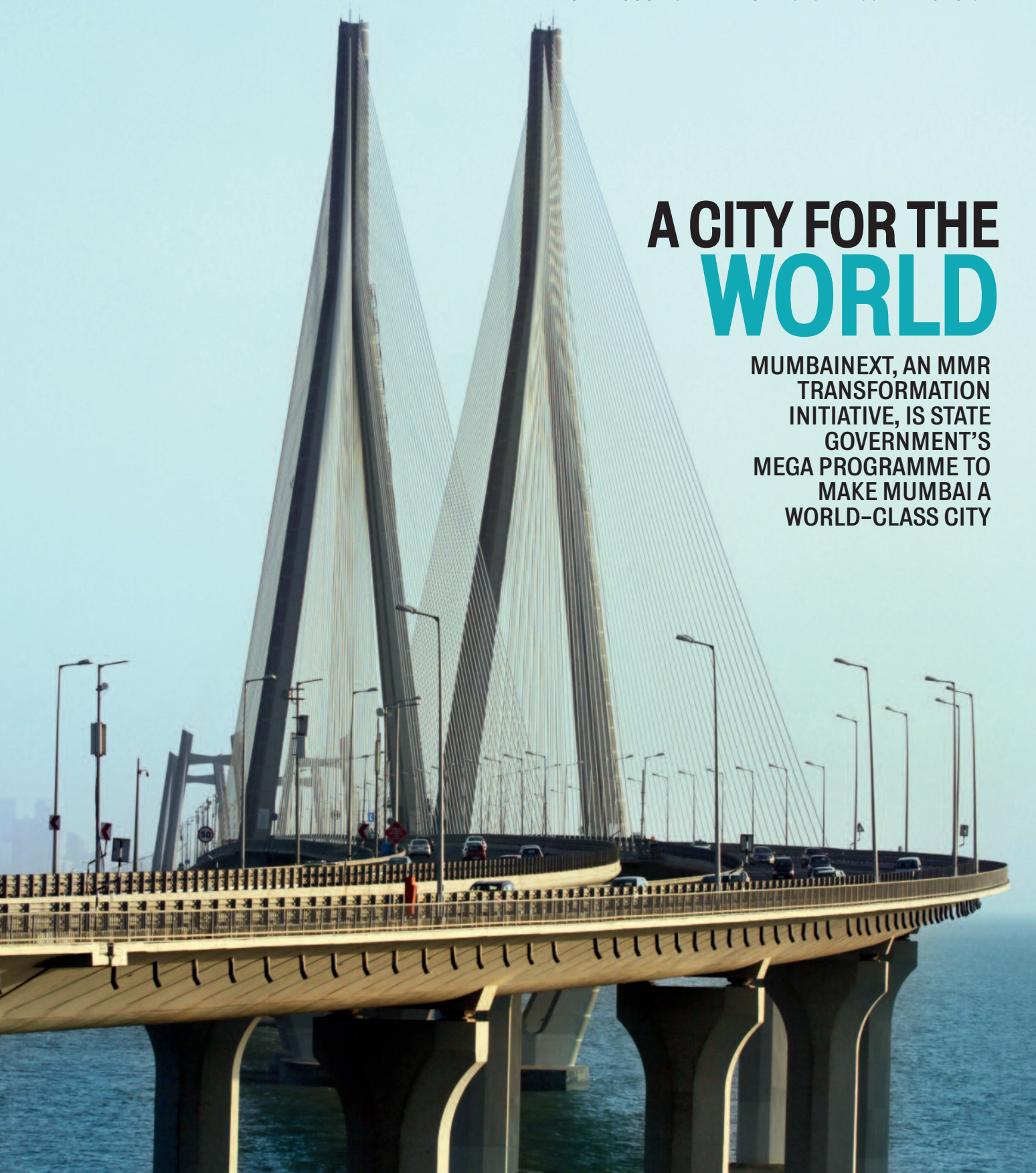


MaharashtraAhead

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A CITY FOR THE WORLD

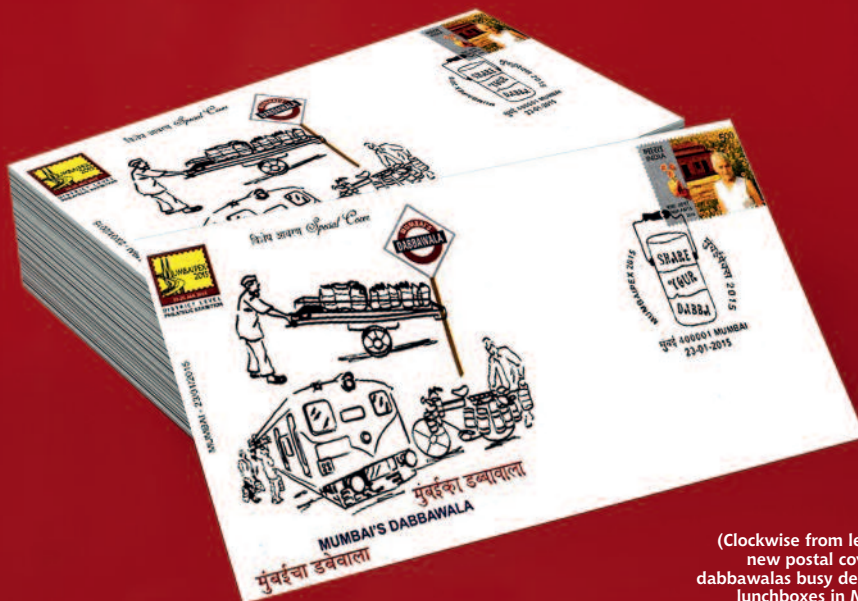
MUMBAINEXT, AN MMR
TRANSFORMATION
INITIATIVE, IS STATE
GOVERNMENT'S
MEGA PROGRAMME TO
MAKE MUMBAI A
WORLD-CLASS CITY





MUMBAI'S DABBAWALAS GET POSTAL COVER

India Post releases commemorative special cover on the Dabbawalas, known worldwide for their service of delivering lunchboxes to offices across Mumbai daily



(Clockwise from left) The new postal cover and dabbawalas busy delivering lunchboxes in Mumbai

In a sincere gesture for the relentless tiffin carriers of Mumbai, Mahesh Zagade, Maharashtra Transport Commissioner, has released a Commemorative Special Cover on Mumbai's Dabbawala's at Mumbaiipex 2015 district-level philatelic exhibition. The event, organised at the Mumbai GPO from January 23-25, was attended by the president of Mumbai Dabbawala Association, Raghunath Medge. Praising the unique venture, Mahesh Zagade said,

EACH LUNCHBOX CARRIES A UNIQUE IDENTITY CODE FOR ACCURATE DELIVERY. THE SERVICE IS OFTEN CONSIDERED TO BE OF SIX SIGMA RATING

"The dabbawalas' logistics management system has become a part of management studies in leading institutions such as the Harvard Business School and the Indian Institute of Management."

Mumbai Dabbawalas deliver about two lakh lunchboxes to offices across Mumbai everyday, with the help of a strong team of 4,000-5,000 employees. Each lunchbox carries a unique identity code, which changes daily, for accurate delivery, and the service is often considered to be of Six Sigma rating.

Expressing his gratitude, Raghunath Medge shared with the audience that his team's Unique Identification Code was developed on the

line of PIN code used by the Postal Department.

Mumbaiipex 2015 displayed rare stamp collections of 25 philatelists based on different themes. India Post released Special Covers on all three days of the exhibition. These included a Special Cover on Dr. Bhauji Lad Mumbai City Museum on the second day. Another cover, on Mumbai's August Kranti Maidan from where Mahatma Gandhi had given the Quit India call in 1942, was released on the third day.



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COVER STORY

A CITY FOR THE WORLD

With an objective to transform Mumbai to become a world-class city, a conference was organised in the metropolitan city to deliberate on the challenges it faces and identify possible solutions. The conference attended by leaders from various areas also discussed factors for moving ahead rapidly and decisions that need to be taken soon



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Maharashtra Chief Secretary talks about why Maharashtra has always been and will continue to be India's best investment destination



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Velas beach, in Ratnagiri, celebrates the arrival of baby turtles every year. The festival is important in terms of conservation and experience



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Kolhapuri jewellery, a pride of Maharashtra and a symbol of prosperity, luck and blessed married life, has maintained its appeal and grandeur for years. A feature on the traditional jewels



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HONOURING EDITORS

Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism and Best Journalist Awards were given for 2011, 2012 and 2013 in a glittering ceremony in Mumbai

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

MAKING MUMBAI A WORLD-CLASS CITY

Mumbai has always been the commercial and financial capital of the country. The current issue of March captures Maharashtra Government's mega initiative to make Mumbai Metropolitan Region, a global financial, commercial and entertainment hub. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis recently announced the launch of MumbaiNext, an MMR transformation initiative, which will leverage region's unique geographic position and business potential in the global financial market.

A conference organised in Mumbai deliberated on key issues that can make Mumbai a world-class city. The event had in attendance prominent personalities from the areas of politics, business, finance and entertainment. The main agenda for the forum was to dissect and identify possible solutions to some of

the key challenges faced by the MMR. Thought leaders and prominent citizens of Mumbai listed out a set of deliverables to make Chief Minister's vision a reality.

Maharashtra Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya, in his elaborate interview to the magazine, underlined that the State has always been, and will continue to be India's best investment destination. He also talked about the expectations and aspirations of common man from the new Government and how the administration is committed to deliver to them.

The edition also covers State's drought preparedness. The Government has resolved to achieve total and permanent freedom from drought through focused

initiatives on water conservation such as Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan and other long-term remedial measures.

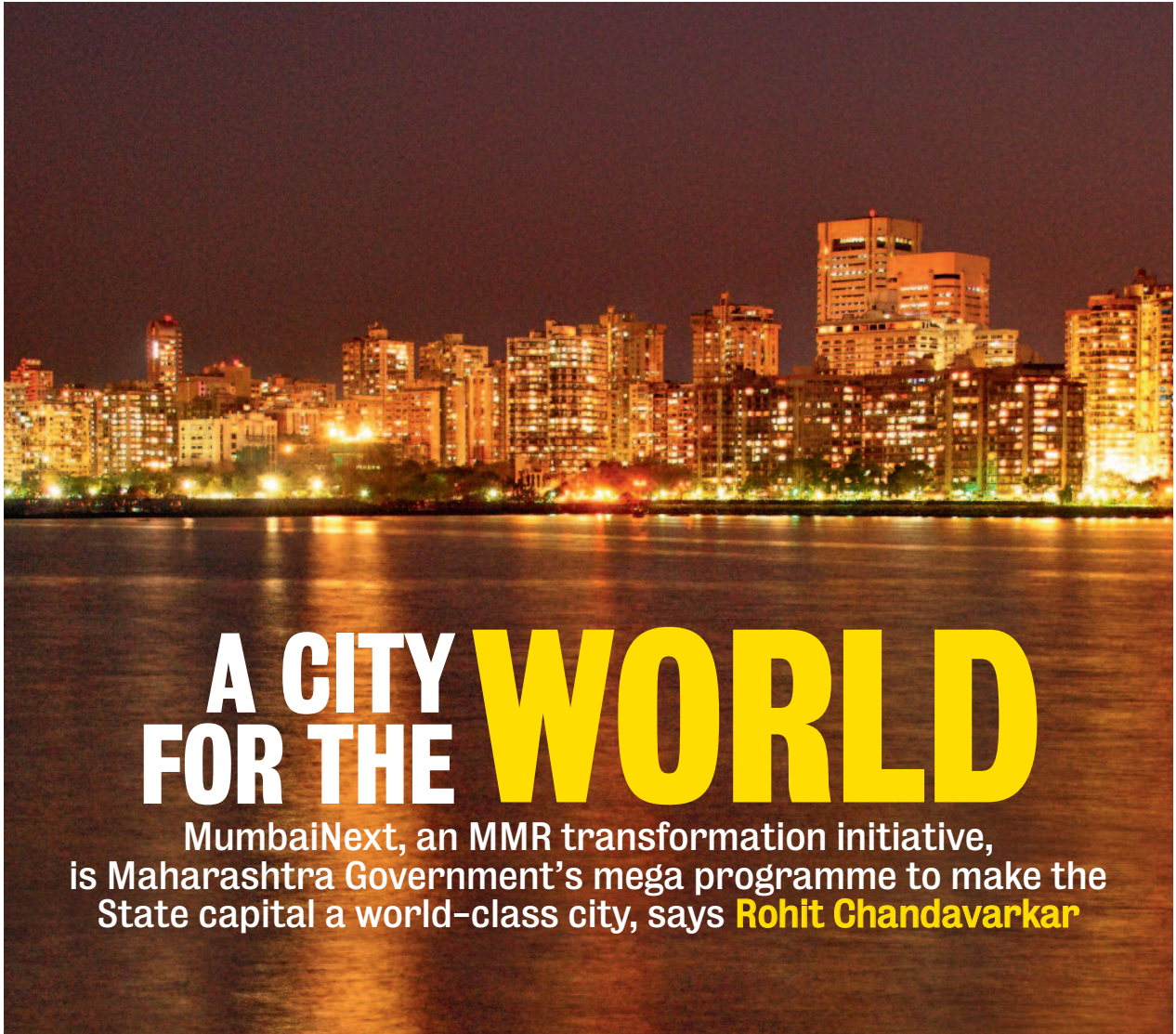
March is the most colourful month for India. As Holi is celebrated in this month the issue also brings the State's efforts for upcoming spectacular and colourful Simhastha Kumbh Mela, articles on Turtle Festival at Velas beach, where endangered Olive Ridley turtles take their amazing march into the sea, the mesmerising, colourful jewellery of Kolhapur, the sumptuous oranges of Nagpur and heritage sites of the State.

We wish our readers a great Holi and hope readers would like the issue.

Mumbai Next, an MMR transformation initiative, will leverage region's unique location and business potential in the global financial market

Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar

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



A CITY FOR THE WORLD

MumbaiNext, an MMR transformation initiative, is Maharashtra Government's mega programme to make the State capital a world-class city, says **Rohit Chandavarkar**

A magnificent view of Mumbai during the night

Maharashtra Government has launched an initiative to transform Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) into a global financial, commercial and entertainment hub with a potential to generate \$50 billion revenues. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis recently announced 'MumbaiNext'—MMR Transformation initiative—which will leverage the region's unique geographic position and business potential in the global financial market.

A conference organised in Mumbai deliberated on these issues. It had attendance of industry captains such as Cyrus Mistry, Mukesh Ambani, the India Chief of World Bank and

diplomats from European Union. The conference was jointly held by the NGO Mumbai First, an organisation that promotes and supports policy for the betterment of Mumbai.

The conference on Transforming MMR into a Global, Financial, Commercial and Entertainment Hub also drew prominent personalities from politics, business, finance and entertainment. Venkaiah Naidu, Union Minister, Urban Development; Jayant Sinha, Union Minister of State (Finance); Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister, Maharashtra; Poonam Mahajan, Member of Parliament (Mumbai North Central); Bollywood icon Amitabh Bachchan and film producer Ekta Kapoor were among those who participated.



(Clockwise from top) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with dignitaries and while addressing the audience, and participants during the conference

The main agenda for the forum was to dissect and identify possible solutions to some of the key challenges faced by the MMR. Thought leaders and prominent citizens of Mumbai listed out a set of deliverables to make Chief Minister's vision a reality. The top six must-do factors for moving ahead rapidly, decisions that need to be taken and financial requirements for speedier execution of various priority projects were some of the areas that were laid focus on.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis underlined astute planning and implementation by Government to boost infrastructure development and improve the living standards of people. In his message sent for the occasion, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, "Mumbai is the engine driver of

India's growth. If Mumbai grows, India grows. In recent months we have had a spate of investment summits by different States. This indicates that we are not only in an era of cooperative federalism, but also in an era of competitive federalism. Maharashtra has traditionally been one of the most economically developed States. Mumbai has a powerful services sector. Maharashtra has a powerful agricultural sector; Bollywood, the cultural face of India, is based out of Mumbai. We as a country have a long way to go."

Union Finance Minister also highlighted key challenges the country faces. Healthcare, clean water, sanitation, poverty and housing for all are some of these challenges. "Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, India has become an

exciting place for investors. We also see countries across the globe facing various challenges. China, European Union, Russia and Brazil are all mired with economic problems. This presents a huge opportunity for Mumbai. The Centre is determined to take India on a high growth trajectory. For this, the Centre will partner with every State that wants to tread on this growth path. Centre's liberalisation drive and focus on creating smart cities has provided a fillip to the economy. The fractured tax system has been set right by the Government, which encourages investors to invest in India rather than deterring them from conducting business. Infrastructure is of high priority for the Government. Centre is singularly focused on fixing the fiscal deficit. Maharashtra has huge areas, where it can work upon to kick-start growth. Creation of new ports, industrial corridors and tourism are some of the key areas of development. I am happy to say that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is determined to take Mumbai to greater heights with singular focus on development and high degree of credibility and honesty."

