a length of 1,290 metres earlier, now have a length of 3,990 metres. The *ghats* at Trimbakeshwar, which had a length of 200 metres, now are 950 metres in length. The huge increase in length of the *ghats* is going to benefit the devotees immensely.

INFORMATIVE WEBSITE: NASHIK POLICE

The Nashik Police Commissioner Office has created this informative Website-<http://kumbhamela2015.nashikpolice.com> for the devotees and tourists visiting Nashik during the Simhashta Kumbh Mela. The Website was inaugurated recently at the hands of Guardian Minister Girish Mahajan.

The Website contains detailed information on history of the Kumbh Mela and its importance, information about the *akhadas*, Sadhugram as well as auspicious mega events, the arrangements at *ghats* for bathing, internal and external parking places, imperial routes such as Dhule-Adgaon, Aurangabad-Pune, Mumbai, Gangapur-Trimbakeshwar, Peth, Dindori sectors, administration

USER GUIDE FOR TOURISTS

■ POLICE

Emergency Police Stations: Gangapur Road, Shivaji Nagar, Nashik, Maharashtra 422002, Phone: 100
Police Commissioner, Police Station: Gangapur Road, Shivaji Nagar, Nashik, Maharashtra-422002, Phone: 0253-2305228

Police Head Quarters: Hindustan Nagar, Bhubal Knowledge City, Adgaon, Nashik, Maharashtra - 422207, Phone: 0253-2305205

Panchavati Police Station: Dindori Road, Lok Sahakar Nagar, Nashik, Maharashtra-422003, Phone: 0253-2629830

Ambad Police Station: Pelican Park Road, CIDCO, Nashik, Maharashtra - 422006, Phone: 0253-2392233

■ FIRE BRIGADE EMERGENCY

- Ganjmal Nashik, Maharashtra, Emergency Number 101
- Shingada Talav, Nashik Road, Phone: 0253-2509766
- India Security Press, Nashik Road, Phone: 0253-2461379
- Panchavati, Godavari river, Nashik, Phone: 0253 2512919
- Satpur, MIDC Satpur Nashik, Maharashtra, Phone: 0253-2350500
- CIDCO, Veer Sawarkar Marg, Shri Ram Colony, Nashik, Maharashtra, Phone: 0253-23931

■ BLOOD BANKS

- Civil Hospital, Trimbak Road, Thakkar Bazar Bus station, opp. Golf Club Maidan, Nashik 0253 0572038
- Jankalyan Blood Bank, Gangapur Road, Shree Nagar, Old Gangapur Naka, Nashik 0253-2573493
- Arpan Blood Bank, 102/103 Dr. Athawale Chambers, Tilak Road, opposite Gawakari Press, Nashik 0253-2311358
- Nashik Blood Bank, Ishwar Krupa, Near G-Shoppo Chandak Circle, Tidke Colony, Nashik 0253-2232996
- Jeevan blood bank and component

Aferesis centre, Mumbai, Naka G-11, 12, 13 Nashik 0253-2508777
● Samata Blood Bank, Govind Nagar, Nashik 0253-2472499
● Life Cell International Pvt. Ltd., Renuka Nagar, Nashik 0253-2318217
● MVP Medical College, Vasantdada Nagar, Adgaon Nashik 0253-2303930

■ BUS STANDS

- Civil Bus Stop, Near Civil Hospital Thakkar Bazar, Trimbak Road, Gadkari Chowk, Nashik 0253-2534209
- CBS Bus Stop, Near old centre bus stand, Nashik 9225142613
- Nashik Road Bus Stop, Nashik Road 9423970031
- Nimani Bus Stop, near Nimani Bus Stand, Nashik 0253-2374374
- Indira Nagar Bus Stop, Mumbai Naka Nashik 0253-2513268

■ AMBULANCE

- Civil Hospital, Trimbak Road, Thakkar Bazar Bus station, Nashik 0253-0572038
- Suman Shatabdi Hospital, College Road, Nashik 0253-2314605
- Six Sigma Medicare and Research Ltd., Sadgurus, Mahatma Nagar, Parijat Nagar, Nashik 0253-6066677
- Wakratund Multi-Speciality Hospital, Mumbai-Agra Highway, Rashant Nagar, Nashik 0253-2386001
- Sarthak Hospital Pvt. Ltd Samta Nagar, Nashik 0253-2353770
- Ashwini Multi Speciality Hospital, Chowk no. 5, Radha Wasudeo Batavia Nagar, Nashik 08888871151
- Sushrut Hospital, Gautam New Pandit Colony, Sharanpur Road, opposite Lion Garden Sharanpur, Nashik 0253-2577717
- Sai Shraddha Hospital, Shivaji Nagar Mhasarul, Gajpantha Society Dindori Road, Nashik 09823675392
- Neralikar Hospital near Jehan Circle, Gangapur Road, Neralikar Lane Udainagar, Nashik 0253-2342471
- Swami Criticare Hospital, Near Pelican Park, Nashik 0253-2391001

To avoid overcrowding during the mega event days, the bathing has been planned at seven ghats at Nashik and three ghats at Trimbakeshwar. Length of ghats has also been increased

routes and related activities. As the information on matters such as police stations, *chowkis*, bus, railway, government and private hospitals, hotels for lodging and others are all available on this Website, it would be easy for the devotees to search for them. Apart from an important do's and don't information, the Website is complete with a gallery full of attractive photographs and videos. Along with the law and order situation, the Website would play an important role of a guide and mentor for the devotees and tourists alike. **M**

—Team Maharashtra Ahead

A DIP OF FAITH

These holy dips are scheduled for the auspicious days and see colourful, magnificent processions of radiant *sadhus* on chariots and elephants at sunrise, says **Abhay Mokashi**



Kumbh Mela is the biggest congregation of people on earth and its size has been swelling with every episode. Kumbh is suggested to be the most sacred of all pilgrimages, attended not only by Hindus, but also by followers of various religions. Held every third year at Haridwar, Allahabad (Prayag), Nashik and Ujjain, in rotation, the Mela at Nashik is known as Simhastha Kumbh Mela, named after the Leo zodiac (*simha* in Sanskrit), as it is the time when Jupiter, Sun and Moon are in the Leo constellation.

An important feature of the Kumbh Mela is *shahi snan* or royal bath. It is believed that a dip in the holy river washes away one's sins and ends the cycle of rebirth and death, as the soul becomes one with the Almighty. These holy dips are scheduled for auspicious days, and see colourful, magnificent processions of radiant saints or *sadhus* on chariots and elephants at sunrise. As the saints pass by, they impart blessings of divine

grace to all those present. Then the saints take their dip (*shahi snan*) in the holy river. The turn of the groups of saints or *akhadas* for the holy dip is as per tradition, with groups

(Clockwise from left) Devotees gather at the banks of the river, taking a holy dip, and a procession of *sadhus* at the Kumbh Mela



In the case of Simhastha Kumbh, *shahi snan* is carried out in river Godavari, also known as Dakshini Ganga. Bathing in holy rivers is considered auspicious by devoted Hindus. Participation in the Kumbh Mela and *shahi snan* breaks all the traditional barriers

THE POWER OF THE AKHADAS

Traditionally, an *akhada* means a wrestling arena. But the groups of saints or *sadhus* are also known as *akhada*. Juna *akhada* is said to be one of the biggest groups with over 1.5 lakh members. Niranjani *akhada* is another prominent group. The list includes Agan, Alakhiya, Abhana, Anand, Mahanirvani and Atal. Most of these groups are Shaivite (Shiva followers). There are three Vaishnavites (Vishnu followers) *akhadas*, whose institution is attributed to Sant Ramanandaji in 1299. There are also some *akhadas* of Sikh orders. The *sadhus* belonging to different groups also owe allegiance to any of the ten *Dashanami* (Hindu monastic tradition) orders—Saraswati, Puri, Bana, Tirtha, Giri, Parvati, Bharati, Aranya, Ashrama and Sagara. The *sadhavis* or women monks are also part of the *akhada* system, and have separate camps at the Kumbh Mela. There are over one lakh *sadhavis* belonging to various *akhadas*.

bathing in a particular sequence. After all these groups have taken bath, other people take their turn for the dip.

In the case of Simhastha Kumbh, the *shahi snan* is carried out in river Godavari, which is also known as Dakshini Ganga (or Ganga of the South). Even otherwise, bathing in holy rivers is considered auspicious by devoted Hindus. Among the Hindus, all people participate in the Kumbh Mela and the *shahi snan* breaks all the traditional barriers. A question that often comes to the mind is that if Kumbh is a religious event, with saints participating in large numbers, why the holy dip is called *shahi snan* or royal bath?

There are several legends about the protection given to the *sadhus* and their *akhadas* by kings of early dynasties. The *akhadas* and *sadhus* had precedence over other pilgrims in case of taking holy dip. It could well be that those who had the royal (*shahi*) backing were considered *shahi* and so was their bath. Also, the members of the *akhadas* came out in a royal procession.

Historically, the saints carried various kinds of weapons, and the tradition continues even today. For centuries, there have been skirmishes between the groups for the honour of the first *shahi snan*. It is said that when such an issue arose during the reign of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, it was resolved by deciding the sequence in which the *akhadas* could have bath. Thus, armed with the *shahi farman* (royal order), the groups took the holy dip, thus giving it the name *shahi snan*. Continuing till today, these groups go for the bath in a procession, and begin by washing their royal symbols.

Later, in 1906, the British Government also issued an order on the sequence in which the *akhadas* could have the holy dip. Crowd management is a major issue at the Kumbh Mela. Though incidents of drowning are not heard of during the *shahi snan*, there have been several incidents of stampede.

The dates for the *shahi snan* are announced in advance. This year, the main ceremony will take place at Ramkund on July 14, 2015, and the flag hoisting of the *akhadas* will be at Sadhugram a month later on August 14. The first *shahi snan* is scheduled for August 26 marking *Shravan Shudha*, while the first *shahi snan* at Ramkund is on August 29 to mark *Sharavan Purnima*. The second *shahi snan* (the main bathing day) will be on September 13 to mark *Bhadrapad Amavasya* and the third *shahi snan*, marking the *Bhadrapad Shukla Panchmi*, on September 18. **M**





ON A MYSTICAL JOURNEY

Trimbakeshwar is the only Shiva temple in the world where the *lingam* is not outside, but inside the floor. **Dilip Chaware** visits the temple regarded as one of the most sacred places in India

The ancient temple town of Trimbakeshwar is located about 30 km from Nashik city in north Maharashtra and is one of the 12 *vyotirlingas*. The unique facts about the place is that it is the source of river Godavari and the *lingam* in the temple is in the form of a three-faced embodying Tridev, representing Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. A sacred river for Hindus, Godavari originates from Brahmagiri mountains at Trimbakeshwar and meets the sea near Rajahmundry. Though an ancient temple, the existing shrine at Trimbakeshwar is a reconstructed edifice, done by Peshwa Balaji Bajirao over 200 years ago.

According to the *Puranas*, Trimbakeshwar is where Lord Shiva agreed to reside at the prayers of Godavari, sage Gautam and some Gods. This is why the *lingam* is located at the source of the Godavari. A crown studded with expensive jewels adorns the Trimbakeshwar *vyotirling*. Legend has it that the crown has been in the temple since the times of the Pandavas. The town is appealing with natural attractions. It is at the foothills of amazing

Brahmagiri and Gangadwar mountains, nestled among lush green trees and in a picturesque setting. The serene ambience and pleasant climate make the town of Trimbakeshwar a hot spot for nature-loving tourists apart from Hindu pilgrims. The black basalt temple is known for holy rituals such as Tri-Sandhya Gayatri, Narayan Nagbali, Kalsarp Shanti and Tripindi Vidhi.

Like every important temple in India is associated with many beliefs and mythological tales, Trimbakeshwar too has its own treasure trove. According to one such legend, sage Gautam resided at the Brahmagiri hill with his wife Ahilya. His devotion was such that he was endowed by Lord Varun (God of Rains) with a bottomless pit from which he could draw unending supply of grains and food. Other sages staying around became jealous of his boon and plotted to have a cow enter Gautam's granary and die. While Gautam attempted to shoo off the cow with a bunch of Darbha grass, the cow died. Now, the sage and his hermitage had both become impure due to the sin of a cow's death.

It was said that only river Ganga's water would wash away the sins of Gautam and his abode. The sage prayed to Shiva, who then decided to grant his wish and requested Ganga to flow down and purify Gautam and his hermitage. Shiva came with the Ganga, which became the Godavari, while Shiva stayed over in the form of Trimbak.

Another legend regarding *Lingodbhav* (the manifestation of Shivling) is that Brahma (the Creator) and Vishnu (the Preserver) were trying to discover the origin of Shiva, who manifested Himself as a cosmic column of fire. Brahma lied that He had seen the top of the fire column. As His bluff was exposed, Brahma was cursed that He

(Clockwise from above)
The black basalt temple in
Trimbakeshwar, devotees
taking a holy dip and
while doing *pradakshina*
at the temple



would not be worshipped on earth. Angered by this, Brahma cursed Shiva that he would be pushed underground. Accordingly, Shiv came near Brahmagiri hill in the form of Trimбакेश्वर. Thus, *pradakshina* (circumambulating) of Brahmagiri hill is considered sacred.

THE TEMPLE AND ITS RITUALS

Built in black stone in the Nagara style of architecture, the Trimбакेश्वर temple is enclosed in a spacious courtyard. The sanctum internally is a square and externally a stellar structure, which houses the small *lingam*. The sanctum is crowned with a graceful tower, which is decorated with a golden *kalash* (pitcher). In front of the *garbagrih* (sanctum sanctorum) and the *antarala* (a small antechamber) is a *mandap* (a

A sacred river for Hindus, Godavari originates from Brahmagiri mountains at Trimбакेश्वर. Though an ancient temple, the shrine at Trimбакेश्वर is a reconstructed edifice, done by Peshwa Balaji Bajirao over 200 years ago

pillared hall) with doors on all four sides. The roof of the *mandap* is formed by curvilinear slabs rising in steps. The structure is bedecked with running scrolls, floral designs, and images of Gods, Yakshas, humans and animals. The *lingam* is in a depression on the floor of the sanctum. Water constantly oozes out from the top of the *lingam*, which is usually covered with a silver mask.

It is believed that the Ganga (Godavari) appeared and reappeared several times in response to the pleas of sage Gautam, and so there are several holy places or *teerth* here. The Gangadwar Teerth is where Ganga emerged. Varaah Teerth is where Lord Vishnu, in the form of boar, plunged in the Godavari. The Kushavart Teerth is a water tank with steps on all sides, pillared aisles and highly ornate arches. This is considered to be the holiest of all the places and is believed to be the spot where Gautam finally secured the Ganga on earth.

Three worship services are held daily at the Trimбакेश्वर temple. After the night worship (*shej-aarti*) is performed, a silver mask is placed in a bed in the hall of mirrors. Every Monday, the silver mask is taken around in a palanquin procession to Kushavart Teerth and given an ablution, called *abhishek*. The processions with the golden mask take place on the occasion of Shivratri and other prominent festivals.

Narayan Nagbali is perhaps the most sought-after ritual, which consists of two different rituals. Narayan bali is performed to become free of ancestral curse (*Pitru Shaap*), while Nagbali is for getting rid of the sin committed by killing a snake, especially a cobra (*naag*). *Kaal Sarp Yog* happens when all the planets lie between *Rahu* and *Ketu*, leading to failure and dejection. In such a case, the tasks at hand don't happen as per the efforts put in, often leading to negativity and inferiority complex. The process to dispel this doom is said to be effective and simple. *Tripindi Shraddh* is performed for removing the *Pretatv* (death shadow) of one's ancestors. Its need arises if one fails to perform *Pitru Shraddh* for three years after their death. *Rudra Abhishek* is a *panchamrut* (milk, curd, honey, sugar and ghee) worship offered to Shiva with recital of hymns to fulfill the wishes of the person performing it.

Mahamritunjaya is believed to be the most powerful of all the sacred mantras. A Sanskrit word, *Mahamritunjaya* means victory over death. Chanting of this mantra is done for long and healthy life and to get rid of prolonged sickness, especially for those on deathbed. **M**





STAGE SET FOR THE KUMBH MELA

Nashik with due support of Union, State and district authorities and natives undergoes a major facelift before hosting millions of visitors during the Kumbh Mela

In the run up to the mega event being hosted after 12 years, the Nashik Municipal Corporation (NMC) has undertaken works to the tune of over ₹1,000 crore. The major projects include construction of roads and ring roads, Sadhugram at Tapovan on a 300-acre land, drainage, creation of health facilities, two filtration plants of 68 mld and cleaning of river Godavari. For security and smooth traffic, a ₹18-crore project has been undertaken to set up a CCTV network and a control room. The people of Nashik, including members of social organisations and environmentalists, have been involved in an operation to clean river Godavari.

DEVOTED TO THE DEVOTEES

The Sadhugram is being prepared as a temporary settlement for various groups of saints visiting Nashik. Generally, three Vaishnav *akhadas*—Digambar Ani, Nirvani Ani and Nirmohi Ani—settle at Nashik, while the 10 Shiva *akhadas* settle at Trimbakeshwar. Separate arrangement of Sadhugram has been made by the district administration over 300 acres of land. The Simhastha

KUMBH GOES TECH SAVVY

A website dedicated to Kumbh has been launched. Authorities have taken to Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp and Instagram to reach out. Information on routes, how to reach, river fronts, facilities for bathing, transport to inner parking, railway information, medical facilities and other public utilities is largely being circulated. The digital media channels are: Facebook: [facebook.com/simhasthakumbhmela2015](https://www.facebook.com/simhasthakumbhmela2015); Twitter: @Kumbh_Mela_2015; Apps: Nashik Trimbak Kumbh 2015 App and Nashik Kumbhmela live; YouTube: [Simhastha kumbhmela 2015 \(Nashik-Trimbakeshwar\)](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCsimhasthakumbhmela2015).

Kumbh this year will see newly constructed river fronts. Nashik has seven new *ghats* with a length of 2,700 m and Trimbakeshwar has three new *ghats* with a length of 750 m. The connecting roads to these *ghats* are complete.

Road widening and beautification works have been undertaken on a large scale. Work on 405 km in the Public Works Department, 20 km in National Highway limits, 105 km in Municipal Corporation limits and 17 km in Trimbakeshwar municipal limits have been carried out, and 38 small and large bridges have been constructed on these roads. The railway facilities include temporary facilities at Odha and Nashik Road railway stations, FOB extension at Nashik road railway station, development of parking facilities, construction of an additional platform at an expenditure of ₹25 crore and increasing of the length of platform at Deolali.

