

MaharashtraAhead

VOL.4 ISSUE 6 ■ JUNE 2015 ■ ₹50 ■ PAGES 52



*A season
of hope*

One Year
Completion

Digital
India

Pradhan Mantri
Jan-Dhan Yojana

Atal Pension
Yojana

Pradhan Mantri
Suraksha Bima Yojana

Swachh Bharat
Mission

Make In India

Pradhan Mantri
Saansad
Adarsh Gram Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana



सत्यमेव जयते
Government of
Maharashtra

NEW ERA OF PROSPERITY

The Union Government under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi completed one year on May 26, 2015.

The Government took initiatives:

- **Industrial Development and Investment** – Make In India
- **Cleanliness** – Swachh Bharat Mission
- **Financial Security of Common People** – Jan Dhan Yojana, Atal Pension Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
- **Farmers** – Loan Waiver
- **Speedy Administration** – Digital India
- **Rural Development** – Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana
- **Self-Employment** – Skill India

The innovative schemes have speeded up the wheels of progress and development.

Maharashtra congratulates Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Government for transforming the new era of progress into reality...



Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister



05

COVER STORY

A SEASON OF HOPE

Maharashtra Government has not only drafted a contingency plan, but has also taken initiatives such as Jalyukta Shivar Yojana, satellite-based crop insurance scheme, adequate agricultural loan availability and seed supplies to keep itself ready for an uncertain monsoon this year



12

FACE-TO-FACE

RAJKUMAR BADOLE

Minster for Social Justice speaks about the various measures being implemented by the State Government for overall development of the backward classes of society



14

ENVIRONMENT

RAMDAS KADAM

In his interview, Minister for Environment, Maharashtra, advocates spreading awareness on proper and limited use of natural resources and reduction of pollution



16

OVERVIEW

NEW FRONTIERS OF SUCCESS

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had a successful tour of China and helped Maharashtra achieve success on many fronts



20

INDUSTRY

A GLOBAL TRADING HUB

Export manufacturing hub, SEEPZ is where some of the best electronic and software exporting companies and gems and jewellery exporters operate



24

NUMBER ONE

COMMITTED TO CASHEW

The scenic coastal region of Sindhudurg boasts of massive production of cashew nut helping the State become one of its largest producers in India



28

CULTURE CURRY

AN EVERLASTING APPEAL

Himroo, the luxurious, opulent and ancient weaving art of Aurangabad draws inspiration from Ajanta and Moghul motifs and finds takers globally



30

WANDERLUST

RAINY DAY GETAWAYS

Maharashtra abounds in destinations that are all set to make your rain-filled days a visual treat and leave you with a lifetime of experiences and memories



37

CM VISIT

ON THE TRAIL OF WATER

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis takes a tour of State's drought-affected regions, to review the status of the works of Jalyukta Shivar Yojana

DISCLAIMER: VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THE MAGAZINE ARE THOSE OF WRITERS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar

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
A Government of Maharashtra Production



**Directorate General of Information
and Public Relations,
Government of Maharashtra**

WELCOMING THE RAIN

Maharashtra is eagerly awaiting the arrival of South West monsoon to get relief from the scorching heat, which has set new records of temperature and humidity. A good monsoon ensures good agriculture produce, making farmers and everyone happy. Monsoon also brings prosperity and good harvest, which has been the foundation of our agricultural economy.

June's cover article features the kharif review, various measures taken by the State Government for farmers, the coming harvest season and also State's preparedness for Monsoon 2015. The feature also covers the fundamentals of weather forecast and changing moods of monsoon.

The June edition highlights Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's recent visit to China as part of a delegation led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit has opened new vistas of industrial progress and investments in Maharashtra. An interesting pact signed during the tour was between sister cities of Aurangabad and Dunhuang, which will help both Aurangabad and Dunhuang share beneficial practices and promote, strengthen tourism, culture and business relations.

**Monsoon
is considered
the prana or
life-force of
India. Rain has
impression
on our history,
growth,
happiness,
beauty and
relationships**

This month's issue also covers workshop on Swachh Maharashtra, where Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis administered seven vows of cleanliness (Swachhatechi Saptapadi) to urban leaders and managers to ensure their towns and cities are declared clean. The seven steps, inter

alia, involve collection, transportation and scientific processing of solid waste.

The issue also covers the three pension schemes launched by the Honourable Prime Minister for the benefit of common people.

Monsoon is also about natural beauty at its best. We take our readers on an excursion to the rain-blessed locations in the State. The other features are on the Himroo shawls of Aurangabad, cashew nuts of Sindhudurg and the magnificent Rajgad Fort.

We look forward to your feedback on the issue. Enjoy the rain!

Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar

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



A SEASON OF HOPE

In India, monsoon has an impression on everything, from agriculture to administration, economy and lifestyle. Keeping itself ready for uncertain monsoon, Maharashtra has put in place a district-level strategy. A report on State's monsoon preparedness by **Team Maharashtra Ahead**

Maharashtra Government has taken all remedial measures to face any disastrous conditions during rainy season. All the administrative machinery in the State is ready to welcome the season," said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis after the pre-monsoon review meeting at Sahyadri State Guest House in Mumbai recently.

"Administrative systems across districts have been directed to work in proper coordination and ensure that citizens do not face any inconvenience due to any calamity during monsoon. Disaster management plans for all the districts have been completed. The officers have been asked to make efforts to create awareness and coordinate with various agencies such as the Army, Navy and National Disaster Management Authority," he added.

To tackle monsoon effectively, the Chief Minister has emphasised on micro-planning. The District Collectors have been directed to consider the estimates of the Meteorology Department for their respective districts and plan the kharif harvest accordingly. The State has established automatic weather stations at 54 locations. To bring acceleration and accuracy, the Government has taken a

decision to establish 2,059 automatic weather stations at circle level. Similarly, at every Gram Panchayat, weather report and agricultural consultancy will be provided through kiosks and LED screens.

The Chief Minister has also underlined the need for timely and proper cleaning of *nallahs* in the Municipal Corporation areas, including Mumbai. Pre-monsoon works such as building roads, water supply, shelter and others have been directed to be completed soon. Further, to ensure Mumbai does not get waterlogged, instructions have been given for posting a division of Mumbai Metropolitan Region Disaster Management Team at Thane.

THE STATE IS READY

The Government has a list of flood-prone villages and has put in place Flood Control Cell, protection teams (lifebuoys, life jackets, etc), mechanised boats, rubber boats, lightening towers, plans of releasing water from dams, cutting dangerous trees, retaining walls and cleaning of *nallahs*, and facilities like roads, bridges, temporary shelters, SMS Blaster technology for pre-intimation of an impending disaster, electricity tripping systems and essential health services.

Remote villages in districts of Nandurbar, Dhule,



A disaster management demonstration at Kolhapur, Maharashtra

“Help and rehabilitation are our priorities”

The month of June is here. The farmers are eagerly awaiting rains. The month has immense importance for agriculture, but it is equally important for being prepared for any calamity. I would like to share with the readers of *Maharashtra Ahead* that the Government is fully geared up for any crisis.

The agriculture sector in the State has been greatly affected by weather change for last few years. The farmers and the development in the State have been on the receiving end because of this. With the farmers despaired due to natural calamities such as untimely rains, hailstorms and drought, the State Government firmly sup-



Eknath Khadse, Minister for Agriculture

ports its farmers. I would like to assure my farmer brethren not to worry even if there is a natural calamity. The State Government is always with you. Last year, the paisewari in 24,889 villages was declared below 50 per cent.

To ensure that farmers are provided financial assistance on a larger scale, the crop damage compensation to farmers has been increased and the eligibility for compensation has been reduced from 50 per cent to 33 per cent. The rates of assistance have been increased one and a half times. While providing assistance to calamity-affected farmers, the State disbursed an assistance of ₹4,886 crore without waiting for

assistance from Government of India. With a view that the farmers should not incur financial losses, a new Crop Insurance Policy is under consideration of the State Government.

Year 2014-15 saw 70 per cent of average rainfall in the State. Marathwada received just 55 per cent rains. Only 47 talukas received 100 plus percentage of rains. It is expected that the rains during this kharif season will be normal. Foodgrain crops are planned on 70 lakh hectares, and the expected grain yield is 99 lakh metric tonnes. The 17 lakh quintal of seeds required for all crops is available in the market. In order to review kharif, the Guardian Ministers have conducted review meetings, and recently a State-level Kharif Review Meeting was held.



Palghar, Thane, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli lose contact during monsoon. Such villages have been provided with food grain supplies in advance. Colaba Observatory, Water Resources Department, Army, Navy, Indian Coast Guards, National Disaster Management Team, Central Railway, Konkan Railway, and Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune, Aurangabad, Konkan and Amravati divisions have been asked to act in coordination with each other in case a need arises.

To keep Mumbai safe and active, arrangements have been made to place six teams with 160 trained officers and staff near seashores, besides 300 volunteering Jawans, two

teams of NDRF and nine teams of Navy and others. There have been a number of deaths in Aurangabad and Nagpur divisions due to lightening. To avoid such cases, lightening location network sensors have been placed at 17 locations in the State through IITM, Pune. The sensors will be placed at three more locations. Through these sensors, one can have information of a possible lightening strike.



Administrative systems across districts have been directed to work in proper coordination with various agencies and ensure that citizens do not face any inconvenience due to any calamity during monsoon

—Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister



for crop insurance on 28 lakh hectares. The State Government had made available a grant of ₹25 crore. Due to the drought situation last year, crops had suffered huge losses. To compensate the farmers affected by the calamity, the insurance company has announced a compensation of ₹1,600 crore to 35 lakh farmers out of the 45 lakh farmers linked to the scheme.

This year, the State also saw the launch of water conservation scheme, Jalyukta Shivar Yojana. The scheme

We have started to implement many schemes and programmes in last six months. Our aim has been to provide a Soil Health Report Card to all the farmers in the State every three years. So far, around 38 lakh Soil Health Report Cards have been provided. With the initiative, the farmers will use proper fertilisers at proper time and will help accrue savings on their production expenses.

The State Government has undertaken an immensely important movement for development of the agriculture sector. Through Jalyukta Shivar Yojana, Water for Everyone and Drought Free Maharashtra 2019 movement will be accomplished.

For guidance and consultation of farmers, a State-level Agricultural Advisory Committee has

been established. The weather estimates from Observatory and guidance related to agriculture are provided to the farmers through SMS. Modern technology is being used for weather-based agricultural system and a meeting was recently held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister. The Chief Minister said that the information provided to the farmers through SMS should not be technical, but in simple words. He also gave instructions to private TV channels to telecast regular updates on weather changes.

Finally, I would like to share with my farmer brothers that we should not lose heart due to a calamity. Suicide is no option. The State is always with its farmers through any calamity or difficulty.

—Ajay Jadhav

FREEDOM FROM MARKET CHARGES

A decision has been taken by the State Government to provide direct marketing license and freedom from market charges to the farmers and farming institutions. To implement the scheme all over the State, an online system is being finalised by State Marketing Corporation.

As per the provisions of Agricultural Produce Marketing (Development and Control) Act 1963, direct marketing by farmers to the consumers was started. Accordingly, farmer groups, farmer cooperative societies, consumer cooperative



Chandrakant (Dada) Bacchu Patil, Minister, Marketing

societies, private companies, registered companies, persons and partnership firms were given Direct Marketing License.

Maharashtra Marketing Minister, Chandrakant Bac-

chu Patil has said that after the increase in rates for vegetables, from March 3, 2014, the State Government had provided exemption for all these constituents under the Marketing Act Rule 59 for

essential bank guarantee and market charges.

"However, the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees continued to torture the farming entities. On enquiring, it was found that the scheme has not at all benefitted. Therefore, henceforth farmers, farmer cooperative societies, consumer cooperative societies, private industries, registered companies, persons and partnership firms will not be required to carry any license and pay any market charges for agricultural produce sales," he said.

Within the next three months, all these benefits will be made available to farmers across the State.



aims at protecting moisture for dry land farming and provide income guarantee insurance and value-added chain of industries to farmers. It is expected that the scheme will lead the State towards perennial development.

Speaking at the Kharif Harvest Review Meeting 2015 convened at the Yashwantrao Pratishthan Auditorium recently, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis touched upon another important aspect. "There is a serious issue in Vidarbha, Marathwada and North Maharashtra in case of crop loans. If the farmers do not get loans, the agricultural productivity gets adversely affected. Hence special efforts will be put on for accruing the benefits of crop loan scheme to all farmers in this area," he said.

The decision of rescheduling of crop loan will help farmers to easily access the loan. At the same time, they will not have to pay interest for the first year. Letters will be issued to Reserve Bank of India to instruct scheduled banks to release crop loans to farmers. A review will be organised through the District Collector up to *taluka* level to track whether the loans have been disbursed in the district or not. At the same time, Secretary, Cooperation will visit the *taluka* and have discussion with the banks. The Chief Minister has directed that if there is still any hurdle in getting loans from district banks, administration should carry out concerted efforts to get farmers loans through nationalised and other major banks.

BE AWARE, BE SAFE

In flood-prone areas, 18 trained teams of NDRF are kept ready. Twelve more teams can be placed in service if necessary. The Control Room Number 02114-247000 can be dialled during calamity. For round-the-clock updates on weather, log on to the websites of India Meteorology Department, www.imd.gov.in and www.imdmumbai.gov.in

Maharashtra has adequate stock of fertilisers and seeds, and it is necessary to strengthen the distribution system for these to reach farmers. Centre's decision to keep urea prices stable for the next four years is going to be beneficial for the farmers. The Chief Minister said that a project of providing milch animals on a special grant basis in suicide-affected districts is also being considered. A programme is being undertaken for 2 lakh agricultural pumps to be connected to electricity by next year. **M**



MONSOON AND ITS CHANGING MOODS

The monsoon is the primary source of fresh water in India. The weather phenomenon, important for the Indian subcontinent, can be explained through various theories, says **Dr. Shrikant Karlekar**

Monsoon is a major weather phenomenon in Indian subcontinent mainly due to its influence on the lives of people for centuries together. The phenomenon was initially observed by sailors in the Arabian Sea travelling between Africa, India and South-East Asia. Monsoon is eagerly awaited in most parts of India for its agricultural and economic importance every year. It is the most anticipated weather event and

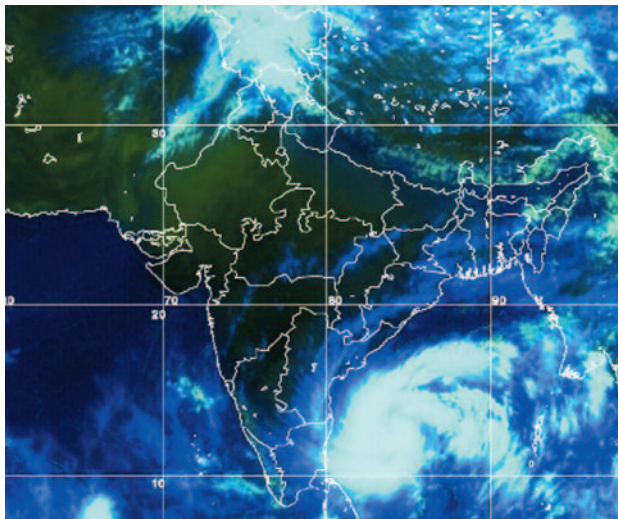
unique weather phenomenon. Yet, it is only partially understood and very difficult to predict. It is to be noted that the complexity of monsoon is still not completely understood. Even today it is not easy to accurately predict its behaviour in terms of the temporal and spatial distribution of the accompanying precipitation and its total quantity.

THE MECHANISM OF MONSOON

The weather pattern associated with monsoon involves winds blowing from the south-west direction (known as the South-West Monsoon) from the Indian Ocean to the Indian landmass during the period from June to September. These are generally rain-bearing winds, blowing from sea to land, and they bring rains to most parts of the subcontinent. The monsoon winds usually split into two branches, namely the Arabian Sea Branch and the Bay of Bengal Branch near the southernmost end of the Indian Peninsula. Subsequently, later in the year, around October, these winds reverse direction and become north-easterly. Due to their land to sea flow, from subcontinent to the Indian Ocean, this system carries less moisture and brings rain to only limited parts of India like Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. This is known as the North-East Monsoon. This rain is responsible for the rice crop of South India. This mechanism completes the annual monsoon cycle of the Indian subcontinent. Based on the time of the year that these winds bring rain to India, monsoons are also categorised in two rain periods called the summer monsoon (May to September) and the winter monsoon (October to November).