Chairman of Reliance Industries, Mukesh Ambani asked, "This Government is focused on Centre-State co-ordination. Mumbai has struggled with infrastructure and poor educational facilities. How do you see that changing in the times to come with the NDA Government at the helm?"

In reply to the question, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said, "Infrastructure investment has slowed down. But, the structure of financing needs to be put in place. Decisions need to come fast. All models of financing for infrastructure development needs to be explored. We need to convert domestic savings into financing infrastructure development. These are some of the areas, which are being looked upon by the Government at the moment."

Speaking at the occasion, Commissioner, Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), U.P.S. Madan said, "We need to enhance the public transport system in Mumbai. There are currently six metro corridors under construction. The estimated time of completion of these corridors is seven years, while the length is 116 km. If I look at Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC), which is a planned venture, there are many problems that exist. One is that of entry-exit. For the same, three flyovers are under consideration by the Government. These would be for easy entry and exit through Kalanagar. We are committed to make BKC a smart city. Installing CCTV cameras and electronic parking are some of the steps that we will take shortly. Also, BKC lacks evening life. Much of the social life is dead post working hours. To liven up the area, we are now inviting restaurants to open up branches. Multi-nodal corridors are also under consideration, like the one in Kalyan and Bhiwandi, within the next three-four years."

Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation Commissioner Sitaram Kunte added, "As of now, ₹11,500 crore has been mobilised in financial year 2015-16 towards capex by the MCGM. Municipal bond markets, unfortunately, are not

What they said...



“ *In recent months, we have had a spate of investment summits by different States. This indicates that we are not only in an era of cooperative federalism, but also in an era of competitive federalism. Maharashtra has traditionally been one of the most economically developed States. We as a country have a long way to go.*

—Arun Jaitley
Union Finance Minister



“ *We need to enhance the public transport system in Mumbai. There are currently six metro corridors under construction. The estimated time of completion of these corridors is seven years, while the length is 116 km. Bandra-Kurla Complex is a planned venture. We are committed to make it a smart city.*

—U.P.S. Madan
Commissioner, MMRDA



“ *Japan has a slow decision-making process, wherein all the stakeholders are consulted and asked to provide their views before the plans are implemented. So, what happens in effect is that once the process is underway, the execution is hassle free and fast. This is one of the crucial factors Mumbai needs.*

—Jamshyd Godrej
Chairman, Godrej & Boyce



“ *Many of the long-term players are averse to entering India because of the restriction on the insurance and pension funds. There needs to be more trust in the system, and calculated risks need to be taken to build up the pace of development. To develop Mumbai, let's not just look at medium or short term; let's start today!*

—Arundhati Bhattacharya
Chairman, State Bank of India





Union Minister, Urban Development, Venkaiah Naidu made a few interesting points during his address at the conference in Mumbai

developed in our country, which creates an issue of garnering finance from public. However, the MCGM has now set a spending target of ₹15,000-20,000 crore to develop Mumbai.”

Sanjay Bhatia, Chief, CIDCO is confident of the new proposed airport that is suggested to become the largest greenfield project in India. “Other major infrastructure projects such as the JNPT expansion, metro projects, etc., are facilitating unprecedented growth in the city. But there is lack of planning. We need more Navi Mumbais. We are striving to finish the new international airport, and I am happy to tell you that we are expecting the first flight take-off in 2019!”

Senior corporate leader and Chairman, Godrej & Boyce, Jamshyd Godrej underlined the need of making the decision-making process inclusive. “I strongly believe that finance cannot be the problem that stalls projects. It is the method of execution. Japan, for example, has a slow decision-making process, wherein all the stakeholders are consulted and asked to provide their views before the plans are implemented. So, what happens in effect is that once the process is underway, the execution is hassle free and fast. This is one of the crucial

factors Mumbai needs. The issue of housing is critical to Mumbai. As much as housing is necessary, the city needs open spaces too. We must devise a method so that housing facilitates economic development. Mega projects like monorail and metro can tackle high-density travelling population, but something like the BRTS—which requires a fraction of the investment—can be a catalyst to ease connectivity issues. The other issue the Government needs to focus upon is that of the Land Ceiling Act.”

World Bank representative Maninder Gill underscored the contribution of master plans to make a city world class. “The physical implementation of master plans must flow out of an integrated body. For Mumbai to become a truly world-class city, the youth must mobilise their talent and enterprise to facilitate affordable housing,” he advised.

Actor Amitabh Bachchan took interest in Chief Minister’s vision for Mumbai. He expressed support. The veteran actor said, “One of the features that attract people to Mumbai is the opportunity of a better lifestyle and earnings. However, what this city lacks most is designated spaces like museums or



theatres that showcase what Mumbai has culturally contributed to the country. Marathi stage has a prominent history which nobody is aware of. Maharashtra has a huge history with many interesting archaeological sites. We need to initiate a campaign that showcases the culture of Maharashtra. Besides, we need structures where city's visitors can go and relax, where the city's creative talent can go and perform."

While many participants agreed on better infrastructure, seniors bankers like Arundhati Bhattacharya, Chairman, State Bank of India, threw light on financial matters and how the two are connected. According to her, making India a fully convertible currency would facilitate trade in an unprecedented manner. "China is making the strides towards making the RMB a fully convertible currency. We also need to narrow our twin deficits. We need to approach the current issues realistically, step by step. BKC, for example, has a huge infrastructure issue. We need to attract fund managers, who are currently sitting in places like Singapore. We have an economy poised for take-off and there is no dearth of talented workforce. What could be better than this for Mumbai? Many

of the long-term players are averse to entering India because of the restriction put on the insurance and pension funds to access certain markets. There needs to be more trust in the system and calculated risks need to be taken to build up the pace of development. To develop Mumbai, let's not just look at medium or short term; let's start today!"

Standard Chartered Bank's Sunil Kaushal said, "Global financial centres are possible only in places that are at the hubs of world finance. The Chief Minister needs to address a huge financial centre in collaboration with the Centre."

The diplomatic community also showed interest. Kumar Iyer, British Deputy High Commissioner, said, "Recently, there has been a lot of activity between London and Mumbai to increase partnership in business, trade and culture. To develop Mumbai, we must focus on non-financial measures such as ease of doing business, understanding its history, solving regulatory hurdles, among others. We have signed an MoU with the Maharashtra Government to facilitate ease of doing business. The full convertibility of rupee is crucial. India needs to work on the principles of deregulation." [M](#)

“We are trying to create an ecosystem for expanding financial services in Mumbai”

“A city like Mumbai has to have a qualitative change if it has to go global, and that is one initiative we are taking. The second initiative is developing the service industry, as now Mumbai cannot be developed as a manufacturing hub anymore. The city can develop as a world-class financial centre,” says Chief Minister **Devendra Fadnavis** in a special interview given to *Maharashtra Ahead*. The Chief Minister speaks to **Rohit Chandavarkar** during the conference in Mumbai to launch MumbaiNext, a programme launched to transform the city into a global financial and entertainment centre. Excerpts:



Q. A lot is being talked about transforming Mumbai into a global financial hub. How do you view this?

A. We want to develop Mumbai into an international financial hub and a financial and service centre, as the city cannot be developed as a manufacturing hub anymore. Even in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), you cannot have much of manufacturing. So, what we can do is, develop the city as a financial services centre.

Mumbai has a unique position in terms of time zone; it is four to five hours ahead of London. Even Shanghai does not have this time advantage, which is only available to Dubai may be. We are trying to make use of this to create an ecosystem for financial services to expand in the city. The move will create a lot of economic activity. Banks and financial services can have a turnover of over ₹50 billion. The second unique advantage of Mumbai is the human resource the city has. With human resource, we can leverage it all. To promote Mumbai, we require commercial spaces, infrastructure and tweaking of certain laws. The basic problem today in making Mumbai a financial centre is that in Indian law, whatever business you do—from Mumbai or from any Indian city—it is taxable. But, financial services are tradable.

Q. Would that mean no taxes?

A. No. Only those financial services that are created and utilised within the country should be taxed. The financial services that are created and utilised elsewhere by using Mumbai as a financial centre should not be taxed. This would be the incentive for people to come and operate from Mumbai.

Q. How will the War Room work?

A. Initially, the War Room in my office will pick 10-15 key

infrastructure projects and co-ordinate with all critical agencies related to those projects. If anything or any agency has a problem, it can immediately come back to the War Room. The War Room will proactively pursue it, and will understand the factors hindering the progress and immediately facilitate the project to move forward. Ultimately, we want to institutionalise the mechanism, so that even the Chief Minister's office is not needed to intervene later.

Q. One of the challenges with Mumbai being a financial centre is the high cost of real estate and transportation. Can the Government do anything?

A. The Government can work on that. For last few years, we did not create a lot of commercial space. We just created one Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC) and that is all. We are planning to create more BKCs. We have identified places where such centres can come up. We will facilitate the process. MMRDA will do some centres; CIDCO will do some centres; and all the other agencies that have land parcels will be encouraged to create such centres. I believe, if we create more commercial space, then the problem would be about taxation. If it is a municipal tax, then the municipal corporation will look into it. If there a tax regime of the State Government, then the State Government will look into it.

Q. Are you looking into some kind of easy tax rates, tax breaks or tax concessions?

A. Right now, we are trying to understand what the issues are and what solutions these issues really require. One issue which we have found out is the availability of less commercial space. We have started working on it. To solve these issues, there could be 100 suggestions of which we will pick five. That's why we have organised this conclave.

Q. What about residential real estates? It is a problem considering people keep on coming to Mumbai.

A. Yes. I believe one has to have a simultaneous policy, where one creates housing on existing land which one has through urban renewal. At the same time, one needs to arrest the urban influx in the fringe areas. For this to happen, one needs to create new cities. This is what we are trying to do. NAINA (Navi Mumbai Airport Influence Notified Area) is an example. It is a 600 sq.km region near Navi Mumbai airport, which would be bigger than Mumbai. A few days back, I gave clearance to the development plan of 60 villages in Bhiwandi that would make a city that can host

18 to 20 lakh people and also act as a logistic hub to Mumbai. The region has 4,000 godowns spread over 600 acres, which are illegal. We have earmarked this area for a logistic hub and we will regularise the godowns. In 2,200 acres, we will create the logistic hub.

“

The War Room in my office will pick 10-15 key infrastructure projects and co-ordinate with all critical agencies related to those projects. If anything or any agency has a problem, it can immediately come back to the War Room

”

Q. What about funds for Mumbai's projects like Metro 2 and 3, which will cost over ₹22,000 crore?

A. Thanks to our Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has already created credit lines for us, from Japan to China. What we need now are clear projects. Now, for the 72-km Metro project, ₹50,000 crore is needed. This will be financed by Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jaica). We also have a tie-up with the World Bank. For Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, we have approached Jaica, and the organisation has expressed its keenness to finance the project. As of now, I think, clear project is an issue; financial strategy is not. In Mumbai, the financial strategy can

be evolved if you have a clear project.

Q. You spoke about getting a good response in Davos. Would we see much more investment in Maharashtra?

A. I think now there is a sense of excitement among people to come to Maharashtra, and the way Maharashtra is functioning, the way people are talking about their experiences here. I just want to share that the Schindler's case in Pune where entire investment was done, when we went to Davos and we handed over the letter (consent to operate) to Schindler, they told us they are now expanding and would be setting up a facility to develop escalators. The earlier project was for elevators and the new one is for escalators. So, this would be India's first escalator manufacturing facility. When we gave the letter of expansion to Cognizant, their reaction was, now we feel that India is as fast as China. I told them, in times to come, we would be faster than China.

Q. Tell us about Mumbai Port Redevelopment Plan.

A. After we took over, we started work on Karanja port. Two other ports, Jaigadh and Diggi, were facing problems due to non-existence of proper roads and no connectivity. According to the agreement, the ports on their own would build the roads and raise the funds, through a toll charged in the port area. Still, the ports were not given clearances. Now, I have given all the required clearances, and the work has started. **M**

“

We are planning to create more BKCs. We have identified places where such centres can come up. MMRDA and CIDCO will do some centres, and other agencies that have land will be encouraged to create such centres

”



“The State has always been and will continue to be **India's best** investment destination”

Maharashtra's Chief Secretary **Swadheen Kshatriya** talks to Senior Journalist **Dilip Chaware** about the increasing expectations and aspirations of the common man from the new Government, and how the administration is committed to deliver. His responsibilities include establishing Mumbai as world finance capital. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. Maharashtra, once the leading State, faces fierce competition from other States in terms of investment and progress. What you have to say about this? Please also tell us about the proposed Maharashtra Summit.

A. I can confidently declare that Maharashtra has re-established its position as the best investment destination in India. The credit for this resurgence goes to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who effectively generated a very positive sentiment about Maharashtra at the recent World Economic Forum meet in Davos. We had 35 bilateral meetings with top industrial leaders from around the world. The global perception now is that Maharashtra is the most ideal place in India to invest. In the soon-to-be held Maharashtra Investment Conclave, this perception will be reflected fully. Details of the conclave are being worked out. All leading industrial houses, investors, innovators and policy makers in

India will participate in the conclave, which will be helpful in charting the roadmap for the future. The emphasis will remain on equitable development of the State by boosting sectors like manufacturing, service industry, tourism, agro processing and entertainment, to name only a few. We welcome a healthy competition from other States on a level playing field. Still, I wish to point out that with Maharashtra's inherent strength, we will continue our forward march.

Q. What about offering a red carpet treatment for industries? What are the initiatives taken to make 'ease of business' possible?

A. The bureaucracy has to discharge a momentous responsibility in this process of keeping Maharashtra 'ahead' of all the other States. Every announcement made by the Chief Minister and the Cabinet will be implemented by the administration in letter and spirit. Another path-breaking initiative will be to cut down the time taken for obtaining construction and building permissions in Mumbai. We are contemplating a comprehensive combined permission so that the total duration comes down drastically. Of course, this is still a proposal and we will refine it, as we discuss it with various authorities and stakeholders. I mention this only to emphasise the point that we are serious about our assignment and will not hinder the path of progress in any manner.

Q. The Chief Minister met a number of international companies at Davos. You were with him. What is the outcome of such efforts?

A. The first thing we noticed at Davos was the positive shift in perception towards India over the past year or so. As already explained, Chief Minister was successful in projecting an attractive image of Maharashtra and the said perception was instrumental in this projection. Our interaction with leading industrialists from around the world convinced them that the State Government is serious about inviting them. We reassured them that their concerns will be addressed soon. Concrete steps in this regard will find a place in the State Budget 2015-16. Suffice it to say that you will see a quantum jump as far as Government initiatives are concerned.

Q. What are your major concerns?

The main concern is electricity tariffs for an industrial project, and we are working for quality power supply at reasonable rates. Discussions are being held with companies like Tata Power, Reliance Infrastructure, the BEST Undertaking

and the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company. We are planning to bring down the duration of about 67 days for obtaining an industrial power supply connection to just a week.

The other major concern is land ownership. We need to rectify the existing regulations to provide for title search. These and other issues are occupying the attention of the Government at the moment. The main objective is to simplify and rationalise all the procedures for launching an industrial manufacturing or service project in Maharashtra.

We are also contemplating to devise a common application form for a trader or an entrepreneur in the Sales Tax department to avert the trouble of submitting the same details at multiple counters.

Q. Your rich experience in administration is expected to reflect in the Government policies. Tell us, how soon can we see steps in this regard.

A. Interactions at Davos and in India, with industrialists and bankers, have repeatedly brought home the point that our policies need consistency, continuity and constancy, no matter which party or individual is in power. The only way to do this is to legislate the policies.

Accordingly, these will be presented before the legislature in the coming Budget Session; discussions will be held threadbare and subsequently implemented after due constitutional procedure. As a result, doing business in Maharashtra will be easy and lead to rapid industrial growth and overall development of the State.

Q. What about Maharashtra being preferred over other States, be it industrial investment, tourism, manufacturing or other sectors?

A. Maharashtra has a rich tradition of pioneering initiatives. This is the State where the first rail line was laid, the first major port was developed and the first international airport began functioning. As a result of this rich heritage, the State has acquired abundant skilled manpower over the years. Information technology is just one sector where Maharashtra leads all the other States. India, as a nation, is in a position to provide trained manpower at a comparative low cost, and Maharashtra will be a crucial factor in this regard. We will benefit from this strategic advantage if we leverage it in the right direction. Maharashtra has a peaceful atmosphere. It is the largest consumer of power. It is known for innovations and initiatives. We are committed to achieving our objective on the strength of this advantage. All the support



MAHARASHTRA HAS RE-ESTABLISHED ITS POSITION AS THE BEST INVESTMENT DESTINATION IN INDIA. THE GLOBAL PERCEPTION NOW IS THAT THE STATE IS THE MOST IDEAL PLACE IN INDIA TO INVEST. THE CREDIT FOR THIS RESURGENCE GOES TO CHIEF MINISTER DEVENDRA FADNAVIS"

the administration can provide will be at hand. The progressive policies of the Government will be the identity of the changing atmosphere in Maharashtra.

