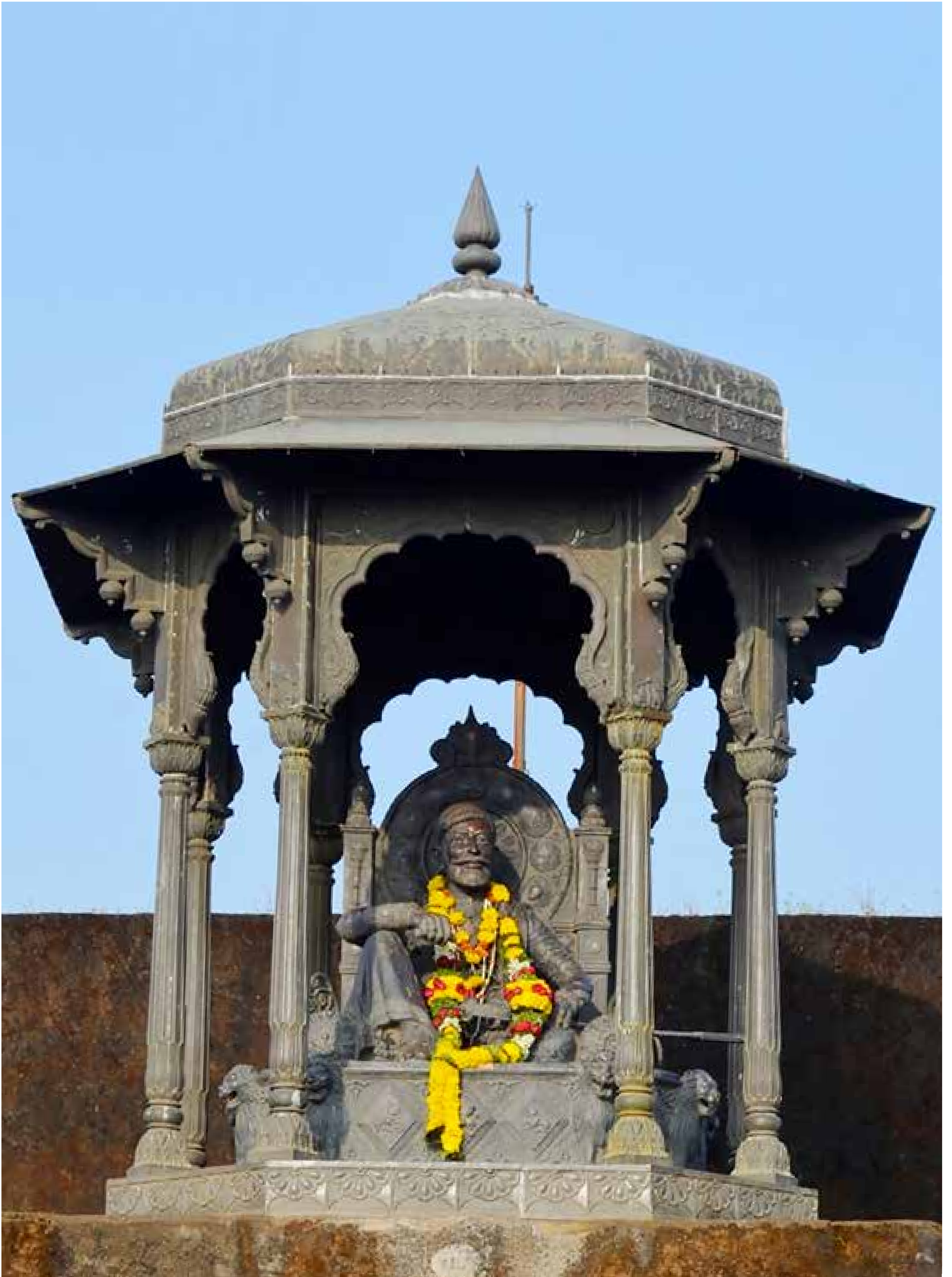


Marvellous MAHARASHTRA





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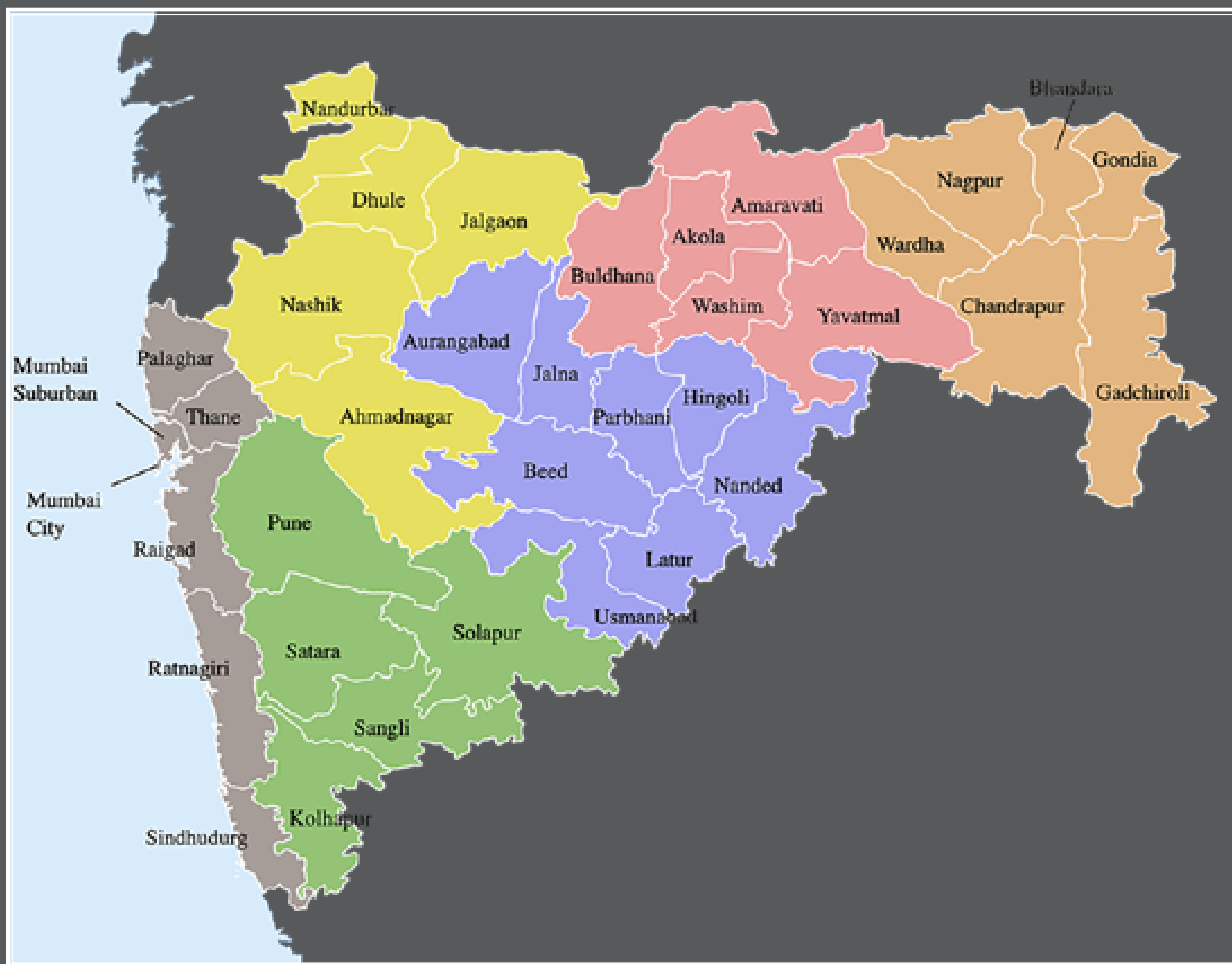
भारत 2023 INDIA

वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE

01

Introduction



MAGNIFICENT, MESMERISING MAHARASHTRA

The rich culture and heritage of Maharashtra come from its glorious past. Despite industrialisation and modernisation in later centuries, the State has preserved its traditional professions, culture, art, and craft. Its drive to be inclusive and pro-growth has made it a place for everyone

Located on the coast of the magnificent Arabian Sea, the State of Maharashtra occupies the western and central part of India. The 720-kilometre-long coastline and Sahyadri mountain ranges on the west, the Satpuda hills along the north and Bhamragad-Chiroli-Gaikhuri ranges on the east serve as its natural borders.

The State has a geographical area about 3.08 lakh sq. km. and is truly blessed by nature in every sense of the word.

The biodiversity-rich Western Ghats, the tranquil beaches that dot the Arabian Sea coastline, the rivers that criss-cross the land flowing east, west and south, the mountains that stretch out into the mists, a forest cover of 61,952 sq.km, a tropical monsoon climate, the varied abundance of flora, wildlife, and produce from land and sea, all contribute to the magnificence of Maharashtra's beauty, productivity and heritage.

