

MaharashtraAhead

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**MAHARASHTRA:
55 GLORIOUS
YEARS**





Mark of the State

To commemorate the inauguration of the State on May 1, 1960, the Celebrations Committee issued the Maharashtra Rajya Mahotsav Mudra, bearing a drawing of a *laman diva*, and a Sanskrit verse, which included a line from the inscription on the gold *mohar* issued by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj at the time of coronation. The *mudra* was struck in gold, silver and nickel.

The Government of India also issued a special postmark to commemorate the occasion. All the incoming and outgoing letters in Bombay City on May 2 were stamped with the mark.

The pencil sketch is by famous artist M.R. Acharekar.



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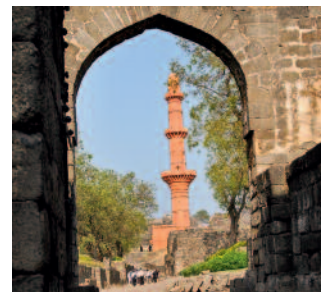


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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

MAHARASHTRA TURNS 55!

On May 1, 1960, the State of Maharashtra came into existence. The number one State of the country, Maharashtra has seen unprecedented growth in all spheres and across all its regions since its inception. The pioneering role of Maharashtra in industry and services sectors, its impressive achievements in social reformation, glorious heritage of fine arts, inclusive character have not just taken the State to the premier position, but also established it as a model to follow for others.

The credit of State's consistent success goes to its leadership, which worked towards dispensing justice and bringing development to all. Birthplace of many freedom fighters, social reformers and national leaders, Maharashtra has given India icons in every sector. To take this legacy ahead, the current leadership is committed to add more chapters to State's success. The May issue of Maharashtra Ahead records the 55 glorious years of Maharashtra and brings the dreams and plans of Hon. Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for the State.

In his interview, the Maharashtra Governor speaks about the many initiatives the State has taken for various sections of society and encourages people to participate in Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan and embrace cleanliness. In his address, the Chief Minister, recalling the words of Martin Luther King, presents his vision on Maharashtra. He has a plan for everyone in the State.

The current issue becomes special as it includes the article on accomplishments of the first year of union Government under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi by the Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. Talking about the busy year at the Centre and the many milestones India achieved under Prime Minister's able leadership, the Chief Minister acknowledges the huge support Maharashtra received from him, making the State push its boundaries. The magazine also brings you the account of Chief Minister's latest visits to Hannover, Germany and Tel Aviv, Israel, and the agreements the State had with them.

In other sections, we bring you features on Warli art, construction-led defence mechanism of three Maharashtra forts, amazing hilly destinations in the State where you can go this summer, Jalgaon banana and Marathi literature festival in Ghuman, Punjab. We look forward to your feedback on the issue.

Jai Maharashtra!

Manisha Patankar-Mhaiskar

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





(Clockwise from top left) State's Pride: Pratapgad Fort, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis during World Economic Forum in Davos this year, power network, highway, Mumbai during night, State Police, young girls, MIHAN, and upcoming Chhatrapati Shivaji Memorial in the Arabian Sea (at the centre)

MAHARASHTRA: 55 GLORIOUS YEARS

A continued pace of progress across all regions and sectors in past 55 years has established the State become a land of opportunities. It now aspires for development not just at home, but globally, says **Dilip Chaware**

Maharashtra, the leading State in India, is the second most populous State after Uttar Pradesh and the third largest State after Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in terms of area. It is the most progressive and richest State in India.

The State Government, under the leadership of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, is determined to perpetuate the pace of progress across all regions and all sectors, social, financial and industrial. Political stability, which had been eluding the State for several years, is now firmly in place so that the leadership can accelerate the process of development on its declared plan of action.

When the State of Maharashtra was formed on May 1, 1960, the leadership of the day had pledged to dispense justice to all people. The collective efforts and enlightened leadership have achieved its continuous progress which has inspired leaders from other States to emulate its example, thus contributing to the nation's onward march. The pioneering role of Maharashtra in industry and services sectors, its impressive achievements in social reformation, its glorious heritage of fine arts and its inclusive character have taken the State to the premier position.

Spread over 307,713 sq km or 9.4 per cent of the total

geographical area of India, Maharashtra's capital Mumbai is the financial hub of the nation. Were it an independent nation, Maharashtra would be the world's tenth most populous country, ahead of Mexico. But in terms of GDP measured in billion dollars, the State is just close to Singapore, a tiny country. Aware of the reality, leaders of Maharashtra have strived to enhance its per capita income. But that is just one indicator.

The initiatives in social and political spheres taken by Maharashtra over the past century and a half need a brief mention because they provide a clue to the greatness of this State. Even before an awakening for political freedom took place, initiatives were being taken for social reforms. Jagannath Shankarshet, who took determined steps to make Mumbai the focus of progress, started the first school for girls in India in his own premises. Balshastri Jambhekar launched the first newspaper in Marathi, *Darpan* to arouse the masses out of their slumber. Vishnushastri Chiplunkar imbibed the pride of Marathi language. As the next logical step, educational institutions to impart 'Indian' education were started and are active till today.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the struggle for independence was led by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. On the moderate front, intellectuals like Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji were spreading the message of self-reliance. Revolutionaries like Vasudeo Balwant Phadke and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar were articulating the disturbed sentiments against the alien atrocities by paying back in the same coin. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the first *satyagrahi* chosen

by Gandhiji, was steeped in Indian philosophy and traditions. In 1942, the call for the Quit India Movement was given at Bombay. This was followed by the naval revolt of 1946, ringing the death knell of the British power in India.

As a consequence of the mass movement for Samyukta Maharashtra, the leadership of India finally decided to grant the status of a separate entity to Maharashtra. A mature Government, committed leaders and fearless bureaucrats propelled the State on a path to progress. But even before that, the progressive direction the State was about to take was becoming evident. A couple of legislations merit attention in this regard. The Harijans were declared to have an equal right to enter any temple by law, and secondly, the tiller was made owner of the farmland on which he worked. The land reforms were later followed by other States. Within a decade of the formation of the State, a severe drought engulfed most of its rural areas in its grip. The conscious leadership then

launched the Employment Guarantee Scheme, which is now part of the national agenda.

Industrial and social infrastructure incepted in those years has transformed Maharashtra into a land of opportunities today. At one time, Maharashtra was the most industrialised State and was leading in sectors such as chemical and allied products, electrical and non-electrical machinery, textiles, petroleum and allied products

and continues to remain so. Other important industries include metal products, wine, jewellery, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, machine tools, steel and iron castings and plastic wares. Main crops include mango, grape, banana, orange, wheat, rice, jowar, bajra and pulses. Information technology is another important sector. At present, Maharashtra is the second largest State to export software and accounts for more than 30 per cent of the country's software exports.

Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust in Navi Mumbai is among the busiest ports in India. Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai is one of the busiest airports in the world. Another feather in the cap of Maharashtra will be the international cargo hub, Multi-modal International Cargo Hub and Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN). The Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor is poised to change the face of Maharashtra and the State is making advance preparations to ensure its passage smoothly.

The topmost ranking of Maharashtra is primarily because of Mumbai, which houses the headquarters of most major banks, financial institutions and insurance companies. India's largest stock exchange, the Bombay Stock Exchange, is the oldest in Asia. The Reserve Bank of India,

LED BY THE MASS MOVEMENT FOR SAMYUKTA MAHARASHTRA, THE LEADERSHIP OF INDIA DECIDED TO GRANT A SEPARATE STATUS TO THE MAHARASHTRA, WHICH WAS ALREADY IN THE FOREFRONT OF MANY PATH BREAKING INITIATIVES



Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru (centre), unveiling the neon map of Maharashtra on the momentous occasion of the formation of the State along with the first Maharashtra Chief Minister, Yashwantrao B. Chavan and Governor Sri Prakasa (left) on May 1, 1960



(Clockwise from top left) Dams, wildlife, infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing are few main sectors of the State

State Bank of India and various nationalised and private-sector banks have their main offices in Mumbai.

Mumbai is home for the world's largest film industry, which is now 100 year old. Innovator Dadasaheb Phalke toiled to make film production possible in India. The Film and Television Institute of India at Pune supplies histrionic and technical inputs to the film industry, while the National Film Archives preserves the glorious past of the celluloid world. Names like V. Shantaram, B.R. Chopra, Shakti Samanta, Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan and Manmohan Desai will not be forgotten while writing a history of Bollywood.

Before the advent of Bollywood, the stage was the sole medium of public entertainment. Since ages, the Marathi stage has been regarded with reverence by the fraternity. The initial period of Marathi theatre was dominated by Annasaheb Kirloskar and Govind Ballal Deval. They were followed by giants like Shripad Krishna Kolhatkar, Ram Ganesh Gadkari and Kakasaheb Khadilkar who enriched the Marathi theatre for decades with their great musicals, invariably transmitting some social message.

While creativity was on its peak, the physical aspect of progress was looked after, too. On the infrastructure front, one of the factors that have made Maharashtra the first ranker is electricity. The State tops in coal-based thermal electricity generation and continues to be the largest consumer of electricity. Maharashtra is also taking path-breaking initiatives in solar and wind energy projects. The Government understands that electricity is an important tool for development. The energy planners in the State face the challenge of providing uninterrupted power supply and quality service as well as to meet the growing demands. As and when this happens, the graph of progress of the State will show spectacular results. Concrete steps are being taken to

strengthen the distribution and transmission network in Mumbai and across Maharashtra.

Another thrust area has been the support provided by the State Government to the automobile sector. Indian and foreign automobile makers in Maharashtra include Tata Motors, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bajaj Auto, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Skoda Auto, Fiat and Volkswagen. Many more leading brands are expected to join this list. It is estimated that the auto sector's share in the State economy is of around 9 per cent.

**THE
INDUSTRIAL AND
SOCIAL
INFRASTRUCTURE
INCEPTE IN THE
EARLY YEARS OF
MAHARASHTRA'S
FORMATION
HAS TRANSFORMED
THE STATE
INTO A LAND
OF OPPORTUNITIES
FOR ALL TODAY**

Maharashtra can boast of many leading academic institutions. These include the Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute, Sardar Patel College of Engineering and the University Department of Chemical Technology in Mumbai. In other parts, the College of Engineering and Fergusson College Pune, the Government Colleges of Engineering at Aurangabad, Amravati and Karad, Shri Guru

Gobind Singhji Institute of Engineering and Technology, Nanded, Walchand Engineering College at Sangli, and a bevy of top management institutions turn out abundant technical human resource every year.

There are some outstanding institutions, which are the envy of other States. The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research and the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre scout for and develop scientific genius. The National Defence Academy near Pune trains the youngsters who later guard our borders, the Armed Forces Medical College in Pune



Sindhudurg Fort in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, south of Mumbai

produces the medical personnel which take care of the defence forces. The Military Nursing College affiliated to the AFMC ranks among the top nursing colleges in the world. The Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics at Pune is among the most reputed private think-tanks in India.

University of Nagpur looks after the engineering, science and other colleges in Vidarbha. The Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology is one of the first six Regional Engineering Colleges started in India. The National Fire College at Nagpur is another unique institution. The geographical centre of India lies at Nagpur. The headquarters of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and an important location for the Dalit Buddhist movement, Nagpur was chosen by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to join Buddhism along with his followers.

Gudi Padwa, Diwali, Rangapanchami, Gokulashtami and Ganeshotsav are some of the festivals celebrated in Maharashtra with joy and enthusiasm. Ganeshotsav is the biggest public festival in the world and literally millions of people, irrespective of their religion, participate in its celebration. The other big public festival in Maharashtra is when lakhs of people walk hundreds of kilometers to Pandharpur for the pilgrimage in the month of Ashadh.

Maharashtra has produced many saints. They represent all castes. Some of the idols of the Bhakti sect are Dnyaneshwar, Eknath, Tukaram, Namdev, Gora Kumbhar, Samarth Ramdas, Chokha Mela, Savata Mali and Janabai, Kanhopatra, Sakhubai or Soyarabai. Pilgrimages to Sai Baba of Shirdi, Gajanan Maharaj of Shegaon and many others continue to attract hordes of devotees throughout the year.

In 1708, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, came to Nanded and made it his permanent abode. He proclaimed himself the last living Guru and established the *Guru Granth Sahib* as the eternal Guru of the Sikhs. A monument has been constructed at place where he breathed his last. Maharaja Ranjit Singh's endowment saw the construction of a beautiful Gurudwara at Nanded in around 1835.

Maharashtra has a large number of hill, land and sea forts, which have played an important role in the State's history. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj concentrated on capturing strategic forts from the Mughals and developed some of his own. The Maratha empire expanded because the forts were under its command. Some important forts in Maha-

rastra are Sinhgad, Raigad, Vijaydurg, Sindhudurg, Pratapgad and Torna. The Battle of Attock took place on April 28, 1758 between the Maratha forces and the Durrani empire. The Marathas won the battle and captured Attock. On May 8, 1758, the Marathas defeated Durrani forces in the Battle of Peshawar and captured the city. Marathas had now reached the Afghanistan border. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's dream of 'Hindavi Swaraj' had finally materialised. Bravery, supreme sacrifice and have remained the hallmarks of Maharashtra.

All along, women have been given a revered place in State's history. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's mother Jijabai is the epitome of a model mother. Due to the upbringing under her strict eye, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj later released the daughter-in-law of the Subedar of Kalyan by honouring her. Savitribai Phule suffered humiliation for

teaching girl students but did not give up. Bharat Ratna Dhondo Keshav Karve made it his life mission to uplift the destitute women. Anandibai Joshi was the first woman doctor in all of Asia. In the freedom struggle, the contribution of women was noteworthy. Maharashtra is the first State to provide for 50 per cent of the seats for women in local bodies. The highest constitutional post in India was graced by a

daughter of Maharashtra, Pratibha Patil.

There are many first to Maharashtra's credit. This was the first State to introduce the Panchayati Raj System, the first to implement the Employment Guarantee Scheme, the pioneer in legislating the Right to Information. In every field of public life, Maharashtra has made its mark invariably. The Constitution of India was the handiwork of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The first Indian Governor of the RBI was C.D. Deshmukh. The first Speaker of the Lok Sabha was Ganesh Vasudev Mavlankar. The list is almost endless.

On the occasion of completion of 55 years of its formation, Maharashtra is poised to scale newer heights. Its people, its history and its mindset will make this possible. ■

THE STATE IS TAKING PATH-BREAKING INITIATIVES IN SOLAR AND WIND ENERGY PROJECTS. IT TOPS IN COAL-BASED THERMAL ELECTRICITY GENERATION AND IS THE LARGEST CONSUMER OF ELECTRICITY

INTERVIEW Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao

“Cleanliness must come with reforms and better infrastructure”



In an interview with **Abhay Mokashi**, Maharashtra Governor, **Ch. Vidyasagar Rao** speaks about various initiatives the State has undertaken for all sections of society, to maintain State's pre-eminent position and to bolster solidifying its position as a global destination of choice for businesses. On the occasion of Maharashtra Day, the Governor connects with people of Maharashtra, especially its youth to emphasise the importance of cleanliness, encourages them to come forward and participate in Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan. Excerpts from the interview:

Q. How do you look at Maharashtra Day?

A. Maharashtra Day is an important occasion for everybody in the State. It is a time to celebrate the formation of the State and to show to the world the achievements of

Maharashtra. Maharashtra is privileged that great people have been born here. It is a land of saints, social reformers and great women. Maharashtra is the birthplace of Sant Tukaram, Dnyaneshwar, Gadge Baba, Tukdoji Maharaj... the list is long. It is the land of social reformers like Jotiba Phule, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and others. People in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana were not aware so much about Jotiba Phule, but now I see several statues of this great man all over these States. I am personally so impressed by the contribution of Sant Gadge Baba in terms of hygiene and cleanliness that I have recently translated his short biography into Telugu and it will be published soon. Biographies of many great personalities from Maharashtra should be translated to other languages.

Q. How would you evaluate State's water situation?

A. Irrigation is very important, as many people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. I find there is great imbalance in the irrigation system in different regions of the State. This imbalance has to be removed and that is possible. I have been holding meetings with different sections of society, including experts in irrigation, who tell me that without going for big dams, we can irrigate the State in a

better way by construction of check dams. Such dams are cheaper to build and do not affect the environment. Take the example of Marathwada; it is possible to construct several check dams to irrigate the land. I am sure the people will participate in such projects.



“FIVE PER CENT OF THE TRIBAL BUDGET IS NOW HANDED OVER TO GRAM SABHAS TO DECIDE ON TRIBAL WELFARE. WE HAVE ALSO GIVEN THEM ACCESS TO TENDU LEAVES AND BAMBOO ON WHICH MANY TRIBALS DEPEND”

Drinking water is another major problem in the State. It is sad that water has to be supplied to several villages by tankers throughout the year. The Government will handle the issue on a priority basis and it is possible to provide drinking water to the entire State.

Q. What would you say about the condition of tribals?

A. I have a Constitutional obligation for the welfare of tribals in the Scheduled Areas. I am concerned about the status of the tribals in the State and want their well-being. On my recommendation five per cent of the Tribal Sub Plan funds are now handed over to the Gram Panchayats in the Scheduled Areas to be used for the welfare of the villages. The total Tribal budget is ₹1,600 crore and five per cent of that is a substantial amount. A Government order has been already issued in this context.