Q. How are you going to translate the increasing expectations and aspirations of the common man from the new Government?

A. People wish a new Government to come out with new concepts, to take fresh initiatives and to create a better environment. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has been able to impress upon the masses that he stands for optimism, hard work and decisiveness. Transparency is the hallmark of this Government. Promoting public involvement in governance is the keyword today. We are making solid progress in this direction. The first decision, a Right to Services bill will be presented to the legislature in the coming Budget Session. With this legislation, 150 services of the Government will be notified. A draft of the bill was put in a public domain and wide ranging discussions were held over this. Excellent feedback was received. Under the bill, a public servant will have to discharge his or her duty in a time-bound manner. Failure to do so will invite penal action. This is a revolutionary step and will convince the people that the Government is for them and alive to their needs.

Q. IT, transparency, efficiency, RTI and consumer protection are some of the buzzwords today. How are these being integrated into the State administration?

A. We are increasingly making use of IT in administration. The best example is the recently launched Aaple Sarkar (Your Government) portal. Now, any individual in Maharashtra can approach the Government directly through this portal and post his grievances or demand information under Right to Information Act. The response has been fantastic. People tell me that several of their grievances have been addressed, resolved and a tremendous amount of information is provided through the portal. I urge the people to make use of this portal and of similar facilities offered by the Government so that the administration is always kept prepared to respond forthwith. This is a unique initiative and the response it has been generating has encouraged us to plan more such steps.

Q. Drought, water shortage and falling agro productivity are some of the major hurdles in spending more funds for productive purposes. How is this dichotomy being handled?



PEOPLE TELL ME THAT SEVERAL OF THEIR GRIEVANCES HAVE BEEN ADDRESSED, RESOLVED AND A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF INFORMATION IS PROVIDED THROUGH APLE SARKAR. I URGE THE PEOPLE TO MAKE USE OF THIS PORTAL AND OF SIMILAR FACILITIES OFFERED BY THE GOVERNMENT SO THAT THE ADMINISTRATION IS ALWAYS KEPT PREPARED TO RESPOND FORTHWITH"

A. We are a welfare State. The well-being of the people is our primary responsibility. Farming community is one of the important segments of our population. Obviously, providing succour to the farmers becomes our first priority. Given the grim situation in many parts of the State due to erratic monsoon, there is a water shortage. We have petitioned the Centre for a substantial relief package. Till then, State Government has disbursed about ₹4,000 crore from its own treasury to extricate farmers from difficulties. We are aware that still much more needs to be done in view of the approaching summer and are gearing up to handle the situation. Nonetheless, providing this relief will be a temporary measure. The true remedy lies in making the villages self-reliant as far as their water requirements are concerned. To escape this recurring malady, we have planned to make 5,000 villages 'water surplus' under Government's Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan and by enhancing its scope and provisions to make them permanently free of water shortages. The other vital aspect of this is to supply solar agricultural pumps so that farmers do not depend upon the Government for electricity. As a pilot step, we are installing 7,400 solar pumps in various parts of Maharashtra.

Q. What's your vision for Maharashtra?

A. I am proud to have been serving a leading State like Maharashtra. We are determined to take this reputation further by ensuring inclusive development of the State with involvement of its people. Though this is a Herculean task, but with sheer grit and determination, we will be able to retain the prime position of Maharashtra in all sectors. We are endowed with a good rail network, with a coastline of 720 km and with rich biodiversity. Industry, agriculture, tourism and the services sector are our strengths. Mumbai is the focal area of this progress. Besides strengthening infrastructure, our focus is on the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), which extends up to Virar and Kalyan. We want to develop MMR as a world finance centre. This will attract huge investments in industry, infrastructure, ports, construction, entertainment and IT sectors. We are poised to welcome them with assured power supply, efficient transportation facility and a robust administration. Simultaneously, taking investments and employment opportunities to the remotest corners of the State will be our motto. I am confident that in 2020, Maharashtra will be the topmost State in India and will be occupying a pride of place position on the global map. **M**

SCHOOL BAGS: A **WEIGHTY** ISSUE

The State Government is committed to unburden school students and make education a journey they cherish throughout their life, says Maharashtra Education Minister Vinod Tawde



(From left) Vinod Tawde weighs a school bag and interacts with students in Mumbai

We often stress on the need to improve the quality of education in the State, but as our expectations from the younger generations grow higher, so does the burden on their tender shoulders. And I don't mean just the mental burden to be the best in class, but also the physical pain of loading the heavy burden to school. Therefore, just to get a real picture of the issue of heavy school bags, which has been plaguing the city of late, I decided to visit one private and one municipal school in Mumbai.

The two schools that we decided to visit were Parle Tilak Vidyalaya ICSE School and Parle Dixit Road Municipal School where we not just checked the weight of the school bags separately, but also weighed the student with and without the bag to get the correct figures. On weighing the school bags of



grade 5 and 6 students at Parle Dixit Road Municipal School, I could not believe my eyes, as the weight of the bags ranged between 4.5 kg and 6 kg on an average. With this exercise, it became evident that the weights of the bags are definitely more than what the students are capable of carrying, and that it surely needs to be reduced.

Later, as part of the personal discussion with children, I interacted with a few students to ask how much the weight of their bag should be, and what books they want in the bags. As expected, their replies were as innocent as their age. And, as they say, seeing is believing, we not just witnessed everything but have also started working on the issue.

“**We will use the survey findings and suggestions to formulate the new school bag policy by June. We are hopeful that the policy will be implemented in the next academic year”**

”

Now our next immediate step is to share the findings of the visit with the committee that has been constituted by the Ministry with a view to reduce the load of the school bags. As part of finding solution to the problem, one of the possible ways to tackle it is to adopt the Tamil Nadu tri-semester pattern. In this pattern, the academic year is divided into three terms and

the books are suitably divided into three parts, thereby making the bags lighter. Besides, students should be allowed to get tablets to school, which will automatically reduce the load of books in bags.

In regard to the admission to engineering colleges, we are in the process to start a state-level CET through which admissions would be done. This would be started from 2016 onwards.

I personally believe education should not add stress to children's lives, rather it should be a painless journey they cherish even when they grow up. Just because we want them to excel in whatever they do, we should not rob them of their priceless childhood. Let them carry the light of knowledge and not the overweight of books and bags. **M**

—As told to **Deepika Khurana**



“We will link heavy industries with the people”

Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises is neither sick nor purposeless. There are lots of steps that can be carried out here,” shares **Anant Geete**, Union Minister, Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises. In an interview with **Mangesh Vaishampayan**, he shares his plans for the Ministry and his views. Excerpts:

Q. Ministry of Heavy Industries is considered as a Ministry without work. What are your views?

A. From my experience of nine months here, I can place on record that the perception is totally unfounded. Basically, this is not a sick Ministry. This is a Ministry that contributes a whopping ₹1,62,765 crore to the exchequer, a Ministry with a manpower of a minimum 2 lakh. How can such a Ministry be even contemplated as sick? The Ministry might have been misconstrued due to the change of viewpoint towards public sector undertakings (PSUs) during the free economy era. Practically, this is not the case. How can a Ministry that looks

after all the Miniratna, Navaratna and Maharatna public enterprises on a day-to-day basis be sick? As matters related to everyday life of people are not directly within the jurisdiction of this Ministry, it might have remained deprived of the limelight enjoyed by other Ministries. Here, one has to persevere practically without a chance to shine! I shall strive to project my work as a Minister on priority.

Q. Tell us something about the department.

A. The draft of development accepted by the Indian Governments after independence was more similar to the Russian model. Leave alone the fact that we have taken a 360-degree about turn during free economy. While we were to establish a new India, there were only a handful of industrial dynasties such as Tata, Birla, Bajaj, Firodia and Goenka. The priority of the Government at the time was to provide work to common people. The PSUs were established based on this thought. The country was in dire need of development of basic infrastructure facilities. The public sector industries

such as textiles, ship building, electricity generation, port development and others were established. During the privatisation era, there was a huge increase in the number of private companies, which created a picture that all was not well for PSUs.

Q. What would you say about Indian PSUs?

A. The sector has an investment of ₹8,50,000 crore. The total turnover of these industries is ₹19,45,777 crore. My Ministry has 32 PSUs, out of which around 10 to 11 are either incurring losses or are closed. The Government of India is striving to either renovate them or change their structure. I already have and continue to have an active participation in the process. Out of 277 industries, 77 are sick. In order to change this picture of losses, the Cabinet has approved setting up of a National Automotive Board, which was deferred for a long time. Research and Development department has also started working.

Q. What happened to the proposal of turning loss makers to profit earners, and setting up of a different industry than presently available?

A. Turning sick PSUs to profit earners is a huge task. We have recently placed a mega plan for this before the Union Cabinet. Very soon, we will be making a presentation to the Prime Minister. The country has seven Maharatna companies such as NTPC, Indian Oil and BHEL. They have surplus funds to the tune of ₹2,00,000 crore. The Centre is thinking of creating a company through these funds. This company will also be a PSU. However, the work systems and work culture here would be attuned to modern era.

Q. How far have we progressed on NEMM?

A. National Electric Mobility Mission (NEMM 2020) is an ambitious project. Its main objective is to run the public transport systems in metropolitan cities on batteries. The major advantages would be reduction in pollution and phenomenal savings in fuel expenses. The total project cost is around ₹14,000 crore. Out of this, the Union Government has already provided approximately ₹800 crore for the primary stage. The project will be based on a trinity of objectives such as acceleration in production of battery-operated vehicles, national energy safety, and prevention of pollution by buses. The project will bring about fuel savings to the tune of 25 lakh liters every year. The current available fleet of buses under public transport systems will not be discarded immediately. However, only the new buses will be running on batteries. The project is being launched from New Delhi, and Maharashtra has shown interest in the project. I already had a discussion with Maharashtra Transport Minister Diwakar Raote. The project will be implemented in Mumbai and other big cities in the State.

Q. Delhi had started battery-operated



MINISTRY'S IMPORTANT PROJECTS

- Government of India efforts are on for re-energising 10-11 sick PSUs out of 32 under the Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises.
- A new company will be started from the surplus funds of seven Maharatna companies. This company will also work in the public sector.
- NEMM 2020 is an ambitious project. A ₹14,000 crore project, its main aim is to run public transport bus services in all metro cities, including Delhi and Mumbai. Around ₹800 crore has already been provided by the Centre for the initial stage.

buses, but closed them down.

A. Delhi Transport Corporation had started such a service in Chandni Chowk. However, there were many shortcomings. The service was controversial, as it did not take into account factors such as the number of passengers in the area and the haste to start the service without understanding the battery technology. NEMM 2020 is a project that has been fully thought of, and will be launched practically only after all the tests have been completed successfully.

Q. What do you have to say about the department of Heavy Industries and its functioning?

A. Manohar Joshi and Subodh Mohite carried out their responsibilities with full faith and vigour. We have worked here and our indelible footprints on the Ministry can be seen even today. In the present situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been keeping a personal watch on every Ministry. As this Ministry has both industry and development imbibed and integrated in its name, it has become a challenging assignment. I am shouldering this responsibility and shall continue to do so in future. **M**

“INDIA HAS SEVEN MAHARATNA PSUS WITH SURPLUS FUNDS. WITH THIS FUND, WE PLAN TO CREATE ANOTHER PSU THAT WILL HAVE WORK CULTURE ATTUNED TO MODERN ERA”



“Rural areas must develop systematically”

In her role as Minister, Rural Development, Water Conservation, Employment Guarantee Scheme, and Women and Child Development, Government of Maharashtra, **Pankaja Gopinath Munde** aims to change the rural scenario and make villages self-sufficient

Adequate water availability, pucca houses, road connectivity, market for products made by self-help groups (SHGs) and education for every girl child will change the scenario in rural areas, says **Pankaja Munde**, Minister, Rural Development, Water Conservation, Employment Guarantee Scheme, and Women and Child Development. She has started a few schemes to upgrade lives of the people in rural areas and curb their migration to cities by making available good facilities and employment in villages. Her aim is to make every village a smart village on the lines of the smart city programme initiated by the Centre. Confident to see her plans turn into reality in a few months, the young minister wants to see rural areas developed systematically, of course, by keeping sustainable environment in mind. She insists that transparent and speedy work is important for the objective. The Minister, in an interview with **Shruti Ganapatye**, talks about implementation of her early decisions and expected results. Excerpts:

Q. What does Maharashtra Government plan to do for rural development?

A. The ambitious plan of the Government, Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan (providing villages with permanent source of water) in order to make every village drought free is being implemented by the Rural Development Department. We are hopeful that the Abhiyan will yield fruits in coming years. Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan is the flagship programme of the State Government. We have planned a budget of about ₹10,000 crore for it. The main aim of the scheme is to

decentralise water bodies so that water is available across the State and dependency on particular resources is reduced.

The State Government had declared water scarcity situation in 19,059 villages in November 2014. Under the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, it has initiated a few new schemes for water conservation along with the revival of older schemes. The immediate measures will include conservation of rainwater, as it is the main source of water for many villages and dependency is more on it. The step would also help recharging underground water level, so that water is available throughout the year. Defunct schemes of water conservation will be revived. Many villages have provision for tap water, but lack of maintenance has forced the schemes to close down. These schemes will be started again. Dams and other types of water storage units will be cleaned to hold more water. Storage will be decentralised to bring more area under water. The villages will be encouraged to build small cement dams. We are expecting good results from Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. The villages should get sufficient water for people to have drinking water all the time and farming not affected in any way. We are also hoping good rains this time so that drought situation can be avoided.

Q. What are the other areas of concern?

A. While efforts are made towards water conservation, one must also take care of the environment. I have instructed the officials to ensure environment is not harmed and villages maintain cleanliness. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given us the cleanliness mantra and we want to implement it in every village. I am encouraging people to construct toilets at homes, in schools and other institutions to avoid open defecation. I felicitated a woman, Sangita Awhale some time back, who sold her *mangalsutra* to construct a toilet for her daughter. I think we need more Sangitas, who are articulate and pushy for their demands. We also want people to make use of solar power, and are trying to figure out what help can we provide to accomplish it.

I am connecting villages with roads to make transportation easier. On the lines of smart cities, my aim is to make smart villages. If villages become self-sufficient, influx to cities will also decrease.

Q. How will villages be made self-sufficient?

A. With a view to make the villages self-sufficient, we have suggested to convert *kutcha* houses into *pucca* houses. In the cities, under Slum Rehabilitation Authority scheme,



“MANY VILLAGES HAVE PROVISION FOR TAP WATER, BUT LACK OF MAINTENANCE HAS FORCED THE SCHEMES TO CLOSE DOWN. THESE WILL BE STARTED AGAIN”

the poor slum dwellers get *pucca* houses. I want the similar scheme to be implemented in the villages. My department is working on the viability and innovative ways to make this happen. We are also trying to figure out if two-three storey houses can be built in villages to accommodate more people. It is important to make available good housing in rural areas.

Q. What initiatives are planned for women and child development?

A. Our first initiative is to encourage education of the girl child. We have Sukanya scheme for girls under which they would get ₹22,000 after completing 18 years.

I want to upgrade the scheme and name it Bhagyashree. I also want the amount to increase, and have told the officials to work on it. I am in talks with the banks on changing the current way of giving the entire money after 18 years to giving the family little amount every month so that the girl and her parents are encouraged to teach her further with the incentive coming in. There are other changes in the scheme, as the earlier version did not do well. We are also trying to incorporate the scheme with Centre's Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao to make sure funds are not a problem.

Malnutrition is another problem that is being addressed by the department. It is a social issue, and sustainable efforts are required to tackle the problem. We are working on it and results will be seen slowly. Malnutrition has various reasons, including lack of awareness, early marriages and motherhood, wrong eating habits, unavailability of food and employment. These reasons cannot be solved with a single decision. One has to tackle the problem at all levels and it would require consistent efforts not only from the Government, but also from society.

To make women in rural areas financially independent, a web portal about products made by the SHGs will be launched soon. The SHGs are doing extremely well, but have no access to markets. The portal will give them their own market. Another area is welfare of orphan children. We are making Bal Aadhar cards for the children, so that we get to know how many children live in orphanages.

There are lot many ideas to transform the life of people. But one needs transparency and speedy work in the department to move forward. I am hoping that after May, we can see the results of various initiatives taken by the department. I have initiated a few programmes with an intention to make some good for my people. I want to see it getting transformed into a reality. **M**



“MALNUTRITION IS A SOCIAL ISSUE, AND DEPENDS ON VARIOUS REASONS. IT REQUIRES CONSISTENT EFFORTS FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY”



PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

International Women's Day—observed on March 8 every year—is a perfect occasion to know women's role in a State's growth and the initiatives the State has taken for women welfare. **Irshad Bagwan** lists few important welfare schemes meant for women in Maharashtra

Maharashtra is identified as one of the pioneer and progressive States of India. Many social reformers such as Mahatma Jotiba Phule, Savitribai Phule, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Shahu Maharaj and others started their social work from this State. Today, when we see women in the front row in almost every field, we realise the hardships they faced.

We find a sizeable ratio of women in education and other fields in Maharashtra. The State has provided reservation for women in local self government, so that their participation in politics increases. It has also been an advocate for providing reservation for women in Government employment. The State has created an independent Women and Child Development Department through which many schemes are implemented. In the schemes from other departments as well, women are given priority.