Politically too, Maharashtra has a glorious and powerful legacy. From the rule of the Satavahanas through the reign of the Chalukyas, to the dominant leadership of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and into modern times, the State has impacted the nation's history. It was at the forefront during the freedom struggle, and it was here that the Indian National Congress was born.

Each historical era has left its mark on the State through formidable forts, architectural marvels, stupendous works in the arts, sumptuous cuisine, and eclectic crafts.

Add to this cornucopia the diversity of its people in culture, tradition, beliefs, language and skills, and the brilliance of Maharashtra shines eternal.

The Industrial Might of Maharashtra

The State is an industrial hub and has been contributing majorly to the growth of the national economy. The economy of Maharashtra is driven



A famous hill fort of Maharashtra, Pratapgad Fort is situated close to the famous hill station of Mahabaleshwar in Satara district.

mainly by manufacturing, finance, international trade, mass media, technology, petroleum, fashion, apparel, gems and jewellery, IT and ITES, and tourism.

The State has a well-developed industrial ecosystem for industries, namely automobile, electronic systems design and manufacturing, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, engineering, textile, food processing, logistics, cement and steel industry and IT and ITES. It has established a sin-

gle-window investor facilitation cell—MAITRI—to facilitate clearances through a single window to industrial entrepreneurs. With one of the best industrial infrastructures in place, it is only proper that the State has the maximum large and mega projects in the country.

Foreign direct investment (FDI) has brought innovative technologies in the industrial units,



Automobile and Oil Refinery are a few of the important Industrial sectors of Maharashtra

raised competitiveness among the units, and increased domestic investment in Maharashtra. The State attracted Rs.48,633 crore FDI in 2021-2022, accounting for 21% of India's share.

It has attracted highest FDI inflows of Rs.9,59,746 crore in the past 20 years. The highest State FDI inflow received October 2019 to September 2021 was at 26 per cent. Maharashtra is also the second largest exporting state from India with \$73.12 billion (Rs.5.45 lakh crore) exports in the financial year 2021-22. It constitutes 17.33 per cent of total exports from India, which is \$421.85 billion (Rs 31.46 lakh crore) in the same period.

The first quarter of the financial year 2022-23 has seen an increase of 22 per cent exports compared to the last five years, i.e., Rs. 1.25 lakh crore in FY19 to 1.52 lakh crore in FY23.

An important part of Maharashtra's industrial success is its infrastructure built for business. Over the years, Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation has developed 289 industrial complexes and over 2.5 lakh acres of land.

A Socio-Economic Powerhouse

Maharashtra has been a preferred destination for investment in India with GSDP of \$400 billion, making it one of the largest economies of

India. The continuous inflow of FDI in the State and several initiatives taken by the Government for ease of doing business (EoDB), sectoral policies, quality infrastructure, export initiatives and skilled manpower, makes Maharashtra a leader.

The State has one of the highest per capita incomes in India (Rs. 2.25 lakh in 2021-22) and highest value of exports (17.3% of India's ex-

ports). It has the largest base of internet users, developed infrastructure (five international and 13 domestic airports, two major and 53 minor ports), and largest power capacity.

With 991 engineering and management colleges and 958 ITIs, the state also has the highest employable talent in India at 68 per cent.

Committed to Agriculture



Agriculture is the mainstay of the State. Maharashtra's economy is principally agrarian, and agriculture is the main occupation of the people. The State produces both food and cash crops. Prime crops include rice, jowar, bajra, wheat, pulses, turmeric, onions, cotton, sugarcane, and several oil seeds including groundnut, sunflower and soybean.

The State has huge areas under fruit cultivation of which mangoes, bananas, grapes, and oranges are the main ones.

Maharashtra is the first State to adopt dry land farming technology. There is emphasis on the development of horticulture along with agriculture. The State also has the first farmers' company in the seed sector, State Seed Corporation. It is a pioneer in cooperative networks with the existence of sugar factories, dairies, and water user associations.

Maharashtra has four state agricultural universities and presence of effective and research based farmers' organisations. Grape farmers use the latest technologies such as Eurepgap, Agmark, bar-coding and residue monitoring systems, among others. The concept of contract farming and corporate farming is in the way of promotion.

To enhance climate resilience and profitability of smallholders farming systems in selected districts of Maharashtra, the Project on Climate Resilient Agriculture in Maharashtra (PoCRA), a six-year project, is being implemented in 15 dis-

tricts in partnership with the World Bank since 18 May 2018.