It is sad that even after 18 years of the introduction of the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, rules under the Act were not framed. I held meetings with the senior officials of the State and asked them how many of the 29 powers under PESA have been delegated to the Gram Sabhas/Panchayats and I was told that only a few have been delegated. I want the villages to have self-rule and be self-reliant through the Gram Sabhas/Panchayats.

The Gram Sabhas have rights over the forest produce and we have now given them access to minor forest produce including *tendu* leaves, bamboo and fishing. This has helped them in a big way, as the survival of many tribals depends on these products. In order to fight malnourishment, I have suggested that the tribal boys and girls be given a glass of milk and one egg every day and the Tribal Welfare Department is working on it.

What I have noticed is that the tribals need an iconic leader. All other communities have one leader or the other, but the tribals do not have any person to look up to draw inspiration for their welfare. There were tribal leaders like Birsa Munda and Komaram Bheem in different parts of the country. On a recent visit to Nandurbar, I came to know of a freedom struggle of tribals against the British in the Satpuda region. Very few people know about this freedom struggle in which the British brutally killed several tribals at a place called Ravlapani. The British had committed atrocities on the tribals of Ravlapani in Nandurbar district, who were fighting for India's freedom. The incident is similar to the Jalianwala Bagh incident.

I have decided to create a memorial of the freedom struggle at Ravlapani. I have contacted a sculptor, asked him to visit the place and make a visual representation of the epic freedom struggle. Also, Hirabai, a tribal of Chandrapur district, was a great Freedom Fighter and efforts are being made to highlight her historic



"WHILE IMPLEMENTING SWACHH MAHARASHTRA ABHIYAN, WE SHOULD GIVE EMPHASIS ON BRINGING REFORMS IN RELATED AREAS. WE SHOULD ALSO FOCUS ON DEVELOPING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE"



"I AM PERSONALLY SO IMPRESSED BY THE CONTRIBUTION OF SANT GADGE BABA IN TERMS OF HYGIENE AND CLEANLINESS THAT I HAVE TRANSLATED HIS BIOGRAPHY INTO TELUGU, AND IT WILL BE PUBLISHED SOON"

participation in the freedom movement.

Q. How can Maharashtra tourism be promoted?

A. Mumbai is the financial capital of India and will continue to do so. But apart from that there are several tourist spots in Maharashtra; we need to promote these places. The Japanese visit Chaityabhoomi and are showing great interest in the Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's memorial that is coming up in the Indu Mills compound. We also have the Buddhist caves. The statute of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, which is to come up in the Arabian Sea is bound to be a tourist attraction. People from Japan, Sri

Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, the U.S., the U.K. and other countries visit the Dragon Palace Temple at Kamptee near Nagpur. It is recognised as an International Peace Centre and can be promoted as a great tourist centre. We need to encourage the dalit groups to promote these places.

Recently, the Governor of the Wakayama Prefecture of Japan met me at Raj Bhavan during his visit to the State. He said that a statue of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is being installed at Koyasan in Wakayama Prefecture of Japan, and that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis will be visiting the place to unveil the statue. I am sure hundreds of people from India will love to visit Japan to see the statue. We have several forts, beaches and forests among other places of tourist attraction. Maharashtra has a coastline of 720 km and it has a great potential of being promoted for tourism.

There is a proposal to start navigation from Nashik to Nanded on the Godavari river. A study on the proposal is being carried out. Both, Nashik and Nanded are towns of religious importance and the water transport will help a large number of people. Aurangabad lies in between the two places where a large number of tourists, especially the Japanese visit to go to Ajanta and Ellora. The navigation will boost tourism tremendously. Moreover, it was decided at the World Water Forum held in Kyoto to encourage inland water transport and India is a signatory to the resolution. The Nashik-Nanded water transport will be part of that. It will also benefit people on both sides of the stream.

Q. How do you rate the State in terms of agriculture?

A. In terms of agriculture, I am confident that in the coming years, Maharashtra will be in the forefront, with its agriculture and horticulture produce going up. I am sure we shall be exporting fruits in a big way in the near future. In



order to boost the agricultural and horticultural production, we need to shift from chemical fertilisers to organic ones.

Q. There is criticism that Maharashtra has a short fall of power. Your comments.

A. We will have more power in coming years. General Electric is going to set up a plant here. The State will also go for solar energy in a big way. The Raj Bhavan has a solar power plant in Mumbai. We are also installing solar power plant in Pune and within six months, we will be able to generate surplus power that would contribute to the common grid.

Q. Tell us about the Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan.

A. Based on Prime Minister's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, a Swachh Maharashtra programme will be launched. While implementing the programme, we should also give emphasis on bringing reforms in related areas. Along with cleanliness, we should develop our infrastructure and carry out reforms to make the drive successful. The drive is also benefitting us in other ways. For instance, I had gone to J.J. Hospital alongwith brand ambassador of the Abhiyan, Nita Ambani to launch the cleanliness drive. After the programme, I had a meeting with Dean Dr. T. P. Lahane, BMC Commissioner and Chief Secretary. See how one good thing helps another. The issue of how heritage tag was hindering the development of

J.J. Hospital came up. A proposal for reconstruction of the hospital building to accommodate more patients was pending, as the heritage committee had not given clearance. People from all over the State come to this hospital for treatment, and its capacity needs to be increased. Without delay, the Government decided to increase the floors of the present building and create 1,000 extra beds. The foundation stone of that project will be laid soon.

Speaking about the Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan, I must appreciate the amazing work done by film star Makarand Anaspure. He stayed in village Gogalgaon, Ahmednagar, for over three weeks as part of the cleanliness drive and changed the face of the village. Participation of people is very important in such projects, and people do participate. Moreover, Sant Gadge Baba had shown us the way to cleanliness decades ago. Recently, I attended a school programme organised by Anjuman-I-Islam. I told the school authorities to launch a massive cleanliness programme, and that I would come to launch the same. All over the State, school children are being told about the importance of washing hands and I am happy to say that most school children in the State have made it a habit to wash their hands, especially before eating anything. A study has shown that nearly 40 per cent school children in a neighbouring country become victims of cholera and dysentery and that the simple act of hand washing could reduce the proportion of diarrhoeal diseases.

Q. What do you look at the youth in Maharashtra?

A. I have tremendous faith in the youth of the State. They can work wonders here. They need to participate in the Swachh Maharashtra Abhiyan in a big way. I also believe that they should be given NCC training. Let them have the experience of handling a .303 bore gun. Even participation in NSS needs to be increased. We need to ensure that examinations are held on time and results declared in stipulated time. All these issues have been discussed at the meeting of Joint Board of Vice-Chancellors of Universities in Maharashtra.

Q. Are women safe in Maharashtra?

A. I am deeply concerned about the falling male-female ratio in the State. I am glad to see that the number of women per 1,000 men is higher in most tribal areas, but it is sad that in the areas with educated population, the number is far low. Though the State has been successful in banning amniocentesis, the number of women is falling. At the same time, I am happy that as compared to many other States, women are safer in Maharashtra.

Q. Where does Make in Maharashtra stand?

A. The Government has taken many steps to make Mumbai a global financial centre. With Make in Maharashtra, we are getting more foreign investment, helping the State retain its pre-eminent position. I am sure it will continue to do so. **M**

ADDRESS Devendra Fadnavis

“Prosperous Maharashtra, the only dream”

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis gave a lecture on the subject of “Maharashtra in my dreams” at Vasant Vyakhyanmala, the traditional annual spring lecture series, in Pune. The series was started by Lokmanya Tilak and Justice M.G. Ranade in the 19th century. Excerpts from the lecture:



“
IF AN INDUSTRY IS
STABLE AND
REGISTERS
GROWTH, THE
STATE WILL ALSO
PROGRESS. FOR
THIS TO HAPPEN,
WE WILL HAVE TO
MAKE EFFORTS FOR
REDUCING THE
TARIFF FOR
DOMESTIC
CONSUMERS
”

Today while I try to present my vision on Maharashtra, I vividly remember the words of Martin Luther King's 'I have a dream'. Just as he had pursued a dream for the United States, all of you have pursued your dreams about the future of Maharashtra. I also have carried a similar dream.

Before the elections I had presented a Vision Document, and I am happy to say that whatever point of view we had and the dreams we have seen while we were in Opposition, we have started to fulfill those dreams after coming to power. Today, the contribution of agriculture in the GDP of Maharashtra is just 10 per cent, but those who depend on it for employment make 50 per cent of State's population. It means, there is a huge gap between those who depend on agriculture and the rest of the State. This disparity is the biggest challenge. The dependence on agriculture has increased, as the employability in other sectors is absent or the skills required for these sectors are not available. While the GDP growth of Maharashtra is 8 to 10 per cent, agricultural growth is in negative. The main reason for this is the lack of irrigation facilities and drought-affected regions.

As for Maharashtra, we have limits on what is known as flow irrigation. We can maximise irrigation to around 40 to 50 per cent. With this, the rest of the area will remain as dry lands. Even while thousands of crores of rupees have been spent during the last few years, we have been able to bring only 17 per cent of the land under irrigation. In the dry land agriculture, only 25 per cent Rabi crop is taken in comparison to Kharif. Forty per cent of the large dams in the country are located in Maharashtra, but these too have limitations. What all of these suggest is that we need to think differently when it comes to irrigation.

An option is to go for Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan. Under the scheme, 14 current water conservation schemes will be integrated with their planning carried out under the District Collector. The Government is aiming at making 5,000 villages water sufficient every year. This scheme has been drafted keeping in mind the watershed areas. Implementing different patterns for different locations are being considered. Each village is encouraged to draft its own plan and implement the same. The Government will help wherever required, but the success of the work will depend on public participation. Contractors will be supported whenever needed, but their bills will only be paid if the Gram Sabha sanctions the works.

This year, we have started the Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan in 6,000 villages. Work in 2,500 villages has actually started. It is important to make the villages water sufficient. Hence, we are emphasising activation of some old schemes as well. Like, it is easier to repair an old seepage lake. Active participation from some corporate houses will also be sought. The farmer will become prosperous through this decentralised water resource. One will then turn attention to multiple crops. The farmers are in bad shape due to their



realised the importance of a value chain. Accordingly, the State took the initiative to set up a value chain. Under this, the agro-processing industry will provide seeds to farmers and purchase the produce at an appropriate rate. Now, 5 lakh farmers have joined the chain. The target is to take the number to 25 lakh.

Basic investment in agriculture is also essential. For this, we had a meeting with NABARD and other banks. We have told them to provide loans for basic investments. At present, we are giving ₹8 lakh crore for crop loans. The Government is mulling on the issue whether 25 per cent of this could go to

agricultural development. As I said earlier, employment for half of State's population depends on agriculture. It is necessary to bring this to 35 per cent. The remaining 15 per cent will have to be provided new employment opportunities. For this to happen, we need to make skill-based training available.

India is seen as world's youngest nation. But we must provide work to these young hands. The Prime Minister has already given the slogan of 'Make in India'. Now, the world is anxiously looking at India and at Maharashtra with hopes. A company like Bosch is going to undertake 25 Industrial Training Institutes. The students trained at these centres will later get jobs from the company and others like it. At present, electricity rates in Maharashtra are comparatively higher than other States. We are making efforts towards reducing industrial electricity rates by ₹1 to ₹1.50. If an industry is stable and registers growth, the State will also progress. For this to happen, we will have to make efforts for reducing the electricity

tariff for domestic consumers. While at this, we shall also bring Services Guarantee Act for a worthy and transparent administration. Through this Act, the people will be bestowed with fundamental right of getting service.

With a view to clamp the education czars, a The Maharashtra Educational Institutions (Regulation of Fee) Act will be implemented. This will prevent charging of exorbitant tuition fees. This is a people's State. We care for the confidence people have bestowed on us. Our Government is dedicated to develop the State. **M**

dependence on a single crop. This needs to be changed.

In order to make agriculture sustainable, farmers need to get perennial electricity. It is essential to provide them with solar agricultural pumps. These pumps will help farmers get electricity during the day, and will benefit the Government in long run. While this is implemented, there is an issue of agricultural product pricing. Agricultural produce does not get the right price. It is thus necessary to turn to agro-processing industries. I recently visited World Economic Forum at Davos. During discussions there, we

AGRICULTURE

Half of the population of the State is dependent on Agriculture. Hence, perennial development of agriculture is essential. Through Jalyukta Shivar Abhiyan, we have taken steps towards perennial development of agriculture.

EDUCATION

Proliferation of education should not lead to its commercialisation. To ensure that parents are not unduly harmed financially while paying tuition fees, a strict Act has been made and its implementation will be carried out with full force.

MAKE IN MAHARASHTRA

On the national-level, Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given the slogan of 'Make in India'. On the same lines and to encourage industries to come to the State and provide employment, we have launched the programme, Make in Maharashtra.



(From top) Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in a fighter plane made by SAAB and with Maharashtra delegation and SAAB team members in Germany

DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis visits Germany to promote Maharashtra and attend the five-day Hannover Messe, jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. A report by **Archana Shambharkar**

More than half of Maharashtra's population is under 25 and the same is also technically skilled. In order to bring employment to all of them and to maximise national production by building efficient human resources, the Make in India programme was announced by the Centre. The effort is aimed at enhancing not just investment in the State, but also to reach the target of Make in Maharashtra. It is thus essential for the State to discuss the programme with various countries

across the globe, such as Germany. Around 300 German engineering companies such as Volkswagen, Bosch, Thyssenkrupp, Mercedes, Daimler, Audi and others already have their operations in Maharashtra. To bolster this association, the State leadership—Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Minister for Industries, Subhash Desai—led a delegation to Germany recently.

The occasion was to attend Hannover Messe, Germany—world's largest industrial trade fair. Organised from April 13 to 17, the fair was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Maharashtra had already garnered good response at World Economic Forum at Davos earlier this year. International companies were



Meet 'n' greet: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with delegates from various countries and industry heads as part of his visit to the industrial trade fair at Hannover, Germany

seen interested in expanding their ventures in the State due to the changing scenario.

Travelling for 12 hours from Mumbai to Frankfurt and then to Hannover, the Maharashtra delegation was received by the fair organisers with enthusiasm. Industrialists from the State who were present for the reception of the delegation expressed satisfaction with the cooperation they were getting from the Government for setting up business in the State.

At the fair, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the attractive Maharashtra stall, named Magnetic Maharashtra, and talked about the progress of German companies in Maharashtra. He also invited German Chancellor Angela Merkel to visit the State. The invitation extended by the Prime Minister of India was no less than an honour for Maharashtra. It also made the job easier for Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who led his delegation with a firm conviction that if India's development rate has to be raised to 8 per cent, Indian States need to play the role of income growth engines taking their development rate to 10 per cent.

Maharashtra was the only State from India which had created an open platform for investors at the Hannover Messe. Over 200 German and Indian industrial groups participated in the event. Instead of verbose promises, information on practical initiatives by the Government was presented to the audience. The issues for which Mercedes Benz had to fight for a year were cleared by the Government in 15 days. The investment from Schindler was

“ We welcome companies that would like to start operations at Vidarbha and Marathwada. The foreign investment coming to the State must bring maximum benefits to rural areas”

held up due to interpretation issues of an Act. The State Government decided to bring in amendments in the Act. This decision was not for the benefit of a particular company, but for removing the flaws in drafting the Act. These and many steps—undertaken during 11 months of the Union Government and five months of the State Government—helped the business world experience affinity for both the Governments. The information on the proactive decision-making process

of the State Government impressed everyone present.

During the visit, the State delegation met representatives of many international companies. It also received first-hand information on their set-ups. Many companies admired the initiatives and remedial measures taken under Maharashtra's new 'ease of doing business' policy and expressed satisfaction. In one of the sessions, information was collected on some experiments in the area of hydroelectric energy. The Chief Minister too received information on how hydroelectric generators could be produced with rivers in villages and how electricity could be generated at the village level. He saw a demonstration of how a robot could be trained to make production centres smarter.

An objective of the Hannover fair was to make efforts towards accelerating production by coordinating manufacturing with Information Technology. Some of the companies presented information on efforts being made for complementing human skills with robotics. The Chief Minister discussed it with ABB—a major company in this field—which showed interest in establishing a robotics training centre at Nagpur.

One of the major achievements for the State at Hannover was the encouraging response for investments at various levels by Volkswagen, a global leader in automobiles. Mahesh Kodumudi, CEO, Volkswagen India,



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with trade fair representatives at Hannover, Germany

praised Maharashtra's initiatives such as accelerated permissions for electricity, land and environment for companies, which wish to arrive in the State. The meetings also aimed at encouraging companies like Volkswagen and Mercedes to manufacture spare parts through small and medium enterprises in the State.

Efforts are also being made for training of available skilled manpower for enhancement of industrial areas. Bosch provided a solution to the need and agreed to train students of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in Maharashtra. Bosch, which has production centres located in Pune and Nashik, also promised to provide employment to the trained students. Chief Executive Officer, Bosch India, Saumitra Bhattacharjee gave this assurance. A similar request made to Volkswagen was accepted by its senior member of the Board of Directors, Thomas Ulbrich.

Representatives from Thyssenkrupp, Davva, Kuka Robotics, Woko and others were also present at the meeting. The Chief Minister promised that obstacles in investments at the State at all levels will be removed. While encouraging investments in Maharashtra, the delegation shared that a facilitation and coordination centre has been set up by Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation to help those interested.