The State Transport Corporation plans to operate a fleet of 1,000 buses for long-distance transport and 3,000 buses for internal transport. With CCTV facilities at Nashik bus station, bitumen road for Trimbakeshwar bus station and



KUMBATHON

A bunch of researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA and techies led by Nashik-based innovator Sunil Khandbahale, have joined hands to use technology and solve all crowd-related challenges. Leader of the initiative, Ramesh Raskar, Associate Professor, MIT Media Lab together with the team of researchers from MIT along with INDOVATION Nashik and other partners, has identified 50 areas where technology can be used to solve probable challenges during the Kumbh Mela. The initiative involves a wide cross-section of people both inside and outside Nashik—scientists from MIT, students from across India, experts from industry to police and Nashik Municipal Corporation. The multi-year platform, Kumbha.Org now spans areas in health, transport, payments, food, civic issues, housing and so on. The initiative also aims to create an accelerated environment to produce tangible results through the joint collaboration of hands-on innovators and industry experts. Nashik Kumbathon is all about creating social entrepreneurs.

FACILITIES AT SADHUGRAM

Plot size: 300 sq. m
Internal roads: 9 m wide
Service roads: 6 m wide
Street lights: One every 30 m
Plot based facilities
Toilets: 4 (1 commode)
Bath rooms: 5
Water supply: 24x7
Electricity Supply: (2.5 KW) • 4 lights
• 2 points



(Clockwise from below) The new electric sub-station, water reservoir, water purification plant, Nashik Airport Terminal, water tank at Trimbakeshwar, infrastructure works, road works, Nashik Ghat, and new green buses launched by the Maharashtra State Transport Corporation have been developed for the Simhashta Kumbh Mela

construction of Deolali Depot, the STC is ready to serve the devotees. Nashik Airport Terminal is complete. Efforts are on to initiate air services from Nashik. Mahavitaran has placed 62 new generators and expanded capacity of 46 generators to create new capacity of 25 MW. For continuous electric supply, two new sub-stations and three new bays of 33 KV have been built. About 51 km of sky and underground cables have been laid.

New water purification plants with 136 ml at Nashik and 2.60 ml at Trimbakeshwar have been commissioned. New water reservoirs—13 at Nashik and two at Trimbakeshwar are being erected; 21 km of the pipeline as part of the Gautami-Godavari water supply scheme at Trimbakeshwar will serve the city, while 9 km of the pipeline set up at an expenditure of ₹ 27 crore will serve the *akhadas*.

A new building has been set up at the District Hospital with 200 beds. The capacity of Trimbakeshwar Rural Hospital has been expanded by 70 beds. Red Swastik Society of India will train and deploy 500 people across these cities to provide first-aid and medication.

Processing wastewater, drainage management, Kushavarta water purification plant, cleanliness and other works have been completed. The chemical preservation of the ancient temples at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar is also being carried out.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has trained people from various vocations such as engineers, police, doctors, officials of the revenue department and other Government agencies. The employees of the water and sanitation department, including deputy engineers, sanitary inspectors, masons, volunteers and health workers are being trained to meet drinking water requirement, sanitation and related issues. **M**

A CAPTIVATING MELANGE OF HISTORY

Nashik is much more than being the land of the Kumbh. Its rich religious, social and cultural history makes it a place for everyone, says **Mrudula Varaskar**

(Left and facing page) The famous temple of Trimbakeswar and its gallery



A land of myths and legends, temples and caves, Nashik is a paradise for history buffs and tourists alike. Nashik is a city where *Ramayana* and *Mahabharat* meet, Buddhism and Hinduism religiously cross paths and modernism and mythology exist in perfect harmony. Leaping several aeons from 200 BC since Nashik's documented history, the city continues to fascinate even today. Now that the holy city is all set to host the famous Simhastha Kumbh Mela, let us take a trip down its glorious past.

According to folklore, Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman spent some time of their 14-year exile in a small village called Panchvati in Nashik. The place still has a cave called Sita Gupha from where Ravana is believed to have abducted Sita. Today, tourists flock to see the idols of Lord Ram, Sita and Lakshman there.

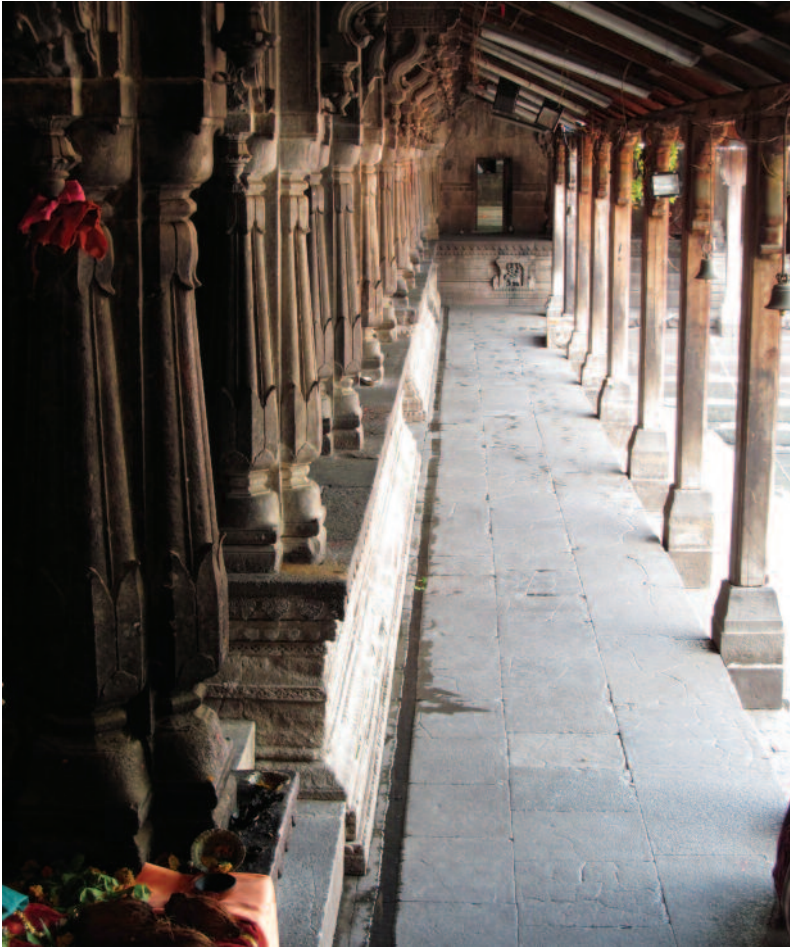
Anjaneri and famous temple of Goddess Saptashrungi are the other trails found from *Ramayana*. Anjaneri Hill is the birthplace of Lord Hanuman, which also has a temple of his mother, Anjani. Though more popular for its scenic treks among adventure seekers, the devout visit the place for its powerful spiritual significance due to its proximity to Trimbakeshwar temple—one of the 12 *jiyotirlings* (marks of Lord Shiva).

Merely 60 km from Nashik, the Saptashrungi temple on Saptashrungi Fort finds mention in *Ramayana* as part of the Dandakaranya forest. It is believed that Hanuman came here in search of the *Sanjeevani* herb for restoring Lakshman's life. There is also Ramkund (a pious river bed) where Lord Ram and Sita used to take bath during their exile. Today, devotees bathe in this popular tank.

Another grand Indian epic, *Mahabharat*, too has impressions on the land, the most famous being Pandav Caves, which exist on the Trivashmi Hills since the second century. Some historians, however, believe that Pandav Caves were actually Buddha Vihars (dwellings of the monks) and that Pandavs never stayed there. Nevertheless, with beautifully carved doorways and sculptures, the caves are a major tourist attraction.

ARCHITECTS OF WONDERS

Nashik has about 205 temples, but some are more famous for their architectural styles. To begin with, Naroshankar temple, built in 1747 in Mayan style of architecture, has intricate designs and beautiful sculptures of animals, birds and trees. Gondeshwar temple has the unique Hemadpanthi style architecture with Lord Shiva's idol and other



small temples in the temple complex. Shree Kalaram temple built by Peshawa's knight is made of black stone with a tip of 2 kg gold.

The Sundarnarayan temple is built at such an angle that the rays of the rising sun on March 21 fall directly on the idols of Lord Vishnu, Goddess Lakshmi and Goddess Saraswati. Kapileshwara temple of Lord Shiva is equally famous, as it is one of the rare one that doesn't have Nandi (bull) at the gate.

Mukti Dham was built by Rajasthani workers in marble and has replicas of 12 *gyotirlings* with some important events of Krishna's life depicted on its walls. Three-storied Jain temple is a recent example of architecture grandeur which is built with white marble and pink sand.

But there is more to Nashik than temples and spirituality. The mention of Nashik dates back to 200 BC since the Mauryan dynasty. In fact, archaeologists have found some samples that may prove that Nashik existed since the Stone Age. But it was after the Mauryan dynasty and during

WHAT IS IN NAME?

In its long history, Nashik was known by various names. The prominent ones are—Trikantaka, named after three demons killed by Lord Vishnu; Nashik from *nasika* (nose in Sanskrit) from the incident of Lakshman cutting off Surpanakha's nose; Nasikya, named by Patanjali dynasty in 145 BC; Govardhan, named by Ushavadat in 2nd century; Triashmi or Trishala, named by Sanskrit poets during Abhira dynasty; Goparashtra, named by Chalukyas in 8th century; and Gulshanabad (a city of roses) by a Muslim saint from Madina in medieval era.

the Satavahana dynasty that Nashik really prospered and became famous for its silk. So much that the silk woven in Baghdad and European countries was known as *nac*, *nacquts*, *nachis* and *naciz*, named after the city.

After Mauryans, the Abhira and Ahir dynasty ruled Nashik when significant investment went for providing medicines to the sick Buddhist monks. Many inscriptions found in various caves and other historical records point to the prominence of Nashik in Traikutakas, Vishnukundins, Kalachuris, Chalukyas of Badami, Rashtrakuta and Chalukya dynasties. But it was during Yadavas of Devgiri that Hemadpanthi style of architecture flourished and so did Marathi language and literature. Propagator of the Mahanubhav cult, Chakradhara preached in Marathi and his followers too contributed greatly to the Marathi literature.

After Yadavs, Nashik was ruled by the Nizams, and in 1636, it was included in the Mughal province of Aurangabad. Since 1751, Marathas ruled Nashik and enriched the city with trading of metal ware, fabrics, grapes and onions. In 1818, Nashik came under the Colonial rule.

The region continued to play a key role during the British rule and became an important trade centre with improved connectivity via the railways. Nashik got Asia's largest golf club inside Deolali Cantonment established by the British. The city also had its first Municipal Corporation in 1864. However, along with good administration by the British, came their growing atrocities on innocent Indians, which eventually led to the fight for Independence.

The first war of independence started in 1857, where amongst many others, the soldier of Peshwas and Nashik's brave son Tatya Tope took on the mighty British. Nashik is also the birthplace of the great freedom fighter Veer Savarkar. Here in Nashik, freedom fighter Anant Laxman Kanhere with his friends shot A.M.T. Jackson, the collector of Nashik in British India. Nashik is a witness to many such events given that many youth took an active part in anti-British agitation as part of the Indian rebellion in 1857.

Even today, Nashik continues to maintain its unique identity. Be its flourishing vineries, movie legend Dadasaheb Phalke's memorial or nation's currency printing press, Nashik is an enchanting potpourri of all things ancient and contemporary. **M**

(Reference: Department of Maharashtra State Gazetteer and official websites of Nashik district and Government of Maharashtra)

ABODE OF THE GODS

If you are visiting Nashik during the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, try to see the other amazing places the district has. **Chandragupta Amritkar** highlights the famous tourist spots in and around Nashik for the travellers



The famous pilgrimage place of Panchvati

A city of temples, Nashik is one of the holiest places for Hindus that hosts thousands of visitors every year. Add to this, its picturesque surroundings, scenic backdrop of the Sahyadri, vineyards, museums and pleasant climate that make the place an ideal tourist destination for anyone, from India and abroad and from any religion.

According to Hindu beliefs, the Panchavati area of Nashik is where Lord Ram stayed with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman during his years of exile. The city today is a beautiful blend of ancient culture and modernity. The onset of monsoon together with the start of Kumbh

Mela—regarded as the most sacred of all Hindu festivals—makes Nashik a paradise for tourists this year. During this Simhastha Kumbh, one can witness the amazing sight of thousands of saints, sages and holy men along with millions of pilgrims from across the globe coming together to take a holy dip in Ramkund. A popular belief is that Ram had his bath here during his stay. Let us visit a few important places of Nashik that people must visit.

PANCHVATI

Panchvati would be the perfect place to start your tour. River Godavari flows through Nashik and its northern part is called

Panchvati. It was the place where Ram, Lakshman and Sita made their home while serving the exile. The word Panchvati literally means 'garden of five banyan trees' (Pancham Vat Vriksha). The trees still exist on the temple premises.

KALARAM TEMPLE

Built by Sardar Odhekar of Peshwa in 1790, the temple is 70 ft. high with beautifully sculptured idols of Rama and his wife Sita and brother Lakshman. It is an important pilgrimage site famous for the massive procession that is held here annually during Ramnavami, Chaitra Padwa (the new year day for Hindus) and Dasara. Besides, the place is worth a visit for its

artistic work. The special features of the temple is the black stone it is set in and its apex made up of gold. The stones used in the temple were brought from Ramshej 200 years ago. According to estimates, the temple was built by 2,000 workers in 12 years with a cost of ₹23 lakh. Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar performed Satyagraha to allow entry of Harijans into the temple in 1930.

SITA GUMPHA

Located on the western door of the Kalaram temple is the cave where it is believed Ram's wife Sita had been staying when Ravan kidnapped her to seek revenge from Ram's younger brother Lakshman for cutting the nose of his sister Surpanakha. The *lakshman rekha* drawn by Lakshman for protection of Sita is located at some distance from the caves. The Shivling that Sita worshipped is still seen in the cave.

TAPOVAN

Tapovan literally means precincts reserved for meditation and penance. River Godavari's silent gurgling stream, lush green woods together with dense flora and fauna make Tapovan an idyllic picnic spot. However, during the Kumbh Mela, this place is bound to be over-crowded by



sages who throng the place in order to meditate. As per beliefs, it was here that Lakshman cut the nose of Surpanakha, sister of demon king Ravan. This place has temples dedicated to Lakshman and Hanuman.

KAPALESHWAR TEMPLE

The temple built in the 14th century is dedicated to Lord Shiva. This fabulous shrine is located near Ramkund in Panchvati in the serene environs of the sacred river Godavari. Absence of the idol of Nandi in the temple premises is a mystery given that generally all Shiva temples have an idol of the bull overlooking the master sanctum.

SUNDARNARAYAN TEMPLE

A Vaishnavite temple, this temple was built by Gangadhar Yashwant Chandrachud in 1756. It has Vishnu as the main deity, flanked by Lakshmi and Saraswati. There are small carvings of Hanuman, Narayan and Indra on the walls. The east-facing temple has three porches with

balcony seating, lobed arches and globular domes. Angled eaves and serpentine pediments head the doorways inside the porches. A significant feature of this finely carved stone temple is that it is erected at an angle such that on March 21, rays of the rising sun first fall right upon the idols.

VEDA MANDIR

One of the few institutions imparting Indian culture, *Vedas* and *Puranas* is the Shri Kailash Math or the Veda Mandir located at Nashik that attracts students from all over India. Free training and education on *Vedas* and *Puranas* is given to the students. Veda Mandir was founded by a private trust and on its premises is an elegant temple, a classic example of modern architecture. The foyer of the temple is large and adorned with attractive glasses and floodlights. The interiors of this pretty shrine are laid with Italian marble. The temple contains idols of Ram, his consort Sita and brother Lakshman.



Dadasaheb Phalke Smarak

The temple also has a beautiful idol of Guru Gangeswaraji.

CHAMBHAR LENI

Nashik and the adjoining areas are famous for scores of temples and holy places. One among such sacred spots is Teerthraj Gajpantha, which is a holy place of the Jains. Chambhar Leni caves are an element of this famous place. Perched on top of the hill at an elevation of 400 feet, these command a panoramic view of the valley below. The popular belief is that King of Mysore, Chamaraj built Chambharlena in 600 BC, bringing the caves the name Chamer caves or Chambhar caves.

PANDAVLENI

Built by the Jain kings, Pandavleni caves, also known as Trirashmi caves, are a cluster of Hinayana Buddhist rock-cut caves carved between the 1st century BC and 2nd century AD. The caves are located on the Trivashmi hills, 8 km south of Nashik. Most of the caves are *viharas* (Buddhist monasteries) except for the

18th cave, which is a *chaitya* (prayer hall with a stupa at one end). Out of the 24 caves, 3, 10 and 18 caves are noted for their outstanding sculptures. These caves house idols of Buddha, Jain Teerthankara Vrishabhdeo, Ambikadevi, Veer Manibhadraji and the Bodhi Sattvas.

DADASAHEB PHALKE SMARAK

The memorial of the founder of Indian cinema and film industry, Dadasaheb Phalke is located close to the Pandav Leni caves. Born in Nashik, Dhundiraj Govind Phalke produced the first Indian film *Raja Harishchandra*. He went on to produce several films and documentaries till 1932 from a studio in Nashik. He made 95 movies and 26 short films in his career span of 19 years. The memorial is spread across 29 acres with a well-maintained garden in its courtyard. The building has a place for meditation, a conference hall and an exhibition centre. It displays the works of Dadasaheb Phalke and is worth a visit.



Pandavleni is a chain of 24 caves of the Buddhist era



Jain Mandir at Vilhoul in Nashik

JAIN MANDIR

The Jain community has recently built a beautiful temple to install many of their important religious leaders or Tirthankars at Vilhoul in Nashik. This shrine consists of a three-storied architectural grandeur of its own type different than the other temples. The temple has been constructed using white marble and pink sand and without any use of steel, cement or modern building material. The *shikhar* (peak) of the temple is also noteworthy because of its remarkable carvings. The visitors, especially Jain devotees, make a trip here to worship Parshvanath (Chaumukhi) and Mahaveer Swami. The ground floor of the eloquent building houses a discourse hall, where sermons and meditations take place. The 24th Tirthankara of the Jains is a deity of this temple. It is said that this idol is massive, weighing 12 tonnes and made up of *panchdhatu* (five materials).