The project aims to promote a climate-resilient agriculture system, post-harvest management, value chain promotion and institutional development in the project area.

Focus on Education

Maharashtra, along with Kerala and Punjab, has been ranked first in the Government of India's Performance Grading Index (PGI) report for the academic year 2020-21. Despite the pandemic, the schools in the State excelled in the five parameters of learning outcome, access, equity, infrastructure facilities and governance process.

The infrastructure facilities domain includes measures such as providing safe infrastructure, working toilets, clean drinking water, clean and attractive spaces, electricity, computing devices, internet, libraries, and sports and recreational resources, among others. Indicators like availability of digital facilities, timely availability of textbooks and uniforms—which are critical inputs for better performance of students—are also measured by the index.

Maharashtra's literacy rate is 82.34 per cent, with 88.38 per cent of men and 78.57 per cent of women literate, according to census 2011 data.



(From top left): The third-oldest college in Asia, College of Engineering Pune, was established in 1854; Maharashtra, along with Kerala and Punjab, has been ranked first in the Government of India's Performance Grading Index; agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Maharashtra.





(From top): To improve the living standards of slum dwellers, the Government of Maharashtra has a comprehensive slum rehabilitation scheme; out of 339 sites identified for wind power projects in the country, 40 sites are in Maharashtra.



The State has a sophisticated educational system with more than 84,000 schools, 45 universities, and 1,000 colleges.

Modern schools and colleges were established during the colonial era largely due to the efforts of social reformers such as Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Indian nationalists like Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, and foreign missions such as the American Marathi Mission and Scottish Presbyterian missionary John Wilson. The State has South Asia's oldest women's liberal arts college, SNDT Women's University founded in 1916. It has also the third-oldest college in Asia, College of Engineering Pune, established in 1854. The Government Polytechnic, in Nagpur, is one of the first polytechnics founded in India, in 1914.

Urbanisation with Development

Maharashtra is highly urbanised as 45.23 per cent of its population lives in cities and is high on

What makes Maharashtra magnificent? Its land, people, culture or work ethic? Perhaps all of these, but most of all, its welcoming spirit. The State has earned this reputation because of its rich cultural and liberal history. Maharashtra means a Great Nation, and the State has stood strong in this test of times.

literacy, according to Census 2011. In the State, the number of urban centres has increased from 266 in 1961 to 534 in 2011. The level of urbanization in the State ranges from 6.93 per cent in Gadchiroli district to 100 per cent in Mumbai and Mumbai suburbs.

Of the total urban population in the State, 80 per cent is concentrated in Class-I towns only. To maintain the civic amenities in city's urban centres, metropolitan region development authorities like the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) have been established for Pune, Nagpur, Nashik and Aurangabad.

Mumbai, the financial capital of India, has a population of over 100 million, making it the country's most populous city. Next to Mumbai, the cities of Pune, Nashik and Nagpur are also densely populated.

An important plan of the Government of Maharashtra is a comprehensive slum rehabilitation scheme to improve the environmental living of the slum dwellers. Under Digital Maharashtra, the State Government plans to digitalise Gram Panchayats. The concepts of Digital Highway and Digital Market have been introduced to bring a revolutionary change in the working systems of the villages.

Infrastructure: The Road to Success

Maharashtra has always been the land of opportunities. With the Government's big push for infrastructure development, there are ample opportunities for investors and citizens of the State.

Focus is laid especially on the transport sector by taking up a slew of projects to improve connectivity and smoothen traffic flow.

Key transport infrastructure projects are Mumbai Coastal Road and Trans-Harbour Link, Mumbai-Nagpur communication super expressway, all-weather road connectivity across the State, and the ambitious metro rail projects in Mumbai, Pune and Nagpur.

These projects will further consolidate the State's pre-eminence as the favoured investment destination. The Government hopes to change the face of Maharashtra with the development of these projects.

The Mumbai-Nagpur Communication Super



Maharashtra has an extensive road network that includes national and state highways, major district roads, other district roads, and village roads.

Expressway, called the Samruddhi Mahamarg, is a major project that will improve transport infrastructure across the State. The first phase of the 701 km Nagpur-expressway from Nagpur to Shirdi will be operational by November. The project will directly connect ten districts, 26 talukas and around 392 villages.