Two acres of land was provided on behalf of the Government to SQS, an IT company. It plans to expand in Maharashtra and provide 2,000 more job opportunities. Devendra Fadnavis and Subhash Desai handed over the consent letter to the company during the conference.

The fair also witnessed dialogues with companies based in other European countries such as

Sweden. Discussions on various levels were conducted with Swedish company, SAAB Group, which deals in air security equipment, fighter and light combat vehicles, and others. Visit to their Linköping plant was also organised. India's Bharat Forge is a major supplier to SAAB. Telecommunication giant Ericsson showed interest in investment to the tune of ₹300 crore at Pune. In other meetings, it was decided to sign a contract with the company for sale of furniture and textile items produced by small and medium enterprises in the State and Women Self Help Groups.

The Swedish Indian Investors Group brought to delegation's notice that many Swedish companies are doing well in Maharashtra and have made an appeal for creation of a platform so that cooperation between Sweden and

Maharashtra can be extended and expanded. Companies were encouraged to start set-ups at Aurangabad, Nagpur, Amravati and other cities.

"We welcome companies that would like to start operations at Vidarbha and Marathwada. The foreign investment coming to the State must bring maximum benefits to rural areas. The need of the hour is to encourage agro-industries. A value chain for agricultural produce is being created. Good farming, perennial

irrigation and markets for the produce will boost farmers' morale, said Devendra Fadnavis. "Since half of the people associated with agriculture produce only 10 per cent of the output, it is necessary that some of the people associated move to other sectors. We will make efforts to see that they are employed in the companies in their own area and attain financial prosperity," he added.

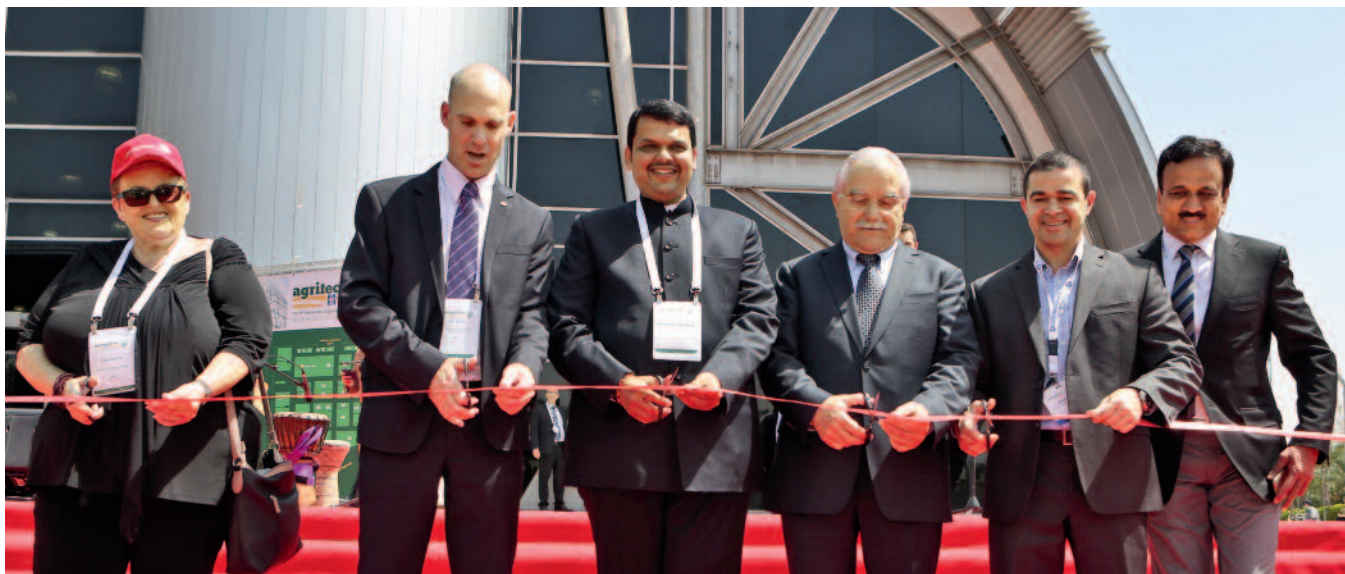
A result of the tour was the admiration Maharashtra received in terms of interest and investment. It also proves that the Indian economy is entering a new era where everyone has the opportunity to grow. "Devendra Fadnavis must have been cast in a German engineering module because he is very efficient, trustworthy and ever ready," commented eminent film actor Vivek Oberoi, who unexpectedly visited the India Investor Conference at Hannover Messe. **M**

“ Post our visit to Davos, we decided to create a value chain for agricultural produce. Good farming, perennial irrigation and markets for produce will boost morale of farmers”



CUTTING-EDGE ALLIANCE

During his visit to Israel, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis holds talks to get Maharashtra Israeli agriculture technology to improve farm incomes and reduce the agrarian distress faced by Vidarbha farmers. A report by **Kirti Pande**



Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Israeli Agriculture Minister Yair Shamir (fourth from left) inaugurate Agritech 2015 in Tel Aviv, Israel

Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis was in Israel for a three-day visit to explore the possibilities of collaborations with the nation in agriculture, crisis management and to attract foreign investments. During his tour, he attended the symposium on India-Israel collaboration for Make in Maharashtra and participated in Agritech Israel 2015, the world's most important exhibition in the field of agriculture technologies. He also explored the possibilities of collaboration with Tel Aviv Municipality, focusing on emergency preparations and crisis management technologies, and with cancer hospitals.

Devendra Fadnavis had meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli Agriculture Minister Yair Shamir, senior officials from various ministries, heads of leading IT companies and firms specialising in drip irrigation, and visited research institutes. He also called upon Former Prime Minister and President of Israel, Nobel laureate Shimon Peres.

AGRARIAN CRISIS

Agritech is the largest global agricultural techno-

logy exhibition in which countries participate to seek cutting-edge agriculture and water use technologies. The Chief Minister inaugurated the stall of Nan Dan Jain Irrigation, which is a partnership project between Israeli drip irrigation manufacturer, Nan-Dan and India's Jain Irrigation. The project is part of Make in Maharashtra, as the company is now exporting over \$30 million of automated irrigation systems manufactured in Jalgaon to the world.

“ Jethro and Demeter have decided to send a team of experts to Yavatmal and Osmanabad to prepare an action plan that would help in addressing the issue of farmer suicides ”

Israel's unique agriculture techniques, which give “more crop per drop” have impressed Devendra Fadnavis. “We not only want to import technologies, but also want to develop these in Maharashtra. That is what ‘Make in India’ and ‘Make in Maharashtra’ stand for. We appreciate Israel's ‘more crop per drop’ and look forward for technological collaborations for such initiatives,” he said.

In his address, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed for a collaboration with Maharashtra in field of agriculture, especially towards targeting agrarian crisis. He also extended cooperation in the field of manufacturing, internal security and cyber security, and support for creating Smart Cities.

A delegation from Israel is likely to visit Yavatmal and Osmanabad districts that had been reeling under agrarian crisis for the last 15 years due to drought and periodical hailstorms. Devendra Fadnavis said,



"I have urged the Peres Centre for Peace, founded by Shimon Peres, to help districts in Maharashtra in tackling the agriculture crisis that leads to farmer suicides," adding, "Jethro and Demeter have decided to send a team of experts to visit the districts to prepare an action plan that would be adaptable to domestic conditions and help in addressing the issue."

Emphasising on the importance of drip irrigation, the Chief Minister said, "In the next three years, sugarcane (crop) in the State shall be under drip irrigation. Besides, Jain Irrigation and Finolex (companies into drip irrigation) that are already there, we have asked Netafim to start a production unit in Maharashtra."

SMART CITIES

Devendra Fadnavis met Tel Aviv Mayor Ron Huldai during the visit. Both the leaders agreed to cooperate in building smart cities and explore the Indian IT potential to increase efficiency of smart urban solutions. The Chief Minister was briefed by Tel Aviv Mayor and his team of experts on the concept and implementation of the Smart City project in Tel Aviv, which was adjudged World's Smartest City at the Smart City Expo World Congress in 2014.

The Smart Cities makeover would be undertaken in partnership with Israel. Acknowledging that apart from Mumbai, rest of the cities would require a lot of upgradation to meet the "world class" status, Devendra Fadnavis asserted, "I am committed to transform the face of Maharashtra. And we will have to begin with smartening of the top cities, followed by two-tier and three-tier cities in phases in coming years."

Both sides agreed to cooperate and facilitate in exchange of information and best practices. Some of the areas that were outlined for cooperation are community outreach and participation through use of social media and open data, online municipal services, traffic and parking management through IT, security and emergencies, promoting a Start-up City and youth entrepreneurship, green construction and rational land use to create an appealing urban environment. Ron Huldai invited Maharashtra to participate in the Tel Aviv Innovation Festival (September 6-7) to understand the role of innovation in building smart cities. Devendra Fadnavis also invited Ron Huldai to Maharashtra to promote the friendship between India and Israel.

BOOST TO INDUSTRY

The three-day 19th International Agritech Exhi-



(From top) Devendra Fadnavis with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and while signing an MoU with Israel during the visit

“ I am committed to transform the face of Maharashtra. And we will have to begin with smartening of the top cities, followed by two-tier and three-tier cities in phases in coming years”

bition & Conference 2015 had around 100 Indian companies collaborating with Israeli companies for the 'Make in Maharashtra, In Collaboration with Israel' initiative. On the occasion, Devendra Fadnavis lauded Israel for making the best use of scarce water resources for agriculture and setting an example, and invited the companies there to invest in Maharashtra. He assured that through the Maharashtra

Industrial Development Corporation, efforts would be made to set up a special Israel Industrial Zone for the benefit of Israeli companies setting up ventures in the State.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has also offered to set up an India-Israel industrial park in Maharashtra, expecting the collaboration to take the bilateral ties of India and Israel to the next level. In his address at the India-Israel collaboration for Make in Maharashtra symposium, held at the Tel Aviv University, he described Maharashtra as "the powerhouse of India". He also sought to bring in defence investment in the State. **M**



(From top) The Raj Bhavan and Maharashtra Governor supervising the tree census in Mumbai

A GREENER WORLD

Maharashtra Raj Bhavan, Mumbai, sees the tree count double in seven years, reports **Umesh R. Kashikar**

The findings of the first GPS-based tree census of Raj Bhavan in Mumbai points out that the tree count at State's first official residence has increased from 2,994 in 2008 to 5,590 to date. The Governor of Maharashtra, Ch. Vidyasagar Rao has expressed satisfaction over the rise in the tree cover at Raj Bhavan. The statement followed a report on the tree census presented to him by the Additional Municipal Commissioner, S.V.R. Srinivas.

The recent tree census show that there is a total

of 130 species of trees at the Raj Bhavan, of which five belong to the category of rare species. These include *surangi*, paper tree, *tabebuia chrysanthia*, *cassia grandish* and *gorakh chinch*. While *ratangunj* (927 trees), *gulmohur* (575), *bhend* (303), copper pod (279) and coconut (271) top the chart, 23 species, including the all spice tree, *arjun*, *bael*,

balsam, *bismarckia palm*, are at the bottom, with just one tree each.

Tree plantation activity backed by enhanced efforts to conserve every single tree through drip irrigation has helped in increasing the tree count at the Raj Bhavan

—Vasant Saluke
Comptroller,
Governor house

The lone *gorakh chinch* tree is located next to the banquet hall of the Raj Bhavan. Though the height of the tree is medium, the belt at the base that is strengthening the tree is recorded as huge as 33 m. The tree derives its name from monk Gorakh, who is said to have taught his disciples under the shade of this tree. As many as 74 trees were found to have a height between 15 m and 18 m. About 49 trees were found to be dead trees.

The Comptroller of the Governor house, Vasant Saluke said, "Tree plantation activity backed by enhanced efforts to conserve every single tree through drip irrigation has helped in increasing the tree count at the Raj Bhavan." He acknowledged the contribution of members of the Nanasaheb Dharmadhikari Pratishthan in planting and conserving the trees.

Malabar Hill used to be a densely forested area except for a few Government residencies. Despite widespread urbanisation, the Raj Bhavan has meticulously maintained its greenery and ecosystem. The long stretch of forest in the Malabar Hill complex hosts a variety of flora and fauna. A study conducted by the Bombay Natural History Society in 1997 revealed the existence of 36 species of birds and a number of rare marine shells, amphibians, butterflies and insects.

Meanwhile, a Biodiversity Park was created on the huge expanse of the Nagpur Raj Bhavan in 2011. Here, the flora ranges from roses, aromatic plants and medicinal plants to cacti, sacred plants, ornamental bambusetum and a large number of native species. The fauna encompasses various butterflies and birds. Apart from Mumbai, there are two more Raj Bhavans in Maharashtra, in Pune and Nagpur. **M**





THE CENTRE OF ATTRACTION

With big-ticket projects like MIHAN and industrial hubs like Butibori gaining strength, Nagpur is on the path to become a global industrial destination. Supported by leadership at the State and Centre, it is set to bring overall development to Vidarbha, says **Jyoti Verma**

- France announced a \$1 billion investment towards the development of three smart cities in India, including Puducherry and Nagpur
- China expresses interest in multi-modal international cargo hub and airport at Nagpur (MIHAN) project
- CEAT Tyres to open a state-of-the-art facility at Butibori with an initial investment of ₹400 crore

The recent announcements present only a sneak preview of the buzz Nagpur is currently witnessing in terms of industrial expansion. Practically the geographical centre of the country, the district is also becoming the centre of attraction as far as global business, investments and partnerships are concerned. Trade analysts credit Nagpur's location and connectivity—with all major highways and railways trunk route passing through the city—and favourable leadership at both Centre and State for the action. Most of the mega projects approved for Maharashtra in the past five to six months, by the Centre and the State, are for Nagpur. These include three educational institutions of national importance (IIM, AIIMS and NIPER), which will provide world-class education and research facilities and are together valued at ₹3,000 crore in terms of investment, apart from adding to premier education and research opportunities in the city.

A few other observers suggest Nagpur to always had the charisma to become a business hub that can serve the whole country and beyond. Once the Capital of Central Provinces and Berar, then the Capital of the new state of Madhya Pradesh and later transferred to Maharashtra to become its second capital, India's "zero mile" location is also important, being part of Vidarbha. The region holds two-third of State's total mineral resources and accounts for nearly one-third of its cotton production and nearly half of thermal power capacity. Besides resources, the region provides equity support to new cooperative spinning mills and capital subsidy for new textile units to open here.

The benefits have led to opening of big textile companies such as Raymond, IndoRama, Indoworth, Gimatex, PeeVee Textiles and Mohata Mills in Nagpur. The other companies that have chosen in the district as their base in India include Boeing and Jaipuria Group, the biggest bottler in India of



PepsiCo. Most of these projects come under the category of mega projects. These mega projects are classified in terms of investment and jobs to be created. In a district like Nagpur, any business pumping in ₹250 crore in the unit or assuring to create 500 jobs gets the status.

POWERED BY MIHAN

The Government of Maharashtra with the co-operation of Government of India is developing the existing Nagpur airport as Multi-modal International Passenger and Cargo Hub Airport at Nagpur (MIHAN) Project. This includes the upgrade of existing airport to international standard and expanding it by constructing the second parallel runway and most modern passenger and cargo terminal building with the state-of-the-art facilities for passenger, baggage and cargo handling. The project is supported by an international airport, Special Economic Zone (SEZ), IT Park Health City, manufacturing units, captive power plant, rail road terminal, international school, leading IT companies and other manufacturing companies. A salient feature of MIHAN is its location, as Nagpur is the only city that can offer an SEZ and an industrial area that is connected to an international airport and a railway line with the only “diamond crossing” (E-W, N-S).

(Clockwise from left) Offices of KEC International, Grindwell Norton, Star Circuits & Engineering, Indo Rama Synthetics, Shilpa Roller, Narayana Process Foods, Sanvijay Rolling and Engineering, and Arc Tech Systems in Butibori

An industrial suburb of Nagpur, Butibori is developed as a 5-star industrial district by MIDC and is the biggest MIDC area in terms of notified area in hectares. Currently, there are a total of 266 companies in Butibori MIDC

BUTIBORI INDUSTRIAL AREA

The other interesting features of Nagpur include a township of CIDCO, which is planned to fulfill city's status as the second capital of Maharashtra. The township has acquired 2,500 acres of land on National Highway 7. Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) has also developed the industrial areas around Nagpur. These include Butibori, Hingna and Umred.

Butibori has large, medium and small-scale industries, power plants, textile companies, production units, ancillary units, food industries, among others. In December 2014, CEAT Tyres laid the cornerstone for its ₹400 crore plant in Butibori. Once implemented, the project will provide employment to more than 2,500 people from the area. The project was given the letter of intent within a day—a first in the history of India, said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis. The state-of-the-art plant will be set up in three phases and the first tyre will roll out by April 2016. Spread across 60 acres, the plant is expected to manufacture 1.2 million tyres for two and three-wheeler vehicles.

After Ceat Tyres' entry in Butibori, MIDC plans to prefer mega projects for this industrial estate. Recently, engineering and construction major Larsen & Toubro too opened a service centre in Butibori. **M**

“We aim to bring life to closed fertiliser units in Maharashtra”



Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers, **Hansraj Ahir** is considered and admired as one of the studious Members of Parliament. He studies every issue that is presented to him from all aspects and then resolves the issue. As a minister, he has concentrated his energies on additional empowerment of the departments under him, to make them optimally useful to the nation. **Vikas Zade**, Special Correspondent (Politics), Dainik Bhaskar, interviews the minister for Maharashtra Ahead. Excerpts:

Q. You are known as an MP who unearthed Coalgate scam. However, instead of Coal Ministry you have been allotted the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers.