Although the SW and NE monsoon winds are seasonally reversible, they do not cause precipitation on their own. Two main factors are essential for rain formation in monsoon mechanism. They are moisture-laden winds and formation of rain droplets. In case of Indian monsoon, it is achieved by orographic barriers in the path of winds forcing it to rise. Consequently, precipitation occurs on the windward side of highlands due to adiabatic cooling and condensation of the rising motion of the moist air.

The mechanism starts at the extensive water bodies namely Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and Indian Ocean around the subcontinent. These oceans help in accumulation of moisture in the winds during the hot season. The high mountain systems of the Western Ghats and the Himalayas right across the path of the SW monsoon winds favour the system to develop consequently. This is the main cause of the substantial orographic precipitation all over the Indian subcontinent.



(From top) A satellite image showing weather condition of India and a verdant patch during monsoon in Maharashtra

The Western Ghats are the first highlands of India the SW monsoon winds encounter. The Himalayas play more than the role of just the orographic barriers for monsoon. They help to confine the monsoon to the subcontinent. Without it, the SW monsoon winds would blow right into Tibet, Afghanistan and Russia without causing any rain in India. For NE monsoon, the highlands of Eastern Ghats play the role of orographic barrier.

The onset of monsoon is marked by the sudden change in weather conditions in India (typically from hot and dry weather to wet and humid weather during the SW monsoon) due to abrupt rise in the mean daily rainfall. It is also known as bursting of monsoon. Every year, the normal onset of SW monsoon is expected on the western coast of India around June 1. It then subsequently covers entire India by around July 15. Its withdrawal from India typically starts from September 1 onwards and completes by around October 1. Similarly, the NE monsoon is expected around October 20 and lasts for a period of about 50 days before withdrawing totally.

Theories for mechanism of monsoon primarily try to explain the reasons for the seasonal reversal of winds and the timings of their reversal. The traditional theory says that due to difference in the specific heat capacity of land and water, continents heat up faster than the seas. Consequently, the air above the coastal lands heats up faster than air above seas. This creates areas of low air pressure above coastal lands compared to the air pressure over the seas causing winds to flow from the seas to the neighbouring lands. This is known as sea breeze.

The theory portrays the monsoon as a large-scale sea breeze. It states that during the hot sub-tropical summers, the massive landmass of Indian peninsula heats up at a different rate than the surrounding seas, resulting in a



pressure gradient from south to north. This causes flow of moisture-laden winds from sea to land. On reaching the land, these winds rise up due to the geographical relief, cooling adiabatically and leading to orographic rains. This is the southwest monsoon. Reverse happens during winter when the landmass is colder than the sea, establishing a pressure gradient from land to sea. This causes the winds to blow over Indian landmass towards Indian Ocean in a north-easterly direction causing the northeast monsoon. Since the SW monsoon is from sea to land, it has more moisture (therefore, causing more rain) than the NE monsoon. Only a part of the NE monsoon passing over Bay of Bengal picks up moisture causing rain in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu during the winter months. This theory is also known as the thermal theory or the differential heating of sea and land theory.

Many meteorologists, however, argue that the monsoon is not a local phenomenon as explained by the traditional theory, but a general weather phenomenon along the entire tropical zone of earth.

The dynamic theory of monsoon explains monsoon on the basis of the annual shifts in the position of global belts of pressure and winds. According to it, monsoon is the result of the shift of the Inter Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) under the influence of the sun. Though the mean position of the ITCZ is taken as the equator it keeps shifting northwards and southwards with the migration of the sun towards the tropics (Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn) during the summer of the respective hemispheres (Northern and Southern Hemisphere).

The theory states that during the northern summer (months of May and June) the ITCZ moves northwards towards the Tropic of Cancer. The ITCZ being the zone of lowest pressure in the tropical region is the target destination for the trade winds of both the hemispheres.

Consequently, with ITCZ at the Tropic of Cancer, the southeast trade winds of the southern hemisphere have to cross the equator to reach the ITCZ. However, due to Coriolis effect (which causes winds in northern hemisphere to turn to their right, whereas winds of southern hemisphere to turn to their left) these southeast trade winds are deflected eastwards in the northern hemisphere transforming into southwest trades. These pick up the moisture while travelling from sea to land and cause orographic rain once they hit the highlands of the Indian peninsula. This results in the SW monsoon.

MONSOON MOODS

Every year's monsoon is not necessarily a normal monsoon. A monsoon with excess rain can cause floods, and one with too little rain can lead to widespread drought, food shortage, famine and economic losses. Therefore, a normal monsoon with mean performance is the most desirable monsoon.

In some years, it rains too much causing floods in several parts of India, in others it rains too little or not at all causing droughts. In some years when the rain quantity is sufficient, its onset may be arbitrary. In some years, in spite of average annual rainfall, its daily aerial distribution might be substantially skewed. Such is the variability in the nature of monsoon rains and weather. In the recent past, rainfall variability in short time periods of about a week were even

attributed to desert dust over the Arabian Sea and West Asia. Sometimes it is also attributed to El Nino phenomenon in Pacific Ocean.

A timely northward shift of the subtropical westerly jet in the beginning of the summer season is critical to the onset of the SW monsoon over India. If the northward shift of this jet is delayed, the SW monsoon gets delayed subsequently. An early northward shift heralds an early monsoon. A strong easterly tropical jet results in a strong SW monsoon over central India and vice versa.

Many weather experts argue that the monsoon is not a local phenomenon as explained by the traditional theory, but a general weather phenomenon along the entire tropical zone of earth

Indian monsoon is the main cause of fresh water in the Indian subcontinent. It influences the flora, fauna and ecosystems, agriculture, society, hydro-power production and availability of fresh water in water bodies and underground water table. Considering the agricultural calendar of India is governed by monsoon, any fluctuation in the temporal distribution, spatial distribution or amount of the monsoon rains leads to conditions of floods or droughts causing the sector to adversely suffer. This makes it important for us to understand it and act accordingly. **M**

Maharashtra Government is committed to bring the deprived sections of society into the mainstream. In an interview with **Pravin Raut**, the Minister for Social Justice **Rajkumar Badole** speaks about the various measures being taken for the overall development of the State. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. Do the current welfare schemes aptly provide justice to the deprived sections of society?

A. The Social Justice Department is playing a key role in providing justice to every neglected, deprived and backward class of society. Immediately after I took over, I reviewed the Department, which closely connects with various issues of people. During the review, I realised that some of the schemes were appropriate, but a few needed administrative reforms so that benefits reach people in time. Instructions to carry out the required reforms were issued right away. I believe that welfare schemes are only successful and justified if their benefits reach people in time.

Q. Is there any resolve to implement new initiatives?

A. Many changes need to be done in the current welfare schemes. I am also interested in bringing in new schemes, and have issued instructions for preparing proposals for the same. Under Special Component Scheme, Backward Industrial Cooperative Institutions are being set up by providing funds. However, to enhance the quality of these institutions, the entrepreneurs must be trained. Looking at the need, we plan to launch a scheme to guide them. Six corporations are already active under the Social Justice Department to look after the employment of youth from Backward Classes. These corporations are making efforts to help these youth become independent. A need for absorbing educated, talented youth from Backward Classes and

“The benefits of welfare schemes should reach people in time”



Scheduled Castes into the Government jobs was felt by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Research and Training Institute. The need led to the setting up of UPSC examination training centres at three locations. Currently, people have to face a number of difficulties for caste verification. We

have decided to set up Caste Verification Committee in every district to solve the problem.

“TO PROVIDE SECURITY TO SENIOR CITIZENS FROM THANE AND MUMBAI, IN CONSULTATION WITH POLICE DEPARTMENT, WE ARE TRYING TO FIND A WAY OUT”

Q. What are your plans for providing justice to differently abled persons in the State?

A. For differently abled, handicapped and blind persons in the State, we have Ashram Schools that are run by the Department as well as the NGOs. We have



taken a policy decision to give grant-in-aid to 123 private institutes that provide education to handicapped persons. Maharashtra State Financial Development Corporation is carrying out a huge work for the progress of handicapped persons and we are going to further develop this Corporation. With its efforts, the disabled persons will not have to run to Mumbai to get benefits of the schemes meant for them. At the same time, instructions have been issued for preparation of an independent manual for development of disabled persons that will act like a guide for giving justice to them.

Q. Senior citizens in the State face many problems. What measures will be taken for them?

A. The present age limit for senior citizens is 65. We are making efforts to reduce it to 60 years. Cases of attack on the elderly are also being reported. We are going to

emphasise on strict implementation of law and order. We also realise that problems of senior citizens living in urban pockets differ from the problems faced by those living in rural areas to some extent. They have health issues. Besides, we need to create ways for their entertainment. In order to provide security to senior citizens from Thane and Mumbai cities, in consultation with Police department, we are trying to find a way out.

"WE ARE PROACTIVE ON THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF RAMAI GHARKUL SCHEME SO THAT HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE STATE CAN HAVE HOMES"

Q. There is a demand for enhancement of honorarium for helpless people...

A. With a view to improve their lifestyle and make it respectable, we are providing honorarium to the extent of ₹2,200 crore every year to around 27 lakh helpless people in the State through the Social Justice and Special Assistance Department. The financial assistance is ₹600 per beneficiary at present. As the amount is small, there has been a demand to enhance it. We are discussing the issue at the Government level. At the same time, we are proactive on effective implementation of Ramai Gharkul Scheme so that homeless can have homes. We have resolved to make the empowerment scheme, Karmaveer Dadasaheb Gaikwad Sabalikaran and Swabhimana Yojana more effective, and will soon implement revised schemes so that landless get the benefits fast.

Q. What are the steps taken towards the possession of Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's residence at London?

A. Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar had resided at this house during his education in London. It was learnt that the landlord of the place wanted to auction the house. The State Government immediately took the decision to buy the place. The procedure will be completed soon. The Chief Minister has desired to develop Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's residence at London as an international memorial and a hostel for students from India.

Q. What are the expectations of people from this Department?

A. While working for the deprived and neglected classes, I would like to implement various schemes through the Social Justice Department. The work has already begun and changes will be seen soon. At the same time, I am expecting guidelines and suggestions from the people on reforms that must be carried out. The State Government will always welcome suggestions from the people. **M**

(The writer reports on Mantralaya for Tarun Bharat, Nagpur)

“Environment protection is everyone’s responsibility; we all must address it”



Environment protection is everyone’s responsibility, says **Ramdas Kadam**, Minister for Environment, Maharashtra. In an interview with **Varsha Phadke**, on the occasion of World Earth Day (Vasundhara Din), he advocates spreading awareness on proper use of natural resources and reduction of pollution. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. What are the main objectives of the Department on the occasion of Vasundhara Din?

A. At the outset I would like to give my best wishes to the citizens of the State on the occasion of Vasundhara Din. *Vasundhara* means the Earth, our mother! All of us are responsible for her protection and conservation. By protecting environment, avoiding pollution and by maximum plantation, we should conserve and protect our *Vasundhara*. The Environment Department is implementing various initiatives to achieve the same. However, I expect cooperation from State’s people, as the Government alone cannot accomplish the task.

After taking over the reins of the Ministry, I have seriously looked after the Department. The Department is important as it connects to urban issues, industries, forests, CRZ laws—which



protect the seashore—and many other aspects. The various types of effluents from the industries, the issue of dumping grounds, drainage system, air pollution, harmful waste from hospitals, and many other subjects are directly linked to this Department. I have set a target of transforming the Department.

Q. What are the steps being taken for protecting the environment and natural resources?

A. People still do not have enough information on the work being done by the Environment Department. Hence, I am concentrating on making the Department people-oriented and creating awareness about environment among people. The industries flouting environment rules are flourishing as people are ignorant about the rules. The companies dump effluents in creeks and rivers, and suddenly we come across the news of dead fish. We read about water pollution due to toxic chemicals being released in river. We realise the gravity of the matter once

it has happened. While many industrial set-ups are obeying environmental rules, many other flout them and endanger the health of people. If the same continues, there will be no natural resources left for the next generation. My priority is to make environment a subject important to everyone.

“WE HAVE DECIDED TO PROHIBIT PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF PLASTIC BAGS BELOW 50 MICRON THICKNESS. AS AN OPTION, PEOPLE WILL BE ENCOURAGED TO USE PAPER OR CLOTH BAGS”

Q. Environment Department handles two important aspects of holding back

depletion of environment and pollution. What are the steps being taken?

A. Any changes in the environment directly affect the health of people. With a view to create awareness in this matter, I surveyed *Waldhuni* river at Kalyan and *Ulhasnagar* and *Mithi* river at *Bandra-Kurla Complex* and *Chandrapur*. I studied the problems of these rivers at various levels.

A strict action has been taken against those responsible for



Inspection of Mithi river revealed that the problems were created by illegal industries and encroachments

polluting the Waldhuni river. The action is set to make others think twice before releasing toxic chemicals in flowing water. Inspection of Mithi river revealed that the problems were created by illegal industries and encroachments. If a separate drainage line is laid for processing waste water before it is released into the sea, the pollution of the river can be curbed. We have also taken steps for controlling pollution in Chandrapur, and I am confident that the results would be seen soon.

Q. What steps are being taken for the prohibition on production and distribution of plastic bags?

A. The deluge in Mumbai on July 26, 2006 was mainly due to uncontrolled use of plastic bags. To ensure that residents do not face the situation again, we have decided to prohibit the production and distribution of plastic bags below 50 micron thickness.

Earlier, there was a prohibition on the use of plastic bags, but due to the lack of coordination between the implementing agencies, it remained on paper. Now that the coordination is in place, the prohibition will be implemented strictly. As an option, people will be encouraged to use paper or cloth bags. Mahila



Bachat Gat and unemployed youth will be asked to manufacture these paper and cloth bags. Funds for this are also available.

Instructions have also been given to Maharashtra Pollution Control Board to take strict action against companies manufacturing plastic bags below 50 micron thickness. Instructions are being issued to Municipal Corporations/ Municipal Councils to ensure the success of the initiative.

Q. What steps have been taken to prevent river pollution?

A. To prevent water pollution by industries, we are going to make the installation of zero effluent system compulsory. A company will not be given permission to operate without the system. MIDC has been instructed to run the community waste water system at full capacity. Another factor that causes

pollution of rivers is urban waste water. It is essential for every Municipal Corporation and Municipal Council to process the water before it is released into rivers. We, with Urban Development Department, plan to draft an action plan for the same.

"WE WILL NOT LAY EMPHASIS ON PLANTING TREES ALONE, BUT WILL ALSO OBSERVE HOW THESE TREES CAN SURVIVE FOR LONG. WE WANT PUBLIC SUPPORT TO MAKE THIS DRIVE SUCCESSFUL"

Q. There is a need to protect mangroves. What is your opinion on this?

A. Mangroves are the safety armour of Mumbai seashore.

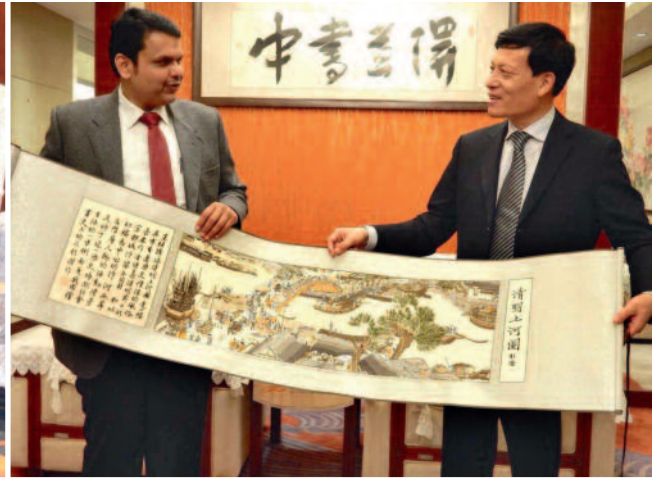
Mangroves provide protection to the aquatic biodiversity of the sea. This is a system bestowed by nature. We are making all efforts to save the mangroves. In this context, we will have to discuss with experts and find a way out through a definitive plan. I can say that the Department of Forests has prepared an independent system for protection of mangroves.