In the first phase, it will connect eight districts. The project will bring Nagpur and Mumbai within eight hours reach. It will also connect several industrial areas, the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC), the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC), dry ports of Wardha and Jalna, and Mumbai's Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT).

The multi-billion-dollar project of DMIC will connect six Indian States to create a strong economic base with a globally competitive environment and state-of-the-art infrastructure with a view to help local commerce, enhance investments and attain sustainable development. In Maharashtra, the projects will cover two industrial areas, Shendre Bidkin and Dighi Port.

Aurangabad Industrial City (AURIC) is being developed as part of DMIC. The Government is



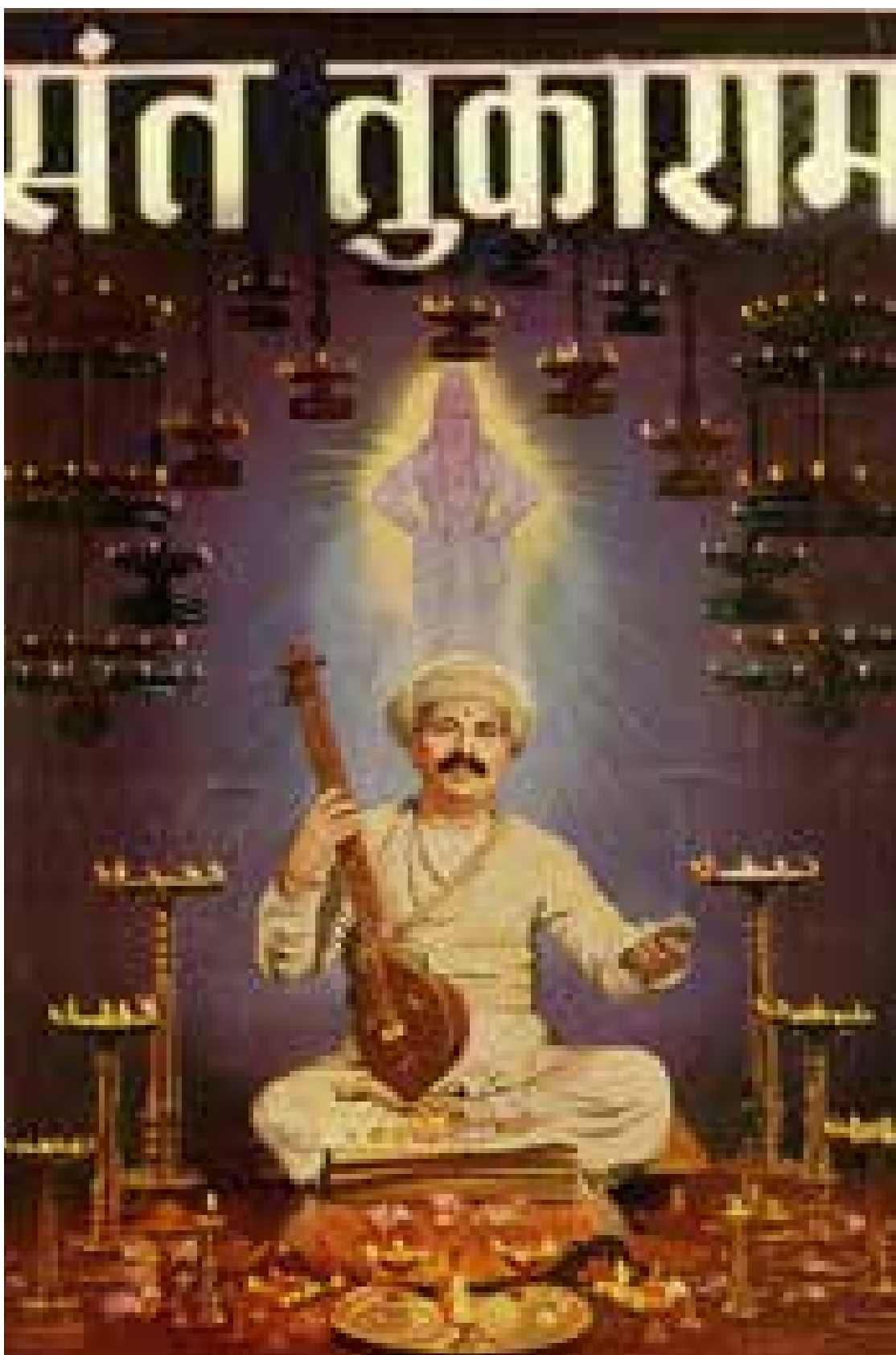
determined to expand the metro rail network in the State.