A. You are correct. While in opposition, I was successful in creating a wildfire on the issue of coal mine distribution in the

Parliament. I represent the coal mine region of Chandrapur in Maharashtra and, therefore, I am naturally more conversant with the issues due to my studies for many years now. Therefore, I am pleased that I was able to bring to the fore the national highest earning distribution system. However, due to my striving and analytical attitude, I am being given a chance to directly serve the farmers, labour and common people through the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers. I am happy that I have

been chosen by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. I am happy to handle important subjects such as fertiliser supply to farmers, fertiliser production and pharmaceutical production that matter to the people of India.

“PROPER DISTRIBUTION OF FERTILISERS TO FARMERS IS A HUGE MOVEMENT AND VARIOUS STEPS AT THE MINISTRY LEVEL HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO ENSURE IT”

Q. What are the schemes under your consideration to make this Ministry more people oriented?

A. In fact, this Department is the one closest to the people. The Department is connected with the largest industry of the nation, agriculture, and healthcare of every citizen of the nation. I am happy that I can be instrumental in providing direct help to the commonest of common person. Reduction of imports of special medications, strengthening production of indigenous medicines and fertilisers, supply of fertilisers after careful assessment of soil quality, striving for providing regular and easy supply of fertilisers, creation of awareness for avoiding use of chemical fertilisers, and to work on this project in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture will be my priorities in the near future.

Q. What is the policy for increasing pharmaceutical production, easy distribution and price control?

A. The pharmaceutical production for 500 diseases as per demands of the Ministry of Health is a continuous process at the Department. Quality products from India are exported to many countries. However, compared to other nations, the production of basic ingredients needed for medicines in India is less. They have to be imported in huge quantity. If basic ingredients are manufactured in our country, the price control can be brought in. The Prime Minister has initiated ‘Make in India’ for this purpose, and we are trying our best to achieve this. Remedial measures will be implemented very soon so that all the District hospitals and Primary Health Centres have the facilities to deliver medicines to common people.

Q. Tell us about the efforts being made by the Department to help farmers receive fertilisers at cheaper rates and in required amount.

A. The chemical fertilisers are provided to the farmers at subsidised prices. Urea is imported at ₹20,000 per tonne. The farmers receive the fertilisers at a subsidy of ₹5,000 per tonne. Basically, gas, potash, phosphite and other chemicals are not manufactured in India. Since we are dependent on other nations for these, we have to forego a huge amount of precious foreign exchange. Proper distribution of fertilisers to farmers is a huge movement and various steps at the Ministry level have been taken to ensure it. We are vigilant about adequate supply and easy distribution. However, I would like to point out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has envisioned "Soil Health Card" scheme. With this scheme, we will be able to supply fertilisers as per the quality of the soil.

Q. Petroleum industries are moving ahead very fast all over the world. Your Department is responsible for the same. What are the resolutions?

A. This is an important responsibility at the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers. I would strive so that a network of industries is created across the country. My efforts are concentrated on the development of a Plastic Industries Zone in Mumbai, which is capable of providing employment to at least 1 to 1.5 lakh youth. I shall be meeting the Government of Maharashtra soon. When Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat, he had made available a huge zone for plastic industries at Dahej. On the same lines, the Central Petrochemicals Department has prepared a draft proposal for creation of a Plastic Zone in Maharashtra.

Plastic granules are manufactured from the waste created in petrochemical refineries. These are supplied to plastic manufacturing plants from which various products are manufactured. However, considering the importance and need for plastics, the Central Petrochemicals Department has prepared a draft plan to develop a plastic zone along 150 km of Mumbai sea shore. As the raw materials required for this industry would be arriving via sea, the area around Mumbai has been emphatically chosen. This industry has been recognised at four Indian States. Discussing the issue with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, a proposal has been made for space in Mumbai for this industry.

Q. You have represented Maharashtra in Delhi for 14 years. As a Minister what



"MY EFFORTS ARE CONCENTRATED ON DEVELOPMENT OF A PLASTIC INDUSTRIES ZONE IN MUMBAI, WHICH CAN GIVE EMPLOYMENT TO AT LEAST 1 TO 1.5 LAKH YOUTH"



ACTION PLAN

Efforts for India attaining apex position in the world in the field of pharmaceutical production.

- Revitalise Hindustan Antibiotics Limited, Pimpri, Pune
- Efforts for regular and easy supply of fertilisers to farmers
- A coal-to-gas project in Vidarbha under consideration
- Acceleration in cheaper and high-quality pharmaceutical production
- Aiming to create Government medical stores at Primary Health Centres
- Orientation of farmers to use fertilisers according to the quality of the soil
- Encouragement to create an innovative national network of plastic industries

would be your contribution to the glory of the State?

A. There would be a definite contribution. Development of one's own State is an ethical responsibility of an individual. Fortunately, we have same political party ruling at Centre and State. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is an enthusiastic person. As I said earlier, positive discussions have started with the State Government on certain projects based on petrochemicals. It is utmost essential to rejuvenate enterprises such as Hindustan Antibiotics Ltd. Pimpri and others.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced 'Make in India'. He has asked us to accept the challenge to move ahead of China in pharmaceutical production. We are taking steps to rejuvenate this company. If production starts here, imports from China could be reduced. We are also considering a coal-to-gas project in Vidarbha. Through this project, the Department will try setting up a urea-manufacturing unit. Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilisers has got many plants in Maharashtra. We shall look the possibility of starting another such plant.

We are trying to bring life to the closed fertiliser-manufacturing units in Maharashtra. The expansive sea shore available to Maharashtra makes the State an appropriate region for petrochemical industries. I am hopeful that some important projects from my Department will be started in Maharashtra. **M**

“We are firm on our promise of toll freedom”



With a rich experience in organisational work, **Chandrakant Bacchu Patil** has returned to State Legislature for the second consecutive term from Pune Graduates constituency. He has a resolution to rejuvenate all the departments assigned to him, namely Cooperation, Marketing and Textiles and Public Works (excluding Public Undertakings). Considering the said departments are connected to employment generation and daily lives of the people, his efforts are addressed to provide everyone an empowered and path-breaking identity. In an interview with **Rahul Jadhav**, a senior journalist with Maharashtra Times (Kolhapur), he talks about his priorities. Excerpts:

Q. What is the status of the implementation of the new Cooperative Act?

A. There were many impractical items in the old Cooperative Act. Hence, it was essential to make it resonant with the current times. The new Act had also been passed in haste. Hence, we recently had a cooperative expert workshop on the Act in Pune. Many suggestions and corrective measures

presented at the workshop will now be placed before the House. Under this Act, elections for all cooperative societies will have to take place before June 30. Elections for around 1 lakh cooperatives will be held according to the provisions of the new Act. These elections will focus on many aspects from the point of view of reforms. For the elections, we are making efforts to get the basic infrastructure implemented by the Election Commission of India.

Q. How important is Cooperation, which is the spine of rural life?

A. Cooperatives have played a major role in building Maharashtra. The Government has decided that the cooperatives should not only be sustained, but they should also grow further. However, due to certain bad attitudes that have entered the cooperatives, the very spine of rural life and economy at one time is today leaning towards fractures. The policies will definitely be in place so that Maharashtra's cooperatives flourish. The interests of members will be given foremost priority.

Q. What would you like to say about the sugar rates and the implementation of FRP?

A. We have given a warning that if the sugarcane is not paid as per fair and remunerative price (FRP), the sugar produced by the concerned factory will be seized. Some of the sugar factories have implemented FRP rates. Notices have been issued to more than 150 FRP defaulter sugar factories.

Sugar production in India and the world has increased resulting in decrease in sugar prices in international markets. The Government, however, is making efforts so that farmers and sugar industry do not suffer due to this. The Government has allowed a concession in the Sugarcane Purchase Tax, making available funds to the tune of ₹800 crore for paying higher rate for sugarcane to farmers. We are also trying to get sumptuous funding from Government of India. But the factories should also make a move. The funds—to the tune of ₹2,100 crore—provided last year to sugar factories have not been refunded as yet. The Government does not wish that the factories should close down, but the factories must provide rates as per the FRP. The State Government will add ₹1,000 per tonne to Centre's grant of ₹4,000 per tonne for export of raw sugar. This makes the export of raw sugar earn a grant of ₹5,000 per tonne.

Q. How do you propose to empower market committees?

A. Most of the market committees do not have basic facilities for sale of agricultural produce. The committees do not have a say in the whole process. We plan to activate the role of the members of these committees. The status of the market committees is currently limited to earning cess. Apart from making efforts for getting higher rates for agricultural products from farmers, it is essential to create cold storage facilities for perishable goods. We are making efforts in this direction. Efforts will also be made for agro-products processing centres through these committees. Many of the market committees are without toilets. Farmers bringing their agro-products here do not get proper facilities such as a dining hall for lunch. Efforts will also be made for these facilities. Computerisation of market committees and their interconnection with each other, information about rates of agro-products over internet will also be remedied.

Q. The Centre has announced a policy for modernisation of textiles. What are the steps taken by the State Government in this regard?



"TODAY, MARKET COMMITTEES JUST EARN CESS FOR THE STATE. WE PLAN TO ACTIVATE THE ROLE OF THEIR MEMBERS TO EMPOWER THESE COMMITTEES"



"THE STATE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED THAT COOPERATIVES SHOULD NOT ONLY BE SUSTAINED, BUT THEY SHOULD ALSO GROW FURTHER"

A. The Government of India has announced Textile Upgradation Fund Scheme. We have not received any grant from this fund for a year now. The State Government is following the matter. Around 15 to 20 lakh workers depend on this industry. We are going to provide all possible help to this industry, which provides huge employment.

Under the Welfare of Powerloom Workers Scheme, we will be following up health, home and pension on priority. We are going to announce the new textile policy. The cotton crop is grown in Vidarbha, but all the spinning mills are located in Western Maharashtra. In order to save on transport, we are going to implement cotton-to-cloth concept.

We will make effort to encourage local production, as 75 per cent of the cotton produced goes outside Vidarbha. We are thinking on increasing the subsidy for Vidarbha and Marathwada. The old mills are accruing losses. Through acquisition and sale of additional lands, the funds will be made available.

Q. There is a continued and constant demand for provision of concessional rates of electricity for power looms? What is Government's policy on this?

A. The Government will fully support this employment-oriented industry. The Government will have to provide subsidy to power looms. If we do not reduce the electricity rates, this industry will spend huge amount on transport and will not be competitive. Hence, the policy of the Government is that of full sympathy.

Q. Toll is a highly debated topic in the State. What is the policy of the Government on this?

A. We will ensure that Maharashtra is toll free under any circumstances. We have started taking steps in this direction and will soon announce the State Toll Policy. According to the new policy, small four wheelers will be given total toll concession. The toll charged for heavy vehicles and goods transport vehicles will be 20 per cent higher. We have started collecting information on the number of vehicles moving on the road and the toll collected from small and big vehicles. If the toll for heavy vehicles is increased a little, we can refund the amount by toll-collecting agencies. Further, while construction of new toll plazas, a condition will be put to exempt small vehicles from payment of toll. For present toll plazas with expenses up to ₹200 crore, the Government will be paying the amount after collection in one go. ■



A YEAR OF SELF-CONFIDENCE AND NATION BUILDING

Devendra Fadnavis, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, in his piece on the first year of the Union Government, lists the many achievements India registered at home and globally under the leadership of Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

The Union Government under Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is completing a year on May 25, 2015. When the Hon. Prime Minister took oath on May 26, 2014, the Government was under a huge pressure of expectations and aspirations of the people of India. When we compare the thought process at that time to the current, we realise that the mood of India has changed completely. Today, people have self-confidence. There are positive messages floating in the social media. A WhatsApp message said, “Not heard of any scam over a year? Does the Government exist in the country?” The message says a lot; it shows the direction in which the Government is moving.

The media has been responsible for promoting assessment of Government’s 100 days, one year, two years and three years, and so on. In a sense, this assessment is useful. The Information and Public Relations Department requested me to review the performance of Government of India with reference to Maharashtra and made me ink this piece. Looking at the developmental, self-confident, expressional and strongly-willed rising of India in this one year, I am sure of the bright future of the country and its States, including Maharashtra.

At the outset, I must make it clear that Maharashtra has always been a priority for Hon. Narendra Modi’s development agenda. He understands that if development of the country is to be achieved, development of Mumbai will have to be prioritised, as the city is the financial capital of India. It is this reason that he has immense affection for Maharashtra. Understanding the role Maharashtra can play in India’s development, Narendra Modi has always tried to prioritise the State.

BENEFITS OF FOREIGN TOURS

Whether it was World Economic Forum at Davos or Hannover Messe in Germany, the Hon. Prime Minister has provided Maharashtra with opportunities to showcase its strength. He also gave us the opportunity to participate in the agricultural exhibition held in Israel recently. As Chief Minister of Maharashtra, I welcome these

occasions and thank him on behalf of the entire State. In each of these foreign tours, I had a refreshing experience. The Ambassadors at these locations welcomed me as a representative of India and not just as the Chief Minister of a State. There was a reason behind this—the Hon. Prime Minister had held a conference of all Ambassadors and clearly expressed that India comprises of all Indian States, and all States must be given the help needed.

MAHARASHTRA ON FAST TRACK

Our Government in Maharashtra has also completed six months. Although, we have had the opportunity to work with the Centre during this period, Maharashtra is honoured for the support it received from Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Any project from Maharashtra goes on fast track and is sanctioned on priority. It is only with the firm support of the Union Government that Maharashtra projects see speedy action. Right from the airport at Navi Mumbai to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Memorial and providing land at Indu Mills for a memorial for Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the support of the Hon. Prime Minister and his team is totally valuable. The approval for coastal road is in final stages. The Centre has sanctioned relief of ₹2,000 crore for drought-affected farmers of the State in a single installment. This is by far the largest amount of relief given to any State by the Union Government.

BENEFIT OF PAST EXPERIENCE

The most important quality of the Hon. Prime Minister is the ease with which he meets any Chief Minister. He is approachable in true sense of the word. The main reason of this accessibility is his experience of being at the helm of affairs in Gujarat as Chief Minister for 15 continuous years. He is fully aware of the difficulties faced by a Chief Minister. And, he has not changed his stance even after taking over as Prime Minister. He ensures that the current Chief Ministers do not undergo the anxieties faced by earlier Chief Ministers. Through Niti Aayog, he has provided more powers to the Chief Ministers. He strives to see that more resources are available to the States. When he addressed the gathering at Niti Aayog meeting, he specifically questioned, “What is India in true sense? If the States are taken out, will the country exist? India resides in all and every State.” We are proud that we have a Prime Minister who takes additional care of the States.

During the Niti Aayog meeting, the Hon. Prime Minister arranged a separate meeting of Chief Ministers. It was a session, where everyone heard and learned from other’s meritorious work as a Chief Minister

COMPREHENSIVE LEADERSHIP

I have had the privilege of being closely introduced to the working style and thought process of Hon. Narendra Modi on many occasions. In fact, I have got an enlightened mentor in him. I recall an incident. When the Niti Aayog meeting took place in New Delhi, the Hon. Prime Minister arranged a separate meeting with Chief Ministers. There was neither an agenda nor any paper to be discussed. It was a free-flowing thought dissemination meeting, where those present had to listen to the meritorious work of every Chief Minister and strive to implement the same in his State. It did not matter whether the Chief Minister was from BJP, Congress or Communist Party. The idea was blending of thoughts beyond party affiliations. The Hon. Prime Minister's greatness was in recognising outstanding experiments in administration with a clean heart and keeping aside political differences. He alone can do this!

A YEAR OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

Hon. Narendra Modi today has created affinity and excitement about India among all nations of the world. Now, it is the responsibility of the States to convert this opportunity into investments. The States that can use these huge and positively placed opportunities and go for development can alone partner India's success.

During my foreign tours, I was touched by another development, and this relates to expressing one's nationality. Wherever I went I could experience the new point of view

about India. There was a time when nobody spoke about India. Now, everyone speaks about India. The confidence generated among residents also exhibits the same sentiment. Recognition for strengths of India was not enough; the same needed to be presented in a proper way. This task was carried out by Hon. Narendra Modi with unparalleled ease. It was only due to him that we could accelerate programmes like Make in India and Make in Maharashtra.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

Currently, 53 per cent population of Maharashtra is under 25 years of age. The world needs a huge number of skilled manpower and Maharashtra youth has the potential to fulfill this need. We need to tap various employment sources, so that our population can reap the benefits. We also face the challenge of providing work to 70 crore skilled hands. If we are unable to

comply, the country would be doomed, and this is the purpose behind Make in India. Ideally, efforts on this count had to be put in around 10 years ago. But, there was no initiative taken. The effort being made by Hon. Narendra Modi will ensure a bright future for the country and also Maharashtra.

It is not that positive decisions have been taken in case of industries alone. Decisions in the interest of farmers have also been taken. The requests made by Government of Maharashtra regarding agriculture and farmers have always been approved by the Centre. The Union Government came to the rescue of our farmers by approving minimum support price (MSP) for their produce and kept them alive in difficult times. None of the

Governments so far had dared to go against the WTO Pact. This was done by Hon. Narendra Modi. He stood by the farmers and for their interests even when there was a global market. He also said that developing countries should have freedom to fix the MSP. This is a huge political achievement for him.