Q. Tell us about the tree plantation drive in the State.

A. Saint Tukaram had said that trees and herbs are our relatives. In order to maintain environmental balance, tree plantation programme was undertaken. However, the important question is, how many trees survived from the number of plants planted. We are not going to lay emphasis on planting trees alone, but are going to observe how these trees can survive for long. In this respect, my Department, in coordination with the State Forest Department, is taking necessary steps. We will try to get cooperation from people to make the drive successful.

Q. Do you believe that Coastal Regulation Zone rules need to be implemented rigorously?

A. Yes, of course! The Government of India CRZ Notification 2011 is being implemented in the State. Under the provisions of the same, development works in Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) areas are controlled. For this, CRZ Control Authority is established by the Union Government. We are committed to scrupulously implement this Notification. **M**



(Clockwise from top) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Qingdao city of Shandong with Mayor Zhang Xinqi, during an interaction with Governor of Henan Province, Xie Fuzhan and with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other leaders after the State/Provincial Leaders' Forum in Beijing

NEW FRONTIERS OF SUCCESS

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was part of the delegation Prime Minister Narendra Modi led to China recently. A successful tour, it helped Maharashtra achieve on many fronts, reports **Rohit Chandavarkar**

China and India are two of world's oldest civilisations. In fact, the two countries contributed 50 per cent of the world economy in 1850. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has faith in cooperative federalism and development for all. He believes that India lives in its States. The same goes for Chinese Provinces. Considering the increasingly important role played by Indian States and Chinese Provinces in advancing the bilateral relationship between the nations, the two sides agreed to establish a State/Provincial Leaders' Forum. The forum was launched in Beijing during Prime Minister's tour to China in May.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was part of the delegation to China. Sharing his experience of the visit, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, there has been a paradigm shift in India-China business partnership, with Maharashtra emerging as a chosen destination for investment in the infrastructure and manufacturing sectors.

The five-day-long forum saw discussions on various subjects and agreements signed between the Asian nations. Under the subject of culture and tourism, a sister cities agreement was signed between Aurangabad, in Maharashtra, and Dunhuang. Economic and manufacturing investment in Maharashtra was the second area that came up for discussion. While Pune is the software capital of India, it lacks hardware manufacturers, as all computer chips are imported. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had a productive meeting with IT hardware manufacturing company Foxconn to form a mutually beneficial relationship. Chairperson of Foxconn, Terry



(From top to bottom) An action-packed visit: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visits a Shandong High-Speed Group project, with senior officials of Bank of China and Foxconn Chairman Terry Gou and during a meeting with Great Wall Motors

Gou, in Zhengzhou agreed to expand manufacturing in Maharashtra and will be visiting the State soon.

The Chinese firms that are set to visit the State to take forward the investment talks include China Road and Bridge Corporation, China Harbour Engineering Company, China Communication Services Corporation, Zhu Lei of Yapp Automotive (biggest fuel tank manufacturer), Foxconn and China Gezhouba Group (CGGC). Almost 1,000 hectares have been identified near Pune for Beiqi Foton, which wants to start manufacturing light transport vehicles. The Chief Minister also met the president of consumer electronics major Haier, Liang Haishan and signed an MoU for a mega investment project in Pune. Devendra Fadnavis thanked Liang Haishan for his plans for new investment of \$70 million. The Government approved Special Mega Project status to Haier within 48 hours of receiving its application.

The third subject taken up was infrastructure investment in trans-harbour link, highways and metro. Another area where China has made impressive progress is in the technology for special infrastructure projects such as deep sea ports and trans-sea projects, both relevant for Maharashtra. "We in Maharashtra are planning to construct coastal highway in Mumbai and trans-harbour link across Mumbai harbour, which can benefit from Chinese technology and infrastructure companies," said the Chief Minister.

An advantage that Maharashtra and China share is the presence of fully State-owned companies that can work together in various sectors such as infrastructure and power"

Devendra Fadnavis also visited Qingdao city to learn about Chinese infrastructure development in coastal area to understand how it works. He held discussions with Shandong High-Speed Group (SDHS). This company built the Forbes-awarded best bay bridge, Jiaozhou Bay Bridge spread over 26 km in three years at an estimated cost of \$1.4 billion. The company has agreed to come to Maharashtra and partner with Maharashtra State Road Development

Corporation (MSRDC) and Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) to build infrastructure in the State.

Following discussions with major Chinese infrastructure companies on the possibility of setting up joint venture companies with Maharashtra, the Chief Minister said, "An advantage that Maharashtra and China share is the presence of fully State-owned companies like MSRDC and Maharashtra Power Generation Company. The companies must explore joint venture with China Road and Bridge Corporation, China Harbour Engineering Company and CGGC, so that an effective mechanism of mobilising low-cost Chinese infrastructure funds at 2 per cent can be set up, and billions of dollars of surplus Chinese funds can be invested in setting up infrastructure in Maharashtra."

In other agreements, Bank of China spelled out its plans to open a branch in Mumbai. Devendra Fadnavis held a series of meetings with Chinese financial institutions and industries to attract investment and partnership in the mission 'Make in Maharashtra'. Crane manufacturer Taiyuan Project (TZ) has agreed to set up projects in Pune and Nagpur. Great Wall Motors Company Ltd, a leading manufacturer of SUVs and pick-ups, has expressed its interest in developing an industrial park in Pune for Chinese companies. **M**

BLESSED BY BUDDHA

Known for world-renowned Buddhist caves, Aurangabad and Dunhuang go a long way back in history. The recently signed Sister Cities agreement between the two now officially brings them closer, says **Jyoti Verma**

During his official visit to China, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis signed a Sister Cities agreement between Aurangabad and Dunhuang with Xia Hongmin, Vice Governor of Gansu province, where Dunhuang is located. The Chief Minister also presented a beautiful Ajanta painting of Buddha holding a lotus to Xia Hongmin. The Chief Minister was part of the delegation led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to China in May.

(Clockwise from below)
Amazing views of Ajanta,
Chief Minister Devendra
Fadnavis presenting a
memento to Xia Hongmin,
Vice Governor of Gansu
Province, and Mogao
Caves in Dunhuang

Both known for amazing ancient Buddha caves, Aurangabad and Dunhuang have deep cultural similarities. The bond between them dates back to 4th century, as it is believed that the Buddhist monks from Ajanta caves near Aurangabad carried the art of cave hewing to China, where the earliest cave complex of Mogao is located. With many heritage structures and picturesque locations, the historic city of Aurangabad is known as the tourism capital of Maharashtra. Dunhuang—situated at the westernmost end of the Gansu Corridor, in a valley flanked by the mountain ranges of Qilian and Beishan, with the confluence of Sule and Danghe rivers, forming a series of lakes and saline beaches and Yushuquan basin—has attracted tourists over centuries. The name Dunhuang, meaning “to flourish and prosper” indicates city’s prominence since ancient times.

Under the agreement, the sister cities exchange notes and look to bring synergy in various areas such as education, culture, sports, youth affairs, urban planning, waste water management, infrastructure, environment, public health and trade and commerce. The agreement also leads to delegations, interactions between institutions and sharing of experiences in areas of mutual interest.





The agreement will help both Aurangabad and Dunhuang share beneficial practices and promote and strengthen tourism, culture and trade relations. The pact is quite similar to the one between Mumbai and Shanghai, which are looking at each another for mutual economic prosperity. The metropolis would welcome investments from Shanghai (and China in general) in some of the iconic projects such as waterfront development, dockyard, high-speed trains and Metro rail projects, among others. During the recent China visit, Sister Cities agreements were also signed between Chennai and Chongqing and Hyderabad and Qingdao.

COMMON HERITAGE

Aurangabad is located on the famous ancient silk route that traversed across Asia to Europe, and Dunhuang was a major stop on the route. Aurangabad is well known for its Buddhist caves and World Heritage Sites of Ajanta (30 caves) and Ellora (34 caves), while Dunhuang is best known for its Mogao caves (735 caves), also known as the Caves of the Thousand Buddhas.

The caves of Mogao shelter a total of 45,000 sq. m of wall paintings and 2,415 colourful stucco images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas



“The Sister Cities agreement will help both Aurangabad and Dunhuang share beneficial practices and promote and strengthen tourism, culture and business relations

—**Manisha Mhaikar**,
Secretary
Urban Development
Department



(enlightened beings). The caves consist of 735 grottoes, considered among the best preserved in the world. The amazing murals in the caves immediately make one remember Ajanta, but Mogao is not just one replica, but several hundred times as large as Ajanta. Except the floors, ancient paintings cover every inch of the surface of the well-preserved caves; the paintings are on the ceilings extending right through the passages. Dunhuang Academy has been involved in countering the corrosion in the caves. Using modern technology, the professionals at the Academy have devised processes to cure the cracked, flaked, faded and detached murals, to prolong the life of the World Heritage Site indefinitely.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis agreed with Dunhuang Academy and Mayor of Dunhuang that the state-of-the-art, three-dimensional theatre, which showcases 1,000 years of Mogao caves can be replicated in Ajanta and Ellora caves. He has invited the technical team, which designed the interpretation centre at Mogao to work with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation at Ajanta. This is the first step the sister cities will take in their journey of development together. **M**

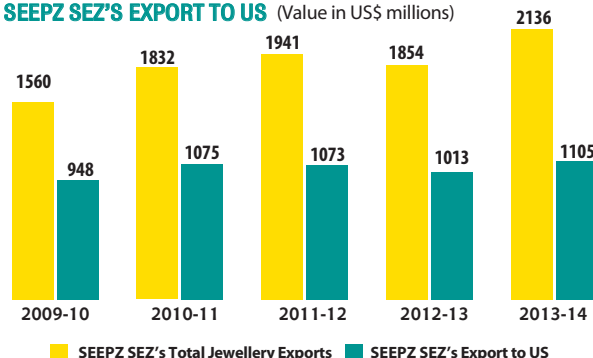


A GLOBAL TRADING HUB

Maharashtra's export manufacturing hub, SEEPZ is where some of the best electronic and gems and jewellery exporters operate, says **Chandragupta Amritkar**



**SEEPZ SEZ'S TOTAL JEWELLERY EXPORTS VIS-A-VIS
SEEPZ SEZ'S EXPORT TO US** (Value in US\$ millions)



Santacruz Electronics Export Processing Zone (SEEPZ) is a special economic zone (SEZ) located in Andheri East that was established in 1973 exclusively for manufacturing and exporting electronic items. Over the years, the hub has become a landmark of Mumbai. The idea behind its institution was to provide liberal economic laws as compared to the rest of India to promote rapid economic growth using tax and incentives and attract foreign investment and technology. The SEZ has been quite successful in accelerating the progress of electronics manufacturing in India, presumably encompassing the technology transfer objective and taking advantage of the growing electronics world market, serving both export and foreign exchange objectives.

Considering the high potential and pollution-free nature of gem and jewellery (G & J) industry, the Government of India

decided to permit manufacture and export of G & J items from SEEPZ in 1987-88, which soon gave a glamorous twist to this SEZ. With a view to overcome the shortcomings experienced on account of multiplicity of controls and clearances, absence of world-class infrastructure and an unstable fiscal regime and with the objective of attracting larger foreign investments in India, the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Policy was announced in April 2000. SEEPZ was one of the three export processing zones converted to SEZs in 2000. SEEPZ became the second SEZ in India, after Kandla, Gujarat.

The main objectives of the SEZ Act are—generation of additional economic activity, promotion of export goods and services, promotion of investment from domestic and foreign sources, creation of employment opportunities, and

WHY SEEPZ

CORPORATE TAX/INCOME TAX EXEMPTION AS PER SEC.10AA

- Hundred per cent of export profits exempted from tax during first five years; half of export profits exempted for next five years. Further half tax exemption is allowed provided the company ploughs back half of its net profit earned into the project. In total, 15-year tax benefit is allowed.
- SEZs to have Offshore Banking Units: No loss on account of forex conversion and loan available at international interest rates
- Write off of unrealised exports allowed

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE

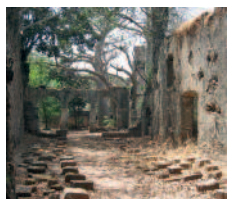
- Exemption from Customs Duty and Central Excise Duty on capital goods, raw material, consumables, supplies, etc.
- Exemption from Customs/Excise Duty on goods (all construction and office materials) for setting up units
- Exemption of Service Tax on services wholly consumed for authorised operations within the SEZ and refund for services not wholly consumed
- Import and export on self-certification basis
- Online service enabled for all trade transactions

OTHER IMPORTANT BENEFITS

- 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment is allowed
- 100 per cent Capital Account Convertibility is allowed (EEFC A/C)
- Speedy clearance of import/export cargo at all ports
- Minimised labour law restrictions on contract labour
- Free imports of technical know-how allowed
- Only positive net foreign exchange earnings required on cumulative basis of five years
- Single-window clearance facility
- State Taxes, Duties, Octroi, VAT, etc., exempted or refunded
- SEZs are governed under SEZ Rules 2006/ SEZ Act 2005. This is the main applicable regulation for SEZ
- Ready, modern infrastructure available

OUT OF THE BOX

Within the premises of SEEPZ are the ruins of an abandoned Portuguese church, St. John the Baptist Church. It was built by the Portuguese Jesuits in 1579. After SEEPZ was formed, the church had restricted access and lay in ruins for years, but in 2003, it was handed back to Fr Rodney Esperance of Bombay Archdiocese.



development of infrastructure.

SEEPZ today houses prime electronic hardware manufacturing companies, software companies and jewellery exporters of India. Around 300 units operate in the area. These include CGI Group Inc., Tata Consultancy Services, Syntel, Zycus, ACE Software, Tara Jewels Ltd., etc. Buildings in the zone are called standard design factories (SDF). Over 295 dynamic and technologically advanced exporters located here supply computer hardware and software and G & J products to global markets. These include 28 IT hardware units, 168 G & J units, 66 IT software units and 33 trading units.

SEEPZ employs nearly 85,000 people. About 40 per cent of its workforce consists of women. This goes a long way in ensuring local community welfare. An export manufacturing hub with an in-house customs clearance facility, SEEPZ

enables the exporters to deliver air and sea consignments well in time without any hassles and through simplified procedures. It offers unique combination of urban infrastructure, skilled labour, eco-friendly production, speedy and cost-effective shipping. SEEPZ also runs programmes for skill development, to and fro transport and recreational facilities. For international investors, it offers a proactive industrial environment at par with the best in the world and serves as an incubation centre. It is like a bourse that offers investors the convenience of buying everything at one place.

THE G & J SECTOR AT SEEPZ

The SEEPZ Gems & Jewellery Manufacturers' Association (SGJMA) is the representative body of the gem and jewellery units in the SEZ formed in the year 1989. It is a voluntary set-up by the jewellery units located here and functions on democratic principles. The sector, which started operations in SEEPZ in 1987-88 with nine pioneering units and combined export of \$4.09 million, has expanded rapidly with more than 168 units presently engaged in exports of jewellery and providing employment to about 35,000-40,000 persons. It has become the largest supplier of gold jewellery to the US, with export to the country touching almost a billion US dollars. This growth has been achieved by focusing on core basic values—ethics, skill, consistent quality

and timely delivery. SEEPZ has become a 'hassle-free' zone after its conversion into an SEZ in the year 2000.

The G & J sector at SEEPZ has expanded to over 168 units presently engaged in exports of jewellery and providing jobs to about 35,000 to 40,000 persons

Most of the jewellery units located in the SEEPZ have product development centres—a separate facility, detached from the distractions of day-to-day production with a facility for sampling. A cutting-edge creative team of designers, CAD operators, model makers and merchandisers works freely, interacting in a cheerful and

stimulating environment. The original designs and proprietary concepts, which each unit develops in its product development centre fuels the growth of export of diamond-studded, precious metal jewellery from the SEZ.

Being located near the diamond trading centre of India (Opera House, Mumbai) and with availability of gold through various nominated agencies within the zone, SEEPZ is also a sort of one-stop shop for all raw materials required for production. Getting labour on a daily basis is also easy. Its nearness to Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai helps SEEPZ units in dispatching consignments within 24 hours of manufacture. The presence of customs officers, custodian, consolidators and other connected agencies within the zone and their professional approach makes the delivery possible on all seven days of the week. **M**

MoU for a food preservation JV signed with Rosatom

The food preservation joint venture with the Hindustan Agro Cooperative Society and Rosatom, a Russian firm which works in the nuclear power sector, to help in increasing the shelf life of vegetables and foods, is really excellent, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. A memorandum of understanding in this regard was signed in presence of the Chief Minister at Sahyadri guest house in Mumbai.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said that the technology would also help in keeping the prices of food materials stable and consumer getting quality food and

vegetables. He further said that the project will be successful as using technology is the need of the day.

Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya; Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture, Sudhirkumar Goel; Principal Secretary to Chief Minister's Office, Praveen Pardeshi; Chief Executive Officer, MIDC, Bhushan Gagrani; former Chairman of Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. Anil Kakodkar; Deputy Chairman of Hindustan Agro Society, Dr Bharat Dhokane-Patil; and Vice President, Rosatom, Anton Moskvina were present on the occasion.



Officials of NASSCOM and State Government exchange the MoU papers in Mumbai

Start-up warehouses planned at Navi Mumbai and Pune

In order to reach out to maximum number of entrepreneurs, start-up warehouses with latest technology will be set up in Navi Mumbai and Pune. For this, NASSCOM's 10,000 Startups Programme entered into a strategic partnership with the Maharashtra Government. The MoU



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya with officials of Hindustan Agro Cooperative Society, India and Rosatom, Russia during the MoU signing ceremony in Mumbai



Create an army of young entrepreneurs in Maharashtra: Governor

Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao has expressed the need for creating an army of young entrepreneurs in the State to set up micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to achieve higher levels of progress and prosperity. Observing that the MSMEs are the backbone of economic development in India, he asked the State industry department to explore the possibility of organising a trade fair of MSME products and services in Mumbai to showcase the strength of Maharashtra in the sector.

The Governor was addressing a conference of MSMEs organised by the Industry Department at Y.B. Chavan Auditorium in Mumbai. The theme of the conference was Transform MSMEs for Transforming Maharashtra. Referring to the challenges faced by the sector such as non-availability of credit, high-interest rates and requirement of multiple permissions, the Governor asked the Government to aim for

Maharashtra assures Europe a better trade environment

Maharashtra is a powerhouse of India and no efforts can be complete without its involvement. The State makes 15 per cent of the national GDP, 30 per cent of the country's total exports and 30 per cent of total FDI of India, hence more and more investments should come to the State, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The Chief Minister was speaking at a

programme organised on European Day at Hotel Taj, Mumbai. While talking about Make in Maharashtra, he said, endeavours are being made to reduce industrial permissions from 76 to 25 to bring about ease of doing business. He also assured to help the industrialists with a single-window system.

Devendra Fadnavis said that Maharashtra has best infrastructure and industrial facilities. Talking about his Davos visit, he said that there was a sense of enthusiasm in the business community. "We will translate this enthusiasm into reality and a seamless ecosystem. Maharashtra has cordial relations with Europe and every effort will be made to make these bonds stronger; we wholeheartedly welcome European investors," he said.

Captain Avinash Batra, President, The Council of European Chamber of Commerce in India; Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Mumbai, Michael Siebert; Ambassador and Head of European Union Delegation to India, Dr Joao Cravinho and others were present on the occasion.



Delegates during the European Day celebrations

was signed in this regard in the presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Subhash Desai, Minister for Industries; Chief Executive Officer, MIDC, Bhushan Gagrani, and President, NASSCOM, R. Chandrashekhar. NASSCOM delegates, along with other industry leaders and entrepreneurs, were present on the occasion.

The objective behind the association is to build entrepreneurial capabilities, and create vibrant online community to link investors, mentors and entrepreneurs in the State. It also aims to organise common application process with Industries Department and MIDC to generate large number of start-up applications and make relevant connections with the investors.

The warehouses will provide early-stage technology start-ups with highly affordable co-working space conveniently located in the centre of the city, thereby establishing Navi Mumbai and Pune as one of the emerging destinations of global businesses and start-ups.



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis (left) speaks during the launch of IBJA Jewellery and Knowledge Park

Skill development crucial for gems and jewellery sector: Chief Minister

In order to promote growth of gems and jewellery (G&J) sector in the State, Maharashtra Government has decided to set up a knowledge smart city alongwith Jewellery and Knowledge Park, which will help in generating large number of employment opportunities for youth under the skill development project, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The Chief Minister was speaking at the launch of Indian Bullion Jewellery Association's (IBJA) Jewellery and Knowledge Park at Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai. Minister for

Housing, Prakash Mehta; MLAs Raj Purohit, Shaina NC, Mohit Kamboj; President, IBJA; and others were present on the occasion.

Speaking further, the Chief Minister said that Government will extend full support to the proposed IBJA Jewellery and Knowledge Smart City. "Skill development is the focus of the State Government. IBJA Jewellery and Knowledge Smart City will also give a thrust to upgrading the skills and value additions in the G&J industry.

The proposed park is a part of Make in Maharashtra. It will have support activities such as training institute, research centre, exhibition and convention centre, residences for employees, hostel, schools and hospitals. The facility in Mumbai has been looked upon as a place that will solve problems of logistics, security and well being of artisans.



becoming number one State in the country in terms of the ease of doing business.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said that impetus will be given to MSMEs. "For setting up a new business, single-window clearance will be launched within a month and half," he said.

Devendra Fadnavis was speaking at the concluding session of the conference. He shared that a new comprehensive policy for MSMEs will be made to boost the sector. "The sustenance and growth of these enterprises is crucial for providing greater employment opportunities to youth. A full-fledged MSME Development Corporation would be constituted to address their issues," he said.

Industry Minister Subhash Desai expressed Government's commitment to bring prosperity to the State by supporting the MSMEs.

Secretary, Ministry, MSME, Madhav Lal; Principal Secretary, Industries, Apurva Chandra; and CEO, MIDC, Bhushan Gagrani were also present.

(From left) Maharashtra Governor, Ch. Vidyasagar Rao addresses the MSME conference, and the participants in Mumbai



Chief Minister chairs the MIDC Security Meet in Mumbai

Police stations to be set up in MIDC areas

For attracting more and more investment in the State, a number of facilities are being made available to industrial investors in the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) areas. To ensure that law and order issues do not affect investment prospects in the State, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has directed to set up police stations in these areas.

The Chief Minister was speaking at a meeting to take review of law and order situation. Minister for Industries, Subhash Desai, Minister of State for Home, Ranjit Patil; Minister of State for Labour, Vijay Desh-

mukh, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, K.P. Bakshi, Principal Secretary, Industries, Apurva Chandra, Director General Police Sanjeev Dayal, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Office Praveen Pardeshi, CEO, MIDC, Bhushan Gagrani, senior police officers and others were also present.

The Chief Minister asked for coordination among Police, industries and labour department, and called for a strict action against those creating hurdles for smooth functioning of companies. Directives have also been issued to take steps to set up police stations in large MIDC areas.

COMMITTED TO CASHEW

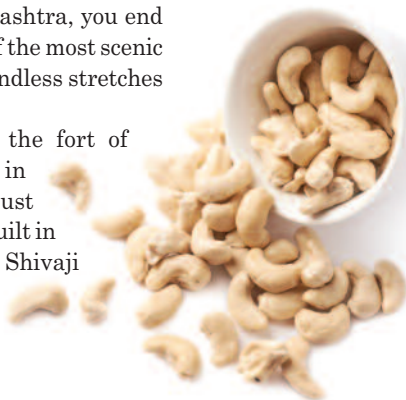
The scenic coastal region of Sindhudurg boasts of massive production of cashew nut, helping the State become one of its largest producers in India, reports **Sameer K**



Maharashtra is among the largest producers of cashew nuts in the country, with over 1,50,000 hectares of land under cultivation. And when you think of cashews from Maharashtra, you end up thinking of Sindhudurg—one of the most scenic coastal regions in the State with endless stretches of sea and greenery.

Sindhudurg is named after the fort of Sindhudurg, which means “fort in the sea,” located on a rocky island just off the coast of Malvan. The fort, built in the 16th century by Chhatrapati Shivaji

(Clockwise from above)
Cashew nut: in farms,
during processing and
ready to eat



Maharaj, has a temple and a palm imprint of the Maratha leader. The district has 37 forts, including seafort, forts on land and forts on hilltop. The scenic location and monuments make Sindhudurg a tourist attraction.

The region is also known for its cashew production and cashew-processing units. Cashew is chiefly grown in Vengurla, Malvan, Sindhudurg and Sawantwadi. Sindhudurg has about 43 large cashew-processing units and 260 small scale cottage units, which are operational during the season. The district does business worth ₹150 crore in cashew, and there is a likelihood of a surge.

“The cashew nut was brought to Sindhudurg by the Portuguese,” says Suresh Bowlekar of Bowlekar Cashew Industries, one of the biggest units in Sindhudurg that does a daily business of around 2,500 kg of raw cashew. “The soil, water and climate in this region are ideal for cashew cultivation. Most of the production is organic and the business has been growing,” he says.

Ajit Gogate, who is part of the recently announced board for cashew and mango says, “The previous Government in Maharashtra had announced the establishment of a separate board for mango and cashew—the major cash crops in Konkan region for which ₹100 crore is expected to be disbursed. The board is yet to begin functioning formally.”

According to official estimates, around 62,100 hectares of land in Sindhudurg comes under cashew cultivation of which 41,995 hectares are productive. The productivity as on date is around 950 kg per hectare—one of the highest in the country. “A cashew cluster has also been announced, but is yet to take shape although units have begun to function individually,” says Bowlekar.

A SEASONAL COMMODITY

The existence of cashew-processing units in Sindhudurg is almost a century old. The first cashew-processing unit came up in 1920 in Vengurla and subsequently spread to other areas of the district. Two more units followed in 1928 and 1929. The fourth unit came up in 1953. These



units were exporting cashew kernel from the Vengurla port, through Portuguese traders, to the USA. In the beginning, cashew processing was profitable as export markets were fetching good prices. But since the raw material was available only for a limited period in a year, the units required huge working capital to procure and stock raw cashew nuts. In 1940, the oldest unit suffered a major financial loss due to fluctuation in procurement price of cashew nut and its effect on final price, a phenomenon, still common today. The establishment of a cashew corporation made available imported cashews at a much lower price and regulated exports.

Members of Maharashtra Cashew Manufacturers Association say, the Sindhudurg Cashew Cluster Scheme initiated by the Agriculture Department of the Union Government should benefit all stakeholders of the industry, from farmers to the youth.

Cashew is a seasonal commodity and the trading season is from March to May. Producers usually supply to the primary or village markets, where small traders collect the produce and supply to the urban markets. The cashew trade is seldom handled by exclusive traders. Usually, the traders who collect other plantation products also trade in cashew. Due to the highly competitive nature of the trade, farmers face a few marketing problems. When large quantities are collected by middlemen, the processors enter the marketing chain and make wholesale purchases. Grades and standards for cashew are yet to be introduced in India. Quality is generally determined by appearance and cutting tests that traders employ prior to purchase. The raw cashew nut market involves a large amount of capital where nearly 80 per cent of the produce is transacted within a span of 35 days.

In Sindhudurg, the cashew season lasts for only a couple of months. The units then end

BENEFITS OF THE NUT

- Cashew is chiefly grown in Vengurla, Malvan, Sindhudurg and Sawantwadi

- Sindhudurg has about 43 large cashew-processing units and 260 small scale units, which are operational during the season

- Around 62,100 hectares of land in Sindhudurg comes under cashew cultivation of which 41,995 hectares are productive

- The productivity in Sindhudurg as on date is around 950 kg per hectare—one of the highest in the country



Cashew was brought to Sindhudurg by the Portuguese. The soil, water and climate in the region are ideal for cashew cultivation. Most of the production is organic, and the business has been growing

—Suresh Bowlekar



up storing stocks for future use. Vengurla, in Sindhudurg, is known for its cashews.

QUALITY AND QUANTITY

According to Sandip Soman, a farmer, the cashew from Sindhudurg is known for its flavour. It is yellowish in colour and has a special taste because of the soil, he says. Moreover, the cashew is roasted in clay ovens that gives it a special taste. Soman rues the mechanisation coming into cultivation and fears that commercial production could take away that flavour of cashew, something that Konkan is famous for.

Bowlekar believes, the organic processes used for cultivation make the difference, and hopes this remains in the future as well. “The Maharashtra Government had recently announced that cashew-processing units in Konkan will get incentives equal to the amount they deposit as VAT on the sale of produced and processed cashews. The cashew unit owners hope that this will help them get better returns,” he says.

Maharashtra, Gujarat and Delhi are the major markets for Sindhudurg cashew. The export market too has begun to pick up, as the nut is being exported to USA though there is no official data available. There has been a 30 per cent rise in cashew prices since last year, and therefore, cashew farmers are a happy lot. Production is set to increase next year, say industry experts.

Interestingly, India is one of the leading producers, processors and exporters of the cashew in the world. It has about 0.97 million hectares under cashew cultivation with productivity of 770 kg per hectare. Maharashtra, Kerala and Karnataka are the prime producers of the nut along India's western coast, while Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are key producers along the eastern coast. Cashew is also grown in Chhattisgarh, Goa, Gujarat and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. **M**

THE KING OF FORTS

Withstanding storm, wind and heavy rain, and witnessing many battles for centuries, the Rajgad Fort stands tall to tell its story. **Dr. Sachin Vidyadhar Joshi** writes about its history, beauty and glory

Fort Rajgad is an early medieval fort situated in the Gunjavane river basin. The fort is important when one talks about the Maratha Empire, as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj selected Rajgad as his Capital due to its proximity to Sahyadri and Deccan Plateau. In addition, Rajgad was not possible to win easily because of its height. Mughal, Adilshahi and Nizamshahi forces were usually familiar with the battle of bare ground, but the Maratha combatants were expert in guerrilla warfare technique.

After being selected as the Capital, Rajgad witnessed many historic events. Shivaji Maharaj planned and executed the attack on Shahistekhan from Rajgad. He reached Rajgad safely after his escape from Agra. He and Rajmata Jijau were at Rajgad when Tanaji Malusare performed his heroic exploit at Sinhgad. Similarly, many big and small campaigns were planned from the Maratha Capital.

From the architectural point of view, it was very difficult to build a wall around the fort in the medieval period. It was a challenge to construct strong walls and gateways on 500 m high hill top with steep slopes. Rajgad falls in the high rainfall zone of the Sahyadri. Under these conditions, Shivaji Maharaj decided to reconstruct and strengthen the fort in 17th century. He built three lower forts (*machi*)—Padmavati, Suvela and Sanjeevani—and one upper fort, Balekilla.

It is difficult to say anything positive about the earliest date of construction of Rajgad. According to some historians, the fort

was built by the Bahamani kingdom. Other chronicles and historical documents suggest the original name of the mountain to be *Murumb devacha dongar*. First literary evidence of Rajgad was found in the historical Persian text *Burhana-e-Masira*. Nizamshahi of Ahmednagar captured the forts in Konkan and plateau region in the last decade of the 15th century. During

Rajgad Fort is important when one talks about the Maratha Empire. The fort is close to Sahyadri and Deccan Plateau and not easy to win because of its height

this campaign, Nizamshahi forces conquered the fort, say Persian records, suggesting the fort to be constructed before 1490 A.D. The fort was under the Nizamshahi rule for almost 130 years. Haibatrao, a chief of the Adilshah of Vijapur, captured the fort from Nizamshah in 1625 A.D. After the death of Dadoji Kondadev, Shivaji Maharaj captured the fort in 1647 A.D. The geographic location of Rajgad is very important and strategic. On its south is the wide Velwandi river valley and on the north is the Gunjavane river basin. Maximum height of the fort is 1323 m from sea level and 488 m from the base of the fort. The *machi* or lower fort is a small horizontally extended hill strengthened by constructing strong walls and bastions. The three lower forts of Rajgad are extended in three directions. Sanjeevani *machi* extends in the west, Padmavati in the north and Suvela in the



(Clockwise from left)
The magnificent Rajgad
Fort, Brahmarshi talav
and a distant view
of the fort



east. Balekilla is located at the centre of the lower forts. The upper fort was built at a little height than the lower forts and many structural remains can still be seen here. Sanjeevani *machi* is 1 km and Suvela is 1.23 km long from the base of the upper fort. Both these lower forts are bolstered by double-layered fortification with bastions and small gateways.