DUDHSAGAR WATERFALLS

Located in Someshwar is the



Dudhsagar Waterfalls

Dudhsagar waterfalls, a favourite picnic spot for city dwellers. The waterfall reaches its zenith during the monsoon season. It is 10 m long and the water is milky white, giving it the name Dudhsagar. It is a favoured spot for film shootings. Carved steps on the rocks make access to the top of this lovely spot effortless.

MUKTIDHAM TEMPLE

Just 7 km away from Nashik is the famous Muktidham Temple built with white Makrana marble. Built by

Late Jayram Bhai Bytco, it displays almost all deities of the Hindu pantheon. It also showcases the facsimile of all the 12 *dyotirlings* (radiant marks of Shiva) of India. It is believed that a holy *darshan* of the shrine provides as much virtue as a visit to four holy places, making the magnificent shrine a privileged pilgrim centre. The architecture of this temple is known to be unusual. The temple interiors are exquisitely carved with 18 chapters of *Bhagavad Gita* inscribed on the walls.

ARTILLERY CENTRE

Situated in Nashik is also the biggest artillery centre in Asia. The centre was shifted from Pakistan in 1947. It provides training to soldiers of the Indian Army for one of the most advanced artillery weapons, the Bofors gun. The area is under military surveillance.

VEER SAVARKAR SMARAK, BHAGUR

Bhagur is the birthplace of freedom fighter Swatantrya Veer Savarkar and hence has historical and national importance. The place is also known for a beautiful temple of Bhagur Devi. Bhagur is situated 3 km from Deolali Camp and 17 km from Nashik road.

ANJANERI

The birthplace of Hanuman, Anjaneri is located on the Nashik-Trimbakeshwar road. A mountainous terrain, it offers a perfect location for rock climbing. It is a nature's delight, thanks to the greenery. Anjaneri is one of the best places to visit during

the rains. You can find a temple of Anjani (mother of Hanuman) at the top of the Anjaneri Hill.

INSTITUTE OF NUMISMATIC STUDIES

The Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies was established in 1980. A unique museum, it is considered to be one of its kinds in Asia. The museum provides an authentic history of Indian numismatics through photographs, articles, line drawings, replicas and real coins. Located close to Anjaneri Hill, the institute undertakes workshops to promote coin collections in India.

DHAMMA GIRI, IGATPURI

Dhamma Giri means Hill of Dhamma. It is one of the largest Vipassana meditation centres in the world. It is co-located with the Vipassana Research Institute at Igatpuri in Maharashtra, approximately three hours drive from Mumbai. The





Vipassana International Academy located in Igatpuri, Maharashtra

meditation centre that gave its first discourse in 1976 today sees scores of students coming annually. Its pagoda has over 400 cells for individual meditation. It has a visitor centre wherein people can have depictions and stories from the life of Buddha. It also plays a short film on the Vipassana centre and its ideology. For those who want to experience what they teach, there is a 20-minute session of meditation technique (called *ana pana*), which helps you observe your breath as it is. Volunteers

help in guiding tourists and show them around together with a visit to the grand stupa, a few miles away. The centre conducts a 10-day residential course free of charge for the enthusiasts.

GONDESHWAR TEMPLE

Weathered by the wind and sun for centuries, one splendid black-stone temple is of Sri Gondeshwar at the northeast of Sinnar town. The temple is built as per Hemadpanthi style of architecture popularised by Hemadri Pandit, a minister



Gondeshwar Temple



Saptashrungi Devi Temple at Wani

during the Yadav dynasty. This stone wonder is still the largest, most complete and best-preserved structure from the medieval temples of Deccan in the Indo-Aryan style. It is a *Shaiva Panchayatana*, or a group of five temples within a large enclosure. The central shrine is dedicated to Lord Shiva and the remaining four are dedicated to Goddess Parvati and God Ganesh, Sun and Vishnu. The entire temple is built on a raised platform to facilitate *pradakshina* and provide a wonderful view of the sculptures all around the walls of the shrine. The temple is unique in design, perfect in proportion with exquisite stone carvings.

SAPTASHRUNGI DEVI TEMPLE

At Wani, about 60 km from Nashik, is the famous temple of Goddess Saptashrungi. According to Hindu beliefs, the Goddess Saptashrungi Nivasini dwells within the seven mountain peaks (*sapta* means seven and *shrung* means peak). The temple is also known as one of the “three and half *shaktipeeths*” of Maharashtra. It is also

NAVIGATOR

GETTING THERE

Nashik is located in the north-west region of Maharashtra. It is among the major cities in the State and can be reached by road, airways and railway.

By Road: Apart from State transport buses, private buses and taxis ply to Nashik. The city is 166 km from Mumbai and 209 km from Pune by road.

By Train: Nashik's railway station is considered one of the most important railway stations in the network of Central Railway. Every train passing through the region stops at Nashik.

By Air: Nearest international airport to Nashik is Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport. Another important domestic airport is in Pune. Nashik also has two airports, Ozar Airport and Gandhinagar Airport.

among the 51 *shaktipeeths* located on the Indian subcontinent and a place where the right arm of Goddess Sati (first wife of Shiva) fell. The idol of the Goddess is carved in a cave at the base of a sheer scarp rock face. The Goddess is said to be *swayambhu* (self-manifested) on a rock on the sheer face of a mountain. The climb up the hill is tricky. Every April, the temple hosts a major fair, hosting many devotees and travellers. **M**

A ROAD TO THE FUTURE

The coastal road project in Mumbai comes a step closer to reality, as it gets green signal from the Centre



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and bureaucrats with Union Minister for Environment and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar during the coastal road project meeting in New Delhi



KEY POINTS OF THE COASTAL ROAD PROJECT

- A 34-km-long coastal stretch to decongest Mumbai traffic
- It is to be constructed along the western line—Nariman Point to Kandivali
- Set to transform Mumbai into a megapolis
- The project not to breach high-tide line and be within 300-400 m of the coastline
- Estimated cost of the project is ₹10,000 crore
- The four-lane road will have two corridors totally reserved for BRTS
- The road will cost one-sixth of the cost needed for a sea-link project
- It will create 91 hectares of open and green spaces
- Two undersea tunnels will help avoid construction of road in congested areas
- Promenades, gardens, playgrounds and public spaces to be created
- The project to be completed within 5-6 years
- It is conceived to be completed on public-private partnership model

The Mumbai coastal road project, which is all set to transform Mumbai, is on the fast track now. Following his meeting with the Union Minister of State for Environment and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis informed that the Union Government has given green signal to the impending project. “Now that the Centre has given a green signal to the Mumbai coastal road project, it stands to become a major gift to the people of Mumbai; it is like a dream come true,” he said after meeting the Union Minister in New Delhi.

Devendra Fadnavis said that the coastal road project will decongest the traffic of Mumbai and create 91 hectares of green spaces. “This would lead to the transformation of Mumbai and would take it to the next infra,” he emphasised.

Presently, there is 60 per cent of traffic on the western expressway. The construction of coastal road would help ease and decongest Mumbai traffic along the western coastline. The coastal road will help reduce the journey time of commuters from 2.5 hours to one hour. “The timeline of Mumbai coastal road clearance has been drawn. The Draft Notification came by June 15 and the final notification is expected by August 15, 2015,” the Chief Minister added.

Devendra Fadnavis has informed that there won't be any dilution of the high tide line or changes to the prevalent restrictions imposed on construction activity in coastal zones. Even the real estate would not be misused. Care would be taken with regards to transportation and green spaces. The Maharashtra Government has assured the Union Government of sticking to the requisite norms throughout. “We have agreed to furnish it. The Centre also wanted an assurance from the State regarding replantation of some mangrove-laden tracts and we have committed to fulfil all legal obligations in this regard,” he said.

In a bid to make Mumbai a city of global standards and replete with good infrastructure, the Centre considered the possibility of modifying CRZ norms to permit reclamation of the land along the city's coastline for crucial road projects. The road, considered integral to plans for transforming India's business capital into a world-class megapolis, has been planned as a freeway to connect South Mumbai to the western suburbs through a high-speed corridor. **M**

STATE'S DREAM, PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

Supported by public participation, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is all set to transform rural Maharashtra, says **Shubhangi Khapre**



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis surveying the work done under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan

On January 26, 2015 when Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis declared the flagship programme, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, the foremost challenge was to tackle drought across 25,000 villages in the State. In less than six months, the water conservation campaign has turned into a people's movement sweeping across rural Maharashtra.

Today, several hundred people in every village are physically lending their selfless service to rewrite a new episode in Maharashtra making water a common mission. As one travels across rural areas, Jalyukta Shivar emerges as the new *mantra*, which is not only expected to address water scarcity, but also transform the outlook of the villagers towards water management.

Atrenanda Patil, a farmer in village Selu, has given a generous donation of ₹1 lakh for the construction of 4 km nalla bund. On both sides of the ongoing project are sprawling water-starved fields that have never been able to deliver golden harvest. The village, in district Latur and with a population of 2,500, has geared up to raise ₹5 lakh for State Government's water conservation project to end its water woes.

In neighbouring Budhoda village, women have come forward to mobilise ₹80,000 for the ongoing water conservation project. In Shiradon village in





Osmanabad, farmers, setting aside their differences, have made revival of Dhori river a common cause. At Ujni village, revival of river Terna has become a mega project that has united the natives. The tales across 6,202 villages dotted across Maharashtra depict a sign of change, where people no longer are questioning a Government project. Instead, they are adopting the programme and willing to shoulder the responsibility.

The Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan has turned into a people's movement across Maharashtra. The ongoing one lakh water conservation projects across Vidarbha, Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, Konkan and North Maharashtra are set to transform the landscape of the State, as villagers are competing with each other to get ahead in implementing the programme.

Currently, the contribution from people across these 6,202 villages stands at a whopping ₹248 crore. In less than four months, 64,234 works have been completed, and are already displaying results after the first rains. Or else how does one explain

(Clockwise from top left) A work done under Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan; Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis waters a sapling, surveys a work and takes a closer look of a newly built reservoir

Currently, the contribution from the villagers across these 6,202 villages is a whopping ₹248 crore. In less than four months, 64,234 works have been completed displaying results after the first rains

the availability of water in a well at Dahiwadi?

Across rural Maharashtra, the response and participation from the residents and the support of the administration have given the Abhiyan a new meaning apart from its stated objective to combat drought in the State. The campaign has turned into a 'joy of giving' and 'joy of sharing' where people have reckoned water conservation is not all about engineering, concrete and cement, but a mission undertaken to usher in economic prosperity in their respective villages.

"The primary objective of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is to make Maharashtra drought-free. In phases, we would make 25,000 villages reeling under drought water sufficient by 2019. This year, we have shortlisted 6,202 villages in the first phase," says Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

In recent months, Chief Minister has visited all the districts across Maharashtra to review the work, lauding the participation of people. "It was my endeavour to take up the Abhiyan with a missionary zeal. The response and participation

■ PROGRESS REPORT TILL JUNE 12, 2015
JALYUKTA SHIVAR ABHIYAN

NASHIK DIVISION

Total villages	941
Total work	19,876
Completed	12,591
Ongoing	7,285
Villages with public participation	682
Work	704

AMRAVATI

Total villages	1,396
Total work	9,534
Completed	6,248
Ongoing	3,286
Villages with public participation	462
Work	932

NAGPUR

Total villages	1077
Total work	11,250
Completed	8,456
Ongoing	2,794
Villages with public participation	289
Work	385

PUNE

Total villages	903
Total work	27,479
Completed	17,904
Ongoing	9,575
Villages with public participation	635
Work	1,064

KONKAN

Total villages	203
Total work	4,793
Completed	3,491
Ongoing	1,302
Villages with public participation	38
Work	71

AURANGABAD

Total villages	1682
Total work	26,222
Completed	15,544
Ongoing	10,678
Villages with public participation	736
Work	1,081

TOTAL

Villages	6202
Total work	99,154
Completed	64,234
Ongoing	34,390
Villages with public participation	2,842
Work	4,237
Total contribution from people	₹248 crore
Corporate funds	₹200 crore



The primary objective of Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is to make Maharashtra drought-free. In phases, we would make 25,000 villages reeling under drought, water sufficient by 2019. This year, we have shortlisted 6,202 villages in the first phase. It was my endeavour to take the Abhiyan with a missionary zeal. The response and participation is heartening.

—Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister

There is a large number of farmers, who voluntarily carry the desilted soil, which has become useful manure for their fields. Lifting the desilted soil is also a mammoth task.

—Saoji Bajirao Deshmukh
Kati, Tuljapur
Osmanabad

Today, individuals come to us asking when we will start a project in their villages. The awareness campaign through Dindi Yatra (dialogue with villagers) has helped.

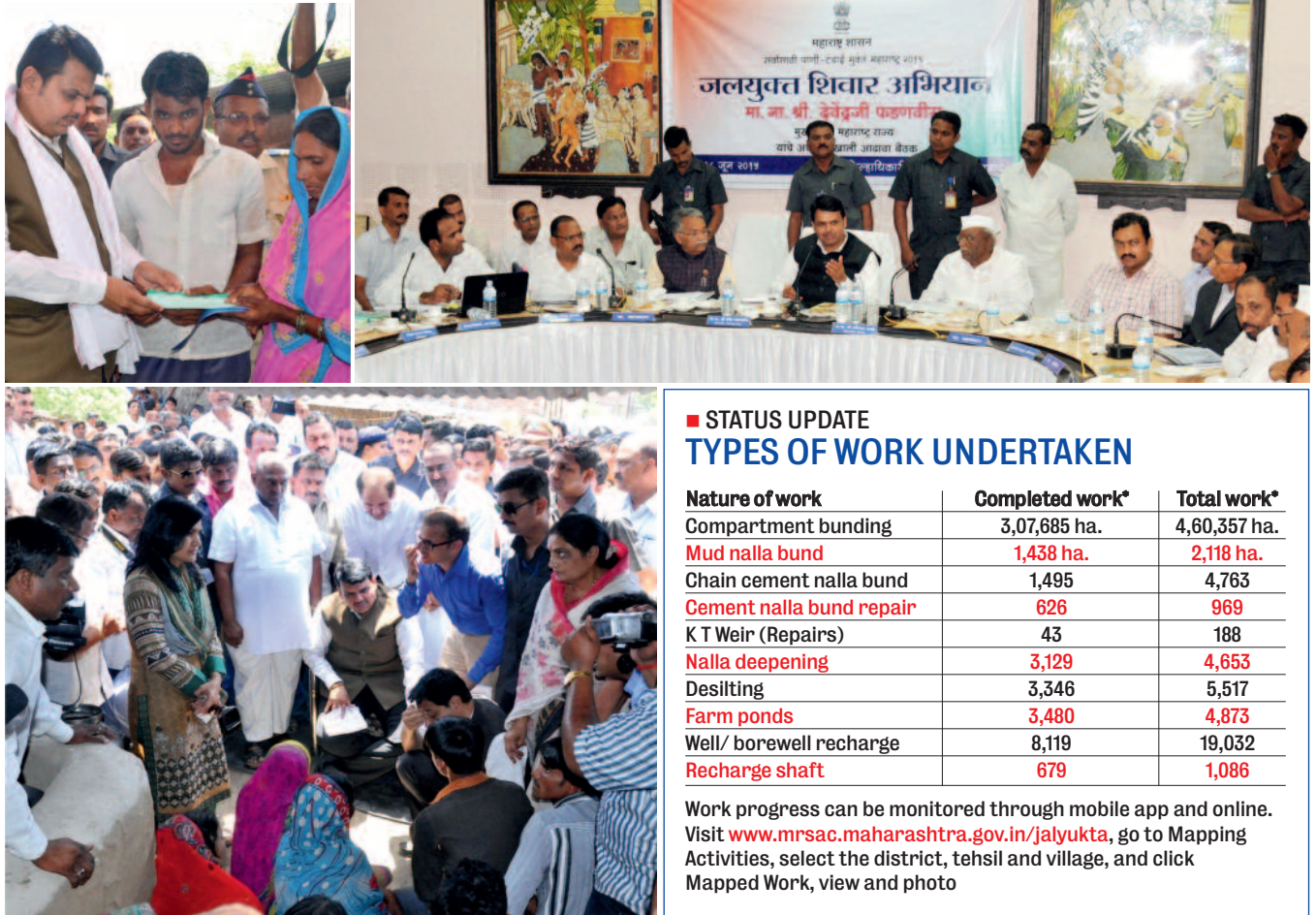
—Prashant Narnaware
Collector,
Osmanabad



is heartening,” he said, adding, “At the outset, we ensured that the projects would not be contractor driven. The projects have been evolved keeping in mind the ground realities and requirement of every village.”

Apart from new projects, a lot of emphasis has been given to the revival of existing structures, which have been lying abandoned or in a state of neglect for decades. In Osmanabad alone, there are 6,400 old structures, which are being revived to make the district water surplus. The ongoing project is a pointer to the paradigm shift in Government’s policy on water conservation. Instead of focusing on big-budget, mega-dam projects, it has concentrated on small and medium projects with lesser budget. The Government has given ₹1,000 crore for these projects.

An elderly farmer, Vinayak Patil (70) reveals, “In Shiradon village, when we discussed the revival of river Dhori, many wondered what would be the benefit and who would have to contribute. But in less than 48 hours, once realising the worth of the



project, people were relentlessly participating in the work.” He recalls, “As a young boy, I would play along the river bank and drink its water, which was clean. Now, it has shrunk beyond imagination.”

Every village has evolved its own formula for the project. The residents who cannot contribute in terms of finance or physical work are told to play the role of project monitor to ensure quality work. At village Kati, Tuljapur (Osmanabad), Saoji Bajirao Deshmukh says, “There are large number of farmers, who voluntarily carry the desilted soil, which has become useful manure for their fields. Lifting the desilted soil is also a mammoth task.”

“Today, individuals come to us, asking when we will start a project in their villages. The awareness campaign through *Dindi Yatra* (dialogue with villagers) has helped,” shares Osmanabad collector Prashant Narnaware. The onset of monsoons has already paid dividends, as water levels in wells have shown a remarkable increase. At Kati village, Nagonath Shendge points towards the village well,

(Clockwise from top left) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis lauds public participation, holds a meeting and interacts with the villagers

In rural Nagpur, the sight of flowing water along 17 km stretch in river Rena has brought relief to the farmers. At a village in district Dhule, the well water recorded 4 m increase in the first few rains

which is swelling with water. He says, “For last three years, the well was dry. As a result, several farmers gave up cultivation of grapes.” Now, the deepening of nalla and compartment bunding works has led to water storage and revival of wells.