Maharashtra is also under a devastating spell of untimely rains and hailstorms. We are facing a huge natural calamity this year. However, Narendra Modi took a revolutionary decision to enhance the criteria for assistance to farmers from 30 per cent to 33 per cent. Earlier, farmers were eligible for assistance only if losses were more than 50 per cent. Now, they will be eligible even if losses cross 33 per cent.

I would like to congratulate Narendra Modi on completion of one year as Prime Minister of India. He has supported Maharashtra throughout. At the same time, I assure him on behalf of the 11 crore population of Maharashtra that we will contribute our best to the development era and to India's bright future. **M**

Maharashtra is facing a huge natural calamity this year. But, we are thankful to the Hon. Prime Minister who has taken a revolutionary decision to enhance the criteria for assistance to farmers from 30 to 33 per cent. This will get them better compensation



Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis with Hon. Prime Minister Narendra Modi

MAHARASHTRA IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The State has always reflected India's development. The reflection seems to have become clearer under the leadership of Narendra Modi at the Centre. The State has been on a progress spree in Prime Minister's one year in office, reports **Raghunath Pande**



In October 2014, while campaigning in Beed, Maharashtra, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Maharashtra is like an elder brother. We (Gujarat and Maharashtra) were together once... I want to take Maharashtra ahead of Gujarat. I want it to be at the top of all States, but for that I need a Government from which I can take work."

Narendra Modi himself answered the question as to whether Metro will have a run at Nagpur. He laid the foundation stone of the project and roads to progress widened. Metro-3 at Mumbai and Pune Metro are other projects that are sure to happen.

Being Chief Minister of a State for 15 years, Narendra Modi has experienced the pangs of running a State and how the Centre could resolve the issues. This was the reason behind his initiative in providing more rights to the States and launching of Niti Aayog. His skills in people-oriented administration brought transparency to the system and helped States like Maharashtra play a role in national development.

TRAIN TO MAHARASHTRA

Railways have undertaken many projects for Maharashtra. Provisions have been made for ₹8,500 crore for MUDP-3 and for ₹11,441 crore for projects at the State; ₹4,670 crore for Pune–

Miraj–Londha route, ₹1,273 crore for tripling of Rajnandgaon–Nagpur tracks, ₹630 crore for Ballarsha–Wardha, ₹1,200 crore for bridging Central Railway and Konkan Railway through Karad–Chiplun route, ₹800 crore for third track on Pune–Lonavala section have been provided. Apart from this, survey will be undertaken for Pune–Nashik, Ramtek–Tumsar, Nandgaon–Manmad railway routes.

Although Maharashtra has not been provided with any new trains, the Rail Budget has made a provision of around ₹20,000 crore for ongoing projects.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed between Ministry of Railways and Government of Maharashtra through which railway route expansion in undeveloped areas of the State and laying of new tracks will be undertaken. For the delayed rail projects in Vidarbha, Marathwada and Konkan, a new corporation has been established through collaboration between Ministry of Railways and Government of Maharashtra as per renewed policy. The main task of the corporation would be to look into delayed tracks in Vidarbha and Marathwada, new routes and expansion of railways.

There has been an MoU between Digi Port and Railway Development Corporation. The new railway tracks in Naxal-affected Gadchiroli district will connect this area to other parts of India. Post-graduate courses in Railways at Mumbai University will be another step in acceleration of development in Maharashtra. These projects are being brought on track with coordination between Union Minister for Railways Suresh Prabhu and Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis.

INFRASTRUCTURE BOOST

"I am not just a representative of Maharashtra, but an ambassador. I shall myself try to coordinate with all the Central Government departments. By cooperating with all the Union Ministers, our efforts will be concentrated on accelerated development of Maharashtra," said Nitin Gadkari,

Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport and Highways. His promise is also being realised. The 1,800 acres of Port Trust land has a price tag of ₹7,500 crore. However, the land has not been used for development.

There is also a discussion on Mumbai Ring Road. However, as Mumbai roads do not come under the purview of National Highway Authority of India, there is a consideration of Coastal Road, Sea Link and Trans Harbour Link. This initiative by the State and Central Transport Ministries will help Mumbai get better transport facilities. The move is equally important from the point of view of tourism.

The Department of Shipping has

For the delayed rail projects in Vidarbha, Marathwada and Konkan, a new corporation has been set up in collaboration with Ministry of Railways. The body will look into delayed tracks in the regions and expansion of rail network

allotted 150 m seabed to the Coast Guard. This will help Maharashtra Government in its Pollution Control Action Plan and Emergency services. The Central Government has taken decisive steps to free Mumbaikars from traffic jams and pollution. A bus, which can run speedily on road as well as on water, has been inducted in the fleet serving Mumbai. There is a proposal to establish a 500-room luxury hotel in the sea at Marine Drive. There is also a proposal for four floating restaurants and a floating helipad.

In order to reduce the crowd at Gateway of India, a new jetty is being considered near Radio Club. For water transport, satellite ports will be established at Rewas, Dahanu and Vijaydurg. Dry ports will be established at Aurangabad, Jalna and Wardha. With a view to reduce transport expenses, emphasis will be laid on water transport through rivers. Ten rivers from Maharashtra figure in Water Transport Scheme and this will provide a new form to the State.

The Nagpur-Ratnagiri road, which has been announced as a National Highway, will be a four-lane concrete road. The estimated expenses on this project are ₹9,000 crore. The road for Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram Palakhi route, Alandi-Pandharpur and Dehu-Pandharpur, is a gift from Government of India to Maharashtra. Similarly, Solapur-Akkalkot-Gangapur-Gulbarga will also be taken up as a four-lane concrete road.

Support has also come to textiles and power. Solapur textile industry is getting accelerated. The Government of India is preparing a scheme for showcasing Solapur textile products at national and international markets. Coal, electricity and gas are being provided to Maharashtra using modern technology. Prime Minister is keen to provide electricity worth ₹400 crore from Narmada project to Maharashtra. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has resolved not to go back on Jaitapur Atomic Energy project and complete it in any case. The reason was the outline of Make in Maharashtra on the lines of Make in India. As Maharashtra has been a priority State in foreign investments, it would be wrong to back out from this project at this juncture. During the France tour of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 17 MoUs were signed. These included the Jaitapur project. AREWA from France is going to help India in setting up this project.

During the France tour by Prime Minister Narendra Modi this year, 17 MOUs were signed. These included the Jaitapur Atomic Energy project. AREWA from France is going to help India in setting up this project

Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Hansraj Ahir started discussions with the State Government on certain projects based on petrochemicals. It was decided that companies such as Hindustan Antibiotics and Maharashtra Antibiotics will be strengthened. If these companies are revitalised, India could reduce imports from China.

The coal-to-gas project at Vidarbha is also under consideration. There is a plan to establish a urea plant from this. Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilisers has many plants in Maharashtra and efforts are on for setting up additional plants. Considering Mumbai sea shore as a plus point, planning is being considered for using this for

petrochemical industries. The Union Ministry of Heavy Industries, led by Anant Geete, will be running battery-operated buses in Mumbai.

As the meeting of the National Wildlife Committee got deferred, there were obstacles in sanction of 12 important projects from Maharashtra. The difficulty was recognised by Minister of State for Union Environment and Forests (Independent Charge) Prakash Javdekar.

He provided sanctions from National Highways to gas pipelines projects. As the issues in the clutches of Tiger Protection Authority were resolved, all the other new National projects such as Bor Tiger project and forest conservation of Melghat-Navegaon-Nagzira were given a green signal. The fast permissions granted for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Memorial in Arabian Sea can be considered as a truly positive effect of the Centre-State relationship. The State Government will take care that the coastal roads do not harm the environment, and is seriously considering a No Construction Zone.

The most important news recently has been that the Centre has agreed to transfer Indu Mill land to the State Government for the memorial of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The MoU for the same was signed in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister of Textiles (Independent Charge) Santosh Gangwar. The MoU is immensely important from the point of view of socialisation process at the State.

In this one year, Maharashtra grew not just at home, but was noticed globally, as seen at World Economic Forum, Davos and the recent trade conference at Hannover, Germany. A proponent of healthy competition among the States, Devendra Fadnavis is keen to see that other States follow suit to better the work happening in Maharashtra. **M**

—The writer is Special Correspondent (Political), Lokmat in New Delhi





BANANA CAPITAL OF INDIA



With high-density planting and single crop cultivation, Jalgaon has built a well-organised banana industry that is today known for highest productivity of the fruit in the country, says **Sameer K**

Think of Jalgaon in Maharashtra and you can picture acres and acres of banana plantations. Located in North Maharashtra, the district has earned the unique distinction of achieving the highest productivity in the country in banana production. The credit goes to thousands of farmers who have worked hard to make their district the “Banana Capital” of India. The banana grown here is famous for its unique taste and quality.

Considered to be the poor man’s fruit, banana is very nutritious and could be a meal by itself. In India, banana ranks first in production and third in area among fruit crops. It accounts for 13 per cent of the total agriculture area and 33 per cent of the total production of fruits. Production is highest in Maharashtra (3924.1 thousand tonnes) followed by Tamil Nadu (3543.8 thousand tonnes).

Within India, Maharashtra has the highest productivity of 65.70 metric tonnes/ha of banana against national average of 30.5 tonnes/ha. The other major banana-producing States are Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. India exports bananas mainly to Middle East countries viz. U.A.E., Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar. The varieties, which are in demand include Grand Naine and Cavendish.

Jalgaon district has shown the way for setting up a well-organised banana industry. This has been achieved by adopting high-density planting and single crop cultivation method. Besides meeting the demands of the markets of Maharashtra, on an average 12-15,000 wagon loads of the fruit are transported every year to the markets in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Delhi. Transportation to the markets of Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan is also quite sizeable.

As opposed to an average of 65 tonnes per

A HEALTHY OUTPUT

- In India, banana cultivation is highest in Maharashtra (3924.1 thousand tonnes), with districts of Jalgaon, Dhule, Nandurbar, Buldhana, Hingoli, Parbhani, Jalna, Nanded and Wardha the top producers

- Banana cultivation started commercially in Jalgaon in 1925. Years ago, farmers used traditional techniques resulting in a yield of 30-35 tonnes per hectare

- Today, Jalgaon contributes 6 per cent of India’s total banana production. It has 48,000 ha of land under banana plantation

- Looking at the export potential, Apeda has declared State’s top banana-growing districts as AEZs



(Top and above) Banana plantations in Jalgaon

hectare grown by a common farmer in Jalgaon, a hi-tech farmer in the district today boasts of producing 90 tonnes per hectare, says K.B. Patil, an agriculture expert who works with Jain Irrigation, one of the pioneers of drip irrigation in the country and a company that played a major role in shaping the future of banana in Jalgaon.

Banana and plantain are most important food and fruit crops globally, supporting the livelihood of millions of people. In India, the climate, soil conditions and water availability serve to make the fruit a unique proposition, says Bhagwat Patil, Chairman, Banana Growers Association, Jalgaon. Although Tamil Nadu has maximum acreage under banana plantation in India—1.25 lakh hectares to be exact—Jalgaon still remains number one in the country for several reasons, he says. “For one, the productivity per hectare is the highest, from 65 to 90 tonnes per hectare. The near-absence of use of fungicides in the plantations makes this an organic fruit,” he says.

Banana cultivation started commercially in Jalgaon in 1925. Years ago, farmers used traditional techniques for banana cultivation resulting in a yield of 30-35 tonnes per hectare. The scenario changed after drip irrigation was brought in and tissue culture was used by scientists to bring in newer varieties. Applying water through drip to the root zone improved the soil-moisture-plant relationship and made the crop healthier. As a result, the bunch size increased from 9-10 kg per bunch to 25-30 kg per bunch. The second cropping further improved



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Although Tamil Nadu has maximum acreage under banana plantation in India—1.25 lakh hectares to be exact—Jalgaon still remains number one in the country for several reasons. For one, the productivity per hectare is the highest from 65 to 90 tonnes per hectare. The near-absence of use of fungicides in the plantations makes this an organic fruit

—Bhagwat Patil
Chairman,
Banana Growers
Association, Jalgaon



productivity to a great extent.

Today, Jalgaon grows 6 per cent of India’s total banana production. It has 48,000 hectares of land under banana plantation. The sweet Basrai variant is very popular in the domestic market. The local Basrai and Shrimanti variety of crops did not lend themselves to second cropping. So when the scientists brought in the Grand Nain variety, the scene changed and yield levels improved to 90-100 tonnes per hectare, says an expert. The hot dry climate also kept diseases away making the banana a near organic fruit. The Grand Nain variety is a high-yielding Cavendish variety introduced to India from Israel. The plant grows to a height of 6.5 to 7.5 feet. The bunches can be harvested within 12-13 months from the date of planting the tissue culture plants in the main field.

The Agriculture Marketing Board of the State has established MahaBanana, a farmers’ marketing organisation in 2002 with headquarters at Jalgaon. There are 26 cooperative societies registered under MahaBanana and each member society has 300-350 small and marginal farmers. About 8,000 farmers have enrolled themselves as members with the organisation. Patil says the farmers are taught new techniques and given training at times.

Interestingly, Pakistan has turned out to be a major market for the Jalgaon banana. Around 10,000 tonnes of the fruit are sent to Pakistan annually. According to Maharashtra State Agricultural Marketing Board officials, the organisation has begun box packing of bananas to Pakistan where it was earlier sold in a loose form. This helps farmers get a better price.

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) believes that India has tremendous export potential for bananas and has, therefore, declared eight traditional banana-growing districts in Maharashtra as agricultural export zones (AEZs), covering the districts of Jalgaon, Dhule, Nandurbar, Buldhana, Hingoli, Parbhani, Jalna, Nanded and Wardha. APEDA has also opened a couple of export facilitation centres at Jalgaon and Hingoli. However, farmers have been shying away from these centres since the rates have been pretty high, says a local farmer.

Patil says, the Far East and Middle East could turn out to be good markets for banana. Other emerging markets could include Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and even China. Pack houses and cold storage chains could be a great help here. **M**



Female farmers during the harvest season

A SLICE OF NATURE

Maharashtra has been a traveller's inn with destinations that personify nature and its beauty. The hill stations of Lonavala and Khandala will charm you with their scenic beauty, green hills, deep valleys, historic forts, lakes and waterfalls. Panchgani, the land of five hills, and Matheran, the forest on top, are sure to leave you mesmerised. This summer, make these hilly pockets your vacation point

LONAVALA BEAUTY PERSONIFIED

Set in the lush green hills of the Sahyadris, Lonavala lies in the Western part of Maharashtra, at an altitude of 625 m. Known as the Jewel of the Sahyadri, Lonavala offers a visitor, pristine woods and valleys, gushing waterfalls, historic caves and scenic vistas. The name Lonavala is derived from the Sanskrit word *lonavli*, meaning many caves. The caves of Karla, Bhaja and Bedsa are close to Lonavala apart from two fortresses, Lohagad and Visapur. Another place of interest is the Tungi fort. Rajmachi Point, located about 6.5 km from the hill town, commands a view of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's famous fort, Rajmachi and the surrounding valley. Ryewood Park and Shivaji Udyan, Walwan Dam, Bhushi Dam, Lonavala Lake and the Ekvira Devi Temple are popular tourist spots here.

Lonavala is home to INS Shivaji (formerly HMIS Shivaji), Indian Navy's premier technical training institute. Besides a major corporate conferencing centre, it is also a chosen venue for destination weddings. Once used to be a popular naturopathy and yoga centre, over the years it has become popular as a monsoon destination. Thanks to the easy access via expressway and trains, the place gets visitors for picnics and long drives. If you make a plan to be here, don't leave without packing the *chikki*, a popular sweetmeat made with groundnut and jaggery.



Navigator

GETTING THERE

BY AIR: The nearest airports are Pune International Airport (64 km) and Chhatrapati Shivaji International

Airport, Mumbai (104 km)

By RAIL: Nearest railheads are Mumbai and Pune

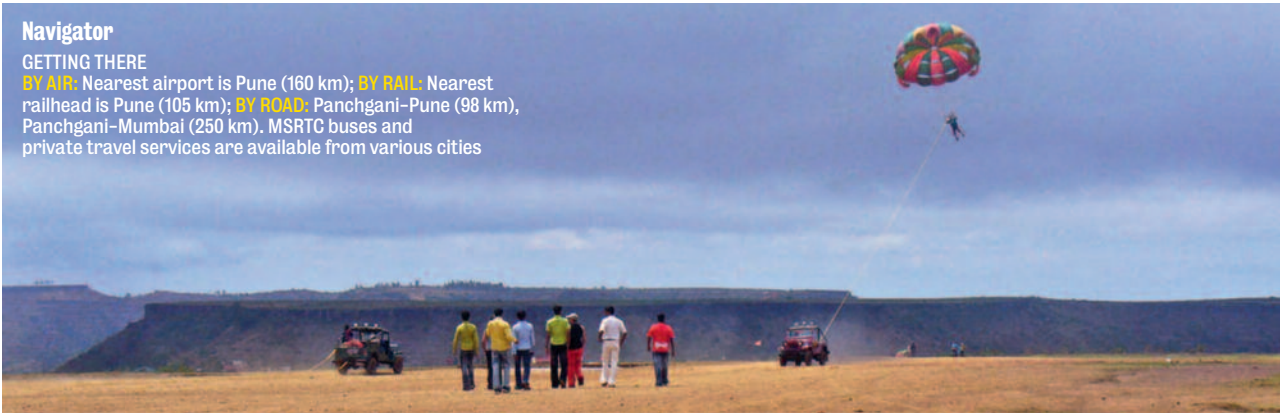
BY ROAD: Lonavala is on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway and is well-connected to towns of Khopoli, Karjat and Talegaon Dabhade



Navigator

GETTING THERE

BY AIR: Nearest airport is Pune (160 km); **BY RAIL:** Nearest railhead is Pune (105 km); **BY ROAD:** Panchgani-Pune (98 km), Panchgani-Mumbai (250 km). MSRTC buses and private travel services are available from various cities



PANCHGANI HOLIDAYER'S PARADISE

Panchgani is a quiet and delightful hill station situated at an altitude of approximately 1335 m. The literal meaning of Panchgani is five hills that make it a spectacular picturesque place. Called the Mecca of Maharashtra, the city is a

perfect destination for nature lovers, who visit the hill station throughout the year.