The Suvela *machi* has a water tank, a spear-hole in the rock (called *nedha*) and three small doors, which were used for emergency exit. Out of these, one opens into the Velwandi river and the other into Gunjavane river. Hanumana and Kaleshwari Devi temples can be seen here. Sanjeevani *machi* was constructed on a gradual slope. Every step was fortified by constructing a strong bastion on it. Three-layered bastions are seen even today. Padmavati *machi* is where all the administrative work was carried out. Padmavati Devi temple is located at its centre. In the north of the temple, one can find flat space with a large sweet water lake surrounded by a stone wall. One small emergency exit commonly known as Chor Darwaja is much closer to the lake. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's palace is on the south side of the temple.

Balekilla is 123 m higher than the lower forts and is very difficult to climb. Rock-cut steps were carved to reach up the gateway. A highly decorated and huge gateway was constructed on a sharp and steep slope. Height of the gateway is 6 m, built in two large bastions and decorated with depiction of lotus and diamonds. Janani Devi temple is located inside the fort complex.

According to many scholars, a large structure on the top of the fort was a marketplace. One wonders, how could people be interested to climb up there to buy things!

Shivaji Maharaj could retain only 12 forts in the Treaty of Purandar and Rajgad was one of them. After the death of Shivaji Maharaj and Sambhaji Maharaj, Aurangzeb attacked Rajgad and captured it in 1704 A.D. He changed the name of the fort to Nabishahadurg. After three years, Marathas, under the leadership of Maharani Tarabai, wife of Chhatrapati Rajaram Maharaj, captured the fort again. **M**

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



■ IN MEMORIAM: NINAD BEDEKAR

Eminent historian, writer, orator and our columnist, Ninad Bedekar passed away at age 65 after prolonged illness in Pune. He contributed to *Maharashtra Ahead* on its series on Maharashtra forts that started in April.

Bedekar is known for his research on the forts of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and about 75 forts outside India, having led numerous treks to them. He was an honorary member of Fort Renovation and Beautification Committee for the Government of Maharashtra and member of various cultural organisations. *Maharashtra Ahead* pays tribute to the scholar and expresses condolences to bereaved family members.

AN EVERLASTING APPEAL

The ancient weaving art of Aurangabad, Himroo draws inspiration from Ajanta and Moghul motifs. The luxuriously opulent art has grown with diverse trends and global appreciation, says **Pallavi Singh**



If you are travelling to Delhi, one place that you cannot afford to miss is Dilli Haat—a place that attracts people for its culturally diverse spread of textiles, handicrafts and artifacts, handloom, food and an eclectic atmosphere. On one of my visits to the Capital and to Dilli Haat, I chanced upon a stall that had a rich display of textiles from Maharashtra. It is here that a Himroo shawl caught my fancy. One look and I fell in love with the weave.

Himroo is an extra-weft, figured fabric with a solid ground of satin or twill, decorated with figurative motifs and manufactured ordinarily from cotton and viscose rayon yarn on a cotton ground. It is also woven from silk yarn and gold thread on a silk ground. When presented to him in the Deccan region, Venetian merchant traveller Marco Polo had said about this fabric, “As fine as a spider’s web, Kings and Queens of any country will have a sense of pride in wearing it.”

ARTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Himroo is an age-old weaving art of Aurangabad. The weavers mostly weave in pure silver or gold giving it a name *Kum-Khwab*, which literally means less (*kum*) dreams (*khwab*) or a fabric rarely seen even in dreams. The word Himroo originated from Persian word, *Hum-ruh*, which means ‘similar’. The art uses Persian designs and is quite characteristic and distinctive in appearance. The hand-woven fabric was used to serve royal families and continues to remain in high demand for its unique style and design. It has a satiny sheen and is popular for vests, blouses, coats, cloaks, shawls and furnishings. Also, there are sarees, dress materials and stoles to choose from.

Himroo designs draw inspiration from Ajanta paintings and the intricate floral inlay designs of Taj Mahal and Bibi ka Makabara. The fabric itself is an extra-weft weave and a mix of silk, cotton and silver or gold threads. The patterns are floral with geometric borders. Intricate creeper designs are popular. Himroo is also made with silk and wool. Nowadays, weavers are making pure silk Himroo shawls, which can pass through a ring.

With a product so good, Himroo has been a choice for today’s fashion designers. No wonder designers have gone ahead and



lapped up the weave, giving it a new twist to suit modern tastes. Well-known fashion designer Rina Dhaka has interspersed the fabric in a lot of her designs. She is currently reviving the crocheted looking lace and is quite open to the idea of imbibing the old weaves in modern styles.

EYE FOR DETAIL

Himroo has a complicated technique of weaving. The design has to be decided at the outset since two kinds of threads are being mixed. One Himroo shawl requires two persons and takes about three weeks to make. One person pulls the string and the weaver weaves with two to three colour weft threads. The pieces are woven on throw-shuttle looms. The process can take a week for a scarf to complete, while a saree can take up to 18 months.

Craftsmen that have an eye for detail design Himroo shawls on both traditional loom (which uses throw shuttle) and Jacquard loom. The Jacquard loom, which uses flying shuttle, gives it a compact texture. Abdul Hameed Qureshi, a master craftsman, was mainly responsible for introducing the new Jacquard looms to Himroo weavers. Most Himroo products are now produced on these looms, which have made the productivity higher and increased the width of the fabric.



(Clockwise from facing page) The opulent Himroo shawls with paisley and floral patterns, threads used in weaving and a weaver at work in Maharashtra



**Today,
Himroo weaves
get exported
worldwide and
are preferred by
women, given
that they come in
a multitude
of colours and
design**

During the reign of Mohammad Tughlaq in 14th century AD, the Capital was shifted from Delhi to Daulatabad, near Aurangabad in Maharashtra. With the shift came the Himroo weavers from Benares. They continued to dwell in the city long even after the king decided to shift the Capital back to Delhi. Daulatabad attracted artisans and craftsmen from all over India, helping the industry flourish for over 200 years. As per the 1961 Census, over 500 to 600 looms were active in the area during the period. Many of these weavers and craftsmen continued to supply textile products such as stoles, shawls and other linens to the royal households.

It is believed that the original Himroo is a dying art with only a few Himroo weavers left. Today, Aurangabad's Nawabpura hosts most units manufacturing Himroo. The Qureshi family is the only descendant left who has preserved the original art of Himroo. It is heartening to see how weavers from this region have skillfully combined silk and pure gold thread to produce some of the most opulent and sought after brocades in India. [M](#)



RAINY DAY GETAWAYS

Maharashtra abounds in destinations that can make your rain-filled days a visual treat and leave you with lifetime experiences. Planning a visit to Bhandardara, Malshej Ghat, Amboli and Mahabaleshwar can give you much more than you imagine, says **Pallavi Singh**





■ MAHABALESHWAR LAND OF STRAWBERRIES

The summer capital of Bombay Presidency during the British Raj, Mahabaleshwar is Maharashtra's most popular hill station. Marked by soaring peaks, breathtaking valleys, lush flora and cool, crisp mountain air, Mahabaleshwar means 'God of Great Power' in Sanskrit. It is a conglomerate of old-world charm, natural beauty and modernity. The town bazaar is called Malcolm Peth after the then British Governor of Bombay, Sir John Malcolm. The bazaar lies at the heart of Mahabaleshwar with its hotels, shops, restaurants, outlying bungalows, Government offices and jostling crowds.

There's Mount Malcolm built in 1829, the one-time residence of Governor Malcolm; Moraji Castle, where Mahatma Gandhi lived during 1945; and the Mahabaleshwar Club, which offers many recreational facilities. Holy Cross Church with its stained glass windows is a beauty in itself.

One could also visit the Old Mahabaleshwar and Panchganga Mandir, which is said to contain the springs of five rivers—Koyna, Venna, Savitri, Gayatri and Krishna. Mahabaleshwar Mandir is revered for its Swayambhu Lingam. About 24 km away lies the Pratapgad Fort, a maze of ponds, chambers and long dark walkways, some of which lead to trap doors that open to a 100 m fall.

Navigator

GETTING THERE

BY AIR: Nearest airport is Pune at 120 km
BY RAIL: Nearest railhead Wathar at 60 km
BY ROAD: MSRTC operates buses on a regular basis to Mahabaleshwar

■ BHANDARDARA AN IDYLIC DREAM RESORT

Sky-high mountains, roaring waterfalls and lush greenery throughout the year, this is Bhandardara for you—a dream holiday destination nestled in the Sahyadri Hills.

This tranquil destination boasts of attractions that range from the grand Wilson Dam to wondrous Arthur Lake. Legend goes that sage Agastya meditated here for a year, surviving only on water and air. Pleased with his display of devotion, God descended on Earth and blessed him with a stream of Ganga river, now known as the Pravara River. The small town of Ghoti past Igatpuri leads to a long narrow road, which cuts across the lofty mountains and ascends to the marvelous retreat. An hour's journey is riddled with spectacular

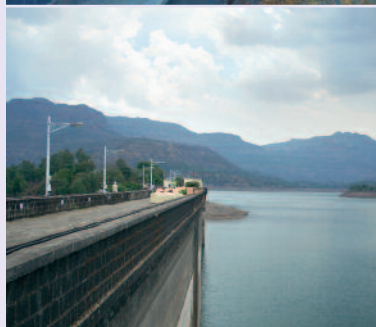
sights en route. Fluorescent green paddy fields contrast with bright blue skies above and the murky brown streams that crisscross the whole land.

Built in 1910 on the Pravara river and standing 150 m high, Wilson Dam is the largest earthen dam in India and is reflective of the engineering marvel of the olden days. The base of the dam has a garden endowed with thick greenery, streams and gigantic trees. One could either stand at the edge of the garden embankment and enjoy the cool spray, or visit the picturesque Umbrella Falls, an added attraction during the season.

Navigator

GETTING THERE

Bhandardara is 165 km from Mumbai. Take the Mumbai-Nashik Highway (NH3)
BY RAIL: Igatpuri station is 45 km away
BY ROAD: The destination is 165 km from Mumbai and 190 km from Pune



■ AMBOLI AMIDST TRANQUIL SETTINGS

If you are in pursuit of peace and solitude, visit Amboli, a quiet hill station on the Western Ghats, surrounded by thick forests and tree-canopied hills. On the coastal side, Amboli gazes over the tree-lined sandy ribbon of the Konkan coast, whereas on the other three sides, one can get a glimpse of the magnificent panorama of the sweeping valley. Snuggling coily, in the southern ranges of the Sahyadri hills, Amboli at an

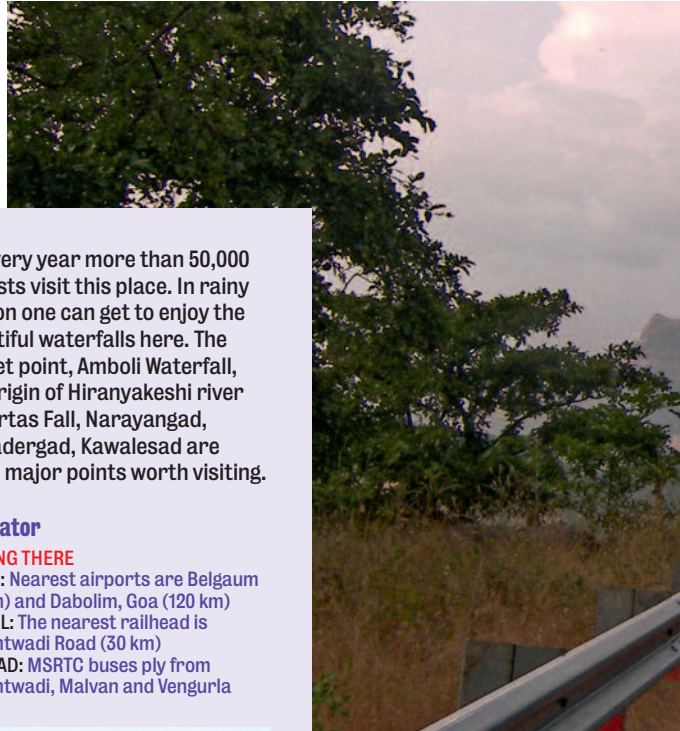
altitude of 690 m is the last mountain resort before the coastal highlands settle, with a sigh, to form flat beaches. Seaview Point offers a rare view of the land all the way to the golden Konkan coast. You can spend hours angling for a fish at Hiranya Keshi or picnic at Nagatta Falls, Mahadev Gad and Narayan Gad. The bauxite mines, 10 km away, can prove to be a pleasant and unique excursion. If you're looking to spend a few days in splendid isolation, Amboli with its cool and invigorating climate, is an ideal resort.

Every year more than 50,000 tourists visit this place. In rainy season one can get to enjoy the beautiful waterfalls here. The sunset point, Amboli Waterfall, the origin of Hiranayakeshi river Nagartas Fall, Narayangad, Mahadargad, Kawalesad are some major points worth visiting.

Navigator

GETTING THERE

BY AIR: Nearest airports are Belgaum (64 km) and Dabolim, Goa (120 km)
BY RAIL: The nearest railhead is Sawantwadi Road (30 km)
BY ROAD: MSRTC buses ply from Sawantwadi, Malvan and Vengurla





■ MALSHEJ GHAT WHERE FLAMINGOES DWELL

A beautiful hill station with its numerous lakes, waterfalls and mountains, Malshej Ghat is popular among hikers, trekkers and adventure lovers. Renowned for its spontaneous waterfalls and torrential downpour, Malshej Ghat is 2,000 ft above sea level. Nestled in the lofty rugged hills of the Western Ghats and blessed with natural beauty and serene surroundings, it proves to be an ideal retreat for city dwellers.

For the outdoor enthusiast and the adventure seeker, there are trekking trails in the surrounding hills to be traversed; for the nature lover, there are gushing waterfalls and the verdant flora and fauna to be enjoyed; the bird watcher can look forward to sighting pink flamingoes that swoop down here. Apart from the Malshej Falls, you have the beautiful Pimpalgaon-Joga Dam, a long bund, which blocks the Pushpavati river that springs out of Malshej Ghat and creates a lake in the monsoons. Close at hand is the Shivneri Fort, famous for being the birthplace of the legendary Chattrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The unusual hill has Buddhist caves dating back to the 3rd century.

The Harishchandragad Peak (1424 m) is a favourite with trekkers. It is unique because of the semi-circular rock wall of the Konkan Kada. The site is home to diverse flora and fauna. The monsoon months are the best time to be here.

Navigator

GETTING THERE

BY AIR: Nearest airport is Pune (116 km)

BY RAIL: Nearest railhead is Kalyan (90 km)

BY ROAD: From Mumbai, 154 km, via Murbad

■ PRADHAN MANTRI SURAKSHA BIMA YOJANA

- This is an accident insurance scheme providing insurance cover for one year. The annual premium per person is ₹12. If the insured person dies in an accident, the heirs will receive ₹2 lakh as insurance compensation.
- Total and irrecoverable loss of both eyes or loss of use of both hands or feet or loss of sight of one eye and loss of use of hand or foot, the compensation would be ₹2 lakh.
- Total and irrecoverable loss of sight of one eye or loss of use of one hand or foot, the compensation would be ₹1 lakh.
- This is for bank account holders in the age group of 18-70 years.
- The scheme is being implemented through co-operation of banks and insurance companies from the Public Sector.
- The duration of the scheme is from June 1 to May 31.
- If the scheme is to be continued further, the application for renewal must be made before May 31.
- The scheme gets an extension of three months initially.
- Joint account holders in the family can also participate in the scheme.
- If the policy holder completes 70 years, if there is insufficient balance in the account for payment of insurance premium, or if the bank account is closed, the insurance cover will lapse. Insurance policy lapsed due to technical reasons can be renewed after completion of certain formalities.



Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis with Maharashtra ministers during the launch in Mumbai

DAWN OF A NEW ERA

Government of India has taken proactive steps to bring its people socio-economic security, says **Dr. Surekha Muley**

The struggle for three major aspects of life—education, health and livelihood—and their fulfillment lead to what is known as human development. The struggle that goes on in one's life also impacts society one is part of. Just like gender and economic and cultural equality are important in securing human rights, a secure environment is important for the entire society. This secure environment will only be available when we are able to remove the disparities between rich and poor, organised and unorganised, rural and urban, and economically secure and economically insecure sections. The most important aspect of this is to enhance the perimeter of opportunities available to the people.

Our society is marred by paradoxes where there is prosperity on one side and struggle to survive on the other. This is coupled with instability in terms of income and employment, even as there is a challenge in terms of securing and developing the life of the common man. The Government seems to be accepting this challenge.

Attempts are being made to make programmes related to people, their skills and opportunities, legal rights and ways to connect with them. Focus is on people deprived of development.