There are plans in place to expand the metro network in Mumbai, Nagpur and Pune. Another

focus is on strengthening the airport network in the state for swift movement of cargo and people. There are three international and 15 domestic airports in the State.



(Clockwise from top): Poster of first full-length film *Raja Harishchandra* produced by Dadasaheb Phalke, the Father of Indian cinema; *Do Aankhen Barah Haath*, a movie by Marathi actor, producer and film maker, V. Shantaram; a 1936 Marathi film, produced by Prabhat Film Company and based on the life of Sant Tukaram.



Home of Cinema

Mumbai, the capital of Maharashtra, is the home of the world's largest film industry, Bollywood, which is now 110 years old. Innovator Dadasaheb Phalke, the father of Indian cinema, chose Mumbai to produce India's first full-length film, *Raja Harishchandra*, in 1913.

There was no looking back for Indian cinema after this black-and-white silent film. In 1931, India had its first talkie, *Alam Ara*, that introduced the idea of music and playback singing in Indian

cinema. Now, after completing 100 years, Indian cinema produces more than 1,000 films every year in several languages.

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. Trailblazers such as V. Shantaram, B.R. Chopra, Shakti Samanta, Raj Kapoor, Mehboob Khan and Manmohan Desai will not be forgotten while writing a history of Bollywood. The term Bollywood,

from Bombay (the earlier name of Mumbai) and Hollywood, originated in the 1970s, when India surpassed the US as the world's largest film producer. It is one of the biggest film industries in the world in terms of the number of people employed, and its epicentre, Filmcity, is one of India's largest studio complexes.

This industry has produced three remarkable Indian films—*Mother India* (1957), *Salaam Bombay!* (1988) and *Lagaan* (2001)—that made it to the Academy Awards (also known as the Oscars) as India's official entry to the Best Foreign Language Film category.

Praiseworthy Position

With new amenities and infrastructure being added to the State regularly, Maharashtra maintains its position as one of the most favoured destinations for people and businesses from around the world.

Even with increasing industrialisation and urbanisation, the State has worked to preserve its traditional values and cultural heritage, right from art and culture to handicrafts and cuisine. The people are warm and kind-hearted, welcoming everyone with love and gratitude.

This gesture by the Maharashtrians has made the capital city of Mumbai cosmopolitan and home for diverse professionals from different parts of the country and world.

From long coastlines to large forest areas with a thriving wildlife population, and abundant temples, forts, monuments, and art, Maharashtra has something for everyone. Maharashtra had the highest numbers of foreign tourist visits, with 1.26 million, in 2021, says the India Tourism Statistics 2022 report by Union Tourism Ministry released in September 2022.

A photograph of a forest path with large trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves. A large, semi-transparent number '02' is overlaid in the center.

02

State Symbols

MEET THE STATE SYMBOLS OF MAHARASHTRA

The State has its own nature-oriented symbols which represent the natural beauty and richness of its eco-system, from flower to tree, animal and bird to butterfly

State flower: Jarul (Tamhan)

With shades of red and violet colours, this flower is seen in the jungles of Western Maharashtra, on the banks of rivers in Konkan, where it is known as 'Motha Bondara'. This flower is found in Mumbai and Vidarbha as well. When the spring arrives, the tree gets new leaves, and the season of flowers begins. Medicinally, it is used to control blood pressure, diabetes and cholesterol.



(Clockwise from left): State flower, Jarul; State animal, Shekaru; State bird, Hariyal; State butterfly, Blue Mormon; State tree, Amba

State animal: Shekaru (The Indian Giant Squirrel)

Shekaru (scientific name Ratufa Indica) is a rare species of squirrel that is endemic to India and endangered. The beautiful squirrel is found in Bhimashankar, Phansad, Ajoba mountain range and in areas like Mahuli and Vasota in Maharashtra. Shekaru is also found in Tadoba and Melghat. The squirrel weighs two to two-and-a-half kilos and has length between two to three feet. It has blood-red eyes, moustache, brown fur all over body, and a yellow belt on neck and stomach. They have pronounced and broadened hands with an expanded inner paw for gripping. The tail is long and strong. The color of the tail is light brown to creamy white on the tip. It can jump between 15 to 20 feet.