In rural Nagpur, the sight of flowing water along 17 km stretch in river Rena has brought relief to the farmers. At a village in district Dhule, the well water recorded increase of 4 m in the initial showers. Every completed project has created additional water storage to serve people’s requirement. A case in point is a compartment bunding at village Kati spread across 639 hectares and built with an expenditure of ₹51 lakh. It promises water storage of 287 TMC. Another project at village Dahiwadi constructed from ₹25 lakh has water storage of 30 TMC. Whether it is *pazar talo*, deepening of nalla, river revival or compartment bunding, the cumulative water storage is expected to raise the water tables. [M](#)

—The writer is Senior Editor, Indian Express



A DREAM CALLED DEVELOPMENT

A people-centric approach initiated by the Prime Minister will see the States have a greater say in the implementation of the urban development initiatives



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister for Urban Development M. Venkaiah Naidu at the launch in New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said private property developers should not decide how a city should grow and the decision should be taken by residents and the city leadership, as he unveiled three mega flagship urban schemes aimed at developing cities as engines of growth: AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation); Smart Cities Mission; and Housing for All (PMAY). “Under these schemes we can go ahead and we can do it together (Centre and States),” said the PM.

Smart Cities Mission aims at development of entire urban eco-system of cities covering physical, social, economic and institutional infrastructure. The objective is to enable better living and driving economic growth for the benefit of all sections. Under AMRUT, focus will be on providing basic infrastructure like providing tap water and sewer connections to every urban household, solid waste management, provision of roads and public transport. Promotion of urban reforms to improve urban governance will also be supported. AMRUT includes 500 cities with a population of above one lakh each. Under PMAY, it is proposed to build 2 crore houses for urban

The smart city project aims at development of 100 Smart Cities, while 500 cities are being identified under AMRUT. Housing for all aims at 2 crore affordable homes for poor

poor including economically weaker sections and low income groups in urban areas by the year 2022. This Mission has components like In-situ Slum Redevelopment with private sector participation using land as resource, Affordable Housing through Credit Linked Subsidy. Under these components, central assistance will be in the range of ₹ 1 lakh to ₹2.30 lakh.

Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis shared the ideas with the Prime Minister, Union Urban Development Minister, M.Venkaiah Naidu, Minister of State Babul Suprio, Haryana Chief Minister, Manoharlal

Khattar, Deputy Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Nirmal Kumar Singh. Housing Minister, Prakash Mehta and Water Resources Minister, Girish Mahajan. Minister of State for Housing Ranjit Patil, Secretary to the Chief Minister's office, Milind Mhaikar and State Urban Development Department Secretary Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar attended the event. State local representatives including 25 Municipal Commissioners, 24 Mayors and 26 President of Municipal Councils also took part in the meet. **M**



CLEANLINESS, A RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL

Besides public participation, strong will in political leadership and unflinching support of administration can only make Maharashtra clean and healthy, says **Kartik Lokhande**

At the launch of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on October 2, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that India would be a clean country if its 125 crore citizens decide not to litter. To realise Prime Minister's dream of a Clean India, Government of Maharashtra has launched the *Saptapadi Swachhatechi* campaign. The campaign has been launched to make Maharashtra the first litter-free or garbage-free State in the country.

Under the campaign, Urban Development Department had organised a workshop of Mayors,

(Clockwise from above) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis administrators oath to officials and the participants



chiefs of municipal councils, Municipal Commissioners and chief officers of municipal councils from Nagpur Division at Chitnavis Centre, Nagpur, on June 12. The campaign covers various aspects, viz., 100 per cent utilisation of toilets, collection-transport-processing of garbage, massive participation of people, sewage treatment, making Maharashtra cleaner and greener. The participants of the workshop had several queries about the campaign and its components. These queries were answered in a question-answer session. Manisha Patankar-Mhaishkar, Secretary, Urban Development Department and Nodal Secretary, Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan, Meeta Rajiv Lochan, Commissioner and Director of Municipal Administration, and Utkarsha Kawdi answered these queries. Shyam Wardhane, Chairman, Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT) and Shravan Hardikar, Municipal Commissioner, Nagpur, were present in the workshop.

As is the case, more than 20,000 MT of garbage is generated daily in Maharashtra. The participation of local bodies as well as people is required to reduce the quantum of garbage generated, and to ensure proper management of dry and wet garbage. Over 31 lakh families out of 1.08 crore families in the State do not have facility of toilets. Of these, 23 lakh still use public toilets, but the rest defecate in the open. To change this scenario, the participants of the workshop



"CITIES SHOULD BE CLEANER, SMARTER"

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that Centre and State both were working on sustainable technology to resolve the issue of garbage. "Cleanliness is the first step towards making cities smarter. To ensure participation of people, elected representatives at all levels need to assume leadership in the larger cause," he said.

"LET'S JOIN HANDS TO MAKE CITIES CLEAN"

Efforts, passion and commitment are the values required to make any campaign successful. "We all have these values in us. We just need to channelise our energies towards achieving the objectives of Saptapadi Swachhatechi," said Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar, Secretary, Urban Development Department and Nodal Secretary, Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. Use of positive energies, technology, and people's participation can help in achieving the seemingly impossible tasks. She urged on making cities, Nagpur Division, Vidarbha region, and the State cleaner.

resolved to implement effectively the concept of toilet in every household.

During the day-long workshop, the officials stressed upon the need to inculcate cleanliness as a habit. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis—who made it a point to guide the participants of the workshop starting with the resolve of realising the dream of making Maharashtra clean—emphasised that the cities need to be clean apart from being smart. The participants vowed to work towards accomplishing the objectives of Saptapadi Swachhatechi.

Seema Dhamdhare, Joint Secretary, Urban

“

We pledge to actively participate in the Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan.

In the days to come, we will make Nagpur an ideal in cleanliness.

—Pravin Datke
Mayor, Nagpur

Being inclined to cleanliness, I pledge to make Chandrapur clean and beautiful.

—Rakhi
Kancharlaware
Mayor,
Chandrapur

I pledge to make Wardha clean and beautiful.

—Triveni
Kuttarmare
President,
Wardha

We pledge to make Deoli clean by end of 2015.

—Shobhatai
Tadas,
President, Deoli

By making pledge of cleanliness, efforts will be made to carry it forward.

—Manglatai
Atram
President, Rajura

We take the pledge to make Brahmapuri clean, beautiful and waste free.

—Rita Urade
President,
Brahmapuri

Development Department, started the first session of the workshop with an audio-visual film on Saptapadi Swachhatechi. The film suggested mandatory usage of toilets, discussed the problem of garbage and measures to be taken, and other aspects of the campaign. Next, Meeta Rajiv Lochan threw light on various aspects relating to garbage. "Almost 70 per cent of the total garbage in State is generated in urban areas, but it is not segregated. It needs to be segregated for proper management," she said. She also stressed upon the effective use of technology to get better results. Positive attitude will bring about the desired change, she added.

Manisha Patankar-Mhaikar urged the Mayors, Municipal Commissioners, chiefs and Chief Officers of municipal councils, to take lead in implementing the campaign. She assured them the support from the administration. "Strong will in political leadership and unflinching support of the administration work wonders and impossible becomes possible," she said. Focussing on the element of proper planning to achieve the goals set, she said that passionate efforts to implement the plan would make Maharashtra a smart State.

In the second session of the workshop, Utkarsha Kawdi made presentation on how to make cities free from open defecation. She spoke on the schemes for construction of toilets, responsibility with the administration and credit supply to beneficiaries. She informed that credit was being supplied through self-help groups also.

Among the participants, Sheela Borkar, Chief Officer of Mohpa Municipal Council, said that coverage of toilets would be 100 per cent in Mohpa by the end of financial year 2015-16. Sudhir Shambharkar, Municipal Commissioner, Chandrapur, sought funds.

Praveen Datke, Mayor, Nagpur; Rakhi Kancharlaware, Mayor, Chandrapur; Triveni Kuttarmare, President, Wardha Municipal Council; Shobhatai Tadas, President, Deoli Municipal Council; Manglatai Atram of Rajura, Rita Urade of Brahmapuri, Reena Therkar of Mul, Anil Dhanorkar of Bhadravati, Janabai Pimpalshende of Warora, Rajani Motghare of Paoni, Abhishek Karemore of Tumsar, Vinod Jadhav of Wadsa-Desaiganj, Vidya Kamble of Gadchandur, Kunda Paunikar of Umred, Pandharinath Kapse of Hinganghat, Durgesh Purohit of Arvi; Pramod Wankhede, Administrator of Chimur Municipal Council, and Chief Officers of various municipal councils took oath of working for the cause of clean Maharashtra. **M**

—The writer is Senior Reporter, The Hitavada



NOT JUST A PLEDGE, BUT A MOVEMENT

Cleanliness is a learning process, conveyed the cleanliness workshop in Kolhapur. The meet led to many ideas on planning and implementation, says **Samrat Phadnis**

To assure its complete commitment and enthusiasm for cleanliness, the Urban Development Department, Pune Division organised a workshop, Swachhatechi Sankalp, Saptadi Swachhatechi. The workshop proved to be an open platform and incredible brainstorming opportunity for the executive members and officers of five municipal corporations and 43 municipal councils of the division comprising Pune, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara and Solapur districts.

Minister of State for Home Ranjit Patil joined the discussions with elected representatives and Government officials of the five districts and listened to their concepts in length. "Cleanliness is worship, a religion and a key to healthy life," he told the audience and appealed them to participate in the Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan, which he called a freedom struggle for cleanliness.

"Maharashtra is facing severe problems of cleanliness and health, especially in the rural areas. The two areas, cleanliness and health are interlinked. While becoming smart, the cities also need to adopt cleanliness. It's a social requirement. Elected representatives are the trustees of society and they should seek society's participation to make the mission successful. Let's remember the work done by Mahatma Gandhi, Sant Kabir and Sant Gadgebaba and make the mission a social movement," added the Minister of State for Home.

Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar, Secretary, Urban Development Department and Nodal Secretary, Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan invited the audience to be consistent in the mission, if the

By October 2, our village will become clean. Presently, there are 220 toilets in the village. To make the villages defecation free, applications are being disbursed.

—**Manisha Gawde, President, Shirur**

With the help of Municipal Council, scheme to distribute dustbins will be launched. We pledge to make our village clean and beautiful.

—**Shubhangi Biranje, President, Ichalkaranji**

The city has underground sewerage and 99.99 per cent toilets. We pledge to achieve the rest by October 2.

—**Ujjwala Toshniwal, President, Mahabaleshwar**

State is willing to become clean by October 2, 2019. "Let us not limit ourselves with determination only. It is everybody's right to have a toilet. No angel will come to clean our village. We need to take the first step," she said.

Let it be Ichalkaranji's Shubhangi Biranje or Kagal's Sangita Gadekar or Daund's Ankusha Shinde, the women councillors, who had recently become the council chairpersons, inspired by the UDD Secretary's remarkable address, declared accepting the challenge to make the towns clean. Senior council chairpersons such as Mangaladevi Shinde from Ashta and Ujjwala Toshniwal from Mahabaleshwar expressed confidence to shoulder the responsibility.

Meeta Rajiv Lochan, Director, Municipal Council Administration and Commissioner, praised the projects implemented by Kagal Municipal Council. "Councils should start a pilot project in a specific locality to demonstrate how the mission can achieve success. They should come up with facilities such as *ghanta gadi* and toll-free number for the citizens to register a complaint," she said.

In the workshop, conducted at Shahu Sabhagruh in Shivaji University, Deputy Secretary, Urban Development Department, Seema Dhamdhare gave a presentation of Swachhatechi Saptadi. The nationally acclaimed solid waste management project of Pune Municipal Corporation was presented as a case study by Commissioner Kunal Kumar. Pune has established ward-wise solid waste management projects, which have benefitted the corporation.

Rajiv Jadhav, Commissioner, Pimpri-Chinchwad and P. Siva Sankar, Commissioner, Kolhapur informed about the projects implemented by their municipal corporations for the solid waste management and their plans for the mission. "Pimpri-Chinchwad has a population of 20 lakh. We have set the target of October 2, 2017. Along with Government's ₹12,000 grant (for making toilets), we will also give assistance of ₹4,000. Our efforts are to give package of ₹20,000 through corporate social responsibility," shared Rajiv Jadhav.

Pravin Dongare, Deputy Mayor, Solapur, Vivek Kamble, Mayor, Sangli-Miraj-Kupwad, Alandi's Chief Executive Officer Vinayak Aundhkar, and Lonavala's Chief Executive Officer Ganesh Shete enlightened the audience on initiatives they have planned and launched in their respective areas.

In the second session, Janvani's Director Kiran Kulkarni spoke on the topic, Scientific Methods of Solid Waste Management. Experts Nahturam Munde and Sameer Rege talked on zero waste system, role of local self-government, decentralised system for the disposal of waste, cost savings through such experiments, making manure using organic waste converter machine and projects started by Aundh (Pune), Trissur municipality in Kerala and Mapusa municipality in Goa.

An enthusiastic participant, Manohar Shinde, Deputy President, Ashhta said, "Before the announcement of Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan in Maharashtra, Malkapur Nagar Panchayat made provision of ₹10,000 for construction of toilets. We pledge to make village clean before September 30."

Another official, Ramesh Patil, President, Barshi, said, "Those who intend to construct toilet will be given grant. We aim to make the city 100 per cent open defecation free. We pledge to make our city clean by December 2016."

Solapur is already taking initiatives to become clean and green. According to Praveen Dongre, Deputy Mayor, Solapur, the city generates about 500 tonne of waste. "Of this 50 per cent is used for solid waste projects and remaining is used for power generation. This power is used for street lights in the city," he added. Bhushan Gaikwad, President, Wai underlined the efforts being taken for building toilets. "Every citizen, who intends to construct toilet, will be given grant," he said.

A video of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis' appeal to participate in the Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan was showed to the audience, encouraging everyone to be part of the mission. **M**

—The writer is Assistant Editor, The Times of India, Kolhapur



■ WORKSHOP: NASHIK

WILLPOWER AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Use political willpower, administrative planning, people participation, funds and the technology surging ahead from it, and make your city clean and beautiful..." was the appeal made by Manisha Patankar Mhaiskar, Secretary, Urban Development and Nodal Secretary, Resolve to be Clean campaign.

Manisha Mhaiskar was speaking at the first session of a one-day workshop for Mayor and commissioners of all the municipal corporations and President and Chief Executive Officers of municipal councils at the programme, Nashik Division Resolves Cleanliness. Municipal Administration Director and Commissioner, Meeta Rajiv Lochan; Divisional Commissioner Eknath Dawle; Joint Secretary, Urban Development, Seema Dhamdhare; and others were present on the event organised at Dr. Munje Institute. The workshop was the fourth organised under the Clean Maharashtra Campaign.

Manisha Mhaiskar said that although the campaigns led by Sant Gadge Baba and others were successful, thought has not been given to processing the solid waste so far. While development in the sectors of education, health and basic infrastructure has been huge, city outskirts are laden with waste. This picture needs to change. Elected representatives and administration have the power to totally revamp the city. People always support persons bringing about clean, green and beautiful cities. Union and State Governments have also prioritised cleanliness. While planning cleanliness, funds need to be utilised on priority. She expressed confidence that with a firm resolve by political leaders, cleanliness will definitely be achieved.

We pledge to make city of Dhule waste and plastic free. We will get the city 100 per cent usage of toilets, a pollution-free river and better waste management.
—Jayshree Ahirrao
Mayor, Dhule

Nandurbar
City is taking lead in cleanliness. We pledge to have 100 per cent individual toilets in the city.
—Deepak Kataria
Deputy President, Nandurbar

With welfare schemes and people's cooperation, five municipal corporations and 38 municipal councils, work of cleanliness mission is being undertaken. With community toilets, we pledge to take the division ahead in cleanliness.
—Eknath Dawle
Divisional Commissioner, Nashik

We pledge to make Nashik 100 per cent defecation free and separate dry and wet waste. We are committed to make this Kumbh Mela a clean and pious one.
—Dr. Pravin Gedam
Commissioner, Nashik Municipal Corporation



MAKING WAY FOR IT TOWNS

With tax and real estate benefits to companies, the new IT policy aims to attract ₹50,000 crore of investment and create 1 million jobs in five years, says **Murtuza Merchant**

In what will give cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Chennai a run for their money, Maharashtra Government has come out with a new Information Technology (IT) and Information Technology-Enabled Services (ITES) policy that aims not only to generate investments in the IT sector to the tune of ₹50,000 crore, but also generate employment for more than 10 lakh people in the State. The State Government has laid extreme emphasis on development and, thus, in order to encourage industrialisation under the Make in Maharashtra programme, it has taken steps such as simplifying the process for environmental clearances and reducing the number of permissions required to set up an industry from the initial 75 to 37. The Government wants to further reduce it to 25.

Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya informed that the definition by the Central Board for Direct Taxes for IT-enabled services was accepted by the State Government while framing

the policy. The new policy, which is State's fourth IT and ITES policy, also incorporates policies for animation, visual effects, gaming and comics (AVGC) sector. It confers the status of IT industry on AVGC parks. The new IT policy that envisages people living and working in the same area was approved by the State Cabinet of June 16. The policy will enable the IT sector to create integrated townships spread over 10 to 25 acres and start rural BPOs to ensure that the industry extends to the rural areas of the State.

REAL ESTATE BENEFITS

A notification issued by the State's Urban Development Department (UDD) last month stated the proposal of the Industries Department to modify the existing Maharashtra Industries Development Act. While the UDD approved changes for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region along with the Pune Metropolitan region that have plots measuring one



“
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—Swadheen Kshatriya
Chief Secretary



hectare or more, approvals have now been given for plots in Marol, Navi Mumbai, Thane and Mahape regions. In all these regions, at least 50 per cent of the area will be used for IT purposes.

The permissible FSI for integrated IT townships in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, Thane, Kalyan-Dombivali, Ulhasnagar, Mira-Bhayandar, Pune, Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporations and Ambernath Municipal Council limits will be 2.5. Elsewhere, the FSI will be 2 with a premium. The premium will be used for developing critical infrastructure related to IT parks. The current FSI in these areas varies between 1 and 1.33.