Panchgani was discovered during the British Raj as a summer resort, and a superintendent named John Chesson was placed in charge of the place in the 1860s. A walk on the lush green paths, views of river Krishna snaking through beautiful valleys and

gentle hills, and visit to the Table Land are few activities you must do when you visit Panchgani. Situated around 60 m high, Table Land is a flat stretch of laterite rock. It is the second longest mountain plateau in Asia. Many large caves are seen from here, the most popular being the Devil's Kitchen. It is believed that the Pandavas stayed here for a

while and used this place to cook their food. Parsi Point is another place that is a must see. Other touristy places are water sports centre, Tapola, Bhim Chula, Harrisons valley, Sydney Point, Dhoom Dam, Lingmala Falls and Rajapuri Caves. Panchgani is renowned for many premier residential educational institutions.





Navigator

GETTING THERE

BY AIR: Nearest airport is Mumbai (100 km);

BY RAIL: Nearest railhead is Mumbai (20 km)

BY ROAD: Mumbai–Neral (90 km), Neral–Matheran (21 km), State transport buses ply from Mumbai and Pune to Neral

MATHERAN CLOUDS, JUNGLE AND A TOY TRAIN

Matheran—a spot loved truly by Mumbaikars—is easily Maharashtra's prettiest hill station. Matheran, in the Raigad district, is connected to the town of Neral, at the base of the hills. Matheran, meaning forest on top, was discovered by Hugh Poyntz Malet, Thane's District Collector, in

1850. According to local lore, he asked the name of the place. Somebody said it was a forest (*ran*) on the top (*mathe*). And that is how the place got its name.

To reach Matheran, Malet climbed the hill via what is known as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Ladder (apparently, the Maratha ruler had also taken the same route). The forest with its cool and salubrious climate pleased Malet, who later, together with a few friends,

built the first few cottages here. As word got around, the British and some wealthy Indians based in Mumbai also began to visit Matheran. Soon, beautiful, English-style cottages and gardens dotted the hill side. Even today, a handful of luxury bungalows hidden among the forested trails guarantee you proximity with nature.

Roads in Matheran are not metalled and are made of red laterite earth. Toy trains are an ideal way to reach the hill



Toy trains are an ideal way to reach Matheran. Begin your visit to the hill town with Panorama Point to see the sunrise and end it with a visit to Porcupine Point to see the sunset



Navigator

GETTING THERE

BY AIR: The nearest airports are Pune International Airport (64 km) and Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai (110 km)

BY RAIL: Nearest railheads are Mumbai (110 km) and Pune (60 km)

BY ROAD: Pune-Khandala (69 km), Mumbai-Khandala (101 km), Lonavala-Khandala (5 km). State transport buses ply from Mumbai and Pune

KHANDALA

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

Regarded as a popular hill station in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, Khandala, is set amongst the hills and valleys of the Sahyadri mountain range. This place is adorned by a fascinating panoramic beauty. Khandala is smaller than Lonavala and relatively calmer.

Known to be the Pride of the Sahyadri Mountains, Khandala's beautiful waterfalls amidst the lush green environment makes for a splendid sight. Its history is similar to Lonavala in the sense that Chhatrapati Shivaji ruled the area around Khandala, which came under the Peshwa rulers before being taken over by the British. Tugautli, Lonavala, Bhushi and Valvan lakes adorn this idyllic hill station. Amrutnjan Point, Reversing Station, Monkey Hill, Kune Falls, Sakur Plateau and the Rajmachi Fort are places of interest here. Ganesh Chaturthi is celebrated here in September with much pomp and show.



station. No vehicles are allowed inside the town. In 2003, Matheran was declared an eco-sensitive zone, putting a cap on industrial and other developments here. Begin your visit to Matheran with Panorama Point to see the sunrise and end it with a visit to Porcupine Point to see the sunset. Other places of interest include the Charlotte Lake, which is the main source of drinking water for the local population, Louisa Point and Echo Point.

ART THAT SPEAKS

Warli, the monochromatic tribal expressions of a cultural milieu, is more than mere designs on walls; it depicts a way of life, says **Pallavi Singh**

What started as a means of transmitting folklore to a populace not acquainted with the written word soon became famous and got popular in the name of Warli folk paintings. While there are no records of the exact origins of this art, its roots may be traced to as early as 10th century AD. Research suggests that tribals were the propagators of a tradition, which originated sometime in the Neolithic period between 2,500 BC and 3,000 BC.

Warli is a vivid expression of daily and social events of the Warli tribe of Maharashtra, found mostly on the northern outskirts of Mumbai, who use this art form to embellish the walls of their homes. The art that was first discovered in the early 70s has evolved from its mural form and is characterised by images of human beings and animals, and scenes from daily life created in a loose rhythmic pattern. Painted white on mud walls, they are similar to pre-historic cave paintings in execution and usually show of human figures engaged in activities like hunting, fishing and farming, and during festivals and dances.

SYMBOLS AT PLAY

Warli art is two dimensional, with no perspective or proportion. The paintings are simple and linear with maximum use of triangular shapes. Human and animal bodies are represented by two triangles joined at the tip—the upper triangle depicts the trunk and the lower triangle the pelvis. Every symbol of Warli art has its own meaning and language. Men and women in spiral form and concentric circular designs symbolise the circle of life.

Warli paintings are seen mostly on an austere mud base using one colour, white, with occasional dots in red and yellow. Their white pigment is a mixture of rice paste and water with gum as a binding. They use a bamboo stick chewed at the end to make it as supple as a paintbrush. The paintings depict significant occasions in one's life, be it marriage or harvest period and sacred rituals attached to the same. Many of the Warli paintings representing Palghat, the God of matrimony, often depicts a horse used by the bride and groom. The monochromatic tribal paintings express various folk imaginations, beliefs and customs. It is also a reflection of the



social and religious aspirations of the local people.

Warli paintings are important to a marriage ceremony and are called *lagnacha chauk* or marriage paintings. Married women or *savasini*, paint a *chauk* or a square on the walls. These paintings also showcase the love of the natives for nature. Believed to invoke the power of Gods, Warli symbolises human's harmony with each other and with nature.

THE ROAD AHEAD

In a significant diversion from the authentic style of Warli, new-age artists have started to draw straight lines in their paintings as against a simple juxtaposition of countless dots. While, traditionally, the paintings were exclusively farm scenes with huts, of late, modern elements have started creeping in. Cityscapes with contemporary themes are making way. But, by and large, Warli paintings with traditional themes are still a big draw, both domestically and internationally. Now, this tribal art is no more just a woman's domain or a tribal expression of social realities. There is a



(Clockwise from top left) Children admiring a Warli artwork on wall, artists busy making a Warli painting, and a key chain, wooden boxes, envelopes and flower pots with Warli artwork



PHOTOGRAPHS: RAKHI ADGA SALUNKE

significant change in the art reflecting the development of man and society. It is now being done on paper incorporating traditional decorative Warli motifs with modern elements say a bicycle, car, building, computer, train, etc..

The world of fashion is an area that has seen traditional art and craft at play. Today, many designers are inspired by the charm of traditional folk style. Warli entering the fashion field was a revelation to the art itself. Designers impressed by the simplicity of the art have tried to implement it in their work. Fashion designer Shruti Kothari tells us how the famous art, from a remote village, is no more a remote tradition. To her “the simple motif of stick figures on a structured tunic adds just that element missing. A black skirt with white sticks on it is shockingly seen on Western wear and not on Indian wear.”

Shruti Kothari's new release was anti-fits, a rebellious

Warli art is two dimensional, with no perspective or proportion. The paintings are simple and linear with maximum use of triangular shapes

trend defying the norms of regular fashion. These outfits had Warli art on them giving the apparel an exotic Indian appeal.

Another fashion designer, Smriti Gupta has created an entire line of dresses based on these paintings. When she decided to take up traditional art forms as an inspiration for one of her collections, she came across Warli. She has used traditional

patterns, rich and folksy colours to recreate the magic of Warli in her dresses. Quite recently, PN Gadgil Jewellers from Pune have come up with unique designs inspired by Warli in jewels, ranging from pendants, necklace, bracelets and bangles. The earthy and soothing nature of the art helps in creating the nostalgia.

Today, one can see Warli paintings on home decor products, a garment, or a toy. The whims and moods of tribal life make for interesting themes, which is why Warli is much more than designs on walls; it is an authentic depiction of a way of life. **M**



FORTIFICATION DEMYSTIFIED

In the second column of our series on Maharashtra forts, acclaimed historian **Ninad Bedekar** enlightens us on the defence mechanism and architecture of the forts at Daulatabad, Rajgad and Vijaydurg



In the medieval period, forts were the foremost defence of a kingdom against the enemy. Ramchandra Amatya passed on Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's policy on forts to Chhatrapati Sambhaji of Kolhapur; saying, "Forts are the essence of the entire kingdom." Known as one of the greatest civil administrators, diplomats and military strategists of the Maratha empire, Amatya wrote *Adnyapatra* in which he explained different techniques of war, the maintenance and administration of forts, among other aspects, with the intention to guide Shivaji's grandson Sambhaji II. *Adnyapatra* has a whole chapter dedicated to forts. "The essence of the whole kingdom," it declares, "is forts".

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj built his kingdom on the strength of forts. He also built forts along the seashore. Out of these, three epitomise the kind of defence the forts must offer any kingdom. These were the Daulatabad or Devagiri Fort near Aurangabad, the Rajgad Fort—located at the first capital of the Marathas—and the seafort of Vijaydurg. The forts cover the gamut of Maharashtra's fort construction policy. The first fort is made invincible by removing stones; the second is made strong by using the stone; and the third, by concealing the stone!

The famous Ellora Caves are just 16 km away from Devagiri-Daulatabad. When Ellora was being built, removal of stone from the Devagiri Fort began. The fort has a huge, wide, deep and smooth moat—a water tank cut out of stone—and a wondrous winding, three-and-a-half-turn dark passage, *andhaari*. This passage is the only way up the moat that has



(From top) Seafort of Vijaydurg, the fort of Rajgad and the Devagiri-Daulatabad Fort near Aurangabad



crocodile-infested waters. The darkness of the passage can only be pierced by the leaping flames of a torch. It is not known for how many years the rock was cut at Devagiri. The credit for its construction goes to the Yadav dynasty. The Rashtrakuta and Shilahara dynasties are largely lost to history.

The Devagiri Fort had a unique way to defend its inhabitants. At the end of the *andhaari*, a hot plate awaited the enemy. Should the enemy reach that far, he would fight for air and rush towards one of the vents, eventually falling headlong into the waters of the moat. While making an estimate of the excavated basalt of this Deccan trap that has specific gravity of 2.7, we reached the ballpark figure of two million tonnes. The astonishing estimate underlines the strength of the fort. It is difficult to win the fort without defections. Besides the moat, the fort has three massive ramparts—Mahakot, Ambarkot and Kalakot. There is no need for fortification at the rear, as it is impossible to assail it from behind. Devagiri-Daulatabad is thus an interesting case of fortification by removing stones.

Building forts using stone is not uncommon. In 1645-46, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj captured the fort of Murumb Dev (or Brahmadev's Hill) and began building the first capital of his kingdom. The fort was to be known as Fort Rajgad. The fort lies in the midst of valleys of Nira, Velvandi, Kanandi and Gunjawani rivers and is an extraordinary feat of engineering standing for more than 350 years. The land slopes away on three sides and in the centre is the Bale Killa—the highest point of the fort. The three wings of the fort were strengthened

by strong walls and enclosed slopes (or *machi*). Of the three wings, the Sanjeevani *machi* (lower plateau) is one-and-a-half-kilometer long with triple-layered fortification. It has bastions and Alu darwaza (an entrance to the fort). The Suvela *machi* is similar. It also has a water tank, a spear-hole in the rock (called *nedha*) and doors—all quite out of the ordinary. On the Padmavati *machi*, one finally finds some flat space with a large water tank.

The way up to the Bale Killa—called *Adhikyata* in Sanskrit—is extremely difficult. After the arduous vertical ascent, one finds buildings and water tanks. The nearby forts of Purandar, Rohida, Torna, Sinhgad, Lohagad-Visapur are easily visible, besides distant views of Raigad, Pratapgad and Makarandgad. It is estimated that Rajgad Fort was built with seven to eight lakh tonnes of stone. Where the stone came from, how it was chiseled to shape and fitted, where the mortar was made, or how many men were employed are questions that remain unanswered to date. Rajgad is thus an excellent example of a fort made invincible by using stone.

Now, what if we make a fort strong by making its stones go invisible? No big task, as this too has been achieved in Maharashtra. In Sindhudurg, on the river Vagotane, located on the edge of the Arabian Sea and near a village named Girye, stands the sea fort of Vijaydurg. Shivaji captured it in *Vijaya Samvatsara*, giving it its name.

Charles Boone, a British Governor of the Bombay Presidency, made several attacks on the fort in 1719. A ship named Fram was specially built for this purpose. But the attacks did not succeed. The English closed the road from Vagotane with wooden blocks, but still could not get close to the fort from the sea. They even had to lose some of their ships. Fram eventually sank and Boone had to withdraw his forces. The mystery behind the defeat of British was eventually solved in 1991. The Western Naval Command and ships of National

Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa, found a stone wall inside the sea, about 300-350 feet away from Vijaydurg. Not visible even during low tide, the wall runs parallel to the fort's wall and is 300 feet long and 20-22 feet wide. The stones used in the wall are chiseled by human hands. The Portuguese probably knew of this wall, as can be seen from some of their documents, but the English were unaware and, therefore, sustained losses.

Vijaydurg, thus is an example of making a fort invincible by making the stone 'invisible'. The stones point to the fact that the fort was built in the 17th century, says Dr. Sila Tripathi, a technical officer from the Marine Archaeology Centre, NIO. **M**

—The writer is an eminent historian, writer and Chief Advisor, Fort Restoration Committee. The article is co-authored by Dr. Uday S. Kulkarni

TARGETED OBJECTIVE, RIGHT APPROACH

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis shares his mission to provide access to justice for all at an affordable cost and at an accelerated pace



(From left) Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan in New Delhi

Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis was in New Delhi on April 5 to attend the Joint Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices organised by the Union Ministry of Law and Justice. Addressing the august audience with profound courtesy, Devendra Fadnavis gave assurance of the State Government's complete cooperation to the Judiciary, so as to facilitate citizens for overcoming any obstacles hampering the way towards fulfilling the mission of creating additional law colleges for future generations and expedition of pending legal cases across the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the conference. Expressing his concerns on the pending legal cases, the Prime Minister appealed to the State Governments for adopting a comprehensive integrated approach with respect to creation of

more law colleges ensuring swift expedition of cases. Targeted objective combined with right approach would definitely ensure attainment of the goal, he expressed.

The Chief Minister said, "Our mission for the Judiciary for next five years is to provide access to justice for all, affordable cost of litigation and delivering justice at an accelerated pace." Expressing his concern on the alarming 29 lakh court cases pending in the State, Devendra Fadnavis informed the gathering about the MIS being developed for reducing the cases. He underlined his concern on numerous cases relating to crime against women, disadvantaged sections of society, matrimonial

"It is Maharashtra Government's resolve to reduce the age of pendency from 15 to three years. This would go a long way in reducing litigation cases"

disputes and personal liberty. He emphasised Government's resolve to reduce the age of pendency from 15 to three years, which would go a long way in reducing litigation cases.

Underlining some of the important steps taken after October 2014 in this direction, the Chief Minister informed about the creation of additional 179 posts of Judicial Officers from the level of Magistrate to District Judges coupled with 754 supporting staff employees, increase in the strength of Judges from 75 to 94—an increase of 25 per cent—and sanctioning sufficient finance for infrastructure, salaries and allowances.

Devendra Fadnavis added that delegation to fully reimburse the medical expenses bills has been given to the Chief Justice of the High Court of Bombay. Sitting and retired judges would be able to avail it. Enhancement of pecuniary jurisdiction of the District Courts from ₹25 lakh to ₹1 crore has already been taken by the Cabinet in February this year. **M**

MAHARASHTRA RECEIVES PANCHAYAT AWARDS

Maharashtra received National E-Panchayat and State Devolution Index Award at the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the occasion of 22nd National Panchayati Raj Day at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi on April 24. The awards celebrate the various initiatives that strengthen the Panchayat Raj System, the backbone of the country. As many as 20 Panchayati Raj Institutions from Maharashtra, including State Zilla Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Gram Panchayats won awards on the occasion. The function was attended by 92 representatives from the State.