Women within the age limit of 18 to 40 belonging to economically weaker sections of society are being trained in vocational

education. The aim is to make them self-reliant. The courses run by various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are in tailoring, typewriting, computers, screen printing, handicrafts, Anganwadi and Balwadi training, and others. The trainees at these centres are also provided monthly stipend.

With a view that the women get all essential information and guidance, and distressed women receive further assistance, the State has established many Committees. For eradication of dowry, an all inclusive Women District Advisory Committee is working under the Chairmanship of District Collector. At Zilla Parishad, a Women and Child Welfare Committee is established. Through this committee, the Zilla Parishad is provided grants for carrying out works for women and child development. Zilla Parishad also earmarks 10 per cent of its income for this work. The committee also receives grants from District Planning and Development Council provisions to carry out the tasks.

The Women Counselling Centre Scheme was started in 1994.



Based on the guidelines of the Centre regarding atrocities against women, Maharashtra established a taskforce to curb the acts of violence on women. Currently, there are 105 counselling centres working in the State. The State is also committed to provide help to rape victims and those affected by child abuse. Financial help is provided to heirs of deceased acid attack victims. To provide psychological treatment, financial assistance, counselling, shelter, medical and legal help to rape victims, Maharashtra has recently introduced Manodhairya Scheme.

With the aim of improving girls' education and health, prevent child marriages, make girls financially secure, curb female foeticide and enhance girl childbirths, Sukanya Scheme has been started. Under this scheme, every girl child born in a BPL family gets a life insurance of ₹21,200 within one year of birth. The girl is eligible to receive ₹1 lakh when she turns 18. The scheme includes the benefits of Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana and Shiksha Sahayog Yojana. The Government is considering

implementing this scheme more effectively with certain changes.

ACTS AND ACTIONS

The Women and Child Development Department also runs hostels, called Rajya Griha in the State. Admission here is given to women who don't have shelter, are castigated, divorced, single mother, abused and from prostitution. There are 20 such hostels in 18 districts. Adhar Griha is also active for affected women, who are rehabilitated by NGOs. These institutes provide them food, clothing and shelter apart from safety, medical aid, education and training and legal counselling. A monthly grant is also provided to inmates. Another scheme run under the Illegal Traffic (Prohibition) Act 1956 relates to Women Remand Homes. These homes house women, 18 years and above, freed from brothels and ordered by the Courts to be given security and rehabilitation.

The Government also provides a grant for marriage of girls from orphanages, Government women hostels, remand homes, Adhar Griha, short-term residences and Government grant children homes. Under Mumbai Devdasi Security Act 1934—to prevent Devdasi system—various schemes are implemented in 11 districts, where the proportion of Devdasis is high. Scheme for

grant for marriage of unmarried Devdasis and daughters of Devdasis also exists. The grant is provided for a Devdasi, more than 18 years of age, or for a daughter of a Devdasi. The children of Devdasis studying from class 1 to class 10 are paid annual grant of ₹1,600 for a boy and ₹1,750 for a girl.

Hostels are being constructed at every district to facilitate development of the girls from minority groups studying in cities. Out of these, hostel at Kolhapur has been activated and construction of hostel at Panvel and

Ghansangwi (Jalna) has been done. Land for hostels at 18 locations has been made available. Under Government of India's Multi-sectoral Development Programme, hostels for minority girls have been constructed at six locations in Maharashtra, namely Parbhani, Gangakhed (Parbhani), Washim, Mangrulpur (Washim), Hingoli and Basmat (Hingoli). The department intends to activate these hostels from June 2015.

Certain seats in the second shift at the ITI and polytechnic institutes run by the Minority Development Department, Maharashtra have been reserved for girls. Scholarships are also reserved for girls. Maulana Azad Minorities Financial Development Corporation is implementing schemes for loan to minority women self-help groups and education loan for girls. To increase literacy among girls from backward classes, reduce their dropout level at higher education and facilitate residential accommodation, the Government has built hostels at district and taluka levels and runs Savitribai Phule Scholarship Scheme. **M**

FOR THE GIRL CHILD

Maharashtra will effectively implement Centre's recently launched Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao scheme. Of the 100 districts selected for the scheme, Aurangabad, Beed, Osmanabad, Jalna, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, Buldhana, Wahim, Kolhapur—with low girl child ratio—are selected under this programme

PUNE: THE NEXT IT CAPITAL OF INDIA

A recent announcement by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, on his intention to make Pune the IT capital of India, has brought the city into focus again, says **Chandragupta Amritkar**

The IT sector in Pune, considered the biggest engine of Pune's growth over the last few decades, got a substantial boost when Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister, Maharashtra expressed his desire of making Pune the "IT capital of the country." The Chief Minister's Office has already started taking steps to accomplish the mission. While the idea sounds good, many industry leaders/CEOs have demanded for better infrastructure for Pune-based IT hubs such as Hinjewadi and Kharadi.

Pune is considered the cultural capital of Maharashtra. In the 18th century, it was the political centre as the seat of Peshwas, who were the prime ministers of Maratha rulers. Later, the city



became a prominent educational hub (and still remains so). Early 1970s saw Pune developing into a manufacturing and automobile hub. The early 1990s saw the arrival of IT companies, which soon led to rapid growth with more educational institutions, arrival of reputed hotel brands, employees from world over, among others. Today, with more than 2,000 companies employing over 2 lakh people and exports crossing \$10 billion, IT has become synonymous with the city. Pune's expanding business has witnessed mushrooming of satellite towns of Hinjewadi and Kharadi and developers like Magarpatta focusing on creating IT hubs.

CITY SCAN

Pune inherently has the advantage of being in close proximity to India's commercial hub Mumbai, but is not so crowded. Better weather with quite a few open spaces and greenery help the city. Another factor for city's rapid growth is its excellence in the education sector with a large number of institutes located here. The growth of IT companies has led to more job opportunities and established Pune as a preferred workplace for graduates.

The list of software companies located in Pune includes Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Tata Technologies, KPIT Cummins Infosystems, Wipro Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Zensar, Persistent Systems, Synchro Technologies, Accenture, Amdocs, AtoS, Capgemini, Cognizant, Deloitte, GlobalLogic, Hexaware Technologies, Larsen & Toubro Infotech, Mastek, Mphasis, SunGard,



(Clockwise from above)
 Infosys office at Hinjewadi,
 Magarpatta and EON
 IT Park at Kharadi, in Pune

Cybage, e-Zest Solutions, Opus Software Solutions and Symantec. Not just big-shots, Pune also has thousands of small IT companies and start-ups, which thrive due to the highly skilled human resource pool of the city. Pune is also a major hub for research centres set up by multinational companies and governments such as Centre's Centre for Development of Advanced Computers (C-DAC).

The Hinjewadi IT Park—officially called Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park (RGIP)—is a project started by Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation to house the IT sector in Pune. When completed, the Hinjawadi IT Park is expected to have an area of about 2,800 acres (11 sq.km.). Currently, the RGIP houses many software companies like IBM, Wipro, Tata Technologies, AtoS, Tech Mahindra and Geometric Limited.

Kharadi, located in the eastern corridor, is another fast-emerging IT hub. It already has EON Free Zone, SEZ and IT Parks. The neighbouring Kalyani Nagar and Nagar Road have helped the area become a prominent IT/ITeS destination. The major IT companies in this region include Zensar, Tata Communication, Honeywell, Eclipsys, Synechron, Eaton, Mphasis (EDS), Wipro and Reliance.

PUNE SURPASSES BENGALURU

Pune has surpassed Bengaluru as a hub for high-end engineering design and product development work done out of MNC firms' R&D outposts, and is leaping forward to become the Silicon Valley of India. IT advisory firm Zinnov in its Maturity

Benchmarking Study that surveyed 220 product teams across 30 MNC R&D firms in India found some interesting facts. It said, some 12 per cent of product teams based in Pune are doing high-value product development work compared to 8 per cent in Bengaluru. Product teams based out of Pune no longer play second fiddle to their global teams, supporting them with coding, testing and quality assurance. They have moved up the maturity curve managing the product pipeline, customer interface and channel partnerships. This has resulted in greater mindshare at the headquarters and hence, they are able to drive high-value work from India.

With over 350 MNC R&D centres, Bengaluru remains a hotbed of activity in the country. But Pune has emerged as an attractive destination for product development leveraging on its skilled workforce in executing product design and engineering capabilities.

The study added that IT companies prefer Pune over many other cities in India, especially Bengaluru because of the lower real estate costs involved in setting up operations. Also, IT/ITeS employees, who are looking at buying their own homes, can easily avail home loans and buy properties in the city that are conveniently close to the companies they work with. More and more companies are now looking forward to Pune for establishing their R&D centres and product development hubs, as the city provides them far better resources and an environment that encourages innovation. [M](#)

Today, with over 2,000 companies and over 2 lakh people and exports crossing \$10 billion, Pune is known for its IT. The expanding business has led to mushrooming of satellite towns of Hinjewadi and Kharadi and developers like Magarpatta focusing on creating IT hubs



Mumbai to get CCTV cover with an MoU with L&T in place

By 2016, Mumbai will have a CCTV-based surveillance system in place, as the State Government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) worth ₹949 crore with a consortium led by Larsen & Toubro. The 6,200 cameras will help boost the security of the city and establish it as a global investment destination.

"It is commendable that the high-powered committee, led by Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya, will use sophisticated analytic systems to monitor the law and order situation in the city," said Devendra Fadnavis after the MoU was signed.

The MoU was signed between the State Government and the L&T consortium, which includes MTNL and CMS. The cameras will be set up, along with network connectivity, data and command centres, and will help desks in two years. The consortium has set three deadlines. By November 14, 2015, the system will be set up in south



Logistics hub to come up in Bhiwandi

Maharashtra has a viable environment for industrial investment and it was visible at the World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos. The Government would be setting up a logistics hub in Bhiwandi as part of the Make In Maharashtra initiative, which is set up on the lines of Make In India and emphasis will be given to provide infrastructure for industries, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The Chief Minister was addressing the Progressive Maharashtra 2015 seminar organised by the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) at hotel Trident in Mumbai. Subhash Desai, Minister for Industries; Praveen Pardeshi, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister's Office; Bhushan Gagrani, CEO, MIDC; Ashishkumar Singh, MD, SICOM; Dr. Jyotsna Suri, President FICCI; and others were present.

The Chief Minister said that it was very much evident at the WEF at Davos that international companies are willing to invest in India and mainly in Maharashtra. While concentrating on ease of doing business in the State, the Government is keen to provide the best possible infrastructure to various industries and has taken many important measures in this regard by reducing the number of permissions required to start an industry; providing skilled manpower and use of e-portal are being emphasised.

The Aaple Sarkar portal where people can send their grievances and suggestions is presently operational at Mantralaya level. In the next phase, it will become operational at the *tehsil* level. Soon to provide time-bound services to people. Right to Services Act will be brought in, draft of which has been put up for suggestions and feedback.



Vice President Hamid Ansari bats for equitable growth

Growth and equity are inseparable and the corporate sector as well as the Government must play critical roles to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth in India, said Vice President Hamid Ansari in Mumbai recently.

"Empirical evidence shows that growth without equity is not sustainable in the long run. On the other hand, desired levels of equity or inclusion cannot be attained without rapid and sustained growth. Hence the solution is not in 'either or' but 'in both,'" he told a gathering of industrialists.

The Vice President was speaking at a

Mumbai, which is home to landmarks like the Gateway of India, Reserve Bank of India, Zaveri Bazaar and Nariman Point. The deadline for the eastern suburbs is April 16, 2016, while for the western suburbs is September 17, 2016. The consortium will work with the Government for five years to

The 6,200 CCTV cameras will help boost the security of the city and establish it as a global investment destination

train its officials, after which the project will be handed over to the State.

The main command centres of the surveillance system will be connected to all police stations. The system includes a picture

intelligence unit that will enable facial recognition and track vehicle number plates. This will strengthen the city's policing machinery, improve traffic management and act as a deterrent for criminals. It can store data in the centres at Worli and Navi Mumbai for a maximum of six months.



symposium on Wealth and Value Creators organised by Indian Merchant's Chamber (IMC), a 108-year-old industry association. The function was attended by Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

"We have attained self-reliance in most agriculture products and are even exporting them. Our service sector is counted among the best in the world; manufacturing has grown and diversified into hi-tech areas. Our share in global trade and investment has been on an upward trend," he said.

The Vice President said, India's manufacturing capabilities and service sector should grow in terms of quality and quantity, if it would like to match the levels of developing nations such as Brazil and China.

Maha-Bloomberg sign MoU for Mumbai's road safety

The State Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Bloomberg Philanthropies to improve Mumbai's road safety. The MoU was signed in presence of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Michael Bloomberg of the Bloomberg Philanthropies.

The step comes after Mumbai was selected by Bloomberg Philanthropies among the ten cities to be a part of their new phase of Global Road Safety Initiative. Mumbai would get ₹100 crore in next five years to address road safety and improve traffic infrastructure under the initiative.

Under the initiative, Mumbai has to submit a detailed plan listing measures to be

taken for pedestrian and cyclist safety, increasing awareness through graphic media campaigns, increasing police enforcement to combat drinking and driving and speeding, and encouraging use of helmets and seatbelts. Mumbai was selected after the Municipal Corporation submitted a proposal on all these aspects for next five years. The initiative also covers the cost of infrastructure solutions such as widening sidewalks and improving pedestrian crossings.

Devendra Fadnavis said that road accidents are on rise in Mumbai. Though the Government organises road safety week to create awareness, it is not sufficient. "People need to inculcate safety habits," he said.



PM inaugurates GE facility at Chakan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the world is taking note of India's GDP growth, which has risen to 7.4 per cent, and added that experts now describe India as the fastest growing economy in the world. In his address during the launch of General Electric's multi-modal manufacturing facility at Chakan, Pune, he suggested 21st century to be Asia's century with India playing a key role in it.

While inaugurating the facility, the Prime Minister said there were immense possibilities for manufacturing in India. "India's demographic dividend was a magnet to attract investment. The Government is working towards creating a skilled, talented workforce, which would attract the world to India. Global technology (Vishwa Dhan) and the talent of Indian youth (Yuva Dhan) could together result in a win-win situation for all," he said.

The Prime Minister said that the Government is working towards predictability in

policies and laws that would boost confidence of investors. The Prime Minister said, his Government is working towards improving "ease of doing business." He complimented Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for doing a lot to improve

ease of doing business, and reducing the number of permissions required for setting up business. He praised Chief Minister's initiatives in the hospitality sector.

The Prime Minister congratulated GE for the new state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, and welcomed its announcement for further investment.

The Prime Minister said that in India, water, land and sky—*jal, thal aur nabh*—all make great possibilities for manufacturing. He invited GE, which is already present in land and sky, to also invest in water, implying shipbuilding. He invited GE to invest in defence, where FDI has been raised to 49 per cent.

"Global technology (Vishwa Dhan) and the talent of Indian youth (Yuva Dhan) could together result in a win-win situation for all"

DECODING THE DROUGHT RIDDLE

The frequent agriculture disaster has been a roadblock for Maharashtra's overall growth. This time, the Government aims to overcome it once and for all, reports **Vijay Gaikwad**



Maharashtra suffers recurrent spells of drought due to its geographical location. But, it is the spirit of the State that empowers it to create diversity from adversity. It is due to this spirit that while fighting the severe drought in 1972, Maharashtra launched an employment guarantee scheme. Over the years, the same has been implemented all over India under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Authority (MGNREGA). The State has also launched various focused initiatives to curb situations like drought. During the last winter session of State Legislature at Nagpur, the Government announced a package of ₹7,000 crore to provide immediate help to drought-affected farmers. Maharashtra needs to do much more, as

drought and unpredictable agricultural challenges due to global warming often become a challenge for its agriculture and economy at large. It is equally important to devise solutions that work on the issue.

During the drought last year, a revolutionary technique of cement nalla bunding through the medium of decentralised water resources turned the water situation around in the villages from scarcity to surplus. This year, the Government has resolved to finally achieve total and permanent freedom from drought through Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, by making 1,000 villages free from water scarcity. The scheme will help farmers improve moisture security and enhance agriculture productivity. A country like Israel emphasises safety of moisture. This technology needs to be inculcated in the State.

(Clockwise from top)
Shet tale, cement check dam and fodder camp for livestock under drought management



“WE ARE, AND WE WILL ALWAYS REMAIN WITH FARMERS”

Eknath Khadse, Minister for Agriculture, Revenue and Relief & Rehabilitation, talks about Ministry's recent initiatives

With the aim of encouraging agriculture in the State and extend substantial assistance to farmers affected by drought, untimely rains, hailstorms, crop losses and others, the Government has taken up many long-term remedial measures. The State has taken a decision to extend ₹7,000 crore package to make State drought free, and reconstruction of crop loans and loan waivers, completion of incomplete wells, powers to Tehsildar for water supply through tankers when needed, repayment of loans availed by farmers from 23,811 villages with paisewari less than 50 paise in Kharif 2014, making farmers eligible for new loans, an expert committee for evaluation of

social impact of land acquisitions, e-mutation, State-wide E-mojni, online 7/12 extract and others. Various measures for fodder scarcity such as prohibition on bringing animals to Maharashtra from other States, etc., have been taken.