Economic strategy is being planned with the concept of 'funding to unfunded' and 'pension to unpensioned' so as to take economic development to people at the grassroots. These sections include farmers, farm labour, workers and small street-side vendors, house maids and those working in unorganised and unsecured sectors. If development can trickle down to them, the dream of freedom from disparity will be truly successful. It is with this intention that Government policies have been made for those with minimal income and eco-social insecurity. This era is of immense importance, as it aims at converting the scattered societal development into a balanced social development.

If we look at people from various walks of life, we can get an idea of how society is replete with disparity. One limitation is the issue of gender bias. Here one can see the insecurity right from the birth



of a girl child. The second limitation is of unemployment and minimum eco-social security. We have a huge opportunity to do something in this case. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had expressed similar thoughts while inaugurating a welfare scheme. He had mentioned that 80 per cent of India's population is economically insecure. People in this bracket neither have an insurance cover nor are they beneficiaries of any pension facility. Also, no financial services have reached them as yet. The Government of India, he said, is moving ahead with

■ SCHEMES AT A GLANCE

- The three ambitious social security schemes pertaining to the insurance and pension sector have been inaugurated at 115 places and 12 districts in the State.
- The schemes were launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Kolkata. Everyone saw the programme through a direct telecast.
- At the inauguration in Mumbai, Shantaram Karavande and ten other representatives of Mumbai Dabbewalas were provided insurance certificates.
- Although the formal inauguration of the Schemes in the country was held on May 9, the scheme was implemented on an experimental basis from May 1 this year. In the week up to May 9, it was clear that 5.05 crore people had taken advantage of the scheme. At present, the number of Indians taking advantage of the schemes has crossed more than 5.5 crore.
- About 45 lakh people in Maharashtra have so far taken advantage of the three insurance schemes.

the responsibility of their development.

The State's gender ratio has fallen from 913 in 2001 to 894 in 2011. This could include a girl child born with insecurities, a house maid, farm labour or a worker. The Government has shouldered the responsibility of social and economic security for all these sections and has taken a few definitive strides.

PMJDY AND PMSBY

The Government fully understands that the development will be incomplete and inadequate if the benefits of development at the National and State level do not reach people marred by deprivation. Keeping this in mind, the Government of India on one hand is making efforts at making the country a 'production hub' through its ambitious Make in India programme, and on the other, striving at creating bank account of poor people through the Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).

After opening about 150 million bank accounts under PMJDY, insurance and pension benefits will now reach the account holders through three schemes. Through these Jan Suraksha schemes—one life, one non-life and one pension scheme—pure term insurance and group personal accident covers will be extended to the beneficiaries. In his Budget 2015-16 address, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had informed about two new insurance schemes to be launched for lower-income groups. These were Suraksha Bima Yojana, an accident insurance scheme with a sum assured of ₹2 lakh and premium of only ₹12 a year, and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY), with a life insurance cover of ₹2 lakh and an annual premium of ₹330 for people aged between 18-50 years. The Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) for accidental death insurance will be available to those aged between 18-70 years and holding bank accounts (as the premium will be auto-debited from accounts). For this, the premium will be ₹12 a year and the coverage will be ₹2 lakh for accidental death and full disability, and ₹1 lakh for partial disability.

Announced on August 15 last year, PMJDY has till now seen about 15 crore new accounts opened in various banks. The target of the scheme was achieved earlier than expected due to its conversion into a peoples' movement. With the scheme, around 15 per cent of India's population has got included in the mainstream economy. People have been so enthusiastic about the scheme that even while a 'zero balance' account was envisaged, they invested ₹15,800 crore in it.

Encouraged by the positive response, the

■ PRADHAN MANTRI JEEVAN JYOTI BIMA YOJANA

- This is a life insurance scheme providing cover for one year. It is essential to renew the scheme every year.
- The scheme is implemented through co-operation of banks and Life Insurance Corporation of India.
- All bank savings account holders in the age group of 18-50 can participate in the scheme. The annual premium per person is ₹330.
- After participation in the scheme and on completion of 50 years of age, the scheme can be continued for further five years. For this, one needs to pay a premium of ₹330 every year.
- If a person has many savings accounts, s/he can participate in the insurance scheme only from one account.
- Joint account holders in the family can also participate.
- The duration of the scheme is from June 1 to May 31.
- The insurance premium will be debited directly to the bank in the name of the policy holder.
- For renewal, the application must be made before May 31.
- If the policy holder dies due under 55 years of age, the heir will receive a compensation of ₹2 lakh.
- If the policy holder completes 55 years, if there is insufficient balance in the account for payment of premium or if the bank account is closed, the insurance cover will lapse.
- Insurance policy lapsed due to technical reasons can be renewed.
- The scheme gets an extension of three months initially.

■ ATAL PENSION YOJANA

- The scheme provides definite returns every month after retirement. It is beneficial for citizens from the unorganised sector who do not have any access to the pension schemes.
- It is implemented through co-operation of banks and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority.
- People between the age group of 18 and 40 years can participate in the scheme through their saving bank accounts.
- Depending on the invested amounts, the citizens will receive pension amounting to ₹1,000 to ₹5,000 per month from the age of 60 years.
- In case an 18-year-old individual contributes ₹42 per month, one will receive ₹1,000 per month as pension. If one contributes ₹210, one will receive a pension of ₹5,000 per month. In this way, the annual premium has been decided on the basis of the age at which a person joins the scheme.
- The Government also contributes to the scheme for the first five years (2015-16 to 2019-20). This contribution will be half of the total contribution of the person or ₹1,000, whichever is less.
- This contribution will only be available to those people, who do not have any legal social security and those who are not income tax payers.
- If the customer dies due to any reason, the pension will continue to be provided to his/her spouse. If both of them are deceased, the accumulated amount will be refunded in lump sum to the person nominated by them.



Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley hands over an insurance policy to a policy holder in Mumbai

Government undertook many schemes for the economic inclusion of the people. The Centre has carried out a task of direct transfer of amounts to the respective bank accounts for the people. One of the best examples of this has been making gas subsidy available. A whopping 12 crore account holders in various banks received their gas subsidy directly in their accounts. It also brought transparency and blocked pilferage.

The poor are in need of strength and opportunity. The various schemes launched also address this need. The journey started with the PMJDY and reached Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana. The latter was launched in January to ensure eco-social security to the girl child. Investments made in the names of two daughters within the age group of up to 10 years to an extent of a minimum of ₹1,000 to a maximum of ₹1.5 lakh where each earns 9.2 per cent interest has made an effort to secure a girl's future.

According to the 2011 census, one-fifth of the population of the State is in its teens (10 to 19 years) and the youth proportion (age 15 to 24) is also similar. About 9.9 per cent of the population is 60 years and above. This labour power will bring the most valuable addition to the development of Maharashtra in future. This contains micro entrepreneurs such as vegetable vendors, laundrymen, tea vendors, grocery shop owners and sanitation workers. These people from the unorganised sector help keep the wheels of nation moving. To provide them economic security, the Centre has taken another step

through the medium of currency banking.

PMSBY, PMJJBY AND APY

The Government of India has started the implementation of three more schemes so as to make it possible for the poor to live life respectably. These are PMSBY, PMJJBY and Atal Pension Yojana (APY). Through these schemes, the Government has achieved an important stage in social security. About 80 per cent of India's population will be covered under these schemes. This section represents India's productive force. The schemes require small investments and are affordable.

PMSBY is an accident insurance scheme with annual premium of just ₹12. With this, an accident victim can receive compensation of up to ₹2 lakh. PMJJBY is a life insurance scheme with an annual premium of ₹330 and has an accident insurance of up to ₹2 lakh. APY is a scheme for people from the unorganised sector who do not receive any pension. The scheme guarantees a minimum pension of ₹1,000.

Now it is essential for us to move ahead. We have people working in our homes as maid, driver, laundry worker and waste collector. Then there are auto rickshaw drivers, tea vendors, vegetable vendors and people who serve us on a daily basis. One can pay an annual premium of just ₹12 and get him/her an accident insurance of up to ₹2 lakh or pay an annual premium of ₹330 and provide him a life insurance cover of up to ₹2 lakh under the PMJJBY. One can also secure the future of the elderly through the APY. **M**

Under PMJDY, 15 crore new accounts have been opened so far, including about 15 per cent of Indians into the mainstream economy

ON THE TRAIL OF WATER

On his visit to State's drought-affected regions, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis reviewed the works of Jalyukta Shivar Yojana. **Team Maharashtra Ahead** brings to you reports from Amravati (Vidharbha), Solapur (Marathwada) and Satara (Western Maharashtra)



■ Amravati, Vidarbha

The priority zone

With temperatures soaring above 45 degree Celsius, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visits the drought-affected regions of the State to see the work done under Jalyukta Shivar Yojana. He begins the visit with Amravati in Vidarbha. Before heading for the inauguration of an integrated textile park at Nandgaon Peth Industrial estate, he convenes a review meeting at the Divisional Commissioner's Office. With a view to resolve the issue of Amravati residents and to provide them basic infrastructure facilities, he holds a dialogue with the officers of Amravati Municipal Corporation and elected representatives.

Devendra Fadnavis was once the Mayor of Nagpur and thus has rich experience of dealing with local issues. "Until and unless we offer better services to our citizens, we cannot expect them to come forward to pay taxes. We have to understand their problems before we wish to include them in the tax net. If the taxes are affordable, the number of taxpayers will increase automatically," says the Chief Minister. He assures State funds for underground drainage system, drinking water and Rajapeth flyover, setting a positive tone for the meeting.

Immediately after concluding the meeting, he arrives at the Nandgaon Peth Industrial complex for the launch of the integrated textile park. He also inaugurates the factories of Siyaram Silk Mills Limited and Shyam Indofab Limited. The crowd has phenomenal presence of youth. The huge expectations from the companies that have arrived in the area

and from the young and dynamic Chief Minister, who also belongs to the region, are clearly marked on their faces.

In his address during the launch of the textile park, Devendra Fadnavis picks the burning issue of financial calamity facing the farmers. He asks them to be patient and not to undertake drastic steps such as suicides. "Everything from cotton to cloth will be produced and manufactured here. Your children will be employed here," he says.

From Amravati, the Chief Minister moves to Tunki village in Sangrampur *taluka* of Buldhana district. The villagers have been waiting for the Chief Minister, who hands over cheque and pass books to the rehabilitated people at Chunkhadi village. After the programme, his convoy moves to Karmoda village. This village is chosen by Member of Parliament Prataprao Jadhav under the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana. The Chief Minister keenly observes the area from his car.

Reaching Karmoda, he visits an agricultural lake constructed under Jalyukta Shivar Yojana. After inspecting the lake on the field of Minabai Dilip Barge, the Chief Minister issues instructions for completing other works with quality and in time. He stops at Ladnapur to visit the family of Late Anand Dudhmal, a farmer who had committed suicide. Speaking to the deceased's family members, he assures them Government's



TEXTILE, AN OPPORTUNITY

Spread over 500 ha, the textile park at Nandgaon Peth Industrial Complex will see an investment of ₹1,243 crore. Initially, it will offer employment to 3,710 people, which will mount to around 25,000 people in future. Its other features are 25 MLD water supply, 7.50 km of bitumen roads, 482 street

lights, 33/11 KVA substation, 15 MLD community effluent treatment plant, 16 km of draining lines and a helipad.

The other cotton-producing, undeveloped areas of the State such as Yavatmal, Buldhana, Jalgaon, Aurangabad, Jalna, Parbhani, Nanded and Beed will have similar textile parks, says the Chief Minister, while announcing a robotics research centre at Nagpur.



■ Satara, Western Maharashtra

A public movement hub

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visits Jakhangaon, Dahiwadi and Ranmala villages in Maan and Khatav *taluka* of Satara district and inspects the works taken up through people participation under Jalyukta Shivar Yojana. Admiring the various people-led initiatives, he calls the actions a real encouragement for drought freedom in the State. At the start of May, Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao had also inspected the works of the scheme at Satara.

The Chief Minister inspects the cement bunding constructed by the Agriculture Department at Jakhangaon in Khatav, a bunding built as per Jakhangaon Pattern, and de-sedimentation of drip lake undertaken with people participation. He is with Guardian Minister Vijay Shrivare and District Collector Ashwin Mudgal. Devendra Fadnavis next inspects the bunding being built near Dahiwadi in Maan and bunding, *nallah* straightening and widening at Ranmala.

The bunding on Maan river will store 250 million litres of water and irrigate an area of about 2,000 acres. For the project, State Engineering Department has contributed ₹30.17 lakh; public participation has raised ₹25 lakh; Art of Living has given ₹5 lakh; and Sakal Relief Fund has provided ₹7 lakh. A citizen and teacher, Balwant Patil has provided cement worth ₹7 lakh free of cost for the project.

complete support. The Chief Minister then leaves for Tunki helipad for Khamkhed in Malakapur *taluka*.

In Khamkhed, Devendra Fadnavis visits the cement bunding *nallah* being constructed on Khokar *nallah*. He encourages the local people to participate in the work and asks them to move to farming from agriculture at present. He is confident that the income of farmers will increase with farming. He collects the information about the area that will be irrigated with the new bunding.

The next halt of Chief Minister's whirlwind tour of Vidarbha is Devdhaba village, where he visits the home of Pandurang Wagh, a farmer who had committed suicide. Devendra Fadnavis meets his family and offers condolences to his widow, Vimaltai Wagh and son Dnyaneshwar Wagh. He enquires about Dnyaneshwar's education and family's loans. He then instructs the officers present to provide cumulative benefit of all the schemes to the family. The Chief Minister also enquires about the suicide-affected families of Surange and Jagtap with concern. Generating confidence in the farmer community with his concern and effective measures, the Chief Minister once again boards the helicopter to attend another programme in the scorching heat... **M**

—Mohan Rathod and Nilesh Tayde

Under Jalyukta Shivar Yojana, Jakhangaon villagers have set a new example. Through *shramadaan*, they have constructed bundings in the name of Jakhangaon Pattern. The village where once rationing was done with 35 litres of water per person, the water conservation pattern has brought a revolution.

Expressing satisfaction about the work done, Chief Minister said that Jalyukta Shivar Yojana is a movement to create decentralised water reservoirs. "This is not a movement of the Government alone, but also of its people and villages. Other villages in the State should emulate the excellent water conservation work undertaken by people of Jakhangaon. It is a path-breaking project. The rain arriving at the village is the right of the village, hence it must be used by the village alone. The people movement hub at Satara is definitely encouraging for the entire State," the Chief Minister said.

The public support for Jalyukta Shivar Yojana and appreciation by both the Governor and Chief Minister underline the success of Satara residents. The district is an inspiration for others too. **M**

—Prashant Satpute

“The people movement hub at Satara is definitely encouraging for the entire State for achieving drought freedom for Maharashtra”
—Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister



■ Solapur, Marathwada

Set to be the best performer

For the last few days, scorching heat has soared the temperatures at Solapur constantly. Despite the heat, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis conducts an inspection of Jalyukta Shivar Yojana projects at farms of Ingalg and Hotgi in South Solapur.

The Chief Minister has arrived in the district with a view to take stock of the work done on the scheme before the onset of monsoon. He surveys the compartment bunding, agricultural ponds and well recharging in the farm of Amasiddha Gadekar at Ingalg. He also discusses important technical aspects and gave suggestions. He tries to understand the process of well recharge and gains insight into the enhancement of water levels due to this.

District Collector, Tukaram Mundhe provides the Chief Minister detailed information about the well recharge, compartment bunding, deep continuous and levelled excavation, soil *nallah* dams, river *nallah*, streams renovation and de-sedimentation in the area.

Through the Jalyukta Shivar Yojana, the State Government aims to save every drop of rainwater in every village. It aims to build decentralised water reservoirs. Devendra Fadnavis applauds the work done by the District Collector and confirms Government's financial support for the initiatives.