State bird: Hariyal

(Yellow legged/footed green pigeon)

This State bird of Maharashtra is a dove also known as Green Pigeon. Hariyal is found at Anand Sagar, Shegaon. Its body has shades of various colours such as emerald-green, blue, and violet. This bird is largely found on big trees such as Banyan, Peepal and fig trees. They usually feed on different kinds of fruits. Though they



forage in flocks but can be seen sitting in pairs. Their mating season is from March to June.

State tree: Mango (Aamba)

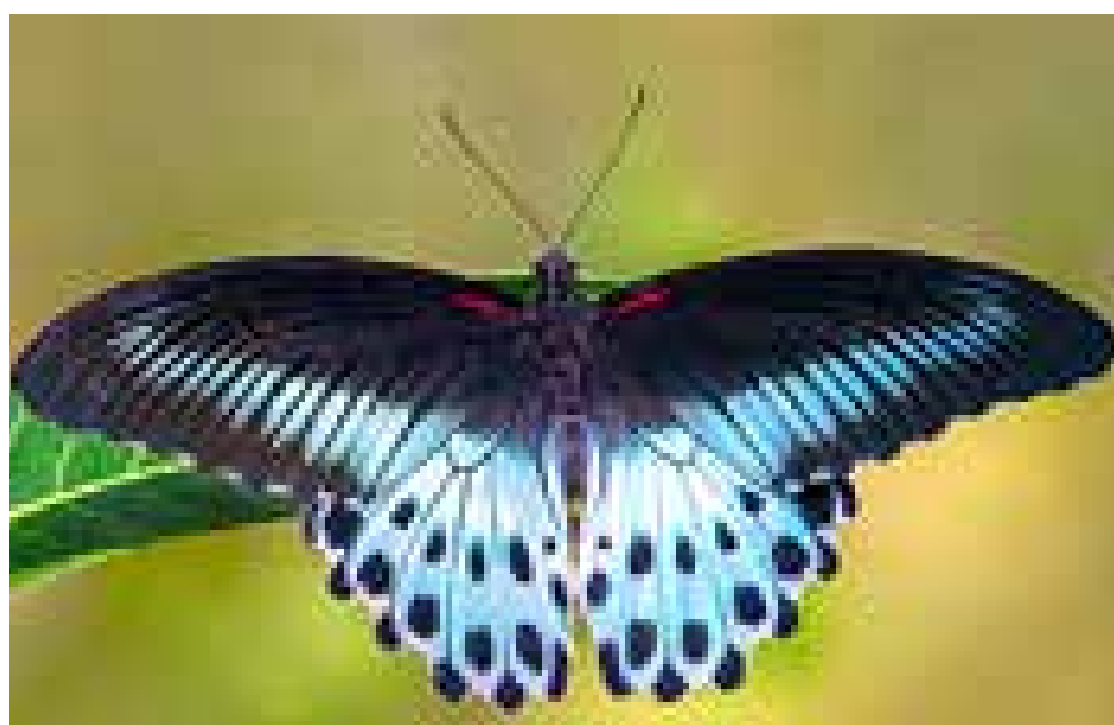
The mango is regarded as the king of all fruits. There are many varieties of mango and the size of the fruit depends on the variety. This tree is always full of leaves having 15 to 25 metre height, 4 to 5 diameter, and has dome-like shape. Its