Micro irrigation and weather-based crops are important areas for us. Countries like Israel use this method of planning agriculture and are successful in carrying out agriculture even with less rainfall and without facing drought.

Under Jalayukta Shivar Yojana, 5,000 villages will be made drought free by this year end. On Republic Day, we initiated 2,800 works on a single day. Under this programme, 10,000 cement nalla bunds will be constructed during 2015-16.

Farmers will be encouraged to use more and more organic fertilisers. In order to care for infertile cows, Gokul Gram Scheme will be undertaken. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently introduced a Soil Health Card Scheme and the State is contemplating to start the scheme in Maharashtra also.

—As told to **Ajay Jadhav**

“ **The State Government has stood firmly behind the farmers in every natural calamity. On the backdrop of climate change, Maharashtra should achieve freedom from drought and farmers should be able to continue farming perennially.** ”

—**Devendra Fadnavis**, Chief Minister



PERMANENT REMEDIAL MEASURES

- Integrated watershed management programme on 10 lakh hectares with project cost ₹6,437 crore. Government resolves to achieve freedom from drought for at least 5,000 villages during next year.
- 2.50 lakh agricultural lakes to be created and 50,000 cement nalla bunds to be constructed in next five years; 10 lakh hectares of agricultural land to be brought under irrigation through decentralised reservoirs.
- Policy decision for making available 5 lakh solar pumps to farmers.
- Decision to bring minimum 10 lakh hectares under micro irrigation within next five years.
- Ambitious programme to undertake 20,000 community agricultural lakes; 10,000 of these have been completed. The remaining will be undertaken within next 2-3 years.
- Sediment removal programme for water storage will be undertaken on a large scale. Provision for additional ₹50 crore.
- Dry land farming movement in the State. At present, funds to the tune of ₹300 crore are available for drought freedom of 500 villages; ₹150 crore available for this work during current year; ₹500 crore will be made available with inclusion of 1,000 villages.
- At least 10,000 broad base furrows (BBF) to be made available. Every village will have availability of at least one BBF on rental basis.

Out of the 29,434 villages in the State, 23,822 villages have been declared as drought affected. A scheme is being implemented for achieving permanent drought freedom for Maharashtra by 2019. Urgent and long-term remedial measures have been included in the scheme. Along with integrated water conservation, the scheme also includes CSR funds as well as participation of public and elected representatives. Concerned District Collector and Zilla Parishad CEO have been given powers. Social activists Anna Hazare and Popatrao Pawar are guiding the Government in this. **M**



CITRUS PUNCH

Known as the Orange City, Nagpur celebrates its bond with the fruit. Now blessed with GI status and good production, its farmers are keen to export, says Sameer K

In India, the city that is most famous for growing oranges is Nagpur. Tangy, tasty and high on nutrition, the fruit has lent its name to the city—so much so that Nagpur has gained fame as the Orange City. With 78,000 hectares in the Amravati division and 35,000 hectares in Nagpur division under orange cultivation, the two divisions covering 11 districts produce 13,56,000 tonnes of orange annually. And, the area under production is growing annually. Area-wise and production-wise, this is about 45.5 per cent of the country's total orange production. Other places where orange is grown are Northeast India, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. However, oranges from Nagpur are considered absolutely top notch and the best in the country.

According to Amol Totey, Working President and Mohanrao Totey, President, Orange Growers Association of India, oranges from Nagpur have a sweet-sour taste, which is not seen in any other orange variety. It has a loose jacket, good durability and quality.

Anil Gharad, Chairman, MahaOrange—a body promoted by the Maharashtra State Agriculture Marketing Board (MSAMB)—agrees. “The loose jacket is not seen on any other orange



A BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

● Citrus crops like lemon, sweet lime and orange are grown across 1.5 lakh hectares in and around Nagpur. Average orange production is around 10 tonnes per hectare.

● Nagpur Mandarin is one of the best mandarins in the world and its production in India is increasing every year.

● MahaOrange has been attempting a pilot project with about 100 farmers to push exports globally through a new export facilitation centre.

variety grown in Australia, New Zealand or Pakistan. The taste of Nagpur orange is unique which is why it finds favour in foreign markets like the Gulf,” he says.

Citrus crops like lemon, sweet lime and orange are grown across 1.5 lakh hectares in and around Nagpur. Average orange production is around 10 tonnes per hectare. The oranges of Vidarbha—mandarin variety—are unique due to their easy peeling skin and separable segments, good flavour, and aroma. The Nagpur mandarin got Geographical Indication (GI) status in April last year. It means wherever this variety is grown, it will continue to be known as Nagpur mandarin.

INDIA AND ORANGES

The major varieties of oranges produced in India are mandarin orange, sweet orange and acid lime. Mandarin orange is a variety of the orange family. The Nagpur mandarin is one of the best mandarins in the world and its production is increasing every year. The Mrig crop (monsoon blossom), which is harvested in February–March, has a great potential



“
The loose jacket is not seen in any other orange variety grown in Australia, New Zealand or Pakistan. The taste of Nagpur orange is unique which is why it finds favour in foreign markets like the Gulf.

—Anil Gharad
 Chairman
 MahaOrange



(From left) Orange farmers in the wholesale market and fresh oranges on sale in Nagpur

for export since the arrival of mandarins in the international market is very less during this period.

The Nagpur *santra* (mandarin) is grown primarily in the Satpura Hills (Vidharba) of Central India, apart from Darjeeling (West Bengal), Coorg (Karnataka), Odisha, Tripura, Sikkim, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. Experts say, flowering of Ambia (spring blossom)—a variety of orange grown in the area around June–July—starts in February, fruiting in April, and it is harvested around September.

MahaOrange has been attempting a pilot project with some 100 farmers to push exports through a new export facilitation centre. Gharad has been attempting to purchase oranges from farmers and establish a marketing chain. The process is likely to begin in the next season of Mrig, which starts in March this year. “There are several markets in India where oranges can be sold. Oranges will be purchased, packed and graded according to quality in three categories—Grade A for top-quality oranges, Grade B for little lower than top-quality oranges, and Grade C



oranges that are meant for the food processing industry. This way, farmers can be guaranteed of better prices, as the rates will be fixed as per the category,” Gharad says.

MahaOrange has created a group of farmers, who are ready to sell their produce to the body. It is expecting the number of farmers to go up as the effort takes off. According to Gharad, farmers can hope to get better prices in March since the produce is limited. This season, farmers can hope to get ₹25,000 per tonne, as against ₹10,000 per tonne in the season that has just ended. The new season that begins in March will continue till April.

MahaOrange is also trying to create nurseries and register these at the ground level, so that standards are maintained and farmers get good root stock. The objective is to reduce the Grade C variety, which is 30-40 per cent of the total produce and is usually given away at throwaway prices. The organisation has also been demanding an orange policy to support farmers in situations where they are forced into distress sales. It has signed an MoU with MSAMB to run the export facilitation centre at Karanja Ghadge, Nagpur, and expects grading, packaging and branding of oranges to make a difference to orange prices in India.

EXPORT POTENTIAL

MahaOrange plans to export from the coming Mrig season. This year, it has decided to tap Middle East, where a pilot consignment will be sent.

The Orange Growers Association, with about 12,000 members, also has similar ambitions. The association is ready to start pack houses. It has been supplying oranges since last 21 years to Mother Dairy Safal (of National Dairy Development Board, a successful cooperative), HOPCOMS Bengaluru, Aditya Birla Retail, Bharti Wal-Mart, Heritage Foods (Hyderabad and Bengaluru), Hypercity Retail India, Metro Cash & Carry, Reliance Fresh, and almost all modern retail and wholesale ventures. The association also exports citrus fruits to Bangladesh and the Gulf region (Dubai, Oman and Abu Dhabi), and is keen to start the multiplication of Nagpur orange plants.

Gharad expects that the GI status and new Government will catalyse the successful launch of Nagpur orange in new export markets, besides widening the reach in domestic markets. Of late, there has been a huge demand for oranges from Kerala and North India cities. The Gulf region and Bangladesh continue to be good markets, but a major push is needed to encourage farmers to go in for exports. **M**

AN EVENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Beginning in July, Simhastha Kumbh Mela is a mega platform where devotion co-exists with development, says **Dr. Kiran Moghe**



(From above) Trimbakeshwar Shiva Temple and bathing ghats in Nashik during the Kumbh Mela

Situated on the banks of the holy river Godavari, Nashik derives its name from the episode in the *Ramayana* where Rama's brother Lakshmana hacked off the *nasika* (nose) of Ravana's sister, the demon enchantress Surpanakha. Adding to city's religious significance is the fact that it serves as a base for pilgrims visiting Trimbak (33 km west) and Shirdi (79 km southeast). Every 12 years, Nashik also plays host to the grand Kumbh Mela, the largest religious gathering on the planet, which shuttles between four Indian religious centres on a triennial basis. The next congregation in Nashik will begin from July 2015.

The Nashik Kumbh Mela is generally acknowledged to be the most sacred of all the festivals. In Krit Yuga, after *Samudra Manthan*, *Amrut Kumbh* (vessel with nectar) arose and Gods wanted to save it from demons. Gods had to hide it at different places, Swargalok (heaven), Mrutyulok (Earth) and Patallok (the lowest realm). Gods were on Mrutyulok for 12 days, and their 12 days are equal to 12 years for humans. Hence, every 12 years, Kumbh Mela is celebrated at four places, where the drops of the nectar fell.

Simhastha Kumbh Mela is organised at Nashik and Trimbakeshwar when planet Jupiter and Sun are in zodiac sign Leo (*Simha*). When Sun is in zodiac sign Aries (*Mesha*), it is held at Haridwar. The Mela is hosted in Prayag when Jupiter is in zodiac sign Taurus (*Vrishabha*) and Sun is in zodiac sign Capricorn (*Makar*).

When Jupiter and Sun are in zodiac sign Scorpio (*Vrishchik*), the Mela is celebrated at Ujjain. Recognising the importance of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela, Shri Shankaracharya appealed his disciples to assemble in Trimbakeshwar. Led by him, till today, devotees, pilgrims and people of various sects and religions gather here for the Mela.

Three *akhadas* of Vaishnav (Vishnu followers) sect are located at Nashik, while Trimbakeshwar has 10 *akhadas* of Shaiva (Shiva followers) sect. An *akhada* is mainly a

tented place where saints and sages of a particular group gather and perform meditation and rituals. Various facilities are organised for these saints by the Government. This year, the State has approved ₹2,378.78 crore for the facilities. Out of this ₹476.26 crore has been provided by the Urban Development Department, while ₹898.90 crore by the Mantralaya.



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



(From above) Sadhus take holy dip during Simastha Kumbh and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis addresses Sadhu Mahant in Nashik

A GREEN KUMBH MELA

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis recently conducted a meeting of Sadhu Mahant at Trimbakeshwar and Nashik and reviewed the developmental works. He assured adequate funding for the facilities for the upcoming Simastha Kumbh Mela. He expressed confidence in organising the event successfully with the guidance from

Sadhu Mahant. He appealed to the local people to cooperate in a manner that promotes Nashik and the Kumbh Mela globally.

Considering the required electricity during the Mela, MSEDCL has undertaken works such as building new sub-stations, 33 KV and 11 KV lines, underground cables for safety, new generators and replacing old poles and wires.

The facilities at the District Hospital has been extended with

construction of 200 beds. Trimbakeshwar Rural Hospital will also accommodate 71 additional beds. Facilities are being created for adequate number of mobile hospitals and ambulances. Planning is under way to make available essential medical facilities at hospitals in Nashik.

With a view to preserve the heritage of ancient temples, the Archeological Survey of India is

undertaking some initiatives. The tourism department will also promote important destinations. The administration is concentrating on presenting the Mela as "Hartikumbha" or green vessel. Special measures are being taken for cleanliness and reduction of river pollution. Municipal Corporation has undertaken projects to enhance the drainage capacity. Temporary toilets with 22,000 seats will be built during the Mela.

The district administration has made requisition of total 283 acres, where a Sadhugram is being built. A religious trust, spread over 33 acre, will also be used for the same purpose. Facilities of internal roads, water supply, toilets and bathrooms, street lights, medical aid, cleanliness and fire-fighting are being developed at Sadhugram. Work on 105 km of roads in Nashik has been undertaken. Through the National Highway Authority of India, six laning of Dwarka square to Nashik Road and widening of Nashik-Peth Road are being carried out. Four laning of Nashik-Trimbakeshwar Road is also in the final stage. At Trimbakeshwar city, work on 23 Shahi roads and the same number of internal roads is being carried out through local Municipal Council. Nashik Road railway station is being given an additional platform, foot-over-bridge and parking space.

A pious bath in Godavari is the most important ritual of the Mela. Considering the huge number of people expected to gather here, ghats are being built at various locations. Ghats with a length of 3,990 m at Nashik and 950 m at Trimbakeshwar will be available. Micro-planning is being carried out for devotees to travel easily. As the capacity of the Railways is around 3 lakh passengers per day, lakhs of other devotees will be arriving by buses and other modes of transport. Considering the situation, MSTRC will run 3,000 buses and carry around 50 lakh devotees daily. The MSRTC is also carrying out many developmental works such as construction of Devlali Depot, repairs of sheds at various locations, reconstruction of bus stops, asphaltting of highway bus station and Trimbakeshwar bus station, building temporary parking lots, fixing CCTV on bus stations and others. **M**

Maharashtra Marvels

Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Matheran and the Lonar crater have been proposed by Maharashtra for inclusion in UNESCO's world heritage sites list, informed the officials from the advisory committee on natural heritage sites, set up by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. [Maharashtra Ahead](#) visits the locations



MATHERAN

NATURE'S BEAUTY AT ITS BEST

Matheran, meaning forest on top, was discovered by Hugh Poyntz Malet, Thane's district collector, in 1850. The famous hill station, in the Raigad district, is well connected to the town of Neral, which lies at the base of the hills. Roads in Matheran are not metalled and are made of red laterite earth. To maintain its uniqueness, no vehicles are allowed in the city. One can reach here by a toy train.

In 2003, Matheran was declared an eco-sensitive zone, putting a cap on industrial and other developments in the area. The hill station is known for beautiful, old, British-style architecture. It also has a large monkey population, including Bonnet Macaques and Hanuman Langurs. The nearby Lake Charlotte is the main source of its drinking water.

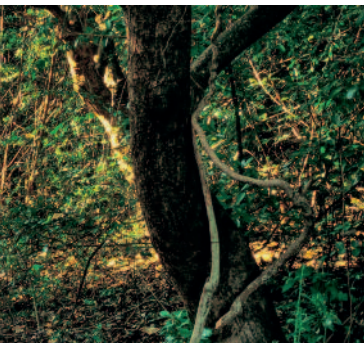




SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK A NATIONAL PARK WITH CAVES AND LAKES

The Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) has always been the ideal weekend getaway destination for the people of Mumbai whenever they want a break from the busy city. The Park, also known as Borivali Park, has about 20 per cent of Mumbai's geographical area. SGNP has over 274 species of birds, 35 species of mammals, 78 species of reptiles and amphibians, 172 species of butterflies and over 1,300 species of plants. Its other impressive features are lakes and caves. Two lakes, Vihar and Tulsi, are located within the forests of the National Park. These lakes were created to supply drinking water to Mumbai. A beautiful value addition, the lakes harbour a thriving population of mugger crocodiles and are visited by migratory birds throughout the year.

SGNP also has a 2000-year-old complex of about 160 rock-cut caves popularly known as Kanheri, a protected archeological site. The name Kanheri comes from Krishnagiri, a Sanskrit word, which means black mountain. Visitors can view the magnificent relics of Buddha and the Bodhisattvas here, and can walk along the magnificent corridors of the prayer halls set in rocks.



LONAR THE METEOR LAKE

Lonar is world's third largest crater. It has its genesis nearly 50,000 years ago, when a 2 million-tonne meteorite impacted the earth to create a depression of 1.83 km in diameter and 150 m deep. The crater was first discovered in 1823 by British officer J.E. Alexander, but finds mention in ancient scripts like the *Skanda Puran*, the *Padma Puran* and the *Aaina-i-Akbari*.

Situated on the outskirts of Lonar town in Buldhana, Lonar today stands as an idyllic expanse of sky blue water amidst a sprawling emerald forest. A beautiful saline lake inside the crater and thick forests around is a visual delight. The saline lake is also unique from a scientific standpoint, being the only discovered crater lake in basaltic rock (a type of volcanic rock) in the world. It has been equally interesting to astronomers, ecologists and believers. No doubt, India's ancient religious cultures have graced Lonar's periphery with temples of various deities over thousands of years.