GADCHIROLI'S SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AWARDED

This Civil Services Day (April 21) two awards fell in the kitty of Maharashtra Government. The first, for the skill development programme for youth in the Naxal-affected district of Gadchiroli to make them financially independent, was conferred the prestigious Prime Minister's Award. Gadchiroli Collector Abhishek Krishna received the award under Government's Crop Pest Surveillance and Advisory Project (CROPSAP) and Amravati Collector Kiran Gitte received the Civil Services Award for his brilliant financial inclusion programme implemented at Tripura's Mandvi block. Impressed by its success, the Maharashtra Government is now planning to replicate the programme in five more districts,



including Nagpur. The award consists of prize money of ₹1 lakh, a memento and a certificate. The Prime Minister's award, started in 2005, has been given to public servants for their outstanding work.



CENTRE SHOULD HELP ADDRESS SUGARCANE PRODUCERS' CONCERNS: CHANDRAKANT PATIL

In order to bring farmers fair remunerative price (FRP) for sugar, Maharashtra Government has taken a decision to grant interest-free loan of ₹2,000 crore. For the same, the Central Government should help the State with funds, urged Maharashtra Cooperation Minister Chandrakant Patil in New Delhi.

Chandrakant Patil was speaking at the meeting of Chief Ministers deliberating on sugar and pending arrears at J.C. Bose Auditorium, Krishi Bhawan, Union Consumer Affairs & PDS Minister, Ram Vilas Paswan headed the meeting. Present during this meeting were Union Agriculture Minister, Radha Mohan Singh, Union Women and Child Development Minister, Maneka Gandhi, and Union Agriculture Minister of State, Dr. Sanjeev Baliyan, along with all State Ministers and senior officials.

Chandrakant Patil addressed the issues concerning sugarcane farmers. He underlined the financial problems of sugar industry and the number of initiatives taken up by the State to help the industry. He said that the State Cabinet has taken a major decision of granting an interest free loan of ₹2,000 crore to sugarcane-cultivating farmers. Five-year repayment tenure period has been fixed. Considering this huge expenditure on the State exchequer, the Minister urged the Centre to provide funding assistance and help in providing relief to the farmers.

The State has witnessed surplus production of sugarcane this year, resulting into a steep fall of market price. To improve the situation, it is necessary to encourage ethanol production. For this, a subsidy of ₹6 per litre be provided for:



PADMA AWARDS TO NINE DIGNITARIES FROM MAHARASHTRA

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

—Amarjyot Kaur Arora, IO, MIC, New Delhi



TOGETHER IN GRIEF

Maharashtra Government has left no stone unturned to ensure a safe passage back home for natives of the State caught in earthquake-hit Nepal, says **Kriti Lalla**

(Top) Disaster management teams from India participate in bringing relief to earthquake-affected people in Nepal

The Government of Maharashtra needs a pat on the back for having streamlined the process of evacuating Maharashtrians stuck in tremor-hit Nepal and bringing them safely back to their homeland. More than 1,000 tourists from Maharashtra have been contacted by the State Disaster Management Department and reported as safe. "Initially, we received information of around 950 tourists from various parts of Maharashtra being stuck in Nepal. Later, more and more people called the Mantralaya Control Room and we found that more than 1,000 tourists are in Nepal, waiting for a reply," said Suhas Diwase, Director, State Disaster Management Cell, Mantralaya.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis issued instructions to the officials to keep in touch with tourists from the State stuck in Nepal after a high-intensity earthquake on April 25. He also alerted the State Disaster Management team to be prepared for rescue operations at any location in Nepal and India, if required. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team from Maharashtra is ready for a call from the Central Government, if needed. The 1,100-member team of highly-trained NDRF personnel has a base camp in Pune.

The State Government has set up a cell at the Maharashtra Sadan in Delhi to help people from

the State to locate their relatives and near ones in Nepal in the backdrop of the earthquake. "This cell, set up as per the instructions of Maharashtra Chief Minister will work in close co-ordination with Ministry of External Affairs and Home Ministry to locate people in Nepal," an official in the Chief Minister's office said.

Interestingly, the State Government made use of the ham radio to track down natives gone to Nepal, and provided assistance to them for their safe return. According to Suhas Diwase, this was the first time for the State to use the ham radio to trace its people stuck in a disastrous situation. He said that within a few hours of the earthquake hitting Nepal, the control room was put into action.

Arun Puranik from the Disaster Amateur Radio Emergency Service said that four amateur ham radio operators are helping out people stuck in Kathmandu. "In Maharashtra, we have more than 400 ham operators. When cell phones or telephone networks collapse as a consequence of natural disasters, only ham helps in rescue operations," said Yogesh Gulati, Chief Commanding Officer of the radio service.

Amateur radio (also called ham radio) is the use of designated radio frequency spectra for purposes of private recreation, non-commercial exchange of messages, wireless experimentation, self-training and emergency communication.

An 18-member trekking team from State's Sales Tax Department left Mumbai on April 18 for an Annapurna trek in the Himalayan Range. All trekkers, including Arun Birajdar, Prashant Patil and Mohan Chikhale have been reported safe. Arun Birajdar said, "We have completed our expedition as planned. We knew about the earthquake in Nepal and land sliding in the Himalayan range, but being in the forest, we did not realise it."

Deputy Commissioner Mohan Chikhale said that the Maharashtra Government traced them even though they were out of range. "We didn't realise the intensity of the earthquake. We spoke to our family members," he said.

Praising the efforts of the Government, Prashant Patil said his family was worried. "The State Government informed my family about my safety. Thanks to it, they could stop worrying."

Expressing satisfaction on being able to rescue people from the State at this hour of need, Suhas Diwase said, "Till today, all 1,300 people from Maharashtra who had gone as tourists or for trek have or are returning safely," adding, "Now,



We received information of around 950 tourists from various parts of Maharashtra being stuck in Nepal. Later, more and more people called the Mantralaya Control Room and we found that more than 1,000 tourists are in Nepal, waiting for a reply

—**Suhas Diwase**
Director,
Maharashtra Disaster
Management Cell

We were on an Annapurna trek in the Himalayan Range. We had completed our expedition as planned. We knew about the earthquake in Nepal and land sliding in the Himalayan range, but being in the forest, we didn't realise it

—**Arun Birajdar**
A trekker and an
official of Sales Tax
Department

In Maharashtra, we have more than 400 ham radio operators. When cell phones or telephone networks collapse due to a calamity, only ham radio helps in rescue operations

—**Yogesh Gulati**
Chief Commanding
Officer, Disaster
Amateur Radio
Emergency Service



we are arranging relief in the form of new blankets, tents and plastic sheets with the help of NGOs at divisional level. This relief will be sent to affected people in Nepal. Through the ham radio service, people from Spain, Dubai and other countries are also getting information from us about their citizens and we are helping them in every manner."

Suhas Diwase explained that the State Government decided to make use of this service after they came to know that a ham radio can work better than Internet and telephone lines in crisis conditions. "We have made State-level platform available to these ham radio operators who have otherwise been operating their devices on their own or on private basis. Now, we will be tying these ham radio users at district level and make them part of the Divisional Disaster Control Room," he assured. The State is also mulling the installation of a ham radio operating system permanently at Mantralaya.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra Public Health Department has deployed two teams of doctors in Delhi for onward journey to Nepal to assist in medical relief. Some essential medical supplies have also been sent with this team. A truckload of medicines, including analgesics, antibiotics, iodine solution, bandages, gloves and TT injections are being dispatched from the State. Teams of doctors from J.J. Hospital have been kept on standby for deployment to Nepal if required. The Government has also set up two helplines on a 24x7 basis for assistance (New Delhi: 011-23380325 and Mumbai: 022-22027990). Arrangements for stay and railway tickets were provided by the Special Cell at the Maharashtra Sadan to those who needed them. Facility for air tickets on priority has also been arranged at the Delhi airport.

Hemlata Upadhaya from Mumbai was on a religious tour to Nepal. On the fateful day, she together with a group of 17 from the State was at the Janaki Mandir, at Janakpur, where they experienced earth-shattering tremors. "By the grace of God and help from the Government authorities, the team was not only able to participate in the ritualistic prayers as part of the tour, but also returned home safe and sound," she said.

Nepal was hit by an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale on April 25 that saw more than 7,000 deaths and thousands rendered homeless, apart from triggering an avalanche on Mt. Everest. Mild tremors of the earthquake were felt in parts of Maharashtra also. **M**



UNITED BY HERITAGE

A convention of Marathi writers held in Ghuman celebrates the common legacy of Punjab and Maharashtra, reports **Praveen Kulkarni**

The 88th All India Bhartiya Marathi Sahitya Sammelan took place from April 3-5 in Ghuman, a small town in Punjab's Gurdaspur district. Collaborated and celebrated as its own by Governments of Punjab and Maharashtra, the convention endorses the stay and spiritual journey of the 13th century reformist and Maharashtrian poet, Sant Namdev in Ghuman 700 years ago. The spiritual leader spent two decades in the fields of Punjab, composing hundreds of *abhangs*—praise-poems to the God Vithalla. Two centuries later, 62 of these *abhangs* were incorporated in the sacred book of the Sikhs, the *Adi Granth*. The idea of organising a Marathi literature convention in Ghuman was seen as a way to honour the bond built by Sant Namdev with Punjab and reiterate the historical links between the two States.

This year, the convention was a double sweet treat being held under the Chairmanship of Dr. Sadanand More, a noted historian, writer, poet and philosopher, and a direct descendant of Sant Tukaram. The event kicked off with a ceremonial flag-hoisting ceremony and demonstration of books. Musicians and dancers from Maharashtra walked through the streets of Ghuman, while the residents put up *langars* (free community kitchens) for the visitors.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Chief Minister of Punjab, Prakash Singh Badal; Union Minister for Road Transport, Nitin Gadkari;

(Clockwise from top) Maharashtra Chief Minister speaks at the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan, Devendra Fadnavis with Sukhbir Singh Badal, and celebrations in Ghuman, Gurdaspur, Punjab Performers from Maharashtra present a cultural presentation



The idea of organising a Marathi literature meet was seen as a way to honour the bond built by Sant Namdev with Punjab and reiterate the historical links between the two States



Former Union Minister, Sharad Pawar; and other dignitaries. At the event, Prakash Singh Badal announced setting up of an Arts and Science College in Ghuman and gave ₹12 crore for the same. The foundation stone for a much-needed degree college was laid by Nitin Gadkari and Sharad Pawar. Punjab Chief Minister also announced a Chair to be constituted in the name of Sant Namdev at Amritsar University.

The concluding ceremony show was again a glittering show. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis won the hearts of those present by starting his speech in crisp Punjabi. In his address, he announced that a Chair in the name of Guru Govind Singh will be started at Swami Ramanand Teerth University, Nanded. He also invited Punjabi litterateurs to hold a similar Punjabi literary meet in Maharashtra. **M**



AN ACT THAT HELPS STUDENTS

The Regulation of Admission Fees Act will help the State regulate college fees and restrict private institutions from conducting common entrance tests, reports **Varsha Andhale**

The State Government has decided to implement the Maharashtra Unaided Private Professional Education Institutions (Regulation of Admission Fees) Act, 2015, from the forthcoming academic year. "The Act is in the favour of students. It is not against any private educational institute, but against those who consider education as business," said Vinod Tawde, Minister, Higher and Technical Education.

The draft of the Act had been pending for many years. The State has now passed an ordinance. Now, a panel will be set up under a retired High Court Judge, Chartered Accountant, former Vice-Chancellors of ICWA and universities, Director, Technical Education and experts from the Finance Department, among others. The team of experts will study the financial status of colleges and finalise their fee structures, added Vinod Tawde.

“

A single CET organised by the State Government will help in reducing students' stress and higher education. A point to clarify is that the Act is not against any private educational institute, but only those that consider education as business. The move will help in maintaining excellence of students.

—**Vinod Tawde**
Minister for Higher and Technical Education

”

(From left) College students in Maharashtra and Vinod Tawde, Minister, Higher and Technical Education, Government of Maharashtra

The Regulation of Admission Fees Act will give the State power to regulate college fees and restrict private institutions from conducting common entrance test (MH-CET) and Central Admission Process (CAP), applicable to all degree, technical, medical and agriculture colleges and varsities.

Meanwhile, there will be another committee to control admissions to colleges. The CET will only be conducted by the committee. No private CETs will be allowed to be conducted. It will be mandatory for colleges to admit students on the basis of the Government-organised CET. Under the Act, if the committee receives a complaint against an institution that provides false information and is proven guilty, the directors of the institute may face jail term of six months to two years.

Another decision has been taken to implement Rashtriya Uchchatar Shikshan Abhiyan in the State. Through this, fund to the tune of ₹550 crore (35 per cent given by the State and 65 per cent by the Centre) will be acquired in the next two years. The Government, by extending supplementary funds, will use the fund to increase research opportunities in universities, give quality education and transform autonomous colleges into universities. "A single CET by the Government will definitely help in reducing students' stress and help education. It will also help in maintaining excellence of students," he said.

Experts have welcomed the Act and called it one of the best Acts in terms of fee regulation. The fact that CETs cannot be taken by individual colleges will be a huge relief for students. There is also a provision for punishment, if institutes flout norms. **M**

STATE BUDGET ON RADIO

The Budget for the financial year 2015–16 was presented in the Budget session of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly in Mumbai. *Dilkhulas* aired an interview with **Sudhir Mungantiwar**, Minister of Finance and Planning and Forests, on the various aspects of the process and objectives it had this year



Sudhir Mungantiwar, Minister of Finance and Planning and Forests on *Dilkhulas*

DILKHULAS

Budget sound bytes

Sudhir Mungantiwar, Minister of Finance and Planning and Forests, Maharashtra presented the maiden Budget of the current Government in the State. Later, in an interview on *Dilkhulas*, he shared that, for the first time, a complete change was brought in the way the Budget is prepared. “A concerted effort was made to focus on the questions before a common man and to find solutions to those problems. This time, in Maharashtra—referred to as Chanda to Banda—a common man from Chanda presented the Budget to the State,” he said, adding, “Tribal, Naxal affected, malnutrition, reduction in per capita income and unemployment were the main issues before us. We had

appealed to all the MLAs, MPs and Ministers to give us suggestions to solve these issues. We also welcomed suggestions from journalists, Facebook, Internet, website, newspapers and other media and from common people. The IAS officers sent us their suggestions through Whatsapp. We put together all these suggestions in just 138 days.”

The proportion at which development and progress was expected in the State has not been achieved so far. “Removing all the lacunae and shortfalls in the earlier Budgets, we made an effort to take the State on the path of progress. The

farmers need opportunities and not sympathy. Hence, we made a huge provision for agriculture,” he added.

Speaking on the Economic Survey of the State, Sudhir Mungantiwar said

“In this year’s Budget, the State is emphasising on creating basic infrastructure for agriculture and rural development. Attention has been given to all constituents—farmers, women, entrepreneurs, youth and the rest. An appropriate balance has been maintained between urban and rural areas, and this balance will definitely result in acceleration of the State economy”

—Sudhir Mungantiwar,
Minister, Finance and Planning
and Forests

that every year economic progress of Maharashtra is documented and the people of the State have a right to know this information. His dialogue inculcated confidence in people and assured them that the provisions in the Budget have been made keeping in mind the inclusive development of the State.

—Meera Dhas





Bhikuji Idate (right), Chairman, National Commission on VJNT, during the talk

JAI MAHARASHTRA

From the life of Babasaheb

Produced by Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, *Jai Maharashtra* is a platform for various welfare schemes and policies of the Government. To discuss important issues of society, the programme invites experts from various fields. This time, the list of experts invited to the studio included Arvind Paranjape, Director, Nehru Planetarium, for a discussion on Opportunities in Astronomy; President's award winner Dr. Kalpana Kharade on the occasion of Blindness



Eradication Week; Shafaat Khan, Head, Department of Dramatics, Mumbai University, on World Theatre Day;

Bhikuji Idate, Chairman, National Commission on Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes (VJNT) on the contribution of VJNT Commission towards building Maharashtra; State Election Commissioner, J. S. Saharia on preparations for local self-government elections; M.V. Deshmukh, Consultant, Fire Fighting Services; and Vikas Kharge, Secretary, Department of Forests.

In his talk, Bhikuji Idate threw light on the life of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He talked about the many incidents from the life of the leader, and how the path of struggle can be inspirational even today. He also shared information about the National Commission on VJNT.

—Atul Pande

MAHANEWS

Information-led public service

In the age of Information Technology, exchange of information is fast. The information reaches us through social media and mobile apps as well. On the other hand, there exists a fierce competition between various TV channels and newspapers on who disseminates the news fastest. The competition has become fiercer with the use of social media. However, all of these still do not ensure that the information shared is authentic. *Mahanews*, an initiative of the Directorate General of Information and Public Relations, has dedicated itself to the missing aspect—providing authentic news.

Over the years, the portal has continued to provide authentic news on a daily basis through its various sections such as Main News, Mantralaya, Maharashtra in the News, Success Stories, Schemes, First Person, Something Worth The Read, Jai Maharashtra, Dilkhulas, Net-Bhet, Search a Job, Photographs Pavilion, Video Pavilion and others.