FOCUS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Government's proposal to develop rural BPOs is to ensure penetration of the IT sector in rural and semi-urban areas of the State and ensure employment there. For setting up of rural BPOs, the Government will provide ₹25 lakh. Youth from the rural and semi-urban areas will also be trained through modules that will be developed by well-known institutions.

Apurva Chandra, Principal Secretary, Industries said that the new policy has simplified the procedures with crystal-clear definition of IT-enabled services.

In the field of animation and gaming, the new policy will provide waiver of entertainment tax to the animation films that complete 50 per cent of the animation work in Maha-

rashtra. Similarly, films with special effects and visual effects will be provided 50 per cent subsidy with a cap of ₹2.5 crore. The Government will provide incentives for attracting investments in data centres.

Maharashtra introduced its first IT policy in 1998, and then came out with updated versions in 2003 and 2009. The policies in 2003 and 2009 resulted in generating employment of 7.48 lakh, with an export of ₹3.24 lakh crore. It also resulted in creating 465 private and 37 public sector IT parks. The policy of 2009, which expires soon, allowed 100 per cent additional FSI in cities. The new policy increases the additional FSI to 200 per cent, allowing developers to construct IT parks three times the size of the plot.

Currently, there are about 7.5 lakh people in the IT sector employed across the State. The policy to safeguard the interests of all those working in the sector rationalises definition of IT support services, and introduces a 'negative list', to exclude malls, cinema theatres, residential apartments and others.

Currently, there is no FSI restriction in Hyderabad. Over the years, Maharashtra has lost out to cities like Bengaluru and Hyderabad in AVGC sector, as there was a need for space creation. While space is an issue, leasing on rent is not affordable in Maharashtra. Thus, dedicated IT township, as proposed in the policy is the best way of ensuring the State's progress in the sector. **M**

“We are doing away with all hurdles and making business seamless”

Maharashtra aims to attract more and more investment in defence, manufacturing, engineering, electronics, agriculture and food processing and to consolidate its position as the most favoured investment destination in the country. The State Government has taken a slew of initiatives to make this a reality. In an interview with **Maharashtra Ahead**, Minister for Industries **Subhash Desai** explains Government's strategy. Excerpts:



Q. What is your take on Make in Maharashtra?

A. There are a few in the defence sector that are keen to invest in Maharashtra. Manufacturing, engineering, electronics, automobile, agriculture, food and milk processing, fruits and vegetables are sectors where investors have shown interest. The State Government wants to promote more and more value-added industries.

Q. What are the results on the ground so far?

A. We had been to Germany in April. On June 11, Mercedes Benz started production in Chakan. Investors are interested to invest in small and medium sector as well. Recently, an international exhibition was underway in Düsseldorf, Germany, where officials of the Industry Department met the exhibitors and industries, inviting them to invest in the State. This will give boost to the foundry sector, especially in Kolhapur. We plan to organise a B2B conference between investors and developers in the foundry sector.



“IN CHALISGAON WE ARE SOON GOING TO INAUGURATE TWO UNITS IN FOOD PROCESSING. I BELIEVE, FOOD PROCESSING IS A SOLUTION TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF AGRICULTURE IN DISTRESS”

Q. Where is Maharashtra currently positioned?

A. We want to retain Maharashtra's pre-eminence as the favoured destination. For this, the Government has released the new information technology (IT) and information technology-enabled services (ITES) policy by proposing a slew of incentives. These sops include simplification of premium rules and exemption in various taxes.

Q. Will Apple set up unit in Maharashtra?

A. We have invited the company to visit our sites and make a

“THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PROMOTE UNITS IN THE ANIMATION, VISUAL EFFECTS, GAMING AND COMICS SEGMENT AND ENCOURAGE DATA CENTRES AND BACK OFFICES”



decision about the location. We will show them a couple of sites with connectivity. We are holding talks with Apple's manufacturing partner Foxconn for the manufacturing venture.

Q. Can you brief us on the present status of DMIC?

A. We have received ₹ 1,500 crore from the Centre and we plan to launch the tendering process for various infrastructure works in Shendre-Bidkin area, which is being developed under Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC). In another four months, we will open all fronts, including roads, water, electricity and plotting (land development) in Shendre-Bidkin. Dighi comes next.

Q. What is the policy on land acquisition?

A. MIDC is the biggest landlord with 85,000 hectare of land, already in possession and mostly developed. MIDC always offer higher compensation. Since 2013, there has not been any notification, but now we have begun the land acquisition process. I want to make it amply clear that it will be done

through negotiations and consent route. Government of India allows States to have their own Acts, but the rider is higher compensation. Moreover, barren, infertile and unused lands will be acquired.

Q. How will Government promote MSMEs?

A. We are taking decisions to provide more land to MIDC estates. Besides, flatted or constructed units with state-of-the-art infrastructure will be provided to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME). The Government has already entered into a deal with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and given over ₹75 crore. SIDBI will contribute the rest of the amount, which will ultimately lead to a fund of ₹200 crore. The financial assistance will be made available as venture capital. We are in the process of establishing Maharashtra MSME Development Institute for the promotion of the sector. The institute will extend cooperation to start-ups facing problems to start their ventures. The Government will provide the necessary support. The institute and seniors will play the role of mentor and provide hand-holding to ventures in the MSME sector.

Q. What are efforts for the dispersal and decentralisation of industrial development?



“MAHARASHTRA MSME DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE WILL HELP START-UPS RAISE FUNDS, PREPARE TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY AND PROJECT REPORTS, BRING IN FOREIGN PARTNERS, SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND INCUBATION”

A. Decentralisation is the key. We are marketing more and more for Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN) project to encourage investment in the project. MIHAN is an attraction. Amravati textile park with eight units in place is slated to be country's best, Government is inviting investors there too. DMIC will help dispersal of units. Japanese are developing township in Supa, Parner.

Q. What is your message for investors and developers?

A. Now, Maharashtra has an industry-friendly government. We are doing away with all hurdles and making business seamless. We have skilled and educated manpower and enough attention is being paid to improvement in skills. Big companies are coming forward. Mercedes Benz and Volkswagen have adopted industrial training institutes (ITIs) in the State. We will provide the required infrastructure, including land, water and electricity. I am confident that Maharashtra will scale new heights in industrial development. **M**



(Clockwise from above) Workers at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's plant, premises of ESDS Software Solutions and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj flyover

THE **NEXT** INDUSTRIAL HUB

Nashik is a prominent angle of the golden triangle in Maharashtra along with Mumbai and Pune. With the other two prime cities already reaching their capacity, it's Nashik's turn to expand as an industrial hub, says **Chandragupta Amritkar**

Nashik is among the fastest growing cities in the State and plays a major role in its development. Professionals from Nashik working in various sectors should jointly take a step forward in the development of the city and the State Government is willing to deliver whatever is required by becoming a partner in the growth of the city," said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Nashik ranks 16th in a global study of fastest developing cities conducted by The City Mayors Foundation—an international think tank on urban affairs—and has witnessed significant economic progress in the last decade. With a pleasant environment, scenic and a strategic location, Nashik is fast emerging as an industrial hub and the next IT destination.

Nashik is also shortlisted for the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC) as an investment region. Plans are afoot to develop an India-China Industrial Park spanning over 2,000 acres at Sinnar in collaboration with China. To cater to industrialists travelling from across the globe, Nashik has established hotels like Express Inn, E&G

Resorts, Taj, Ginger and Ibis for their stay or MICE events. It also has Apollo Hospitals, Wockhardt Hospitals, Vasan Eye Care, Sahyadri Group of Hospitals and Curie Manavata Cancer Centre.

Nashik has five industrial zones—Satpur, Ambad, Sinnar, Igatpuri and Dindori. A separate Cooperative Industrial Estate for woman has also been established. Setting up four industrial estates at Malegaon, Sinnar, Satana and Manmad by MIDC has been approved and the work is in progress. Similarly, two Cooperative Industrial Estates at Nandgaon and Kadwa are being established.

Nashik is home to reputed private as well as public sector companies, including the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited's aircraft manufacturing plant, which is located 16 km from Nashik and employs about 7,000 people. The Currency Note Press and India Security Press, printing Indian currency and Government stamp papers respectively, are located here. Manufacturers like Bosch India, Mahindra and Mahindra, CEAT, ThyssenKrupp, Epcos, Atlas Copco, Crompton Greaves,



NASHIK INDUSTRIES & MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION

Nashik Industries & Manufacturers' Association (NIMA) has been playing a vital role in the growth of industries in Nashik. Established in 1971, NIMA has grown as a large body of all industrial units—large, medium and small scale category units and associate members. It has been a catalyst in interacting with Government officials on behalf of its members and portraying the problems of industrialists. It also plays an active role in creating an environment conducive to growth and provides opportunities to its members to reach international markets by organising export awareness programmes in coordination with Export Promotion Councils. From agriculture to information technology, NIMA has members from all sectors and types of industry. In order to provide opportunities to industries, trade, service providers and professionals to exhibit their products and services so that they can directly interact with existing and potential clientele, NIMA has organised 12 industrial exhibitions. It also provides an opportunity to the general public to know about the companies in the district and witness the current technology, products and services.



ABB, GlaxoSmithKline, Cipla, L&T, Schneider Electric, Jindal Steel, Lear Corporation, Kirloskar, IBP, Coca Cola, Siemens, Parle and Shalimar Paints are also located in the district.

Renowned IT companies like Datamatics, Winjit Technologies, Tecsys Solutions, Netwin Systems & Software, gloStream, Garyhat Vision Technologies, ESOS Software Solutions, WNS Global Services and SG STUDIO 4 Technologies have established their offices here. Global IT giant, Accenture is setting up its new unit in Nashik. It is also emerging as a business process outsourcing destination, and is on the list of the emerging tier-2 cities for BPO/IT companies. Nashik also has two private IT parks, Vascon and Anand Mahindra IT Park.

FOCUS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Almost all blocks in Nashik have been covered under cooperative sector. The Cooperative Industrial Estate of Sinnar is one of the largest in the country, and has been awarded by the Federation of Cooperative Industrial Estates. Nashik exports industrial goods apart from grapes, onion and vegetables. Export-quality carpets are prepared in and around Umbarthan (taluka Sargana). Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB) is implementing schemes for promotion of rural and cottage industries such as Special Component Plan for SC. The State Government has identified certain blocks as growth centres and they have been given the next category for getting concession. For example, the growth centre in zone C shall get benefits of C+ zone.

“Professionals from Nashik working in various sectors should jointly take a step forward in the development of the city and the State Government is willing to deliver whatever is required by becoming a partner in the growth of the city”

— Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister

SUPPORT SCHEMES

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Yojana: The scheme helps the educated unemployed youth to start profitable venture on self-employment basis. A maximum assistance of ₹2 lakh for industry service ventures and ₹1 lakh in case of business ventures will be extended. Conditions needed to avail the scheme are: One should have passed eighth standard; one should reside in the district for at least three years. Total family income should not exceed ₹40,000 per annum. Maximum project cost is ₹2 lakh and age limit is 18 to 35 years.

Seed Money Scheme: The Scheme helps the educated unemployed to start profitable venture on self-employment basis by providing soft loan to meet a part of his margin money required to avail of institutional finance.

DIC Loan Scheme (for rural workers): There is no requirement of education or age limit for this scheme. It helps one to initiate a business except lorry, rickshaw and tempo. The total investment in machinery accessory should be up to ₹2 lakh. **M**

Dutch expertise for coastal road project in Mumbai

The Dutch Government will help Maharashtra with its environment-friendly reclamation technology for the execution of Mumbai coastal road project. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in this regard between the Maharashtra Government and the Government of Netherlands. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte signed the MoU.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "Netherlands is a global expert in creating land and infrastructure in the sea; they will provide us their expertise in this field. The coastal road project would be an integrated project which will include Metro line, existing fishing villages and green spaces."

In his address, the Netherlands Prime Minister said that his country's water experts have been working in various parts of the world. "We are delighted to do it here and to share with Mumbai our water expertise

gained over centuries. The Netherlands has expertise in sustainable land reclamation and the use of the sea, where there is shortage of land. Our Government is keen to share its knowledge in this field," he added.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands will provide technological assistance to modernise and develop the agriculture sector and to tackle drought conditions in the State. It will also help in upgrading agriculture sector skills, breeding of cattle and other sectors as well. The association will also help popularisation of technology among Maharashtra farmers, making available post-harvesting technology, high-quality seeds, newer harvesting techniques, know-how on tackling natural calamities and development of greenhouses, among others.

A meeting in this regard was held between Minister for Agriculture, Eknath Khadse and officials of Agriculture Department and Netherlands Foreign Trade Minister, Lilianne Ploumen and his colleague, Agriculture Minister Sharon Dijksma.



Industries to get infrastructure speedily

The State Government is committed to providing infrastructure facilities speedily to industries coming in Maharashtra, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, while speaking at the ground breaking ceremony of Henkel Adhesive Technologies, India at Pune.

Henkel, a leading solution provider for adhesives, sealants and functional coatings, plans to invest about €30 million to up the plant in Kurkumbh near Pune. Due to start production by early 2017, the plant will cater to various end-user segments such as automotive, metal and industrial sectors.



(From left) Devendra Fadnavis and the Prime Minister of The Netherlands, Mark Rutte sign the MoU; and Eknath Khadse with Agriculture Minister of The Netherlands, Sharon Dijksma

Impetus to financial development with Dahanu Port

The satellite port at Dahanu is the joint effort of the Centre and State and aims at giving impetus to financial development of Maharashtra and generate employment opportunities, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The Chief Minister was speaking on the occasion of signing of Memorandum of Understanding between Maharashtra Maritime Board and Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust for port project at Dahanu at Sahyadri Guest House. Union Minister for Surface Transport, Nitin Gadkari; Chairman of JNPT, Neeraj

India-China cordial relations to benefit both countries: Chief Minister

President of National People Congress of China, Zhang Dejiang's visit to Mumbai will develop a new relationship between the two countries and start a new era of development," said Devendra Fadnavis at Sahyadri Guest House, during a discussion with the delegation led by Zhang Dejiang.

The Chief Minister shared that, during his recent visit to China with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the infrastructure and speed of development in the neighbour country immensely impressed him. "Especially, the 42-km trans harbour link project that has completed within a short span of time. On the lines of this, we would seek cooperation from Chinese companies to complete the trans har-

bour link in Mumbai. The MoUs are often signed for development and progress of nations. But during our visit to China, Maharashtra had discussions for development with various provinces of China, and a new era of development began. This stands to create conducive environment for cultural and industrial development," he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Zhang Dejiang said, "I am greatly impressed with the infrastructure development being carried out in Maharashtra under the leadership of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Hence, I decided to visit Mumbai first. China wants to develop friendly relationship with India. I have also represented local government bodies and have always given priority to nurture good relationships with other countries. China leads in infrastructure, power and modern technology and this will surely benefit Maharashtra."



Processed industries to help in agriculture development

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis recently inaugurated the Individual Quick Plant of Fruits and Vegetables in Food Park of Jain Irrigation at Jalgaon. Minister for Revenue and Agriculture and Guardian Minister, Eknath Khadse; Minister for Water Resource Girish Mahajan; Founder Chairman of Jain Irrigation, Bhavarlal Jain, and others were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that many countries have prospered by adopting modern and latest technology in agriculture and processed industry. "Jain Irrigation has added a great deal in the realisation of the dream of 'Make in India' as well as 'Make in Maharashtra.' Latest use of technologies for fruit and vegetable processing would facilitate and augment our horticulture fruit and vegetable export to greater extent," he added.

Bansal; Chief Executive Officer, Maritime Board, Ashish Sharma; Union Shipping Secretary, Rajiv Kumar; and others were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister said that a satellite port in Dahanu will be built without disturbing the environment, and is expected to decongest the Jawaharlal Nehru Port. This project will play an important role in economic development of the State. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said

the international port will help in supplying raw material to the industries, which will help in attracting more industries in the nearby areas. The project will be completed within the stipulated time frame, he said.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari at the MoU signing ceremony



(From left) Minister for Industries Subhash Desai, Union Minister Prakash Javdekar and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis together with top officials of Mercedes Benz at Chakan, Pune

Maharashtra, the first choice of investors

With State Government's ease of doing business and friendly policies, more and more investors are investing in Maharashtra, with the State becoming their first choice, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, while inaugurating the second phase of Mercedes Benz's plant at Chakan, Pune. Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Prakash Javdekar; Minister for Industries Subhash Desai; Guardian Minister for Pune Girish Bapat; Managing Director and CEO Mercedes Benz India Eberhard Kern and Executive Director, Operations Mercedes

Benz India, Piyush Arora were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that with the new plant, the production capacity of Mercedes Benz will augment to 20,000 units per year. "This will help in generating employment opportunities and help residents. With cooperation from Mercedes Benz for skill development, youth will be given training."

Union Minister Prakash Javdekar said that with easy environment clearances and environment-friendly policy of the Centre and State, more investors are getting attracted to Maharashtra. Minister for Industries Subhash Desai said, with its industry-friendly policies, the State is creating its name and fame among the investors.

Self-certification scheme for industries in Maharashtra

The State Government has introduced Self-Certification Scheme as part of ease in doing business under Make in Maharashtra, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The onus of adhering to the laid guidelines to ensure fair business practices will be on individuals, who would give an undertaking through self-certification. The decision will benefit 35,000 factories and 27 lakh shops and establishments in the State.

The individuals will have to issue a certificate, affirming they are strictly adhering to the required norms. Once the self-certification is done, a database would be maintained, and 20 per cent of the cases will be checked at random to verify compliance. Government inspectors would monitor only if there are major complaints regarding compliance. The self-certification would be on par with a legal affidavit, and violation of rules would be dealt with strictly, he added.

Under self-certification, 16 Acts related to wages and labourers for businesses and shops and establishments have been clubbed under consolidated annual return, which would be submitted to the Labour Department once a year. Currently, industries are subjected to ad hoc inspection by various departments every month. Often there have been complaints from those doing business and shops seeking one-time inspection instead of weekly or monthly inspection from several officers.

The 16 Acts, which have been relaxed from routine inspection for trade and business that are non-hazardous include wages, contract,

maternity laws, housing allowance, migrant labour, Motor Vehicles Act, Shops and Establishment Act and Beedi and Cigarette Act. But, factories and units dealing with chemicals or hazardous materials will not get exemption from periodic inspections.