A DATE WITH OLIVE RIDLEY

Every year, Velas beach, in Ratnagiri, celebrates the arrival of baby turtles. The annual festival is gaining importance for the conservation of rare Olive Ridley turtles and as an experience unique to the place, writes **Jyoti Verma**

Just out of the shell, it is their first step. For a few seconds, the beautiful tiny reptiles stand still, with their eyes fixed on the vast sea. Then, as if poked by someone, they rush forward. Very soon, a few baby turtles reach the waves leaving behind a trail on the wet sand, while a few wait at the water's edge till a gentle wave float them away.

We are at Velas beach in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district, watching the newly-hatched Olive Ridley turtles find their way to their real home. The turtle festival, held annually for the last few years now, is drawing visitors not only from Maharashtra but also from other corners of India and abroad.

Located almost 300 km from Mumbai, inside the Konkan coast, Velas would have continued with its near-anonymous existence if it was not for a chance discovery by Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra, a Maharashtra-based nature club. It was 2002, when the members, during a survey of sea eagles that nested in the rocky patches along the beach, discovered small mounds of sand littering the beach. They asked the local people and learned that these were nests of turtles that came from the sea to lay eggs. The nests were empty though, with many locals suggesting attacks by jackals. Next year, the members dug further to find that Olive Ridley turtles nested at the beach. Unfortunately, poached by locals and wild animals, very few eggs used to survive.

The eye-opener led to a long and coordinated effort to save these turtle eggs and spread the word of conservation. The nature club members roped in some villagers and formed the Kasav Mitra Mandal (Friends of Turtles). Sahyadri Nisarg Mitra and Kasav Mitra Mandal created watch-towers along the beach to look out for danger and also for the

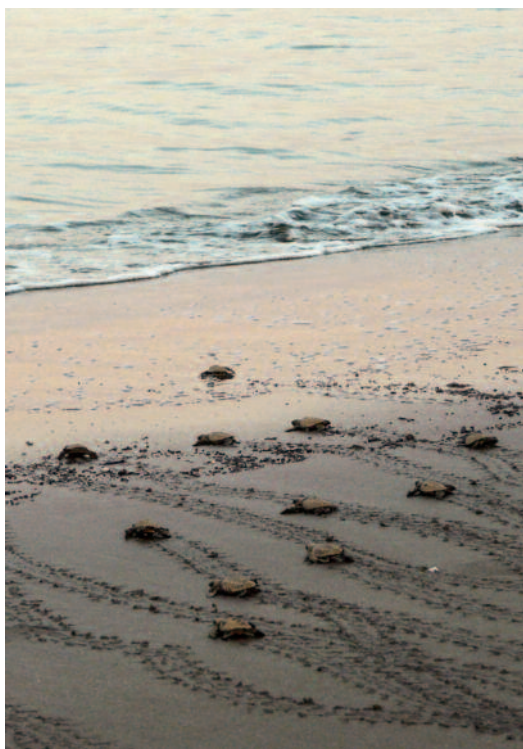


(Clockwise from top left) Baby turtles rushing to the ocean, tourists busy clicking pictures, turtles leaving behind trails and a bunch of new-born turtles



ABOUT OLIVE RIDLEY

Olive Ridely turtles are a rare breed and facing extinction. These turtles are relatively smaller than other turtles; the baby turtles are barely 30–50 mm. While these are found in the Pacific and Indian oceans and mostly nest in and around Odisha in India, a small batch also frequents Velas for nesting. The eggs have a nesting time of 45 days to 60 days. Once born, the turtles are immediately carried a little closer to the sea and then allowed to make their maiden journey into the sea. One has to be cautious, as the turtles get distracted by light and often lose their way to the sea. The pathway thus is barricaded and visitors aren't allowed close to them.



VELAS VISIT

📍 Velas is slightly different from other beaches in India. It requires one to walk quite a distance through a muddy *kuccha* path to get to the beach. The Velas village is lined with palm trees and plantations making it a natural beauty. It also has ancient temples with rock-cut idols and ancient architecture. However, the temples are local and one has to explore the region. A short distance away from the village is Bankot Fort, which offers interesting views of the coastline and is a tourist spot. Visitors can also take a ferry to the nearby holy town of Harihareshwar.

HOW TO REACH

From Mumbai, one has to turn off the Goa-bound NH17 and take the route via Mhapral, Mandangad and Bankot to Velas. Although State transport buses ply to Velas from Mumbai, Pune and other places, these can be crowded. It is advised that one takes private vehicle or opt for a package tour.

safety of the turtles when they lay eggs, which is usually in November–December. Since it was impossible to save the turtles without local help, the nature club members decided to hold an annual turtle festival, setting up hatcheries along the beach to conserve Olive Ridley turtle eggs.

But, the festival was easier said than done to manage initially. There was no hotel at Velas. The infrastructure was then provided by residents, who hosted the tourists for a small amount. With homestays a preferred choice even today, the arrangement has been helping people with some extra income. As more and more locals realised that it was the turtles that were drawing visitors to their village, they too actively participated in

Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra, a nature club, is the brain behind the turtle festival. Supported by locals, it has established a success story of conservation and tourism

protecting the turtles during the nesting period.

Gahirmatha and a few other coastal areas in Odisha are known for mass nesting of Olive Ridley turtles. The nesting sites along the Konkan coast may not put up a spectacular show, but are important for the preservation of the species. Over the years, Velas has managed to find a steady audience. Today, the crowd includes photographers, who are trying their best to freeze frame baby turtles and their first tussle in life, while the rest of us look on in amazement. On the way back, we have to stop at the club's office to see a documentary on Olive Ridley turtles and the conservation efforts being made to save them. **M**



Blessed Jewels

Jewellery designs have always balanced heritage with trends. A beautiful exception has been the conventional Kolhapuri jewellery. A pride of Maharashtra and a symbol of prosperity, luck and blessed married life, the jewels made in the city have maintained their appeal and grandeur, writes **Nikunj Sharma**

The grand city of Kolhapur has many interesting stories for the world. The legend of its origin, its heritage and landmarks, and the success of very functional-yet-stylish Kolhapuri chappals, all make the city interesting. Situated in the southernmost part of Maharashtra, Kolhapur—renowned as the ‘seat’ of Goddess of wealth, Mahalaxmi—is also known for artisans that make excellent heritage jewellery developed during the times of Peshwas.

The main jewel of Kolhapuri jewellery is *sauj*. Typically, a gold necklace with heavy decorative





pattern, varied metals and embellishments, such as beads and stones, *saaj* is a symbol of luck, prosperity, blessing and happy married life. Its making involves delicate embossing and craftsmanship, imbibes patterns developed during the period of Marathas and Peshwas, and carries forward glimpses of the history of the region, its cultural essence, traditional ethnic colours and elegance.

Saaj is generally worn by married women for the longevity of their husbands, but is equally famous among elderly women and girls due to the intricacy of design and symbolic relevance. It is believed that *saaj* gained its significance during the rule of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and become exclusive jewellery for married women. The heritage has been maintained by artisans over generations with extraordinary skills and exceptional patience and dedication. Kolhapur has traditional shops for making *saaj*, which can also be made with silver metal base plated with gold. Imitation jewellery—a cost-effective alternative—is a preferred choice among tourists.

MAKING OF THE SAAJ

Traditional form of the *Kolhapuri saaj* has 21 elements. Each element represents a specific meaning and conveys certain characteristic and facet of married life. Lotus flower motif (symbolising Goddess Laxmi), avatars of Vishnu (like *Kacchavtar* or tortoise) and native deity of Kolhapur, an earthen pot, sun, a *sindoor* box and moon are a few such elements. The *Saaj* begins with *chaphe-kali* (frangipani buds) and ends with *kirti mukh* (a good luck charm), and in line are *panch panadi* (holy leaves), *bel* leaf (leaf offered to Lord Shiva), *bel* plant (a plant of three united leaves), ridge gourd (symbolic of all plants), bitter gourd (life-giving herb), Sun, *manik panadi* (a gem symbolising friendship), *matsya* (fish and an avatar of Vishnu), *koorma* (another incarnation of Vishnu), *Narasimha* (a Vishnu avatar), rose,



KOLHAPURI SAAJ

● *Kolhapuri saaj* is known for its intricate design, unique appeal and grandeur, making it popular among women.

● Karmarkar Pedhi, a Kolhapur-based jeweller, had gifted a *saaj* necklace to Queen Elizabeth of Britain around 45 years ago.

● The exclusive ornament is continuously evolving on experimental basis and subjected to various modern twists from manufactures in past six decades.

● The jewel has retained its antique look and comes in all sizes as per demands of women of all age. *Kolhapuri saaj* is also exported.

● *Saaj* enjoys a loyal customer base for its old pattern. Elderly women show special affection for the conventional 21 leaves *Kolhapuri saaj*. However, young women prefer to wear 10 or 12 leaves *saaj* with new designs.

● Generally, foreign tourists buy gold plated version of *saaj* due to its low cost and excellent design.

beetle, *chandra* (moon), emerald, *gandbhairi* (symbolising unity of husband and wife), *morchel* (symbolic of kingdom and richness), peacock feather, *shankha* (conch), *wagh nakhe* (tiger nail, symbolising power of weapons), and snake (symbolising union).

These basic design aspects of *saaj* have not changed in decades. The number can be adjusted as per design requirement. But greater the number of symbols, more auspicious is the *saaj*. In one lifetime, women add up to as many as 51 symbols in the pattern, making the necklace longer, elaborate and heavy. The antique *saaj* offers a different aesthetic value from the conventional ones and comes in limited designs. *Saaj* is woven into green-coloured silk, and further decoration is done.

The other jewels include *haar* and *malas*, *mohanmala*, *bormala*, *chaplahaar*, *pohehaar* and *putlihaar*. These names are derived from the peculiar shapes of jewels. *Kolhapuri thushi*—a necklace worn like a choker and made of tiny gold round beads of varied sizes closely knit together—is a breathtaking neckpiece. Another piece worn by married women is *Kolhapuri mangalsutra* or *manchali*, which often is made with small pendants known as *saaj ghat*. Combined with beads, these pendants create dazzling *mangalsutras*. *Pohehaar* (strings of necklaces), *putlihaar*, *mohanmala* (bead-chains attached to a central pendant), *Bormala*, *chaplahaar*, *Laxmi haar* (a necklace of coins), are not only ethnic, but also modern.

The ornaments made in Kolhapur using pearls and red and white stones are *chinchpeti* (choker), *tanmani* (short necklace), *nath* (nose ring) and *bajuband* (armlet). Flower-shaped earrings are very popular amongst Maharastrian women. Foremost hand ornaments made in the city are *patlya* (two broad bangles), *bangdya* (four simple bangles) and *tode* (two delicately carved thick bangles). Other styles, slightly different from regular themes, have also been adopted by artisans. **M**



Chief Ministers of Haryana, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh in a discussion with the Prime Minister on the sidelines of NITI Aayog meeting in New Delhi

ON THE PATH OF COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM

It was February 8, a Sunday, and the roads leading to 7 RCR were once again busy with State leaders visiting the Prime Minister to take their discussion on planning to the next level. It was the day to discuss the modalities of newly formed NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog. Their first meet—held on Sunday, December 7—was to rechristen the Planning Commission of India with NITI Aayog. The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This time, all the Chief Ministers were called upon to deliberate on the effective functioning of NITI Aayog and the role each Chief Minister was expected to play in the development of the State and helping the nation in the long run. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh, Union Minister for Railways Suresh Prabhu and Deputy Chairman of NITI Aayog Arvind Panagariya participated to suggest new 'national priorities' that could transform India and propose a committee of chief secretaries to give necessary push to the infrastructure development, apart from pursuing labour and economic reforms.

To make the concept of balanced regional development a reality, the States should be assigned the liberty of drafting State schemes as per their necessity, and finally bring it to the NITI Aayog for approval to seek financial assistance. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis attended the First Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog and put forth a slew of suggestions for the welfare and effective implementation of the schemes in the State. The Chief Minister suggested that

during the transition period under 11th Five Year Plan, the planning process should be continued as per the Plan and Non-Plan pattern, however, in future, outcome-based, long-term strategic planning should fall in process. Under flagship programmes like MGNREGA, States should receive a block grant, which would help them to count the ratio of skilled and unskilled workers.

Devendra Fadnavis suggested said that 35 per cent of the Centre's agriculture-related loans should be invested for agriculture development, and a decision in this regard should be taken by the NITI Aayog. He informed about the ambitious Jalyukta Shivar Yojana launched by the State Government on the lines of the new Central scheme of Pradhanmantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (Prime Minister Agriculture Irrigation Scheme). He said, major funding assistance should be made available



Prime Minister Narendra Modi chairing the meeting

ASSISTANCE FOR MANUAL SCAVENGERS

To facilitate easy and immediate rehabilitation to the manual scavengers working in Maharashtra, the Central Government should provide an additional funding assistance to expedite the process, urged Minister of State for Social Justice and Law, Dilip Kamble. A conference of State ministers was held on Complete Elimination of Manual Scavenging through Effective Implementation of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 was held at DRDO Bhavan in New Delhi. Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawar Chand Gehlot presided over the conference. Secretary, Maharashtra Social Justice and Welfare Department, Ujjwal Uke was also present. All State ministers underlined their readiness and raised their concerns. "Centre provides ₹40,000 one-time cash assistance per scavenger as rehabilitation aid. This is meager and should be increased so as to rehabilitate the scavengers immediately," said Kamble.

AN AMBEDKAR MUSEUM IN LONDON

Maharashtra Government would acquire the London house where Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar once lived. The acquisition would be made before April 14, the birth anniversary of Dr. Ambedkar, informed Maharashtra Social Justice Minister, Rajkumar Badole in a press conference held in the Capital.

A decision to purchase this house is in its final stage and a meeting in this regard was held with Union External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari. Rajkumar Badole said the house will be converted into a museum-cum-memorial. A library and a research centre for students will be formed in the fond memory of the Father of the Indian Constitution.

Every year, the Social Justice Department of Maharashtra sends Backward Class students abroad for their advance academic studies. The purchase will help them stay in that house and pursue studies, informed Badole.



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis attend the meeting with Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi

CENTRE MUST SUPPORT ROAD AND RAIL PROJECTS IN NAXAL-AFFECTED AREAS

The Central Government should provide funding assistance to expedite road and rail projects in the Naxal-affected areas, urged Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, in a left wing extremism (LWE) meet. Convened by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, the meet was held to review development projects related to roads, bridges, railway lines, mobile towers, post offices, banking infrastructure, education, health, radio and TV connectivity, and forest and environmental clearances in LWE-affected States of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Odisha.

The Chief Ministers of Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh attended the meeting along with the Chief Secretaries and senior officials from Odisha and Telangana. Maharashtra Chief Secretary Swadheen Kshatriya, Union Home Secretary L.C. Goel and senior police officials were also present.

Devendra Fadnavis highlighted the issue of pending road works of about 150 km and the work of Indirawati bridge awarded in January last year. The Chief Minister also raised the issue of construction work of laying railway track in the LWE-affected areas.

Rajnath Singh heard the views and assured all necessary assistance. The Chief Minister also highlighted the major concern regarding the requirement of funds for these projects. He urged Union Home Minister to provide special assistance for expediting pending projects. Devendra Fadnavis also urged for relaxations in the policies and schemes for the development of these areas and requested for their early clearances and completions.

under this scheme and micro irrigation scheme. The scheme of solar pumps will be extended and Maharashtra should get Central funding assistance for 5 lakh solar pumps annually.

Maharashtra Chief Minister underlined that as per State's constitution, backward regions of Marathwada and Vidarbha have been assigned special status. For bringing about balanced development in these areas, special schemes should be implemented and a special funding assistance be made available for these areas. On the lines of Namami Ganga (Clean Ganga), an integrated proposal for 30 sub-valleys, has been drafted by the State. He urged for a special assistance to the State's Godavari valley (known as South Ganga) from the Centre.

Speaking on the economic reforms, Devendra Fadnavis said that though there is an increasing change in the economic environment, private sector is not equipped with sufficient financial corpus. To overcome this, Centre should increase its investment share in PSUs in the sectors of roads, railway and public transit system, he said. The State Government has

undertaken infrastructure projects worth ₹1 lakh crore and the Chief Minister urged Centre to approve and give immediate sanctions to expedite the projects.

With an objective to 'transform India,' review of Centrally sponsored schemes, promotion of skill development and creation of skilled manpower within States and mechanisms to ensure Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi constituted three sub-groups under NITI Aayog involving Chief Ministers to play their positive roles. The first sub-group would study the 66 Centrally sponsored schemes and recommend which to continue, which to transfer to States, and which to cut down. The second sub-group would recommend how NITI Aayog could promote skill development and creation of skilled manpower within States. The third sub-group would decide on institutional mechanisms to be evolved and technological inputs, to ensure that commitment to Swachh Bharat becomes a part of our life in perpetuity. [M](#)

—Compiled by **Amarjyot Kaur Arora**, IO, MIC, New Delhi



JUDICIARY IMPORTANT FOR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC PROGRESS

For country's economic progress, judiciary is equally important as good governance. The world is looking at India with great hope. One of the reasons for this is that investors' community across the world trusts the independence of India's judicial system, and it is due to the contribution of all those associated with the legal profession," said Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Prime Minister was addressing the concluding sesquicentennial function of the Advocates

Association of Western India in Mumbai. Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Union Minister for Law and Judiciary Sadanand Gowda, Chief Justice Supreme Court Sharad Bobde, Chief Justice Mumbai High Court Mohit Shah and Chairman of Association Rajiv Chavan were present on the occasion.