Putting together the vast information and helping visitors has only been possible by the impeccable teamwork at *Mahanews*. The team, after reading all the newspapers published from the State and confirming the information by visiting various websites, uploads the information on the portal. In Maharashtra, anyone, from fourth standard pass to graduate in any discipline, has the opportunity to join Government service. Here, collection and delivery of information is no less than a public service.



—Gajanan Patil



LOKRAJYA

Launch of special edition

The April 2015 issue of *Lokrajya*—dedicated to Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar—was released by Minister for Social Justice, Rajkumar Badole at Bharat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Samajik Saptah held at Gateway of India. The issue had special articles on the principal architect of India's Constitution, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, his life and contribution towards transforming India.

On the occasion, Rajkumar Badole declared year 2015-16 to be observed as Social Justice Year by the State Government. Director General, DGIPR, Chandrashekhar Oak informed about the contents of the issue. Principal Secretary, Social Justice, Ujjwal Uke; Commissioner, Social Welfare, Ranjeet Singh Deol; Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration, Harshdeep Kamble; Regional Deputy Commissioner, Yashwant More; Assistant Commissioner, Mumbai City, Shere; Assistant Commissioner, Mumbai Suburban, Avinash Devsatwar; Income Tax Commissioner, Subachan Ram; Amol Madame of Prajasatak Bharat Sanghata; Director, DGIPR, Devendra Bhujbal and others were among the dignitaries present.

HONOUR

DADASAHEB PHALKE AWARD

BORN FOR THE LIMELIGHT

Noted veteran actor Shashi Kapoor has been chosen for the highest award in Indian cinema, Dadasaheb Phalke award for the year 2014



Hindi film actor and producer, Shashi Kapoor has been selected for the 46th Dadasaheb Phalke Award for his outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema. The seasoned actor will be given the award on the 62nd National Film Awards ceremony in May in New Delhi.

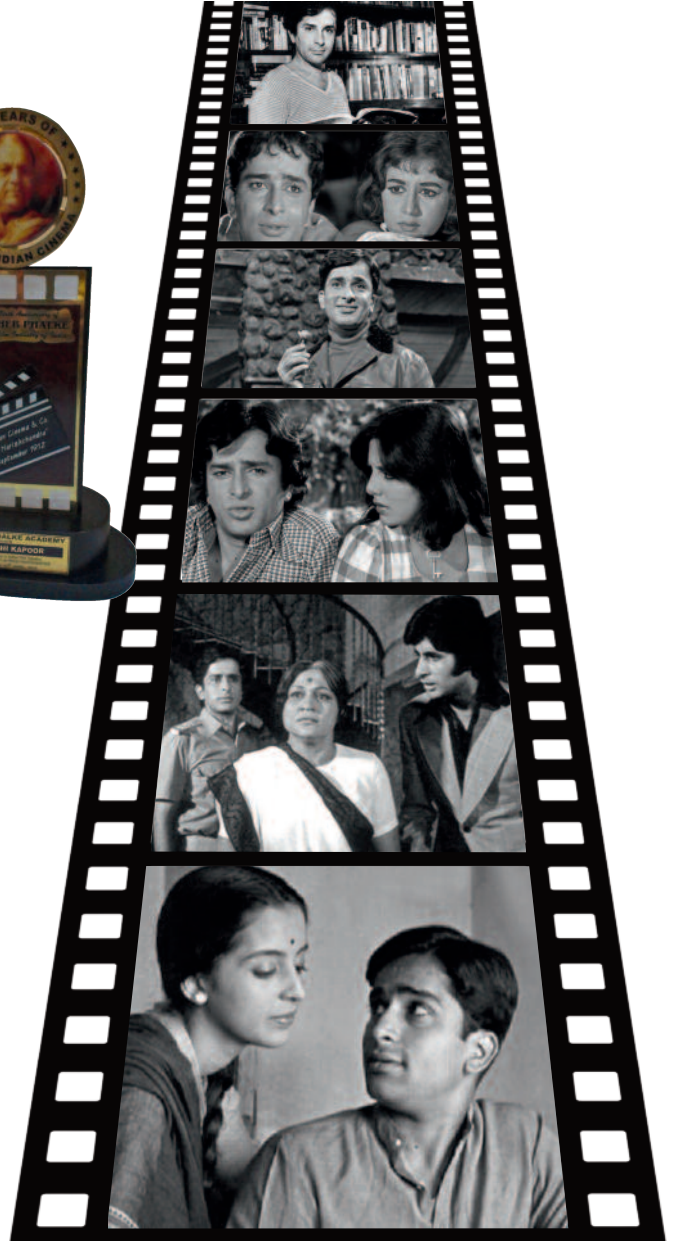
Born in 1938, Shashi Kapoor, a reluctant actor initially, started as an employee of Prithvi Theatre, the drama company started by his

father Prithviraj Kapoor. He had already started his tryst with cinema, appearing in several films as a child actor. In *Aag* (1948) and *Awaara* (1951), he played the younger version of the character played by his elder brother and acclaimed actor-producer, Raj Kapoor.

Shashi Kapoor was with Prithvi Theatre until 1960, when it closed down. But, the actor was keen to learn all aspects of the craft—from on-stage acting to backstage lighting, arranging props and management. Soon, he was working at two companies—Raj Kapoor's R.K. Studios, where he was studying the technical aspects of cinema, and Shakespeareana, a touring theatre company managed by Geoffrey Kendal. His debut as a leading man in films came only in 1961 with *Dharmputra*. Shashi Kapoor was instrumental in reviving the Prithvi Theatre, which today his daughter Sanjana manages.

Considered Indian cinema's first real crossover actor, Shashi Kapoor also did several Hollywood movies. His extensive filmography, which comprises of more than 100 Hindi films such as *Jab Jab Phool Khile*, *Deewar*, *Kabhi Kabhi*, *Trishul*, *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* and *Namak Halaal* and English films—notably those made by Merchant Ivory Productions—such as *The Householder*, *Shakespeare Wallah*, *Bombay Talkie* and *Heat and Dust*. *Siddhartha* and *Muhafiz* are his other foreign films.

Shashi Kapoor was an assistant director to late actor Sunil Dutt when he made *Post Box 999*. He turned director with 1991 Hindi film *Ajooba* and produced films such as *36 Chowringhee Lane* and *Utsav*. Arun Jaitley, Minister for



Shashi Kapoor is the third in his family to get the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, after his father Prithviraj Kapoor and elder brother Raj Kapoor

Information and Broadcasting, congratulated the senior actor, in a statement. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, said in a tweet, "his sensitive portrayal of human emotions has touched many a heart". Shashi Kapoor has won the National Film Award thrice and was conferred the Padma Bhushan in 2011.

Instituted in 1969, Dadasaheb Phalke Award is given in the memory of Dadasaheb Phalke, the father of Indian cinema, who made India's first full-length feature film, *Raja Harishchandra* in 1913. The award consists of the *swarn kamal* or golden lotus, a prize of ₹10 lakh and a shawl. It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony organised by the Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. **M**



Noted writer Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade (left) receiving the 50th Jnanpith award from Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi

THE WINNING NOTE

Acclaimed writer, Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade is a proud recipient of the 50th Jnanpith Award, one of India's topmost literary awards, for his invaluable contribution to the field of literature

Eminent Marathi litterateur, novelist, critic, poet, academic, a relentless advocate of the literary movements and leader of the post-1960s Little Magazine Movement, Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade was conferred the Golden Jubilee Jnanpith Award at the hands of the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on April 25, in New Delhi. Dr. Nemade was honoured with the highest literary award for his immense valuable literary contribution. He is 76.

The award ceremony held at the Balayogi Auditorium of the Parliament Library witnessed eminent litterateurs across the country. After receiving the prestigious award, Dr. Nemade said, "The award has further increased my responsibility. Though receiving such awards feels good, however, simultaneously it reminds you of shouldering more responsibility and duties towards society."

Dr. Nemade, whose novel *Kosala* (cocoon), written in 1963, changed the dimensions of Marathi novel. "I shall always abide by my commitment to write what is right. Writing is what binds me to my readers and to humanity," he said after accepting the award.



“The award has further increased my responsibility. Though receiving such awards feels good, however, simultaneously it reminds you of shouldering more responsibility and duties towards society
—Bhalchandra Nemade



Famous for his *Hindu* and *Hindu Jagnyachi Samrudhha Adgal*, he has inscribed his name prominently in the annals of Indian literature.

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that Dr. Nemade's works would inspire future generations, while pointing out that creative writing has the capacity to touch lives.

"Traversing an expansive timeline, the manner in which *Hindu* leaps through space and time, wielding language and experimenting, with structure is unprecedented in Marathi letters. *Hindu* prominently showcases Nemade's linguistic scholarship, his creative dexterity with words and an encyclopaedic civilisational consciousness," a statement from the Jnanpith's selection committee said.

After *Kosala*, Dr. Nemade presented a different protagonist, Changadev Patil, through his four novels *Bidhar*, *Hool*, *Jarila* and *Jhool*. Another tetralogy begins with *Hindu—Jagnyachi Samrudhha Adgal* in 2010 having Khanderao, the archaeologist as its protagonist. The novel *Hindu* had won him critical acclaim.

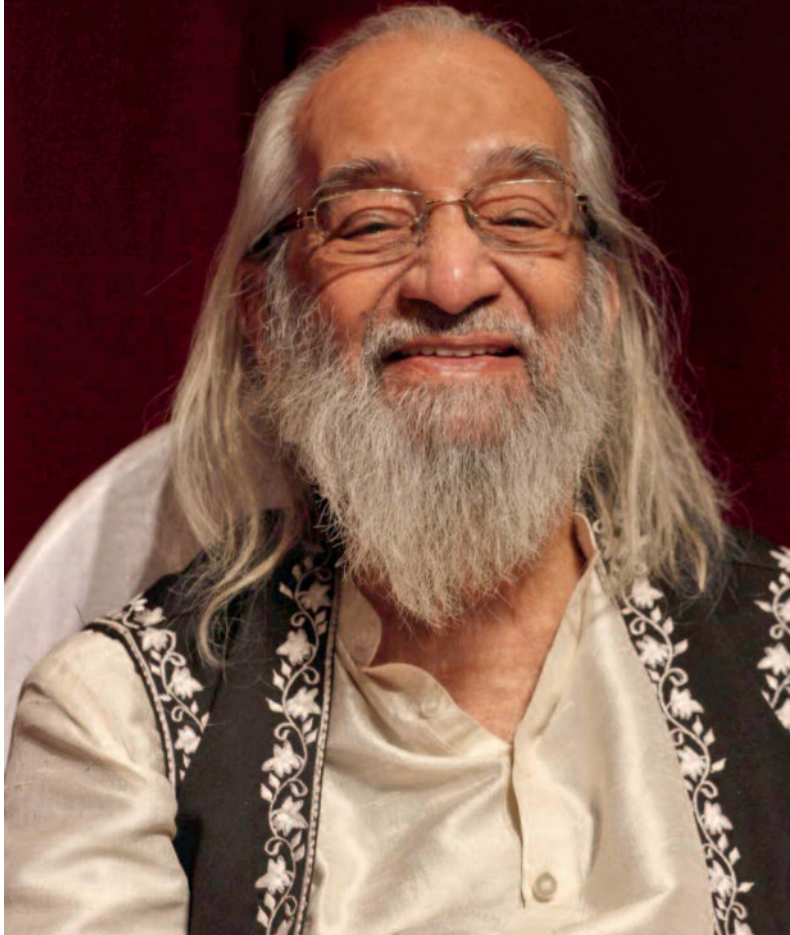
As a critic, Dr. Nemade has always underlined *deshivad*, a theory that negates globalisation or internationalism, asserting the value of writers' native heritage. "Marathi literature ought to try to revive its native base and explore its indigenous sources," he has often urged.

Born in 1938 in Sangavi village in North Maharashtra's Khandesh region, Dr. Nemade graduated in literature from Fergusson College, Pune. He post-graduated in Linguistics from Deccan College, Pune and English Literature from the Mumbai University. With a Ph. D. and D. Lit from North Maharashtra University, Dr. Nemade has taught English, Marathi and comparative literature at various universities, including the School of Oriental and African Studies, London. He received a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1990 for his critical work *Teeka Svayanwar*.

Dr. Bhalchandra Nemade is the fourth Marathi writer to receive the prestigious literary award. He was chosen for the honour by a 10-member selection board headed by noted scholar, writer and critic Namar Singh of the Bhartiya Jnanpith on February 7. Instituted in 1961, Jnanpith Award is given to any Indian citizen writing in the official languages of India. The award carries a sum of ₹11 lakh, a citation plaque and a bronze replica of Goddess Saraswati. He was conferred a Padma Shri in 2011. **M**

THE JEWEL IN THE CROWN

Octogenarian historian *Shiv Shahir* Babasaheb Purandare has been chosen for the prestigious Maharashtra Bhushan award



Balwant Moreshwar Purandare—a historian, writer and theatre personality from Maharashtra has been selected for the Maharashtra Bhushan award. The octogenarian historian, Babasaheb Purandare's major works have contributed much to the cult of Maratha warrior king, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

Babasaheb Purandare, 92, is known as Shiv Shahir because of his bestselling narrative *Raja Shiva Chatrapati* and *Janata Raja*, a popular play replete with medieval Indian pageantry that recreates the 17th century atmosphere in Maharashtra through incidents in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's life. The Maratha history commentator, who made Chhatrapati Shivaji

“Through history, one should be searching for what the nation is endowed with, not be mired with the facts of peace treaties and battles

—Babasaheb Purandare

”

Maharaj's biography his sole goal in life, believed, “Through history, one should be searching for what the nation is endowed with, not be mired with the facts of peace treaties and battles.”

He was one of the key leaders of the Bal Thackeray-led Shiv Sena in the 1970s. His nationalistic vision of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and the Marathas, as embodied in his recreation of the king's life and times, is at odds with the more realistic assessment of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's importance in Indian history and society by great historians like Sir Jadunath Sarkar (in his 1919 masterpiece *Shivaji and His Times*) and left-liberals in Maharashtra like Govind Pansare (in his bestselling pamphlet *Who Was Shivaji?*).

Babasaheb Purandare has published several books like *Purandaryanchi Daulat*, *Purandaryanchi Naubat*, *Gadsanch*—a treatise on the history of forts and fortresses, *Shelarkhind*, and last but not the least *Raja Shiv Chhatrapati*, a publication that has almost 16 editions and has reached over five lakh households to date.

He wrote for Acharya Atre's newspaper and also worked for the fortnightly magazine *Manus*. He together with senior historian and novelist G. N. Dandekar also known as GoNiDa became the harbingers of the heritage of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's life history to the new generation. Babasaheb participated whole-heartedly in the post-independence Dadra–Nagar–Haveli freedom struggle, along with Sudhir Phadke.

Although Saswad was his ancestral village, Babasaheb Purandare spent the better part of his life in Pune. Later, he started working at the Bharat Itihas Sanshodhan Mandal (Indian History Research Society), where he met his mentor, historian G.H. Khare. It was here that Babasaheb Purandare began his research in history. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's biography, he believes, “is a study of creation of a person's character.” He aptly showcases and unfolds the character, traits and persona of Chhatrapati Shivaji through his life and times in his writings, discourses, commentaries and plays. A sense of pride in history, research orientation and perseverance to seek the truth together with his sharp intellect, analytical abilities and his presentation skills, be it through his writing or oration, has inspired many to take up scholastic study of the life of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

The Maharashtra Bhushan award was instituted in 1995 and carries a prize of ₹5 lakh, a citation and a memento. **M**



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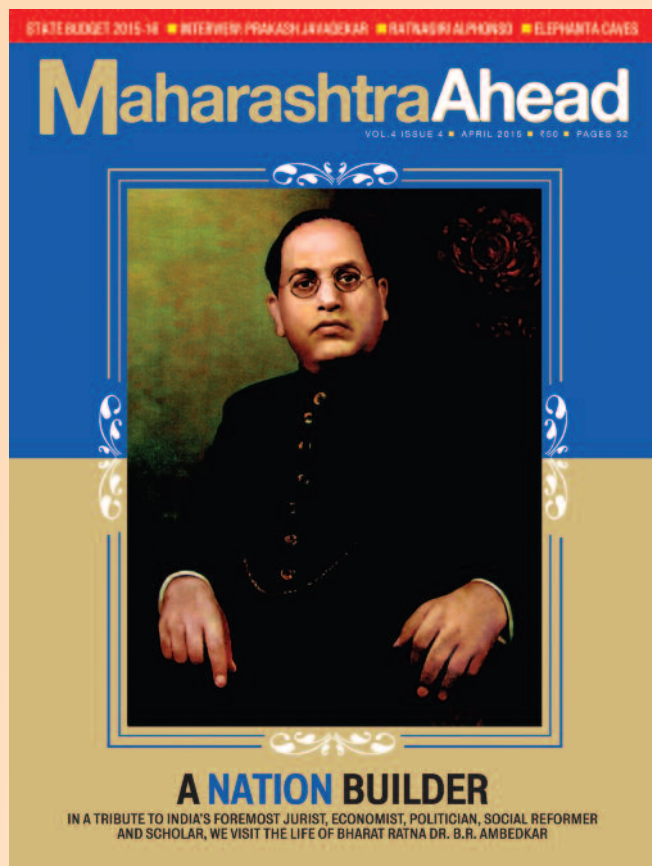
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