The onus of adhering to the guidelines to ensure fair business practices will be on individuals, who would give an undertaking through self-certification

A PLACE FOR SOLUTIONS

Already a success story, Samadhan Shibir is State Government's unique way to serve its people better, reports **Kartik Lokhande** from Nagpur



Yogesh Jamkar is a resident of an area near water tank in Vanjari Nagar, Nagpur. In 2004, he had applied for regularisation of a plot he bought in Jaywant Cooperative Housing Society in Mouza Babulkheda. Since 2008, when the layout got sanctioned, Yogesh has been frequenting the office of Nagpur Improvement Trust (NIT) to get the demand note for the plot. By early 2015, he was a disappointed man, after his many attempts failed to secure the note. May 2015 brought a ray of hope for him. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis had raised a pertinent question before the State officials, "Citizens have got a right to service. Can't we, as Government, provide relief to them by ensuring effective response in time to their grievances and applications?"

The question made the administration think seriously about the effective response to citizens, and Samadhan Shibir was organised on May 30, 2015 at Mundle High School in Chief Minister's constituency of South-West Nagpur.

Like countless many, Yogesh Jamkar also moved an application. He promptly got a token and was asked to remain present on May 30. And, to his pleasant surprise, the same day, he received the demand note from the Chief Minister of

(Clockwise from above) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Union Minister for Surface Transport, Nitin Gadkari and Guardian Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, inaugurate the Samadhan Shibir, and the Chief Minister addressing the gathering and giving away cheques and pending demand notes

Maharashtra. "Sir, I ran from pillar to post in past seven years, but to no avail. And, here I am, getting response to my application within a matter of few days," he told the Chief Minister with a lump in the throat and tears rolling down his cheeks.

In response, Chief Minister comforted him and said, "Jamkarji, the Government is working for the satisfaction of the people. The Government is reaching out to people. Now, be rest assured that the works of citizens will be done at a fast pace."

Yogesh was not alone. There were countless many who got their grievances redressed in Samadhan Shibir. The plot-holders in Madhushyam Housing Society received demand notes after 14 years! The society is along Manewada-Besa Road. The layout came into being in 1985, and the plot-holders got registry done in 1994-95. In 2001, the plot-holders, including Devkabai Sayam, Madhukar Vairagade and Kisnabai Vanjari had applied for regularisation of the plots.



However, their efforts bore no fruits. When they finally received the demand notes, they were not just happy, but full of praise for the initiative.

Sudhatai Fopte lost her husband Dilip in 2011. She was deeply concerned about the future of her two children. Someone suggested her to apply for financial assistance under Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana. She moved an application the same year. To her disappointment, nothing happened in four years. It was the game changer Samadhan Shibir that worked wonders for her. She received the first cheque of financial assistance under Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana at the hands of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The first camp of solutions and satisfaction, thus, proved to be a big hit. The Chief Minister with Guardian Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule and the administrative machinery interacted with the people to resolve their issues.

“The Government machinery should work to resolve problems faced by common man within a set time-frame. Unless there is accelerated response from the administration, citizens will not feel satisfied”

—Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister

The administration had invited applications for the camp till May 25. Though 464 applications were received and 244 of those were disposed of during the camp, the number of long-pending applications cleared was much more. The applications were also received and cleared at the camp. Out of the 889 applications received, 217 were pertaining to NIT, 201 about Nagpur Municipal Corporation, 84 about land records, 72 about Collector Office, 50 pertaining to Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited

and 28 were related to Education Department.

The camp started at 9 am and was formally inaugurated at 11 am. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Union Minister for Surface Transport Nitin Gadkari, Guardian Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule, Mayor Pravin Datke, MLC Prof Anil Sole, MLAs Sudhakar Deshmukh, Krishna Khopde, Sudhakar Kohale, Sameer Meghe and Vikas Kumbhare, and other dignitaries shared the dais.

Speaking on the occasion, Devendra Fadnavis said that Samadhan Shibir would act as a *setu* (bridge) between the administration and the citizens. Buoyed with success of the camp, he announced that similar camps will be organised in all 12 Assembly constituencies in Nagpur district. He also informed the people that the Government has introduced Maharashtra Guarantee of Public Services Act. Initially, the law covers 150 types of services. Eventually, all public services will be brought under the scope of the law. He said that the Government should adopt superior technology to offer speedier solutions to citizens. **M**

—The writer is Chief Reporter with The Hitavada in Nagpur



STRUCTURES OF TALL ORDER

Due to its difficult terrain, Nashik was a land of preference for royals to build forts. **Dr. Sachin Vidyadhar Joshi** throws light on some of its bastions of power

With Sahyadri mountains located in the western part of Nashik district, the region boasts of a large number of hill forts. Forts in the region are built on comparatively higher hills, as compared to other regions in Maharashtra, making it difficult for one to reach the top of the forts easily. Most of the forts in Nashik district are constructed at a height of over 800 m from the sea level and have a difficult access.

The terrain is equally cumbersome in Satmal, Sailbari-Dolabari and Trimbak hill ranges. These run perpendicular to the Sahyadri main range, stretching towards its east. Satmal is the most important from the historical point of view. This range starts from the Hatgad Fort on the Sahyadri main range and extends up to Chandvad in the east. Many medieval hill forts such as Hatgad, Achala, Ahivant, Markandya, Rawalya, Jawalya, Kanchana, Koldeher, Rajdeher and Indrai are located in this range. Dhodap, at a height of 4761 ft., is the highest mountain fort in the Satmal range.

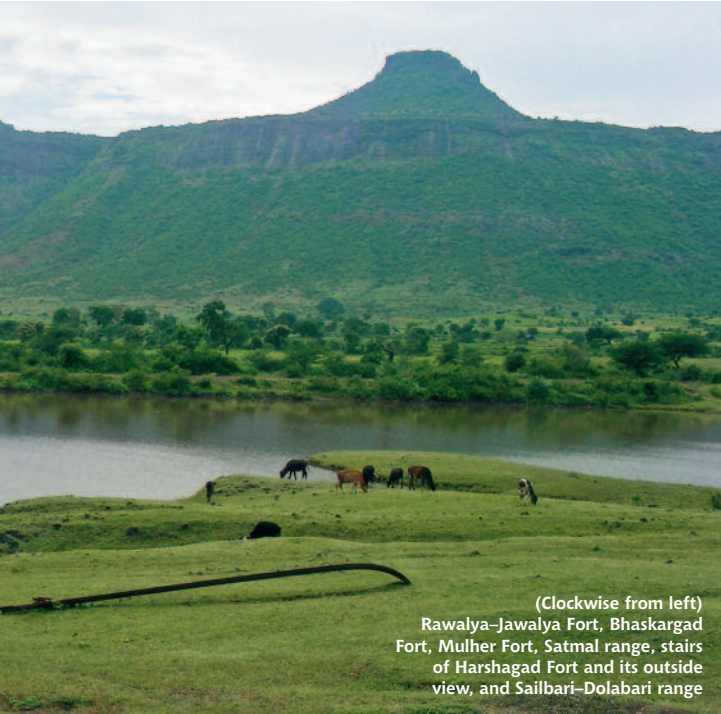
Sailbari-Dolabari and Trimbak are two hill ranges that run parallel to the Satmal range. The Sailbari-Dolabari range is located on the north of Satmal range, but is comparatively smaller in length. The hill forts of Mulher, Hargad, Mora, Salota, Maangi, Tungi and Ratangad are located here. Medieval forts like Trimbakgad, Harshgad, Anjaneri and Bhaskargad are located on the Trimbak range.

Earliest evidences of the forts in Nashik region are found during the Yadava period (12-13th century). Remains of construction such as fortification, bastions, gateways and residential structures can be seen on the forts today. Archaeological evidences suggest that the construction on these forts was done by various empires, from the Yadavas (12-13th century) to the British (19th century).

The most outstanding of these forts are the Mulher, Mora and Hargad forts, which are built on three hilltops situated on a single large plateau known as Mulher *machi*. The total length of the plateau is 2.5 km and it stands at 300 m. Fortification is seen on its edge. It has five gateways to enter the lower fort. After entering the fort, a flat top with few water cisterns appear. Hargad Fort is higher than Mora and Mulher, and has a forge welded cannon, 14 feet in length, weighing about 11,000 kg, commonly known as *Bangadi tof*.

Rawalya and Jawalya forts are situated on a plateau





(Clockwise from left)
Rawalya-Jawalya Fort, Bhaskargad Fort, Mulher Fort, Satmal range, stairs of Harshgad Fort and its outside view, and Sailbari-Dolabari range



similar to Mulher *machi*.. This plateau was, however, not fortified in the medieval period unlike the Mulher. In 16th century AD, both of these forts were well strengthened by a strong fortified wall. Remains of rock-cut water cisterns and defence structures are still seen in the fort.

Harshgad or Harihargad is another important fort in the Trimbak mountain range. Built by Nizamshah of Ahmednagar, the fort is 230 m tall. Rock-cut steps were constructed to climb the other end of the fort; the lower part had to be covered by the pathways. These steps are carved in solid basalt rock at an angle of 75-80°. It is not easy for a person to climb the 100-115 steps without a rope. The steps lead to the main gateway of the fort. It is followed by additional stairs that lead one to the top. The reason behind such a construction was fort's lesser height and vulnerability. The trick was to make the climbing difficult.

Ankai and Tankai forts are the strongest and architecturally most important forts in Nashik. Shiva temple at Tankai Fort and the Hindu caves carved in the Ankai Fort indicate that the forts belong to the Yadava period. These forts were later reconstructed in the Bahamani period. Mughal emperor Shahjahan captured the fort in 1635 AD. A group of Jain rock-cut caves is located at the base of Tankai Fort. All these archaeological evidences indicate that the Ankai-Tankai region was important from the religious, military and trading point of view since 4th-5th century AD. According to traveller Theveno (1665 AD), Ankai was an important place on Surat-Aurangabad medieval route. After crossing its ten gateways, one can reach the top of the fort. The Yadavas, Bahamanis and Mughals consecutively built these entrances and other structures on the fort. The Baglan *taluka*, located in the northern part of Nashik district, has Salher and Mulher forts. Fort Galana is situated on the eastern part of Baglan. This fort is similar to

Daulatabad Fort in plan. The lower fort is fortified by a strong wall with a 150 m high hill fort in the backdrop.

According to the historic text, *Burhan-E-Masir*, Nizamshah of Ahmednagar held 34 forts in Nashik. The three forts of Alang-Kulang-Madan is situated on the Kalasubai Mountain range on the boundary of Nashik and Ahmednagar districts. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj captured Baglan and established his control over the region with the help of these forts.

Forts are a symbol of struggle was once proved by Ramsej Fort during the Maratha period. The fort was under the rule of Marathas after the death of Shivaji Maharaj. Aurangzeb tried to capture the fort for three years (1681 to 1684 AD), but a small garrison of Maratha warriors defended the fort successfully against an army of more than one lakh Mughals. M

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

Nashik district has 60 forts in its domain. Most of these forts are constructed at a height of over 800 m from the sea level and have a difficult access

Nothing **sour** about it

Blessed with suitable climatic conditions for growing grapes, Nashik has become the biggest producer of the fruit in India. The GI status bestowed on its variety only adds to the glory, says **Sameer K**

According to *Ramayana*, Lord Rama made Nashik his home during his 14 years in exile. At the same time, Lakshman, his younger brother cut off the nose of Surpanakha, bringing the name to place from *nasika*, the Sanskrit word for nose.

Apart from its place in Indian mythology, Nashik is slowly but surely gaining a place in Indian agriculture not only for its onions, but also grapes. From a sleepy little town, this bustling city is now home to some of the country's biggest wineries and has carved special place for itself in grape cultivation. Think of Nashik and one immediately thinks of luscious seedless grapes. Nashik is the biggest producer of the fruit in the country. Maharashtra contributes 90 per cent of the India's total grape exports. Around 70 per cent of the State's grape exports come from the district. Maharashtra has nearly 2.50 lakh hectares under grape production of which around 1.75 lakh hectares is cultivated in Nashik. In early 1925, the table grape revolution was started in Ojhar, a small town near Nashik. Today, table grapes are being exported to Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

Nashik has the best climatic conditions in the country for growing table grapes. Its micro-climatic conditions and soil terroir (temperature and humidity) are responsible for some of the best grapes coming out of this region. Traditional viticulture practices, mineral-rich soil, temperature and humidity all help yield good grapes. The Geographical Indication (GI) status granted to Nashik grapes only serves to prove that the variety is among the best in the country.

According to Ashok Gaikwad, President, Maharashtra State Grape Growers Association (MSGGA), Nashik grapes top in quality because of the soil and climatic conditions that are considered ideal for growing grapes. "Farmers here are pretty progressive and are always willing to adopt new technology, which is why productivity in Nashik is the best in the country. Yields in Nashik are of the order of 6 tonnes per hectare, and grape cultivation provides livelihood to nearly 3 lakh

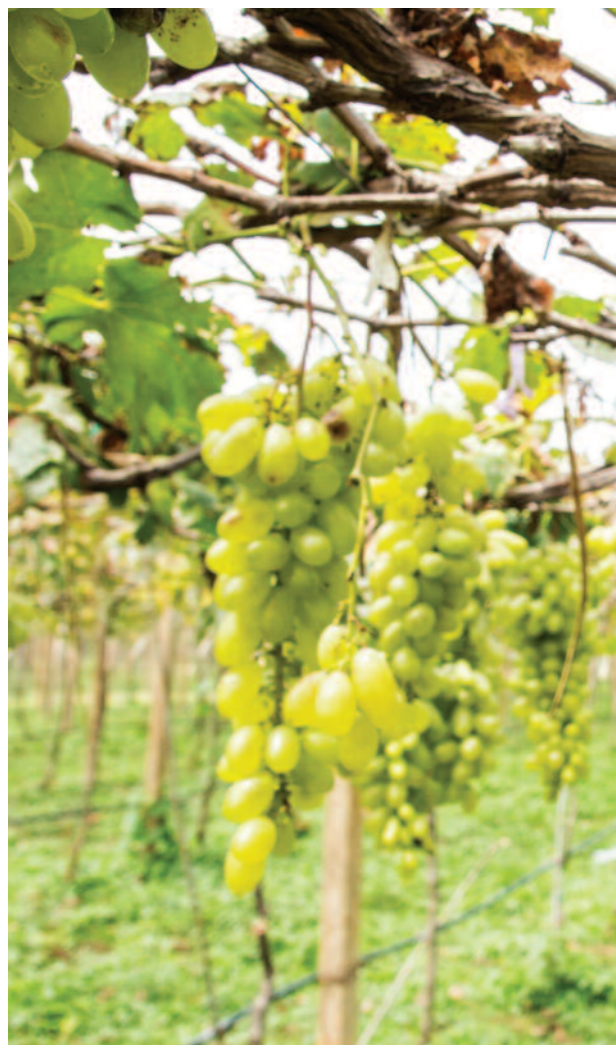
EXPORT QUALITY

- Maharashtra has nearly 2.50 lakh hectares under grape production of which around 1.75 lakh hectares is in Nashik
- Micro-climatic conditions and soil terroir of Nashik are responsible for its good-quality grapes
- Nashik grapes find buyers in Europe, the Middle East and Asia
- China has emerged as a new market for Nashik grapes with demand for coloured varieties, different sizes and greater shelf life



Farmers here are pretty progressive and are always willing to adopt new technology, which is why productivity in Nashik is the best in the country. Yields in Nashik are of the order of 6 tonnes per hectare, and grape cultivation provides livelihood to nearly 3 lakh people across the year

—**Ashok Gaikwad**
President,
Maharashtra State
Grape Growers
Association



people throughout the year," he says.

China has emerged as a new market for Nashik grapes and demand from the country is for coloured varieties, different sizes and greater shelf life. Therefore, new varieties are needed. Around 600 metric tonne of grapes was exported to China last season. This season, the target is to touch 1,000 tonne. The last season was good for export, when the country exported 1,92,000 metric tonnes. From February next year, Indian grapes will also find buyers in Japan. Besides West Asia, grapes from India are popular in Netherlands, Hong Kong, Spain, Germany, Sweden and UAE.

According to industry experts, around 22,000 vineyards from Nashik have registered with Grapenet, the online platform developed by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA). Registering the farm on Grapenet is mandatory for farmers, who



want to export the fruit. MSGGA is also working towards getting better grape varieties for farmers. Last year, the association purchased six varieties from an Israeli and South African breeder and was in talks with a breeder from California.

Grape growers have realised that expansion of portfolio is necessary to tap new markets. To deliver to this, growers in Maharashtra have approached APEDA for financial assistance. They have sought ₹40 crore to help import of good table grape varieties. At present, Indian varieties are being grown in Maharashtra. They require a lot of pruning and are developed in around 120 days. Pruning usually takes place in September or October and most of the time the monsoon affects the vineyards. The producers have been toying with the idea of a permanent solution to overcome the vagaries of weather. It is seriously considering encouraging the use of plastic sheeting to protect the crop, a practice quite common abroad.

Globally, both agriculture and horticulture have benefited from materials and processes linked with the development of use of plastics. According to market experts, proper use of plastics would help to bring about more efficient farming, irrigation and conservation of vital water, not to mention improved storage and protection of hard-won harvests (some 50 per cent of all developing nations' produce is destroyed by poor storage and packaging, it is estimated). These are mainly polyethylene, but there is also some PVC used, as well as films made from specialty polymers. Unlike greenhouses of mulching, plastic sheeting is used normally over the crop and does not require special infrastructure. **M**



(Clockwise from above) A vineyard, fresh grapes and a farmer in Nashik

A creative *Marvel*

Paithani Tourism Centre at Yeola aims at boosting the traditional art and giving artisans an opportunity to display their work under one roof, says Kishore Gangurde

Famous world over as a stunning noble handcraft from India and a symbol of Maharashtra's culture, Paithani from Yeola has not receded even a bit with the changing traditions. Yeola, located 83 km away from Nashik, is a hotspot for the craft. While millions of devotees from India and abroad visit Nashik–Trimbakeshwar for the Kumbh Mela, many travel to Yeola just to purchase a stunning handcrafted Paithani sari.