The Prime Minister said that India has a rich tradition of judiciary. The time is changing speedily, and like quick justice, quality justice is the need of the

hour, and the role of advocates arguing the cases is important to achieve this. He stressed the need for advocates to specialise, particularly in emerging areas of litigation such as international law and cyber crime.

The Prime Minister appreciated the role played by the Advocates Association of Western India over 150 years. He also inaugurated the Bombay High Court Museum, calling it a commendable effort to preserve and perpetuate the rich heritage of this great institution. He suggested a digital version of the museum to be created to showcase to the world the glorious legal heritage of India.

GOVERNOR: SKILL-BASED EDUCATION IS NEED OF THE HOUR

India has a large number of youth and their contribution in the progress is invaluable. Hence, the need of the hour is skill-based education for students, expressed Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao.

The Governor was speaking at the concluding ceremony of the diamond jubilee celebrations of K. C. College in Mumbai. Minister for Higher and Technical Education, Vinod Tawde, Chairman Hyderabad Sind Board, Niranjan Hiranandani, Chairman Reliance Foundation, Nita Ambani, Principal, K.C. College Manju Nichani and others were present on the occasion.

"By 2020, 50 per cent population of India will be of 30 years. Hence they should be imparted with skill-based education to make an empowered generation. Professors play a key role in shaping the future generations," said the Governor, adding, "Looking at globalisation, new experiments are carried out with education. While doing so, we should not forget that

MAHARASHTRA TO ADOPT ISRAEL'S PATTERN FOR WATER CONSERVATION

Maharashtra will adopt Israeli technology for water conservation and to make the State drought free, Rural Development and Water Conservation Minister Pankaja Munde said during a meeting with Israeli Consul General in Mumbai David Akov.

During the meeting the leaders discussed various issues to find out the spheres of cooperation. The Consul General has assured technical assistance and exchange of information in the field of agriculture and water harvesting, on behalf of Israel Government.

Pankaja Munde said Israel's micro-management of water is very impressive. "Marathwada and Vidarbha have been facing recur-

SUPPLEMENTS FOR MDR AND XDR TB PATIENTS

Public Health Minister Dr. Deepak Sawant flagged off a pilot project to distribute food supplements to patients

with multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) and extremely drug-resistant tuberculosis (XDR TB) under Arogya Vardhini Project in Mumbai. The project aims to reduce morbidity and mortality amongst drug-resistant TB patients by provision of nutritional supplementation.

Under the Arogya Vardhini project, packets of ready-to-eat *poha* and *sheera* will be given daily to 500-odd patients registered for directly observed treatment short course (DOTS) at the D North ward health centre in Sion. The project will be extended to the rest of the city within a month.

Dr. Sawant added that another project to give three meals daily to MDR TB patients has got Centre's nod. The National Health Mission (NHM) and BMC have roped in public sector bank, IDBI, to fund the project as part of its CSR initiative. The aim of NHM is to improve health facilities for urban populace and provide best health facilities to poor. The review will be done at places with population of more than 1000 in the State and where there is dearth of facilities.





basic education gives happiness and inspiration; also, there is need to improve students' skills."

Progress made by the K.C. College in the field of education is highly appreciated. The projects implemented by this institution will continue in future and contribute to the field, said Ch. Vidyasagar Rao.

Speaking on the occasion, Vinod Tawde said, "Along with education, skill-based education is highly important and our endeavours will be to start skill-

based curriculum. Our priority will be to give skill-based education a respectful position."

The Governor presented the K.C. Diamond League Awards to Barrister Ram Jethmalani, Nita Ambani, Dr. Vikas Amte, Maliswami Anandurai, Abhishek Bachchan, Vidya Balan, Boman Irani, Shekhar Gupta, Prakash Jha, Kareena Kapoor-Khan, Rakesh Maria, Piyush Pandey, Samir Somaiya, Rajesh Iyya, Anil Murarka, renowned oncologist Dr. Suresh Advani, and others.



ring droughts from the last decade, and tens of thousands of farmers have committed suicide. Israel is three times smaller than that of Marathwada. It has almost similar agro-climatic conditions as Marathwada, but has witnessed an agriculture and water revolution. It has adopted water-harvesting technologies

and developed crops that can sustain with minimum water. We intend to benefit out of their experience in this field," she said.

The Consul General assured that Israel will share its agriculture experiment in the field of water harvesting and agriculture with minimum water with the State.

FRONT SEAT FOR WOMEN IN THE CABS

Considering the safety and security of women and increasing crimes against them, the Government has taken a decision to reserve front passenger seat in the black and yellow shared taxis for women to ensure that they travel comfortably, said Diwakar Raote, Minister for Transport.

Diwakar Raote was speaking at the launch of Bhagini Sanman, a new campaign in Mumbai under which the front passenger seats of the shared taxis will be reserved for women. The scheme is to be implemented at all taxi stands in the State. Those violating the rule will be dealt stringently. "There is an ever

increasing rate of crimes in ST buses and taxis. To keep tab on their location and speed, GPS trackers will be made mandatory," he added.

A helpline for passengers to lodge complaints against taxis and auto-rickshaws that refuse to ply passengers is being launched.



AUTONOMY TO STATE POLICE ACADEMY

Nashik-based Maharashtra Police Academy will be turned into an autonomous institution to allow its faculty greater flexibility, bring in more accountability and elevate the quality of training to global standards. The institution will also be provided funds to construct residential quarters and classrooms and to provide other facilities, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

The Chief Minister was speaking at Maharashtra Police Academy Convocation and passing out parade. Minister of State for Home (Rural), Ram Shinde; State Director General Police, Sanjeev Dayal; Additional Director Gen-

eral Police, Dr. K. Venkatesham; Director of Academy, Naval Bajaj, and others were also present.

Chief Minister said, to face future challenges confidently, officers from the academy will be given e-training. Looking at the number of trainees, a police training school will be started at Varangaon. The Government has taken many important decisions to increase the capabilities of police department. These include 30 per cent incentives instead of promotion to be given. Chief Minister further said officers completing training at the academy should understand their responsibility and create confidence among people.

NEW WELFARE DECISIONS FOR MAHARASHTRA

With speedy and transparent governance, Maharashtra

Government in last 100 days has taken many welfare decisions for the betterment of people, and this will surely take the State to the pinnacles of progress, said Sudhir Mungantiwar, Minister for Finance, Planning and Forests, while speaking on the occasion of completion of 100 days of Maharashtra Government led by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Sudhir Mungantiwar informed there is a decision to start Bamboo Research and Training Institute at Chandrapur for which funds of ₹11.12 crore has been made available.

"This will benefit traditional craftsmen. A decision to upgrade Forest Training Institute at Chandrapur to Forest Academy has been taken. The Forest Academy will provide training in the areas of wildlife management and forest-based products. The Government has also decided to provide bamboo to Burud community on royalty-free and



“A decision to upgrade Forest Training Institute at Chandrapur to Forest Academy has been taken. This academy will provide training in the areas of wildlife management and forest-based products. The Government has also decided to provide bamboo to Burud community on royalty-free and tax-free basis”

tax-free basis,” he said.

There is a decision to take the grand Deccan Odyssey to Tadoba Sanctuary. Sudhir Mungantiwar said that for management and

co-ordination of social forestry, the department has been merged into forest department. “The other decisions include taking up cleanliness campaign at regional

level under the forest department, setting up international bird sanctuary at Gorewada in Nagpur and distributing funds for Sahayadri Tiger Project for 2014-15. An assistance of ₹8 lakh—instead of ₹5 lakh—will be given to the kins of those killed and ₹15,000—instead of ₹7000—to those injured due to animal attacks,” he said.

On the key decisions taken by the Finance and Planning Ministry, he informed that a white paper on financial condition of State will soon be published. Along with State pension, Central pension to ex-servicemen who worked for State Government is part of the plans. Funds are sought from Centre to erect Chhatrapati Shivaji Memorial in the Arabian Sea and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar memorial at Indu Mill land. Family pension to dependent mother—father of a Government servant if one dies during service period is another area considered by the Government.

“The Government is definitely taking people-oriented decisions and will continue to do so in future. We are committed to take Maharashtra ahead on the path of progress,” he said.

TELEMEDICINE A BOON FOR REMOTE AREAS



Medical care is everyone's right. In Mumbai and urban areas, medical facilities are quite accessible, but to provide these facilities in

tribal, far-flung areas, telemedicine has proved to be a boon, said Minister for Public Health Dr. Deepak Sawant at the launch of Shiv Arogya Seva

telemedicine facility in Mumbai.

The telemedicine facility—that aims to give a new lease of life to patients in rural areas—was launched by Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackrey, MLA Anil Parab; Aditya Thackrey; Principal Secretary Sujata Saunik; Managing Director, National Rural Health Mission of Maharashtra, I. A. Kundan; Director, Health Services, Dr. Satish Pawar; senior officers, expert doctors and other eminent personalities were present on the occasion.

Through telemedicine, patients in rural areas can also go to expert doctors for second opinion. They can connect directly with the specialists. The doctors will also be able to see reports of investigations, such as ECGs, and the data can be stored for future reference. This also helps in routine follow-ups, said the Maharashtra

Public Health Minister.

The service, first enabled in remote areas of Chandrapur and Dahanu on pilot basis, will now be extended to Gadchiroli, Melghat and Mokhada. The project would be more futuristic, as it would not be restricted to mere video conferencing. Instead, it will involve more in-depth medical intervention, which will enable doctors to examine patients closely via the satellite communication system.

A panel of around 25 specialist doctors has been created in Mumbai. The panel includes a cardiologist, ENT specialist, oncology surgeon, child specialist, gynecologist and others. They will be making use of VSAT-based connectivity. “We are also looking at options like a mobile van which can cover villages and a stationary facility,” he added.

FIGHT AGAINST SWINE FLU

With death toll due to outbreak of H1N1 virus in Maharashtra mounting to 99, State Health Ministry assures people that the issue is being addressed effectively and on priority



Till last report came in, deaths due to swine flu in Maharashtra had reached 99. Seven recent deaths were reported from Thane, Raigad, Pune, Nashik and Nagpur. Minister, Public Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Deepak Sawant said, there were 911 cases and as many as 39 people infected by the H1N1 virus were on ventilator. "Total number of patients discharged is 521, while 291 are still in hospitals; 61 new cases have been reported," he said.

The Government has assured people that hospitals in the State, both government and semi-government, have sufficient stock of swine flu drugs, which are available for free. Talking to reporters after a meeting with the representatives of Associations of Wholesale and Retail Chemists, Harshadeep Kamble, Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, said that the chemists had been asked to keep these medicines in stock. "There are about 1,191 retailers and wholesalers, who have the permission to stock and sell medicines for swine flu. All these licensees should invariably keep the medicines in stock. The list of these 1,191 licensees is uploaded on the website xlnindia.gov.in," he said.

Kamble has asked the Retailers and Dispensing Chemists Association, Maharashtra State Chemists and Druggists Association and Pharmaceutical Wholesalers Association to assure that their members coordinate with the district-level FDA officers to make the medicines available. He has also directed all the joint commissioners at the divisional level to give necessary licences for stocking the drugs to the hospitals holding a general drug licence.

Against the backdrop of swine flu scare, the Union Health Ministry has asked Maharashtra to



“**The spread of the disease is early this year, as the occurrences are in May or June generally. This year, due to extended winter and climatic changes, the infection is on rise. The 40 per cent of deaths, in Vidarbha region alone, is due to an extended winter.**

—Dr. Deepak Sawant
Public Health Minister



initiate an epidemiological mapping. Epidemiological mapping helps one understand the pattern of the disease, people affected by it, and review the intervention measures taken when there is an outbreak, pandemic or epidemic.

Led by the suggestion, the corporations in the State have been asked to prepare an audit of swine flu deaths. "We have prepared a proforma and sent it to respective hospitals where swine flu deaths have been reported, so that we get detailed case reports," said Dr. Mangala Gomare, epidemiology in-charge in BMC.

Since January, more than 1,013 patients have been found positive of swine flu and 99 have died across the State. The cities that have been affected the most are Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur. Dr. Deepak Sawant claimed that India ranks fifth in the world in case of number of swine flu cases. The only good news is that there is no change in the form or mutation in the swine flu virus. Had there been mutation or change, the virus would have developed a resistance to the medications, he said.

"The spread of the disease is early this year. Usually, the occurrences are found in May or June. This year, because of the extended winter and climatic changes, the infection is on a rise. The 40 per cent of deaths, in Vidarbha region alone, is due to an extended winter," he said.

Dr. Deepak Sawant assured that both Centre and State have taken into cognisance the seriousness of the issue and are taking necessary measures. "After the disease reduces in number and intensity, we'll organise a vaccination drive for all health workers," he said. **M**

AN EVENING FOR THE EDITORS

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis bestowed the Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism in Mumbai recently. The Best Journalist Awards in various categories for 2011, 2012 and 2013 were also distributed. [Pravin Take](#) brings us the details



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis recently gave away the Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Journalist Awards at a glittering ceremony at Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan Auditorium in Mumbai. The Best Journalist Awards in various categories for 2011, 2012 and 2013 were also distributed. With the felicitation of three senior editors, participation of 45 talented journalists and their families, the ceremony was an occasion for the media fraternity to get together. The dignitaries present included Parliamentary Affairs Minister Girish Bapat, Secretary, Information and Public Relations, Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar, Director General Information and Public Relations, Chandrashekhar Oak, Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award winners Laxmanrao Joshi, Vijay Kuvalekar, Dinkar Raikar, News Editor DGIPR Shivaji Mankar, and others.

The Chief Minister made certain important announcements on the occasion. Independent Best Journalism

Awards for e-media, efforts for Journalist Safety Act and starting a pension scheme for journalists were some of them. He further said that prominence of the award and the awardees strengthen the name in whose memory the award is created. "As the media is working to strengthen democracy, its importance gets underlined, but responsibilities increase. The present day is marked by value-added news. However, while catering to the same, we must also preserve the eternal values of journalism," he said.

The Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award consists of a prize of ₹1 lakh, shawl, an auspicious coconut and a Scroll of Honour. The Best Journalist Award includes a cash amount of ₹41,000, a memento and a Scroll of Honour.

The uniqueness of the ceremony was the hearty participation of family members of journalists, who are busy 24x7 in their professional assignments. Many awardees received the honour with their spouse, parents and children.

LOKMANYA TILAK LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

2011: Laxmanrao Joshi: L. T. Joshi is currently the Editor of *Lokshahi Varta*. He started his professional journey with *Daily Tarun Bharat* and rose from reporter to chief editor (1968-1998). He has also been Editor for *Gomantak*, *Goa Doot* and *Tarun Bharat* (Mumbai and Jalgaon). He was awarded Panchjanya Publications Award by the then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.



2012: Vijay Kuvalekar: Vijay Vishwanath Kuvalekar has held the responsibilities of Chief Editor, *Sakal*, Editor, *Lokmat* (Mumbai) and Editor, *Sakal* (Kolhapur). With 33 years of rich experience in the profession, he has received coveted recognitions such as Jeevan Gaurav Ratna Darpan, Balshastri Jambhekar Award, Acharya Atre Award and Late Sushiladevi Deshmukh Award.



2013: Dinkar Raikar: Dinkar Keshav Raikar is Group Editor, *Daily Lokmat*. He has held the responsibilities as Editor, *Indian Express* (Mumbai) and Editor, *Lokmat Times* (Aurangabad). In his 50 years of experience, he has received awards such as G. G. Jadhav Award, Sushiladevi Deshmukh Award, Rotary International Award, Krishwalkar Prabhakar Patil Award and others.



Journalists handling the beats of Mumbai Mantralaya and others also participated. Friends of journalists from all parts of the State were seen to witness the programme. Well-known comperer Pradeep Bhide was at his best of wits.

Speaking on the occasion, Lokmanya Tilak Lifetime Achievement Award winner L. T. Joshi said that the ceremony should, in fact, be renamed as an Award Festival. "Information cannot hide in the era of information technology. Media should also look into the constructive work of the Government," said the veteran editor. He also appealed to reporters from rural areas to concentrate on development journalism.

Another winner, Vijay Kuvalekar said that he considers this Lifetime Achievement Award as an incentive for the honourable work done during his life. He said that the recognition belongs to everyone and not just him. He shared his concerns about Marathi language used in Marathi media and held that media should enhance their contemplative liberal attitude.

Dinkar Raikar, the winner for 2013, said that journalists need to follow journalism that cares for national interest; they should follow journalism that enhances affinity to the State and the nation. "Media's work must always continue for social welfare. Realisation of this is the essence of our work. This in itself builds responsibility in journalists, and we need to keep



In an era where the media is changing its stature and the use of social and e-media has been increasing, it has been decided to include an independent award for blog, website and other e-media from next year."

Devendra Fadnavis
Chief Minister

moving on this route with total dedication and care for our profession," he said.

Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar, Secretary, Information and Public Relations, informed the gathering that the name of the ceremony will change to Award Festival from next year. She also emphasised the need for media to recognise the constructive work of the Government and to undertake development journalism.

While introducing the event, Chandrashekhkar Oak, Director General, IPR, said that the Information and Public Relations Department is working as a coordinator between the people and the Government. Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Girish Bapat also graced the stage with his presence. Shivaji Mankar, Director, News proposed the vote of thanks.

The ceremony was also a great moment of pride for DGIPR, as four of its officers and staff members were awarded. Irshad Bagwan, sub editor, DGIPR, Sakharam Mane, Information Officer at District Information Office, Sangli and Ramchandra Detha, District Information Officer, Aurangabad were felicitated with Government Category Yashwantrao Chavan Awards for 2011, 2012 and 2013, respectively. Nitin Sonawane from Pune Regional Office was felicitated with Keki Moose Best Photography Award for 2012. **M**

A RENDEZVOUS WITH THE CHIEF MINISTER



While interacting with the people of the State through *Jai Maharashtra* immediately after assuming charge as the new Chief Minister on October 31, 2014, Devendra Fadnavis had given clear indications that the role of his Government would be resonant. On February 7, 2015, on the occasion of completing 100 days in office, he had another dialogue with the people through the programme. This was a special moment for *Jai Maharashtra*. Here are some excerpts from the lively interview with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for the readers of *Maharashtra Ahead*



The date was February 6, 2015. At 11 in the morning, the telephone at the news desk started ringing. There was a message that Maharashtra Chief Minister has given an appointment for recording an interview at 2 p.m. the next day. On the line was Media Advisor for Chief Minister, Ravikiran Deshmukh, who surely sounded excited. Team *Jai Maharashtra* immediately got into action. This was a moment to rejoice as *Jai Maharashtra* has an indelible identity as an effective medium for dialogue between the Government and people through 750 episodes aired so far. Another reason was Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's selection of *Jai Maharashtra* as a platform to convey Government's decisions during 100 days in office comprehensively to people.

This was understandably a huge responsibility. The interview was to be taken by eminent journalist and senior political analyst, Shubhangi Khapre from *Indian Express*. An intimation of this interview was provided to Mukesh Sharma,

HOME FOOD KEEPS THE CM GOING

Arriving at the TV centre, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was welcomed by Mukesh Sharma, ADG, Doordarshan, and had a discussion with him for a few minutes. He then went on to wash his hands. By the time, one of his assistants opened the lunch box the Chief Minister had brought along. It had vegetable, chapati, chutney, slices of cucumber and carrot, sent from home. He invited Shubhangi Khapre to join him, but the lady politely declined. He then started discussing the topics for interview and finished his meal with some curd-rice in about 10-12 minutes. The Doordarshan staff present there was astonished, admiring the simplicity of the Chief Minister.

Additional Director General, Doordarshan, Producer Manmohan Singh Rawat and his team.

The time was 2 p.m. The date was February 7, 2015. The telecast was to be aired at 7.15 p.m. On his arrival at the TV centre, the Chief Minister was given a warm welcome by the team. He then had a discussion with Shubhangi Khapre. He also had his working lunch. The recording was scheduled at

MAHANEWS

100 Days of Progress and Faith

Mahanews has continuously served the people since 2008. Changes are made in the portal according to the requirements. Topical articles are run during events such as Legislature Sessions and Elections. Similarly, when the State Government completed 100 days, a new serial *100 Days of Progress and Faith* was started.

The Government under the leadership of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has just completed 100 days of governance. This is not a very huge time-frame from the point of view of a new Government, but successes have been arriving in fulfillment of promises it made during the elections. Corruption-free administration and transparent work culture are the only objectives of the State Government. Detailed information on the decisions taken by the Government is put on the portal. News sections such as district news,



meeting news, decisions of the Cabinet, interviews, schemes, success stories, first person and employment present the picture of development in the State.

Considering the adage, change is the rule of nature, *Mahanews* also follows change continuously. Combined decisions of welfare and development taken by all departments of the Government during 100 days have been placed in the article, *Government under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis: Balance-sheet for 100 Days*. With this, the common reader and representatives of the media are able to find the right information.

With the guiding suggestions from Secretary, IPR, Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar, DGIPR Chandrashekhar Oak and all the seniors in the Department, *Mahanews* has continued its zealous work without considering location or time.



DILKHULAS

Pride of the nation

Dilkhulas recently invited Retd. Col. Uday Pol, Director of the State Government Pre Military Education and Training Institute, Aurangabad for an interview.

In his elaborate talk, the senior army personnel touched upon many key points related to the armed forces and youth. He said, "The students from rural areas aspire for officer ranks in Army. They do not lack intellectually, but there is a lack of awareness and knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to go for personality development. Joining armed forces does not mean being posted in country's border areas, never to be returned. One must understand that even in common life, one comes across many accidents. Compared to those,



proportion of deaths in armed forces is negligible."

Another misconception is that you have to be away from your family when you join armed forces. "This is wrong. There are 90 per cent locations in armed forces where you can stay with your family. A couple of stars on the shoulder of a Jawan are much brighter than thousands of stars in the sky," said Col. Uday Pol, adding, "Armed forces bestow financial stability, as well as worthy pride of serving the nation."

the studios on the first floor of the new building. It seemed as if the entire Doordarshan staff wanted to have a glimpse of the new and dynamic Chief Minister. A smiling Chief Minister and the interviewer arrived at the studios and occupied their seats. The camera and sound tests were carried out and the floor was set for recording. Just before the interview was to start, the Chief Minister looked at the studio clock. It was 4 o'clock. Softly he said, "I must leave from here by 4.45 p.m."

The recording started hurriedly. The first question from Khapre was on drought relief. The Chief Minister shared his point of view on the situation, farmer suicides and remedial measures Government is taking to ward off the problem. He was honest enough to say that the claims of development will not have any standing if farmer suicides do not stop. The interview became more interesting.

"What would you say about your 100 days at the office?" was the last question. "Hundred days is a very short period for

evaluation. The people and the media should give us more time to work. We shall definitely prove our merit," he replied.

He waited till the floor manager signalled OK. While getting up, he said, "I have a meeting scheduled with the Chief Justice and have to move." And within seconds, he was gone.

With telecast scheduled for 7.15 p.m., the Team *Jai Maharashtra* had just two hours for post production. A clip narrating the work carried out by Devendra Fadnavis had to be inserted at an appropriate place. With post production completed, the final tape was handed over to Manmohan Singh Rawat exactly at 7.05 p.m. The telecast started at 7.15 p.m. as scheduled. The entire *Jai Maharashtra* team was brimming with satisfaction of another assignment completed successfully, earning the confidence of the Chief Minister once again, and of course witnessing yet another prime moment from the journey of the State. **M**

—Team Maharashtra Ahead

MEMORIES LINGER ON...

In a tribute piece, **Sudhir Thakare** pays homage to **R.R. Patil**, the Former Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister, Maharashtra, and a creative, people-oriented, popular leader. Although the void created by his untimely demise will remain forever, his former colleague and senior bureaucrat believes the people-oriented development followed rigorously by State's young leadership can take ahead his initiatives. Genuine efforts to make Maharashtra a healthy, happy and prosperous State would be a true obituary



Good morning, Sir. I am Sudhir Thakare. I have been transferred to Water Supply and Cleanliness Department and have joined today. I have come to pay a call on..." I remember the day very clearly when I met R. R. Patil alias Aba for the first time in 2000. The incident exhibited a sharp memory, his nature to attract people towards him and his unique style of creating a dialogue. The fresh and happy experiences with him have remained as an indelible memories lingering on...

"Have a seat. Were you District Collector at Sindhudurg?"

"Yes. Sir"

"I have known you earlier. We have met at Mantralaya while

I was an MLA. At that time you were Joint Secretary in Cooperation and Textiles Department. We had met in connection with reforms in Money Lenders Act. Do you remember?"

"Yes Sir. I remember now..." However, he must have gauged from my response that I was not really recalling the meeting.

"It's OK even if you don't remember. I was not a Minister at the time. Also, I was an opposition MLA. Maybe you may not remember, but I still remember the deep analysis provided by you for that Money Lenders Act."

This was the most natural and mischievous dialogue I ever had. But it exhibited all the aspects of R.R. Patil's nature and personality. He remembered an old meeting and I was unable to place it. In fact, I was quite abashed inside. But the manner in which Aba could establish a close link with natural mischief cannot have a parallel.

He once again called me after about a fortnight and spoke to me at length about an important issue on his mind which was also a very ambitious programme.

"Thakare *saheb*, I am Minister for both Water Supply and Sanitation. However, people only identify me as Rural Development Minister. I am aware of the importance of water supply and sanitation for the people of Maharashtra. Even when there is a discussion on my Water Supply and Sanitation Department, the elected representatives, Zilla Parishad office bearers, Municipal Council representatives as well as Government officers only discuss water supply with me and demand schemes. I am also a Minister for Sanitation and they do not even have an inkling of the importance of sanitation. I wish that Maharashtra should identify me as a Minister for Sanitation. Do you agree with me? Shall we take some bold steps? Have you thought over this issue?"

I had never seen a person considering sanitation with such a degree of sincerity and coming out with unique modern thoughts. I had myself not thought about sanitation as such an important issue. The urge for sanitation in my mind was a result of dialogue, which Aba ignited, guided and also provided with leadership quality. The sanitation movement in entire rural Maharashtra was instrumental in igniting an affinity for sanitation in each one and the launch of Sant Gadgebaba Gram Swachchhata Abhiyan. The World Bank had taken cognisance of this movement as one of the largest, innovative

and people-oriented movement in the world.

While drafting the programme, Aba placed unique concepts through each of his sentences. The depth of his perception, comprehension and talent were impeccably visible. "Prosperity through sanitation," "Initiative by the people, participation by the Government," "Toilet is not just a construction. It is a habit," "Freedom from open toilets," all became slogans to inculcate necessity of toilets in the minds of rural people.

How many examples should I quote? Aba was able to provide an impetus through his oratory and words that connected hearts with issues like sanitation, rural development, *shramdaan* and people participation in everyone, from officers to villagers, Ministerial colleagues, elected representatives, men and women, children and elders, youth and students. He made them strive for action on these matters. Only Aba was able to sow the seed of sanitation and see that it matures in the minds of 5.50 crore population in one crore families at 95,000 wadis and habitats located in 28,000 Gram Panchayats.

While naming the title of the movement after Sant Gadgebaba and announcing a sanitation competition in the name of Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj, he exhibited maturity in sidelining the leaders seen in politics. He always considered that a programme should not be linked to any specific party, but should be carried out as all inclusive, comprehensive and universal programme. When he brought this subject for approval in the Cabinet, he convinced everyone before getting an approval. "Gadgebaba was a social saint. He used to beg at villages, but that was for waste, not for food. He used to bless everyone with clean life in return."

History is witness to the fact that Aba's vision to name the programme

Aba named Maharashtra's sanitation movement after Sant Gadgebaba and announced a sanitation competition in the name of Rashtrasant Tukdoji Maharaj



He gave Gram Geeta by Sant Tukdoji free to Panchayats and asked them to implement it considering the same as a Government circular. This was a unique innovative idea

after such a saint in order to make it a people movement was worthy. The same was proved when the programme actually rolled out. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided an apex importance to the concept of "Swachh Bharat, Swasth Bharat" in his Bharat Nirman/National Development Programme. The same was conceptualised, accepted and inculcated in Maharashtra by this great son of the soil. Aba was an eminent

example of a visionary leader and a leader of masses.

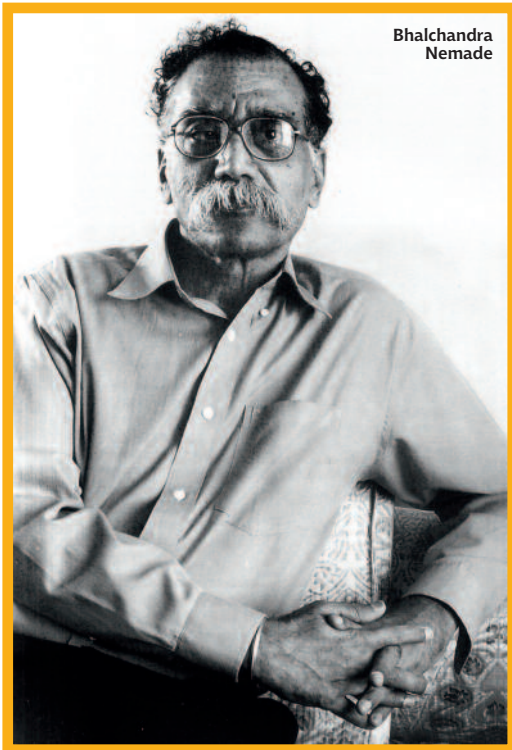
I used to be awed by the creative mind Aba had when we were designing Gadgebaba publicity campaign. He provided precious guidance on radio and TV advertisements and selection of appropriate artists with use of folk arts to make the campaign universal. He used to sit through for hours to finalise advertisements. He carried the message of sanitation through thousands of meetings in hundreds of villages. Only through the medium of publicity and touching the hearts of the population, he gave a message to the people. "Construct the toilet first and clean you village. The Government will evaluate your work on the spot and encourage you with an Award."

The magic to motivate thousands of villages, lakhs of families and crores of rural population to work for their own good was a natural act for Aba. He supplied *Gram Geeta* by Sant Tukdoji Maharaj free of charge to every Gram Panchayat and asked them to implement it considering the same as a Government circular. This was a unique innovative idea. He decided 105 criteria for Sant Tukdoji Maharaj Swachh Gram Abhiyan and examination of a village for 100 marks to conduct the competition in a transparent and disciplined manner. This is an eminent example of his administrative-management and people-oriented skills. **M**



A LIFE DEDICATED TO MARATHI

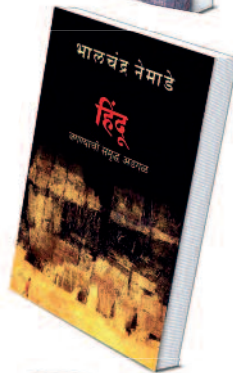
Eminent writer Bhalchandra Nemade becomes the 50th recipient of literary award Jnanpith



Bhalchandra Nemade

Eminent novelist, poet, critic, academic and a persistent supporter of Marathi literary movement, Bhalchandra Nemade has been chosen for Jnanpith Award 2014. He is the 50th winner of the prestigious literary honour, and will receive the award in April. Nemade is the fourth Marathi litterateur after V.S. Khandekar, V.V. Shirwadkar and V.D. Karandikar to get Jnanpith. The writer has also been honoured with Sahitya Akademi Award (1990) for his critical work *Teeka Svayanwar* and Padma Shri (2011).

Born in 1938 in Sangavi in North Maharashtra's Khandesh, Nemade graduated in literature from Fergusson College, Pune. He post-graduated in linguistics from Deccan College, Pune and in English literature from Mumbai University. This Ph.D. and D.Lit. from North Maharashtra University later taught English, Marathi and comparative literature at various universities,



including the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

A proud Maharashtrian, Nemade is known for his novel *Kosala* and quartet *Hindu*, and as a patron of *desivad* or nativism, a theory that negates globalisation and asserts the value of a writer's native heritage and language. The unconventional writer has picked his characters and stories from Maharashtra, and has often spoken of adherence to Marathi with passion and cautioned against giving up region's literary roots. His first novel *Kosla* or *cocoon* was published when he was 24. It was later translated into English and many other languages. His next work, *Bidhar*, followed by *Hool*, *Zarila* and *Zhool* formed a quartet. *Dekhni* and *Melody* are his poetry volumes.

While his critical works are in English, Nemade's creative work in fiction is only in Marathi. In his works, the author has experimented with form and narrative. *Kosla* has a first-person narrative and an experiment in how language alone can keep the reader busy throughout the novel. Nemade's own experience becomes the story of Pandurang Sangvikar (the protagonist of *Kosla*), who epitomises the fate of innumerable village youth lost amidst "modern" values. The narratives of Pandurang and Changdev Patil (hero of the *Bidhar* quartet) are different. Pandurang speaks in the first person,

Nemade is known for his novel *Kosala* and quartet *Hindu*, and as a patron of *Desivad* or nativism, a theory that negates globalisation and asserts the value of a writer's native heritage and language

while Changdev wants to be aloof from the actions around him; he is an observer, not a participant.

Congratulating Nemade, Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "The new waves by post-1960s Marathi literature have made revolutionary changes in Indian literature. Bhalchandra Nemade has been a major contributor to this legacy, and an honour like the Jnanpith award for him is truly honouring Marathi literature."

Maharashtra Cultural Affairs Minister Vinod Tawde said, "The Jnanpith Award for Nemade and Sahitya Akademi's recommendation to confer the classical language status to Marathi have both come in the same week, and both developments have made Marathi people happy and proud."

Instituted in 1961, Jnanpith Award is given to any Indian citizen writing in official languages of India. It includes ₹11 lakh, a citation plaque and a bronze replica of Goddess Saraswati. **M**



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