The compartment bunding works at Solapur have been carried out in a completely scientific manner, making the rainwater stop at the fields. The water resource is set to increase due to well recharge and farm lakes. There are plans to repair around 6,000 old projects in Solapur, and 400 JCBs and 1,400 vehicles are on the job of de-sedimentation of the lakes through people participation. The Chief Minister opines that ₹32 crore worth of record-breaking work has been carried out in the area. He shares that if the same speed of work is maintained, Solapur can become the best performer for the welfare scheme with its irrigated area raised from 24 per cent to 42 per cent. **M**

—Govind S. Ahankari

“WE NEED HOMEGROWN SOLUTIONS”

At the recent NITI Aayog meeting in Chandigarh, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis underlined the need to create situation-based solutions for States’ problems. He stressed the need for a roadmap to tackle the plastic menace, one of the challenges for urban India



State Chief Ministers and Senior Ministers in Chandigarh for NITI Aayog’s meeting on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Immediately after the China sojourn, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis headed for NITI Aayog’s 2nd Meeting of the Subgroup of Chief Ministers on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan at Chandigarh, the Capital of Punjab and Haryana, on. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu convened the meeting, which was attended by the Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Haryana and Mizoram, Devendra Fadnavis, Manoharlal Khattar and Lal Thanhwala, respectively. Uttarakhand’s Health Minister Surendra Singh, Karnataka’s Rural Development Minister H.K. Patil, Delhi’s Forest Minister, Asim Ahmed Khan and NITI Aayog’s CEO, Sindushree Khullar participated in the meet.

Devendra Fadnavis said, “We are not short of technologies, but we need to build a roadmap for technology, which will help

us find solutions to address our problems. We also need to bring in behavioural changes for solid waste management.”

The Chief Minister underlined that urban and village bodies are unable to raise funds on their own, and only suitable technology can help resolve the issue. For this, he appealed for creating a template of situation-based solutions. “We need to train our officials, councillors and Mayors, and I am sure we would definitely succeed in achieving our goals,” he said.

He said that plastic waste poses the biggest challenge in a

“A roadmap identifying how we can make use of advanced technology in carrying forward Swachh Bharat Abhiyan needs to be put on paper”

rapidly growing urban India and is spilling over to rural areas. “The waste is growing, and there is a lack of adequate disposal mechanism, which is proving detrimental to the environment,” he said.

A comprehensive report on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan will be presented to the NITI Aayog, and will include critical issues related to economic and social sectors. Under the scheme, the State has taken up construction of toilets on war footing through public-private partnership. “Toilet for every household” is the theme of the scheme. “A concrete roadmap identifying how we can make use of advanced technology in carrying forward the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan needs to be put on paper and implemented in letter and spirit,” said Devendra Fadnavis.

The Chief Minister suggested greater participation of Village Panchayats, Gram Sabhas and Zilla Parishads and public to make the cleanliness drive a success. **M**

APPROVAL TO COMPREHENSIVE NEW UREA POLICY

Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers, Hansraj Ahir announced the approval of a comprehensive New Urea Policy 2015, which has been taken up for the next four financial years. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, he informed about policy’s multiple objectives of maximising indigenous urea production and promoting energy efficiency in urea units to reduce the subsidy burden on the Government. The policy will also reduce the carbon footprint. “It would enable the domestic urea sector—with 30 urea producing units—to become more energy efficient, and would rationalise the subsidy burden and incentivise units to maximise their production. The policy would ensure timely supply of urea to farmers at same MRP with lesser financial burden on the



“The policy would ensure timely supply of urea to farmers at same MRP with lesser financial burden on the exchequer. It will also reduce import dependency”



OUR FOCUS IS ON BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MAHARASHTRA: GOVERNOR

Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao called on President of India, Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan and briefed him about the steps being taken for the welfare of the Scheduled Tribes and for ensuring balanced regional development in Maharashtra. The Governor apprised the President about the notification mandating allocation of 5 per cent of the Tribal Sub-Plan funds to the Gram Panchayats in the scheduled areas of Maharashtra. The Governor also informed the President that using his powers under Article 371 (2) of the Constitution, directions to the State Government to set aside ₹ 1,000 crore for overcoming the irrigation backlog in Amravati division, which has least irrigation potential, have been given.

The Governor presented a CD of the film, *Parivartan ki Raah Par Gogalgaon* to the President of India on this occasion. The film is on Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and is produced by Marathi film star Makarand Anaspure. The short film depicts the transformation of Gogalgaon in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra through people's participation. Meanwhile, the President of India consented to release a book authored by Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao in Hyderabad in the last week of June or first week of July. The book, *Uniki* (existence or being) contains various articles authored by the Maharashtra Governor on a wide range of socio-economic and political subjects, which were published in various prominent Telugu newspapers.

exchequer. It will also reduce import dependency," he added.

The Union Minister informed that urea units would adopt best available technology in the world and become globally more competitive, thereby making farmers, the urea industry and Government of India benefit from the new urea policy. "The Government had decided in January to allow urea producers to produce Neem-coated urea and make it mandatory to produce a minimum of 75 per cent of domestic urea as Neem coated. This urea is required less and gives higher crop yields. The revival of the closed units would be done soon," he said.

Presently, India imports about 80 lakh metric tonnes of urea out of the total demand of 310 lakh metric tonnes. Subsidy would be payable to suppliers only after fertilisers are received in the districts, and final settlement of subsidy claims will be done after acknowledgement of receipt of fertilisers by retailers.

DECLARE MAHARASHTRA'S LINK PROJECTS NATIONAL: VIJAY SHIVTARE

The Damanganga-Pinjal Link Project and Koyna-Mumbai Link project should be given National Project status, said Maharashtra's Water Resources and Water Conservation Minister of State, Vijay Shivtare, who was in New Delhi to attend the fourth meeting of Special Committee for Inter-linking of Rivers. Union Minister of Water Resources and River Development, Uma Bharati chaired the meeting. Union Minister of State for Water Resources and River Development, Prof. Sanwar Lal Jat, Additional Secretary, Dr. Amarjit Singh, Chairman of newly formed Special Committee, B.N. Navlawala, and senior officers were also present. Addressing a press conference at Maharashtra Sadan later, Vijay Shivtare said that the Damanganga-Pinjal project would address the water requirements of Mumbai. Taking into consideration the expected increase in Mumbai population by 2050, it is necessary to plan for the upcoming demand. He said that the survey report has been completed and submitted to CWC to expedite the further course of action. "This project would help supply 21 TMC of drinking water to Mumbai; the remaining water would be diverted to the Godavari river basin," he said.

Proposal for another major inter-linking project, Nar-Par-Tapi-Narmada is under submission. Vijay Shivtare urged the Committee to conduct a feasibility study by National Water Development Agency. "Instead of providing for lift irrigation,



the project should be undertaken by constructing small check dams and the water collected should be supplied through a tunnel to Godavari river basin. The Committee has assured a study for the same," he said. Informing about the Koyna Hydropower project, he said that the water left out after electricity generation should be utilised for drinking purpose and supplied to Mumbai through Vaishisthi river. He urged the Committee to bring in some changes in the parameters and regulations of a National Project, which is currently fixed to 2 lakh hectares of land under irrigation. He asked drinking water supply to be made a part of it.

—Amarjyot Kaur Arora, IO, MIC, New Delhi

CORRIGENDUM: In the May issue, we published that Abhishek Krishna was awarded for CROPSAR. The project was actually chosen for Excellence in Public Administration and conferred by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Prabhakar Deshmukh, then Commissioner of Agriculture Department, Maharashtra. We regret the error.

MICRO-PLANNING FOR MEGA SUCCESS

July is when Nashik and Trimbakeshwar host the Simhastha Kumbh Mela. Planners are busy in making the event their best show ever, says **Dr. Kiran Moghe**



(From left) Minister for Water Resources and Guardian Minister of Nashik, Girish Mahajan oversees the arrangements and the river bank in Nashik

The holy cities of Nashik and Trimbakeshwar are getting ready for the Simhastha Kumbh Mela. The development works around the mega event in July and the huge number of devotees expected has aroused a keen interest in the people of the region. The administration has accelerated the pace of development in the cities, with roads now being transformed and *ghats* being created on the banks of river Godavari.

What makes the forthcoming Kumbh Mela special is the fact that it is going to be held in an era of technology and media revolution. In 2003, during the last edition of Simhastha Kumbh, limited use of media led to a limited exchange of information. While *sadhus* (sages), *mahants* (chief priests) and the people participating without any formal invitation make the event real, it is believed that due to the accelerated and comprehensive information dissemination process, the number of devotees is likely to be much higher this time. The administration has started planning accordingly.

The entry of *sadhus* and *mahants* in the city during the Mela is of extraordinary significance. The real glory and cultural sanctity of the event comes to the forefront when various *akhadas* (groups of *sadhu*) arrive. In the light of the fact, the administration has provided special attention to the basic facilities at Sadhugram and the *akhadas*. At the core of

the planning is a district-level meeting held every Tuesday. All areas—from health, sanitation, security, facilities for devotees and creation of *ghats* to jamming the mobile network—are discussed on a weekly basis. Micro-planning of each aspect is carried out together with participation of various departments.

LEARNING FROM THE PAST

Managing the crowd of devotees that throng a city during the Kumbh Mela has always been an important responsibility of the administration. Incidentally, 29 devotees had lost their lives due to jamming of crowd in the Mela last time. This time, the State administration is working with a target of 'zero mishap'. Crowd management is being undertaken with extension of facilities and technological assistance.

Taking a pious dip in river Godavari is another important feature of the Mela. Due to the fact that huge crowds gather on the banks of the river on auspicious days, various new *ghats* have been created along the banks of the river. Henceforth, Nashik will have seven *ghats* of a total length of 3,990 m and Trimbakeshwar will have three additional *ghats* with a length of 950 m for devotees.

Centralised public address system and CCTVs are other additions to this Kumbh Mela. These facilities will streamline the efforts of police personnel deployed in the cities during the





Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya visits Nashik to observe the preparations

NON-STOP POWER SUPPLY TO TRIMBAKESHWAR

Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya, during his two-day visit to Nashik and Trimbakeshwar, took review of the ongoing works for Kumbh Mela at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar. Expressing satisfaction with the progress of work at the *ghats*, he asked the officials to take care and control the level of water in the river, and directed to complete the work of roads leading to the *ghats* and other work at the earliest. The Chief Secretary asked the officials to pay special attention to the cleanliness of the river, and to ensure that the area is well lit and the entire temple town of Trimbakeshwar gets non-stop power supply.

Mela. Efforts are also being made to use mobile technology to receive the information of assemblies at a point. Innovative initiatives such as Kumbhathon, started by local youth, are also part of the mega show.

As Kumbh Mela will be held in the rainy season, special attention is given to the health of the devotees. Two hundred beds have been added to District Hospital, Nashik and 70 beds to Rural Hospital, Trimbakeshwar. Modern concepts such as temporary intensive care units at crowded places and GPS mapping of ambulances are also being considered. Given the many private and voluntary organisations that have come forward to provide health facilities, it will be possible to provide immediate help to the devotees.

Media is also all set to play a crucial role in disseminating information. A website and social media are now in place to provide information about the Mela. People can also log on to www.kumbhamela2015.Maharashtra.gov.in or check facebook.com/simhashtakumbhmela2015.

The Disaster Management System is also gearing up for the mega event. Teams are getting trained in search and rescue, first aid, EOC operation and others. Cooperation of NDRF, Yashada, Artillery, Red Cross and others has been sought for this. About 1,500 trained officers and staff will be ready with the first aid facilities. Roads, flyovers, toilets and bus services are moving towards completion. A fourth platform is in the process of being constructed at the nearest railway station. **M**



SEVEN STEPS TO SWACHH MAHARASHTRA

Chief Minister administers seven vows to local body representatives and encourages natives to make the State clean and green, says **Suresh Wandile**



(Clockwise from above)
Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis administers oath to officials, and Aamir Khan and Devendra Fadnis address the gathering

Passion is essential if you wish to achieve anything. Passion is intent will to dedicate yourself completely in whatever you wish to do. When this happens, the success follows," said Aamir Khan, a sensitive and studious perfectionist with a social attitude and a top-notch actor who dedicates himself to whatever he does with passion. The acclaimed actor was speaking on the inauguration of Clean Maharashtra Campaign and to resolve for cleanliness in Konkan Division at Sahyadri Guest House in Mumbai recently. Also

present on the occasion were Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis; Secretary, Urban Development Department and Convener of Clean Maharashtra Movement, Manisha Patankar Mhaikar; Director Urban Administration, Meeta Rajiv Lochan; Konkan Divisional Commissioner Radheshyam Mopalwar, and other dignitaries.

In his speech, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis took up the thought of passion put forward by Aamir Khan. He said that the dream of 'Clean Maharashtra' will only come true if everyone

becomes part of the mission with passion.

A progressive State like Maharashtra needs to implement the cleanliness movement, as it creates waste to the extent of 20,000 tonnes per day. One of the experts present in the audience shared that 3,500 trucks are required daily to transport the waste. The fact left the audience in awe. So much waste means equal amount of bad smell, dirtiness and waste dumps. Disposal of the waste indeed is a big issue for the State.

This picture of progressive Maharashtra is not at all a happy one. Manisha Patankar Mhaiskar said that when a person approaches a city, one first encounters the dirtiness, bad smell and dumps of waste at its outskirts. "Time has arrived to clear this bad image of our cities. Today, many cities and citizens want to be smart. It is a huge inconsistency that on one hand we have dirt and lack of toilets, on the other hand, we wish to establish ourselves as smart natives."

The Chief Minister caught this pulse. "First, make your city beautiful and clean, and then talk about a smart city." He administered an oath of seven steps to cleanliness to all the Mayors, Presidents of Municipal Councils and administrative officers. While impressing upon those present that a new face of Maharashtra is possible, he asked them to dedicate themselves to the cause passionately.

Beginning with the local-body representatives working at the grassroots level in Konkan region, Devendra Fadnavis has decided to carry out the exercise in Marathwada, Western Maharashtra, Vidarbha and north Maharashtra in phases. He has also linked the cleanliness drive to the Smart

“

Ideally, there is no quick-fix solution for transforming the State overnight of all dirt. Adopting simple mechanisms would enable us to fight the menace. It is not funds but public participation that will bring the change.

—Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister

People are ready to change and actively contribute in the process. We must not lose the opportunity to make Maharashtra, a waste-free, model State in the country... My job is to create awareness about it

—Aamir Khan
Actor

”

Cities Project. "The outcome of the campaign would also mirror how ready the local bodies and people are for the Smart Cities Project. Ideally, there is no quick-fix solution for transforming the State overnight and relieve it from dirt. Adoption of simple mechanisms would help us fight the menace," he added.

In her speech, the Urban Development Secretary underlined that many schemes for nation building have been implemented successfully. "Huge dams have been built. We have fine roads, and we have been able to effectively control small pox and polio. However, we have not been successful in waste eradication. This is because we do not take the responsibility of waste. Every person creates about 400 g of waste every day. Due to this problem created by us, there has been a qualitative deterioration in our daily lives. No special efforts were made till 2014 for disposal of waste in a scientific manner. During the last 15 years, emphasis was laid on freedom from open toilets. There was some response from the villages, but urban areas had limitations," she added.

If concerted and planned efforts are made under the Clean Maharashtra Scheme, the movement can be successful even earlier than scheduled, said the senior officer. "Political will, scientifically planned efforts and public participation can only make the difference. If there is strong willpower, funds will not be an issue," she said.

Expanding on the issue of funds, the Chief Minister said that the release of funds to the cities from the 14th Finance Commission will be linked to their performance in terms of cleanliness. He also spoke about the creation of



THE SEVEN VOWS FOR SWACHH MAHARASHTRA

- A firm resolve to participate
- Comprehensive public participation
- Engage people in 100 per cent use of toilets
- Collect, classify and transport the waste
- Scientific processing of the waste
- Treatment of waste water
- Foundation of Clean and Green Maharashtra

“Time has arrived to clear this bad image of our cities. Today, many cities and citizens want to be smart. It is a huge inconsistency that on one hand we have dirt and lack of toilets, on the other hand, we wish to establish ourselves as smart natives. Political will, scientifically planned efforts and public participation can only make the difference. If there is strong willpower, funds will not be an issue.

—Manisha Patankar Mhaiskar
Secretary,
Urban Development

”



Veteran actor and brand ambassador Aamir Khan speaks at the workshop in Mumbai

Clean Maharashtra Fund. The dignitaries present on the occasion also underlined the need for a mindset shift and to make cleanliness a habit. The experts drew attention of the audience to aspects of waste collection, its classification and the importance of scientific process. They also talked about urban solid waste management, production of bio-fertilisers from waste, production of biogas and its usage as fuel and for lighting street lights.

WHY URBAN CLEANLINESS CAMPAIGN?