Paithani is identified as one of the most venerated ornamental traditional textile. Around 17th century AD, businessmen from Yeola lured Paithani weavers of repute from Paithan in Aurangabad to Yeola and began producing Paithani together. The weavers of Yeola nurtured the craft. Currently, approximately 95 per cent of the total production of Paithani saris in Maharashtra is done in Yeola.

WHERE PAITHANI RULES

Yeola is home to around 3,500 Paithani weavers who work round the clock to create stunning and adorable designs. The weavers have taken the art beyond India with their craftsmanship and originality of designs. Last year, Shantilalsa Bhandge, a Paithani manufacturer from Yeola, was honoured with the President of India Award. His family



A weaver at work at a paithani making unit at Yeola in Maharashtra



has received the award for the fifth time in a row. Weavers like him have taken the art ahead, as today Paithani has proliferated in many styles such as semi-Paithani, single *pallu*, double *pallu*, tissue *pallu* and rich *pallu*, to name a few. Paithani is classified based on the work done in the *pallu* and border such as Box Paithani, Kadiyal Paithani, Double *Muniya*, Triple *Muniya*, Parrot Brocade, Peacock Brocade and others. All these styles are popular with customers. Full brocade *pallu*, broad border and stunningly beautiful designs on both sides of the width as well as the gorgeous colour combinations are factors that attract any customer.

COLOURS AND CREATIVITY

Paithani saris start at a price range of ₹4,000 and can go up to ₹3 lakh. The silk used in a Paithani comes from Bengaluru and the gold and silver brocades come from Gujarat. A genuinely attractive Paithani takes shape only through colours and design motifs. Basically, Paithani has two colours—a base colour and the other on the border. The sari is generally woven in green, red, light purple, dark purple, blue, crimson red, pearl and other colours. Excellent colour combinations combined with the use of latest technology has further enhanced the vibrancy of the art.

Paithani is woven on a traditional wooden loom. The raw materials used are mulberry silk, and golden, silver and tested zari. The accessories used for *butta* and border are dobby and



jacquard. The Paithani market at Yeola city is a place marked by hectic activity. The Paithani Tourism Centre at Tilak Maidan is always crowded with admirers. Very soon dress materials, kurta, dresses and purses with Paithani weaves would be available for the connoisseurs of the art.

YEOLA PAITHANI TOURISM CENTRE

Designed as a rural art and craft complex, the Yeola Rural Tourist Information and Paithani Promotion Centre allows visitors to see the process of weaving a Paithani—right from the thread to the finished product. Besides the history of Paithani, its journey from handlooms to the market has been portrayed through an informative exhibition.

The Centre also has a cluster of weavers, with 378 manufacturers and more than 2,500 craftsmen registered under the same. The Centre does the marketing and sales of all Paithani products manufactured by these craftsmen. Only after a scrutiny on the basis of material quality, width, length and other factors, Paithani is exhibited for sales. "Paithani here is affordable in terms of costs, as the products arrive for sale straight from the weavers," informs Vikram Gaikwad, the executive director of the Centre. The cluster has a reeling centre—where cocoons prepare mulberry silk—twisting centre, yarn and warping centre, degumming and dyeing units. Eco-friendly colours are used in the process. There is a testing centre to certify Paithani cluster products for their authenticity and

quality, and to give the percentage of the silver and gold *zari* used. The cluster also has a design centre for customers looking beyond the usual peacock, parrot and other designs. The cluster promotes research and aids development of Paithani weaving. There was a time when silk was imported from China. Today,

both, Yeola and Paithan, source silk from India. In future, the cluster aims to provide export-quality dyeing facility, certified gold and silver *zari*, standardised raw silk yarn and required handloom accessories.

A genuinely attractive Paithani takes shape only through colours and design motifs. Paithani has two colours—a base colour and the other on the border

PRIDE OF THE WARDROBE

The special love of Peshwas for Paithani in 18th century brought the title of Queen of Saris to Paithani. Famous as a poem handwoven in silk and gold, Paithani saris are for those with discerning

and sophisticated taste. The art of weaving Paithani flourished in 200 BC during the Satvahana era in Paithan (Pratishthan), the Capital of the empire. The art was later influenced by Mughals, Nizam and Marathas. The craft got so popular that it became a tradition for every Maharashtrian woman to own at least one Paithani sari. **M**

PROJECTS IN FAST FORWARD MODE

With monsoon arriving in Delhi, the Capital has got respite from the soaring temperatures. A good time to be here, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visited the Capital to expedite State's impending infrastructure projects, attend meetings at the Ministries of Civil Aviation and Environment, and invite the Prime Minister for the Simhastha Kumbh Mela



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis during his meeting with Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Ashok Gajapathi Raju Pusapati in New Delhi

An approval to construct towers of 90 m height at Bandra-Kurla Complex and 225 m at Wadala must be granted by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), urged Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in a meeting with Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Ashok Gajapathi Raju Pusapati. The Chief Minister called on the Union MoS at Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan. Deliberations as to increasing the height to accommodate towers on the available land at BKC and Wadala, Navi Mumbai International Airport were taken up. Present in this meeting were Union Coal Minister Piyush Goyal, MMRDA Commissioner U.P. S. Madan, Greater Mumbai Municipal Corporation, Commissioner Ajoy Mehta, Secretary to Chief Minister Pravin Darade, Resident Commissioner Abha Shukla and Investment and Protocol Commissioner Lokesh Chandra.

The Chief Minister informed that MMRDA has been in constant follow up with the AAI to grant greater heights for buildings in Bandra-Kurla Complex and Wadala. Since the State Government had decided to develop an International Financial Services Centre at BKC, he requested the present height to the towers on available land at BKC and Wadala be increased to 90 m and 225 m. In addition, a letter to AAI requesting to consider the entire "G" Block of BKC as one plot and grant of a uniform height of about 90 m had already been made. However, the AAI conveyed to the State Government that the maximum heights permissible on the said plots would range from 51.75 m to 61.45 m in BKC and 136.15 m to 154.41

m at Wadala. The Chief Minister urged the Union Minister to reconsider the proposal, as the location of the BKC and Wadala Notified Areas are much farther than the airport. Increasing tower heights at BKC and Wadala by 90 m and 225 m is necessary so that the MMRDA would be able to consume the entire available FSI in these areas. M/s Capitol Airspace Group

"Hike in the tower heights at BKC and Wadala by 90 m and 225 m, respectively, is necessary for MMRDA to consume the available FSI in these areas"

of USA has conducted a study, which suggests for permitting the demanded height, underlined Devendra Fadnavis.

After the deliberations, Ashok Gajapathi Raju Pusapati assured of looking into the vital points raised by the State Government, taking suitable decision and cooperating in clearance of heights of buildings in and around Navi Mumbai International Airport.

The Government of Maharashtra is committed to the time-bound implementation of this project, the progress of which is being monitored by the PMO under the Pragati programme, said Maharashtra Chief Minister. The cost, acquisition and resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) for the project would be borne by CIDCO. Devendra Fadnavis also urged the Centre for granting fiscal support and incentives to the project by way of exemptions from service tax and duties, which would attract developers and help in project's success. **M**



A COMPANY TO CLEAR MAHARASHTRA'S PENDING RAIL PROJECTS

To fast-track pending railroad projects in Maharashtra, the Union Railway Ministry would form a company to expedite all the projects, said Union Minister for Railways, Suresh Prabhu.

Maharashtra is curious to expedite the Desaijanj-Gadchiroli rail line project, which aims to provide connectivity to the most backward district of the State. Mumbai Local rail connectivity has to be improved, for which efforts by the Ministry are

underway. Churchgate-Virar and CST-Panvel rail works are under progress. The study group would shortly take up Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet rail project to ensure viability. Selective rail projects would be undertaken on PPP model and Pune's Shivaji Nagar station would be developed on the same lines, said Suresh Prabhu. The Konkan rail connectivity would be extended to double-laning to ensure smooth commuting by the passengers and the Taral-Chiplun, Kolhapur-Vaibhav Wadi projects would be completed. Loans for the completion of projects would be taken from LIC and IFL, informed the Railway Minister.

LEARNING FROM THE DELHI METRO

In a bid to improve the basic commuting facilities of Mumbaikars by providing them a comfortable and cost-effective day-to-day travelling experience, my team is working on various initiatives," said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis after his meeting with Managing Director, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, Mangu Singh in New Delhi. During the 45-minute-long interaction held at Metro Bhawan, Mangu Singh and other senior DMRC officials shared the growth story of the Metro service since its inception, its development both within and outside country, and its status as one of the largest Metro networks in the world. The interaction also explored the ways in which Metro network in Mumbai can be developed on the lines of the DMRC. Full support would be extended to the State Government in its attempts to rapidly develop a large Metro network in Mumbai, assured the senior DMRC officials.



(From top) Managing Director, DMRC, Mangu Singh with Devendra Fadnavis, and senior DMRC officials at the meeting in New Delhi



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis meets Prime Minister Narendra Modi to invite him for the upcoming Simhashta Kumbh Mela at Nashik-Trimbakeshwar. Guardian Minister of Nashik, Girish Mahajan, Minister of State for Home, Ranjit Patil and Minister, Housing, Mining and Labour, Prakash Mehta accompanied the Chief Minister for the meeting in New Delhi. The Kumbh Mela is scheduled in the temple towns located in Northern Maharashtra from July to September 2015

SAHITYA AKADEMI MARATHI AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The prestigious Sahitya Akademi Awards were announced on June 24 in New Delhi. The Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar and Bal Sahitya Puraskar for Marathi Language were bagged by Shahir Leeladhar Hegde and Dr. Veera Rathod.

A well-known writer of children's literature in Marathi, Leeladhar Hegde is the recipient of the Bal Sahitya Puraskar announced by Sahitya Akademi for 2015. Some of his celebrated works are *Panchuche Bet*, *Halamu Halamu*, *Mani Harawali-Mani Sapadli*, *Kawale* and *Bhaandkhor Bhau*. Dr. Veera Rathod has been chosen for Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar for his excellent works, *Sen Saai Ves*. The awards would be conferred on November 14, 2015, at Mumbai.

The award for Yuva Puraskar in Konkani Language has been announced to Shrinisha Nayak for his eminent contribution to poetry (*Khany Geli Aaji*), while the Bal Sahitya Puraskar for Konkani language has gone to Ramnath G. Gawade for his novel, *Sadhu Ani Jadugar Mhadu*. The award would be in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper plaque and a cheque of ₹50,000.

—Amarjyot Kaur Arora, IO, MIC, New Delhi



STRETCH FOR GOOD HEALTH

June 21 has been declared as International Yoga Day by the United Nations. The official day for one to embrace yoga, it saw nations across the globe stretching together for a good reason. In Maharashtra, the day was observed with hundreds of events where children, senior citizens, youth, celebrities and common people took part with zest. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis led the main event at the Yashwant Stadium in Nagpur where over 21,000 people participated. Union Surface Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari was also present on the occasion. The Chief Minister later performed *yogasanas* with the inmates of Nagpur Central Prison. He announced on the occasion that the State Government will open accounts of all jail inmates under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and announced Prime Minister's Suraksha Bima Yojana and Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana for them. Devendra Fadnavis said that the premium of the insurance schemes will be paid by the State Government till the inmates are in jail.



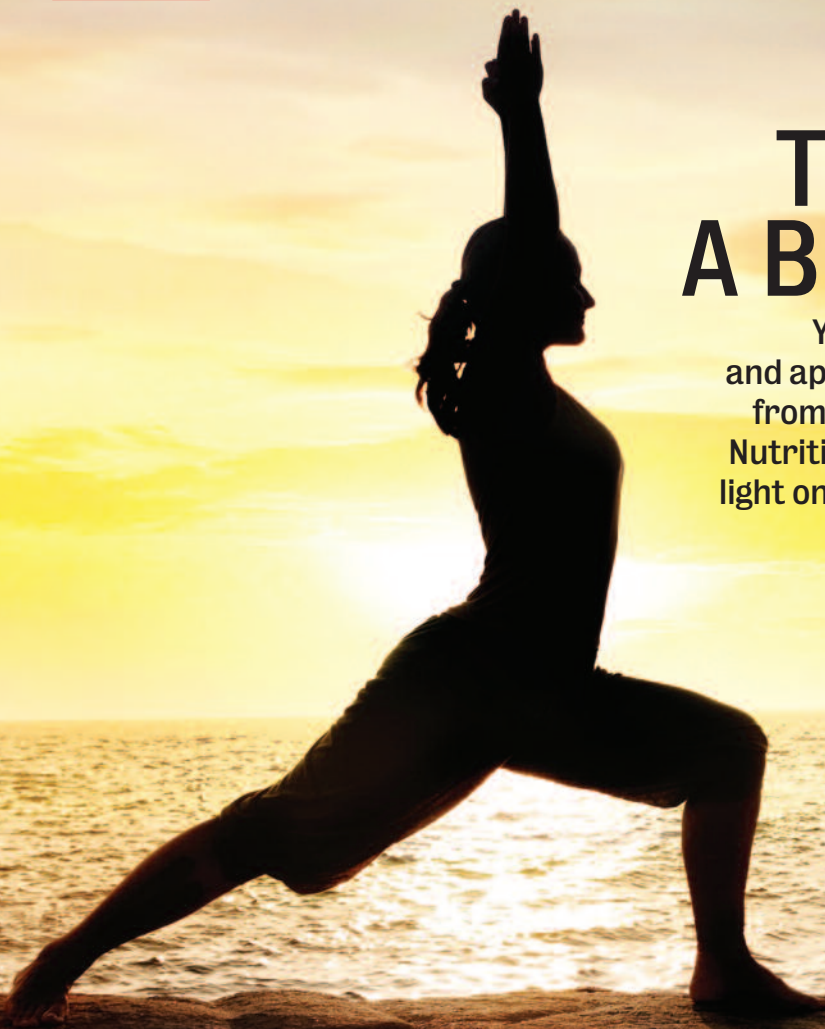


"A scientific exercise, yoga has got following across the world. It not only gives freedom from tension, but also strengthens the power of the soul. I hope it becomes part and parcel of every individual's life"
—Devendra Fadnavis,
 Chief Minister



TOWARDS A BETTER LIFE

Yoga looks at food, body and appetite in a very different way from today's weight-loss world. Nutritionist **Rujuta Diwekar** throws light on the practice and its benefits



The International Yoga day has come and gone, but the benefits of yoga are for everybody to reap every day. You don't necessarily need a mat for that or even spare too much time for that matter. Simply reviewing the way we think of food can help us garner benefits of the ancient wisdom of yoga.

Yoga looks at food, body and appetite in a very different way from today's weight-loss world. In the weight-loss world, there is a term called 'portion control,' which means that an external control needs to be exercised over the food you are eating. This is based on a very narrow view, that of calories, carbs,

protein and fat. According to yoga, not just is this information limited, but also misleading. The more holistic or yogic view is that of *prana* (life force energy) and eating wholesome or *satvic*—simple, sensible, sustainable eating practices. This means, the only thing that can be relied upon is experience and not external measurement.

The other aspect of yoga and Ayurved is that it acknowledges that appetite decreases with age and sickness, and finally, a dead body needs no food. Hunger must be preserved, and not just preserved, nurtured. The practice of *asana* is one of the methods of preserving and nurturing

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, UN General Assembly, 2014

"For us in India, respect for nature is an integral part of spiritualism. We treat nature's bounties as sacred. Yoga is an invaluable gift of our ancient tradition. Yoga embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise, but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and the nature. By changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day. Finally, we are at a historic moment. Every age is defined by its character; and, each generation is remembered for how it rose together to meet its challenges. We have that responsibility to rise to our challenges now. Nowhere is this more pronounced than in this great assembly... Let us fulfill our promise to reform the United Nations Security Council by 2015. Let us fulfill our pledge on a Development Agenda so that there is new hope and belief in us around the world. Let us make a new watershed for a sustainable world. Let it be the beginning of a new journey together."



appetite and, in effect, preserving youth and nurturing life. But the practice of yoga must be correct, only then does it heal and nurture the entire organic body and, therefore, through its effects, the appetite. Just like there is a strict code or technique of *trikonasana* or *paschimottasana* or even *tadasana*, we have a code for eating so that not just appetite, but even assimilation of nutrients is enhanced and finally excretion of toxins is effortless.

What's the code for eating then, one wonders. To answer, it starts with the posture, the preferred one is *Sukhasana* or *Swastikasana*—to align the

The practice of asana is one of the methods of preserving and nurturing appetite and, in effect, preserving youth and nurturing life. But the practice of yoga must be correct

spine and be firm at the base, much like the preferred posture for meditation. So eating is like meditation; the state of mind in which you consume food stays and becomes a part of your body, just like the *anna* (*Annamaya kosha*)—that's why the practice of not talking while eating. Talking distracts, silence forces you to focus internally so that cues of when you are full are heard more clearly by your brain.

After that eat with your hands. The hand you must use is right, not left, as the left is reserved for cleaning and the right for eating. But why right hand? Because it is connected to *prana*, the one that moves upward in the body, energises and gives you ability to take decisions. Use of the left hand stimulates the *apana*, the *sub-prana* that moves downward and, therefore, it is not useful for eating, but for eliminating. So, in India, little children get their chapatis broken down by adults, so that only right hand can be used.

Besides *swastikasana*, silence and right hand, what else? It is how food is served—grain in the centre, legumes, *dals*, veggies to the right and pickle, curd, *chutney* to the left—six tastes and again *prana* and *apana*; everything on the left is rich in probiotic bacteria and B12 and so makes for easy elimination. This is the reason behind people getting bloated, especially during periods. They wouldn't be if they ate like this and preserved the gut bacteria.

But, the question is, how much to eat? One must eat with space left in the stomach. Without space to move, food doesn't get digested, and lack of digestion is a step towards diseases, says Ayurved. One must also share one's food. Sharing increases the taste; what is better to taste is also better digested; and good digestion is the first step to good health. So here's hoping that everyone is in a better shape for the next International Yoga Day. **M**

A DAY AT THE RAJBHAVAN

In a one-of-its-kind meeting, PROs of various State departments visit the Governor of Maharashtra and discuss better ways of communication, says **Suresh Wandile**



(Clockwise from left) PR officers, the Rajbhavan premises, and DGIPR Director General Chandrashekhar Oak presenting the magazines to Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao

A huge opportunity to see the verdant and pictureque expanse of Rajbhavan came our way on June 23, when a special meeting of Public Relations Officers from various offices was organised with Governor of Maharashtra, Ch. Vidyasagar Rao. The first ever meeting of the Maharashtra Governor with Public Relations Officers from various State departments was the initiative of Chandrashekhar Oak, Director General, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations (DGIPR). The agenda of the meeting was disaster management and how prepared are the departments in case a calamity strikes.

Considering officers are the face of an organisation, it becomes their responsibility to give away proper information with speed and in time. In case of a disaster, it is imperative that there is resonance between all public institutions. On this count, the DGIPR organises a meeting of the Union and State Public Relations Officers before the onset of monsoon in the State. Chandrashekhar Oak informed the Governor that the department is now using modern media effectively along with traditional media to deliver information about various Government schemes, decisions and policies.

The Governor commended the work carried out by the Public Relations Officers and underlined the greater role they have to play in the modern society, where any misleading information can lead to chaos. Underlining the security of Mumbai, he cautioned that video coverage must be done with restrain. "Many times, the extremists change their strategy after viewing a live coverage of an event. Precautions must be taken while providing information in such matters.

Mumbai witnesses many rail accidents, following which the victims are in urgent need of blood. We must then announce the required blood groups and details on Doordarshan and other channels," said the Governor.

In the light of the recent hooch deaths in Mumbai, the Governor emphasised that while investigating such incidents,

“Many times, the extremists change their strategy after viewing a live coverage of an event. Precautions must be taken while providing information in such matters”

—Ch. Vidyasagar Rao
Governor

information about the helpline numbers must be provided. He spoke about the evil effects of encroachments on Mithi River and requested for ideas to enhance the beauty of the same. On the issue of cleanliness, he asked officers to celebrate the success stories to encourage others. The officials who met the Governor include Devendra Bhujbal and Shivaji Mankar, Directors, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations. Nilesh Madane, PRO, Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat; Manish Desai, Director, PIB; Saraswati Kuvalekar, Assistant Director, News Section, Sahyadri Channel; Vijay Khabale Patil, PRO,

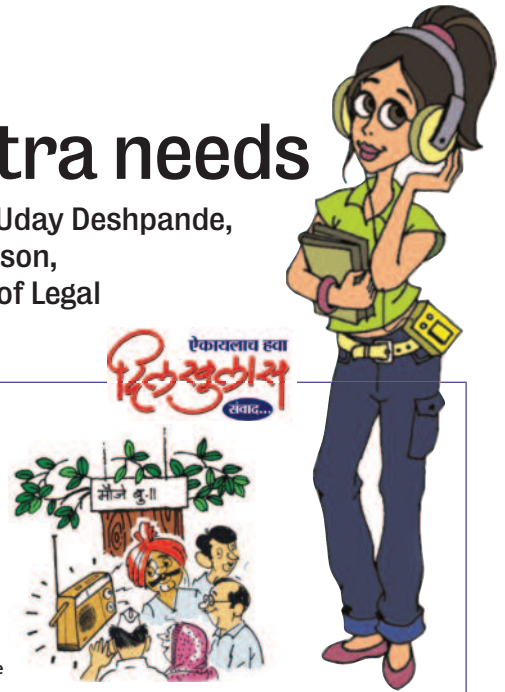
Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai; Narendra Patil, Chief PRO, Central Railway; Manij Varade; Mukund Dhas, STC; Anil Kamble, Mahavitaran; Sandeep Mavle, Deputy Commissioner (PR) Thane Municipal Corporation and Nitin Kumar David, PRO, Western Railway. **M**

The discussions Maharashtra needs

Dilkhulas invited Dr. Deepak Sawant, Minister for Public Health, Uday Deshpande, Convener, Yoga Planning Committee, Shyam Manav, Co Chairperson, Andha Shraddha Nirmulan Samiti and Sanjay Pande, Controller of Legal Metrology (Weights and Measures), for discussions. Excerpts:



(From left) Minister for Public Health Dr. Deepak Sawant, Shyam Manav, Uday Deshpande and Sanjay Pande



DILKHULAS

A healthy state of affairs

In his discussion, the Minister for Public Health, Dr. Deepak Sawant provided information about the facilities and amenities in the health sector. With a view to streamline rural healthcare, a scheme called Operation Kayapalat has been undertaken. Under this, Rural Health Centres and Primary Health Centres will be maintained and kept clean so that the dialogue between the doctor and patients is maintained. The patients will be informed about the availability of medicines and suggestion boxes will be placed at the centre. Making available basic infrastructure at these centres is being looked into.

The Health Department of Government of Maharashtra is implementing Arogyavardhini Scheme in coordination with the Union Government. This scheme aims to provide protein diet and medicines to MDR and XDR TB patients. The concept of Arogyavardhini, which means herb that boosts one's health, is being implemented through supplementary nutritional diet. While speaking about the diseases prevalent during the rainy season, Dr. Deepak Sawant said that certain guidelines have been prepared in case of dengue, malaria, water-borne diseases and swine flu. "In this, the Union and State Government with all municipal corporations will work for controlling contagious diseases. Emergency healthcare service is available on phone number 108. Currently, 936 ambulances are active in the State. At the same time, programmes for safe pregnancy, child health and leprosy eradication have been taken up on priority. The rural population is constantly being kept informed about diseases through telemedicine and community radio," shared Dr. Deepak Sawant.

With a view to control the evil traditions of witchcraft and human sacrifice, a committee is being made to implement anti-witchcraft measures. The co-chairperson of this committee,

Shyam Manav explained the Maharashtra Act against evil traditions and witchcraft and talked about the implementation of the Act in the State. He underlined the fact that Maharashtra was the first State in the country to implement such an Act. Under this Act, 12 actions proliferating superstition have been cited as crimes. He said that a person propagating these criminal acts is also a criminal.

Uday Deshpande, Convener, Yoga Planning Committee, visited the studio on the occasion of International Yoga Day (June 21). As part of the event, the Department of School Education established a Yoga Planning Committee with Uday Deshpande as its Convener. He explained the thought process of the Government with regard to celebrations, the *yogasanas* and their benefits.

Sanjay Pande, Controller, Legal Metrology (Weights and Measures), informed the audience that any item being sold by weight or measure, and services connected with it come under the purview of Weights and Measure Department. It is compulsory for

businessmen and shopkeepers to get their weights and measures checked by the Department. It is a crime when a customer is charged more for the weight he receives. The customers should come forward and lodge a complaint. The number is 022-22886666 for calls and 9869691666 for Whatsapp. Sanjay Pande appealed to the listeners to register their complaints on ligelmetrology.maharashtra.gov.in.

—Meera Dhas

Programmes for safe pregnancy, child health and leprosy eradication have been taken up on priority. The rural population is constantly being kept informed about diseases through telemedicine and community radio
—Dr. Deepak Sawant



(From left) Minister for Transport Diwakar Raote, Minister of State for Agriculture Prof. Ram Shinde, VN More, Sanjay Pande, Dr. Harshdeep Kamble and Dr. Ragini Parekh

JAI MAHARASHTRA

Hear it from the leaders

Over the last month, the dignitaries visiting the studio of the programme included Minister for Transport Diwakar Raote, V. N. More, Chairman, Maharashtra Public Service Commission, Prof. Ram Shinde, Minister of State for Agriculture, Dr. Harshdeep Kamble, Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration, Sanjay Pande, Controller, Legal Metrology (Weights and Measures), and Uday Deshpande on the occasion of International Yoga Day.

Transport Department is for the people and always takes decision in public interest. Recently, the State Transport Department took an important decision to hire children of the farmers who had committed suicide for jobs in the Department. Diwakar Raote, Minister of Transport, provided valuable information on many such important decisions in his interview on *Jai Maharashtra*.

Prof. Ram Shinde, Minister of State for Agriculture, provided information about the various schemes being implemented by the Government for progress of agriculture. He provided a detailed and studied analysis of the present state of agriculture in the State, preparations for kharif harvest



The country has a glittering tradition of yoga. Yoga has a unique importance in our life. It was due to this that the yoga proposal presented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the United Nations received acceptance by

more than 150 nations. The United Nations declared June 21 as International Yoga Day. The exact Government thoughts behind this day, importance of yoga in our life, *asanas* and *pranayam* were explained in details by **Uday Deshpande**, Convener, Yoga Control Committee established by the School Education Department.

and status of the crop insurance scheme.

Jai Maharashtra also broadcast the launch of Clean Maharashtra campaign. The one-day workshop, Resolving Cleanliness was organised by the Urban Development Department for Konkan Division. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis; brand ambassador of Swachh Bharat Campaign, Aamir Khan; Chairman, Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini, Vinay Sahasrabudhe; Secretary, Urban Development Department, Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar; and Commissioner, Konkan Division, Radheshyam Moplawar graced the occasion. The Chief Minister explained the importance of cleanliness and

***Jai Maharashtra* broadcast the launch of Clean Maharashtra campaign. The one-day workshop, Resolving Cleanliness was organised by the Urban Development Department for Konkan Division**

gave an oath of seven steps of cleanliness to those present.

In recent times, there has been a complete change in the way one applies for Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC). In his discussion, the MPSC Chairman V. N. More informed about these changes and the work at the organisation.

The customers face many hurdles with milk, grains, rickshaw-taxi travel, purchase of goods and even

house. A remedial measure for all these is with the Weights and Measure Department. Sanjay Pande, Controller of the Department, gave information on the issues in the *Jai Maharashtra* programme.

The Food and Drugs Administration has recently taken an important decision to take action against companies illegally dealing in cardiac stents. Dr. Harshdeep Kamble, Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration, was specially invited to make the audience understand the thought process of the Government behind this decision, and talk about the Department. Even while we are trying to create awareness with the slogan that organ donation is the best donation, we have not made enough progress in eye donation. In order to know about the reasons and the remedial measures for the same, Dr. Ragini Parekh, Head of the Department, Ophthalmic Surgery, Sir J. J. Hospital was invited to the programme to speak on the topic.

—Atul Pande

Useful information for students

Mahaneews is an authorised web portal for State Directorate General of Information and Public Relations. The portal has carried well the responsibility of conveying Government decisions, schemes, initiatives and programmes to the people and the media from 2008. Under the mentorship of Manisha Mhaikar, Secretary, Information and Public Relations, *Mahaneews* has also accepted the changes in media and social media to be helpful to everyone. Find a Job column at *Mahaneews* has become a beacon of hope for unemployed youth. Columns such as Mahabhramanti and Universities are also proving that *Mahaneews* has been a worthy helmsman for college students, tourists and youth.

With the advent of a new academic year, students aspiring for higher education run from pillar to post for



social commitment and contact details. Information on the meritorious students as well as national and international awards won by the university has also been provided.

Useful information on Earn and Learn is helping poor and deserving students with facilities and amenities for Scheduled Caste/ Scheduled Tribe/VJNT/OBC/ minorities, scholarship information, and fellowship and international scholarship for each University. Information on facility of scholarship, hostels for poor and backward class students, health centre for sick students, sports complexes and the facilities therein, employment information and registration centre, psychological counselling for mentally disturbed students has also been provided in the section.

Another column, Mahabhramanti provides information on forts and citadels in the State, sanctuaries, scenic destinations and religious and cultural locations.

The development of the State is reflected eminently through various columns of *Mahaneews*. Important news from



Find a Job column at Mahaneews is a beacon of hope for unemployed youth. Columns such as Mahabhramanti and Universities make the information portal a worthy medium for college students, tourists and youth

admission to various courses. Many of the students do not have appropriate information about the courses and universities. They also do not know where to find this information. Most of the time, the choice is made on the basis of course chosen by a friend. This fact was identified by Devendra Bhujbal, Director (Administration) and a useful column, Universities was launched. The column provides college students with comprehensive information. The information on districts affiliated to a university, courses available at the university and special features of these courses can now be found on the portal. *Mahaneews* has started from Mumbai University.

A single click on the icon, Universities can now lead a visitor to information on all the universities in the State complete with establishment, journey so far, new and changed courses, qualitative features, library, study centre,

the districts, news on meetings, cabinet decisions, interviews, schemes, success stories, and sections like First Person and Find a Job are serving everyone in the State. Secretary, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Manisha Mhaikar and Director General, Chandrashekhar Oak have always guided the efforts. It is from this support that the Department has effectively projected expert articles on events of the day, information on various schemes and important occasions such as completion of one year of the Union Government, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and tree preservation through *Mahaneews*. The portal is committed to take the key information to the grassroots so that the participation of people is enhanced in State's development. *Mahaneews* has also published success stories of the schemes implemented during the drought period.

—*Dhondiram Arjun*



Minister for School Education Vinod Tawde with children as part of the School Admission Festival

BACK TO SCHOOL

The first ever School Admission Festival turns out to be a celebration of a different kind for students

To make the first day at the school full of energy and enthusiasm for students, Minister for School Education, Vinod Tawde decided to organise a welcome event for all primary and secondary students. The innovative event was named School Admission Festival. The Minister for School Education believes that if the first day of the academic session has positive vigour, the mood accelerates the qualitative academic achievements of pupils in the long run.

Vinod Tawde decided to visit some schools in the State capital, Mumbai. He started with Raja Shivaji Vidyalyaya, Dadar, arriving around 9 am. The Minister for School Education reached the school and welcomed the students and parents who had accompanied their wards on the first day.

“Some parents expect huge scores from their wards and certain schools do not give due attention to this aspect, leading to students being coerced into a rat race instead of experiencing the joy of learning”

—Vinod Tawde
Minister for
School Education

He then visited various classrooms and had a one-to-one dialogue with the students about curriculum, their aspirations, school environment, lessons and topics discussed, school timings—all in all to know whether the school is cool or not. He also asked the students about himself. Seeing some little ones confused, Vinod Tawde introduced himself to them. He also explained his intention to visit the school on the opening day.

The interaction helped the students open up to the Minister for School Education, who told the students that everyone is talented in one field or the other. “However, some parents expect huge scores from their wards and certain schools do not provide enough attention to this aspect. The situation leads to students being coerced into a rat race to get to the apex position instead of experiencing the sheer joy of learning,” he said.

While speaking to Principals and teachers about the challenge, he asked them to know the students’ inclination beyond studies. He also stressed the need to improve the intelligence quotient of the students. He said that school education is the right of every student, and appealed to every student to stay alert so that no one they know, is deprived of education.

Vinod Tawde also established a dialogue with the students of the schools of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai through Virtual Class Rooms. During the interactions, students asked him questions in Marathi, Hindi and English. The Minister, in turn, enquired whether the students have received the educational material provided by the Municipal Corporation. A child prodigy in Maths, Mohammed Ali was chosen from India to participate in Ken Ken International Championship, a mathematical puzzle competition held at Pace University in New York, USA. Ali had beaten nearly 35,000 students in the national round. The Minister congratulated him for his talent and gave him best wishes for future. He also distributed free books to the fifth standard students at Raja Shivaji Vidyalyaya.

The main objective of the School Admission Festival was to welcome students after a long vacation. It was also to tell the students not to be bogged down by the school and studies, and to study in a playful manner and make a choice of the field on their own. The School Admission Festival was a positive effort to ward off fear of school from the minds of students and to develop a sense of belonging to the school, affinity towards studies and dialogues with friends. **M**

—Varsha Phadke



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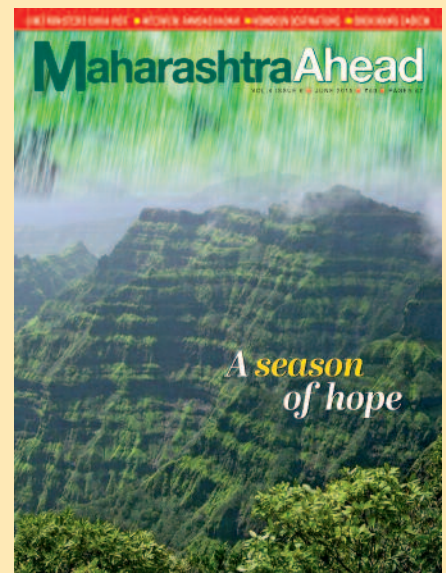
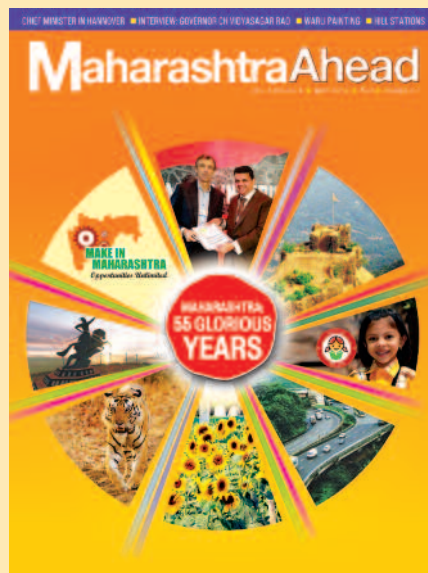
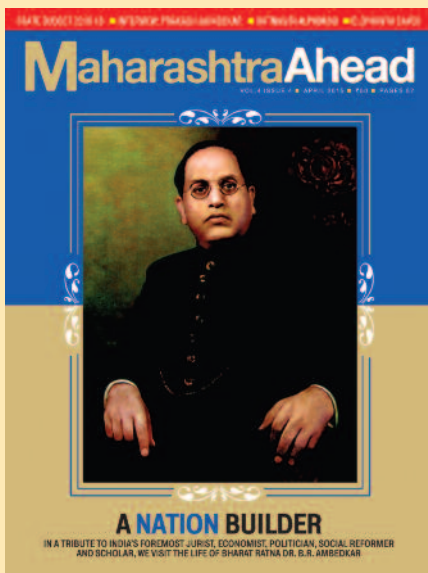
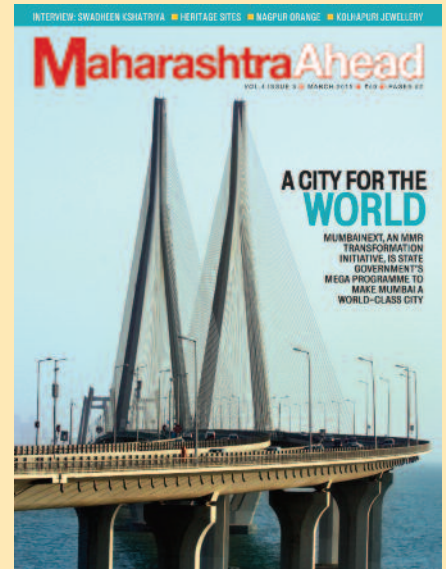
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