According to the 2011 census, the urban population of Maharashtra is 5,08,27,000. This comes to 45.23 per cent of the total population. Out of this, 29 per cent families do not have toilet facilities; 73 per cent of those without toilet facilities use public toilets and the rest 27 per cent defecate in open. Twenty-six Municipal Corporations and 239 Municipal Councils create 20,000 metric tonnes of waste every day. With certain exceptions, none of the cities dispose the solid waste in a modern and scientific way. Thus, huge health and environment issues have crept in urban areas. The National Green Tribunal and High Court have instructed the Government to prepare plans for proper and scientific disposal of solid waste. The outline of the campaign has been prepared.

According to the guidelines issued by the Government of India for Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), toilet facilities will be made available to those families in urban areas who do not have toilets. Similarly, the solid waste will be managed

scientifically. This campaign will be completed successfully by October 2, 2019.

To overcome this huge, building challenge, a State Regulatory Authority has been established under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister. A high-power committee under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary has been established. Under the chairmanship of Secretary, Urban Development, a control and implementation committee has been established. Through this committee, the State cleanliness policy and cleanliness plan will be prepared. Urban cleanliness concept will be prepared and requisitely acted upon. A panel of consultants will be sent for approval of the high power committee. In the matters such as preparation of detailed report under Clean Maharashtra Campaign, appointment of consultants for review and control of the project and valuation of detailed project reports of urban local self-government institutions are included.

“While disposing off the waste, we must use a technology that is relevant to the situation. We have made a suggestion to the work group connected with Clean India Mission to develop such technology. Once this technology is available, the management and processing of solid waste can be made easier,” said the Chief Minister. He encouraged the elected representatives to plan 25 years ahead and set the aim to clean their areas. “Those representatives who would emphasise more on cleanliness of their cities will not have to look back at any time in their lives,” he added. **M**

OVER TO THE EXPERTS

Dilkhulas has something for everyone. Every month, the programme invites experts of varied fields to share their expertise with listeners and give information on key issues. This time, the personalities included Ministers, senior officials and doctors

DILKHULAS

The treasure of useful information

Many eminent personalities have guided *Dilkhulas* programme. Last month, the programme hosted senior ophthalmologist Dr. Tatyrao Lahane, who spoke about eye care; Minister of State for Home, Prof. Ram Shinde, who informed the listeners about law and order in the State and new measures taken by the State Government; Prof. Hari Narke, who gave in-depth information about Mahatma Phule and his way of functioning; and Dr. Maya Tulpule, who talked about leucoderma.

Prof. Hari Narke in his interview spoke about the exemplary work done by Mahatma Phule and Savitribai Phule in the field of education. He gave thorough information about the various facets of the visionaries.

Minister of State for Home Prof. Ram Shinde in his interview informed about the various schemes implemented by the State Government for maintaining law and order in the rural areas of the State. He said, the steps taken by the State Government will give impetus to State tourism and attract large number of domestic and foreign tourists in the State. He said it will also help in generating more employment and self-employment opportunities for youth. He also informed about the schemes implemented for women security.

Vikas Kharge, Secretary, Forests, informed about flora and fauna of State, schemes implemented, forest tourism and animals, Shyamprasad Mukherjee Jan Van Yojana for environment protection, establishment of Maharashtra State Nature Tourism Development Board and other schemes.

Senior ophthalmologist Dr. Tatyrao Lahane talked about the various methods to take care of eyes in summer, eye care for children and ways to avoid infections and diseases.

To observe World Leucoderma Day, *Dilkhulas* invited Dr. Maya Tulpule, founder of Shweta, a Pune-based organisation

that has done commendable work in the areas of awareness, treatment, research and change of perception of society for white skin. Speaking about the symptoms of leucoderma, she said the white spots neither cause discomfort, nor result in a handicap, but must be examined immediately. This is not a hereditary disease.

According to global research, white spots appear due to a typical gene. However, this exact gene has not been found as yet, and hence a definite cure has not come out. On the treatment aspect, Allopathy, Unani, Ayurveda and Homeopathy have treatments for white spots. Ayurveda records instances of white spots in India around 5,000 years

Leucoderma neither causes discomfort, nor results in a handicap, but must be examined immediately. It is not a hereditary disease. Its cure has progressed well, but it is important to remove the stigma attached to it

ago. Latest technology has helped us with new methods of treatment such as Narrowband UVB phototherapy. Experiments such as Melanocyte Transplant Surgery and Cosmetic Camouflage are also being undertaken.

India has the highest proportion of leucoderma in the world—at around 2.5 to 3 per cent. Surgical treatment has progressed well, but it is important to remove the stigma attached to the disease. Research is

being carried out from the point of view of psychiatry, treatment and diet. Shweta has been making efforts towards inclusion of those affected with white skin and provides them jobs in nursing, education and IT sector. More information on leucoderma can be received from www.myshweta.org and by calling 020-25458767.

—Meera Dhas



(From left) Dr. Tatyrao Lahane, Prof. Ram Shinde, Prof. Hari Narke and Dr. Maya Tulpule





(Clockwise from top left) Eknath Khadse, Vijay Shrivare, Vikas Kharge and Prof. Shyam Manav

JAI MAHARASHTRA Focus on the planet

During last month, *Jai Maharashtra* had in its studio luminaries representing a cross-section of areas. Minister for Agriculture, Eknath Khadse spoke about revenue, relief and rehabilitation. Minister of State for Water Resources and Water Conservation, Vijay Shrivare gave detailed information about Jalyukta Shivar Yojana. Prof. Shyam Manav spoke about his role in Maharashtra Anti Superstition and Black Magic Act. Vikas Kharge, Secretary, Forests, on the occasion of World Earth Day, informed about measures taken by the department for environment protection.

Eknath Khadse took review of the steps taken by the Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation Department in the last six months. He also talked about the measures taken by the State Government to make Maharashtra drought free by 2019. Minister of State for Water Resources and Water Conservation, Vijay Shrivare informed about the schemes and steps taken by the Government to combat drought and implementation of Jalyukta Shivar Yojana.

In his interview, Vikas Kharge, Secretary, Forests Department, informed about global warming and awareness to be created for days like the World Earth Day. Steps taken by the department for protection of forests were also discussed.

Milind Karmarkar, producer of *Geet Durgayan*, on the occasion of Maharashtra Day (May 1), talked about the songs on Maharashtra forts. The programme also relayed *Gaurav Marathi Bashecha*, *Guarav Maharashtracha* held at Gateway of India.

—Atul Pande



ONLINE Race for online subscriptions

The link between the State Government and the people is truly the publications of the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations. These publications present the various Government welfare schemes, decisions, policies, initiatives and information about various schemes to the people of the State. In the information era, these publications have now become interactive mediums of dialogue with the Government. There is now a race for becoming online subscribers for publications such as *Lokrajya*, *Maharashtra Ahead* and *Lokrajya* (Urdu). The inclination of readers today is to subscribe online and receive the magazine at home.

MAHANNEWS The Maha traveller

Directorate General of Information and Public Relations' portal, *Mahanews* has initiated a new column for providing guidance to tourists. *Mahabhramanti* or Max-trotter provides a visitor a glimpse of Maharashtra's tourism treasure.

Tourism has always been a topic of interest for everyone. Once limited to visits to religious places, tourism now extends to all places across seasons. With a view to provide information about the land, its culture and traditions and to provide a different experience to the tourists, the Government of

Maharashtra has taken many interesting steps.

Mahabhramanti lists all these steps, facilities available and Government's support to reach the destinations. The section is now a treasure of information on how to reach, facilities of rest houses and food, and, importantly, telephone numbers for the netizens visiting Mahanews.

Maharashtra has a huge treasure of tourist destinations—720 km of expansive seashores, and natural resources in the hills and forests of Sahyadri ranges. The valour of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is linked to hills and



Director General, Information and Public Relations, Chandrashekhar Oak (third from right) and Director, Devendra Bhujbal (first from right) met Ramraje Naik Nimbalkar, Chairman, Maharashtra Legislative Council; Dhananjay Munde, Leader of Opposition, Maharashtra Legislative Council and Uttamsing Chavan, Secretary, Maharashtra Legislature Secretariat and presented them the *Lokrajya* issue

■ HOW TO BECOME AN ONLINE SUBSCRIBER...

Lokrajya is the only magazine which has 40 lakh readers with sales. With a view that the readers can subscribe for the magazine easily, the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations has made available online subscription for *Lokrajya* (Marathi), *Maharashtra Ahead* (English) and *Lokrajya* (Urdu) magazines. Here is a review of how one can become a subscriber for these three magazines:

1. Visit website <http://dgipr.maharashtra.gov.in>
2. Click on the link Lokrajya Magazine Subscriber Registration at Online Services
3. After going through the terms and conditions, click link subscribe Marathi magazine. Fill up the information in the form completely and accurately.
4. In the second stage, about the magazine details,

mention the magazine you want to subscribe, its price and duration of the subscription.

5. After filling up the form, click on Submit and Pay Now.

When you click the Receipt button, you will receive information about names of the banks where you can pay the subscription amount and handling charges.

7. After the payment, click on Print & Receipt Continue button and preserve the print received. This will complete your registration as online subscriber. This should be noted by all concerned.

8. The subscriber number is conveyed through e-mail/sms to the concerned after the registration as online subscriber.

You will start receiving the magazine from the next month of payment of subscription. Annual subscription for *Lokrajya* (Marathi) is ₹100, *Lokrajya* (Urdu) is ₹50 and *Maharashtra Ahead* (English) is ₹500.

■ OTHER WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE

You can also subscribe at District Information Office in every district or the subscription can be sent by money order to Senior Assistant Director (Publications), Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Barrack No. 19, Free Press Journal Marg, Mumbai-400 021 or by a demand draft payable at Mumbai in the name of Accounts Officer, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, Mantralaya, Mumbai. For renewal of subscriptions, *Lokrajya* subscribers should mention their subscriber number.

—Ashwini Pujari



So far *Mahabrahmanti* has covered main tourists spots across Konkan region and Pune. The locations covered include Veerva waterfall of Mandangad, Chiplun of Ratnagiri, Dapoli (also called mini Mahabaleshwar of Konkan), Guhagar (the land of Parshuram), Khed taluka, Jawahar taluka of Palghar fulfilling the urge of tracking, Chandoli Sagreshwar Sanctuary, Nagzira, Tadoba, Andhari Tiger Projects and others.

valleys. The forts here speak of the days gone by. During summer, State's hill stations, hilly treks and jungle safaris become a craze among people, from the State and outside.

With a view that everything here is properly introduced to these tourists, Manisha Patankar Mhaiskar, Secretary, Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, and Director General, Chandrashekhar Oak suggested the concept of *Mahabrahmanti*.

The regular features of *Mahanews* such as Job search, Schemes, Net-Bhet, Photo Gallery and others try to reach

and serve the people of Maharashtra. Through *Mahabrahmanti*, Maharashtra will be introduced authentically. While other States have geography, Maharashtra is proud of its geography and

history. The State is striving to preserve its vast heritage such as the forts, which narrate their story and

historical events they witnessed. Maharashtra already has nice roads, and good and affordable hotels and *dharmashalas* in large number to serve the travellers coming to Maharashtra.

—Dheeraj Khadse





Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis during first-ever online Lokshahi Din

DEMOCRACY MEETS TECHNOLOGY

This National Technology Day, Maharashtra Government conducted the first-ever online Lokshahi Din, bringing solutions close to people, says **Ajay Jadhav**

Is Nashik connected? Is Parbhani online?... The buzz on the sixth floor of Mantralaya is part of the preparations for Lokshahi Din in Chief Minister's Committee Room. The event is organised on the first Monday of every month, but this time, the urgency looked a bit different than usual. It was National Technology Day and the Lokshahi Din was being organised for the first time through video conferencing. "Give justice to the common people; dispose a case within a month; District Collector should personally look into the matter and bestow justice on the complainant...", were the instructions issued to the District administration by the Chief Minister.

During the first online Lokshahi Din, the Chief Minister tried to address issues of complainants in 17 cases from Parbhani, Kolhapur, Satara, Bhandara, Nashik, Jalgaon, Pune and Nagpur. Conducted every month, the day sees citizens interact with administrative heads of State and local self-governments and lodge complaints about civic problems.

Kishor Dalal from Nashik explained his efforts to receive caste verification certificate and said that due to the inordinate delay, the charges should be refunded. The Chief Minister said that there should not be any delay in getting caste verification certificate. It should be delivered within six months. He also instructed to report cases where these certificates have not been issued even after a lapse of six months. He asked for a monthly report on this matter, and instructed action on the complaint of Kishor

Dalal to be completed within a month.

Patankar couple from Navi Mumbai had complained about admissions of their twin daughters as per RTE Act. The Chief Minister issued instructions to State Education Department to take action soon, so that the girls get school admissions.

After listening to the complaint by Bharat Pawar regarding a tenement under MHADA, Devendra Fadnavis directed

officials to include Pawar's name in the Master List and provide him a tenement immediately. On a complaint by a Satara resident, he issued instructions to the District Collector to personally visit the place and solve the matter.

The Lokshahi Din also considered the complaints registered on the *Aaple Sarkar*. Additional Chief Secretary Administrative Reform O&M, Dr. P. S. Meena, Director

General of Police Sanjeev Dayal, Commissioner MCGM Ajoy Mehta, Principal Secretary, Revenue, Manukumar Srivastav, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister's Office, Praveen Pardeshi, Principal Secretary, Energy, Mukesh Khullar, Principal Secretary, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, V. Giriraj, Secretaries to Chief Minister's Office, Milind Mhaikar and Pravin Darade and Secretary, Urban Development, Manisha Mhaikar were present on the occasion. **M**

During the first online Lokshahi Din, the Chief Minister took 17 complaints from the districts of Parbhani, Kolhapur, Satara, Bhandara, Nashik, Jalgaon, Pune and Nagpur



Government of
Maharashtra

The Most Trusted Channels of Communication

सर्वत्र : सर्वोत्तम

लोकराज्य

4 lakh Circulation
40 Lakh Readership

ऐकायलाच हवा
दिवसुलास
संवाद...



@2289



لوک راجیہ

Monthly Magazine in Urdu



लाखो दर्शकांची थेट-भेट घडवून देणारे...

A Phone-in-Programme
on Doordarshan



@ 1 Crore 62 Lakh

MAHARASHTRA

Ahead



माहिती व जनसंपर्क महासंचालनालय

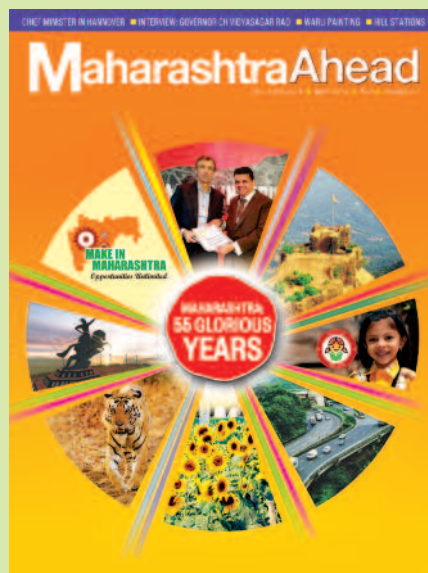
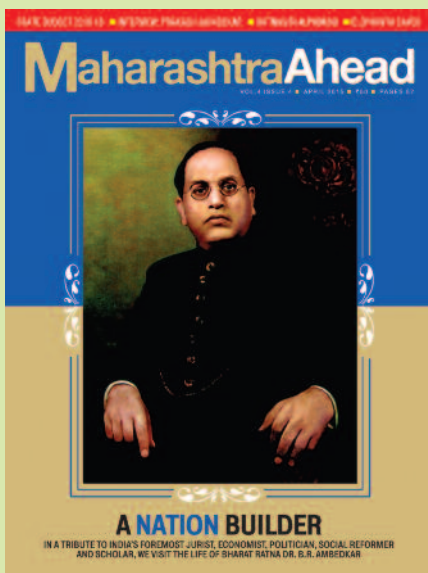


<https://dgipr.maharashtra.gov.in>

Directorate General of Information and Public Relations

Forming a Bridge of Information

A REFLECTION OF CHANGING MAHARASHTRA



O.I.G.S. Presented by
The Government of India

MaharashtraAhead

Digamber W. Palve
Senior Assistant Director

Directorate General of Information and Public Relations
Maharashtra Government
Barrack No. 19, Free Press Journal Marg
Mumbai 400 021.