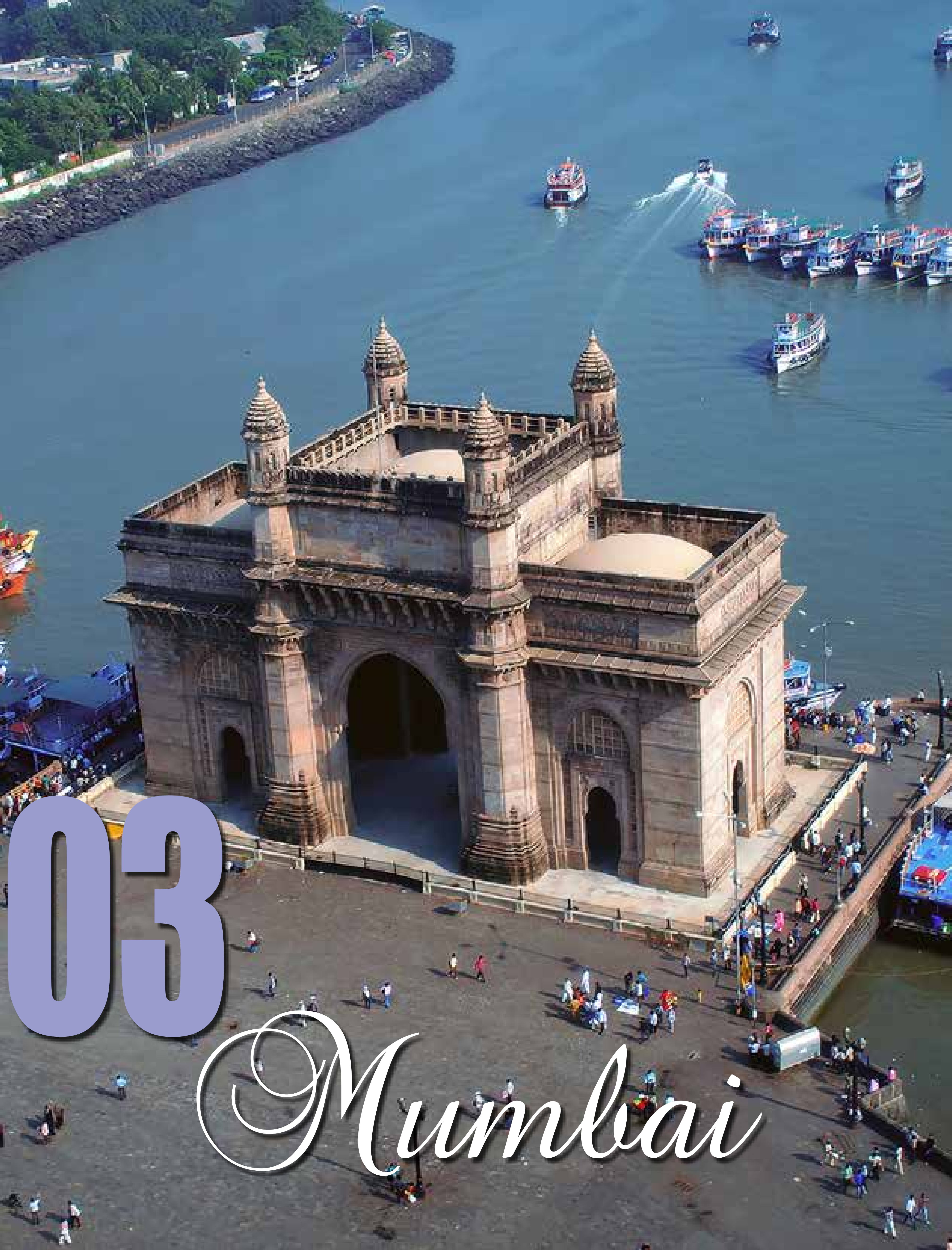


skin is rough, black, and full of cracks. Leaves are simple, tender red and in due course become brown. These leaves, tapered towards the end, become sharp and are in green colour and are used in religious ceremonies and for decor.

State butterfly: Blue Mormon

Blue Mormon is the second biggest butterfly after Southern Birdwing. It is nearly 15 inches long and largely in black velvet colour with some interesting signs in blue colour on its wings. The butterfly, with black colour under its wings, has some red dots noticeable on its body. Blue Mormon is known as Ran Pakoli of Maharashtra and found in the entire state and some jungles of South India. The butterfly is in abundance in Sahyadri mountain range and nearby areas.





03

Mumbai

THE CITY OF DREAMS

Mumbai is the commercial capital of India that has evolved into a global financial hub

Mumbai, earlier known as Bombay, has been aptly described as the most 'city-like city' in India. The British called it Urbs Primus in Indis, while others address it as the New York of the East. The 'Gateway' to India in colonial days, Mumbai is truly the City of Dreams for millions who live in the city. The city ranks fifth among the large cities of the world. Despite the numbers, the city has kept its balance with nature, architecture, heritage and art brilliantly, promising visitors outstanding sights to behold and delights to enjoy.

According to a 2014 case study Global Cities Initiative, Mumbai was the most globalised city in South Asia. The city has been constantly developing. In a region of 1.5 billion people, it is the most internationalised economy, the location of major corporate headquarters, a centre for institutional decision-making, and the main destination for foreign investment and joint ventures. It is also home to the airport with the most international footfall, the busiest port system, and the two largest regional stock exchanges where large Indian firms are capitalised.

Mumbai is also the home of the world's largest film industry, Bollywood, which is now more than 100-year-old.

Landmarks of the City

One can begin the Mumbai tour with the most impressive example of Victorian Gothic architecture, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), formerly called Victoria Terminus. This train station, which is the hub for local and countrywide trains, was opened in 1887-88, Queen Victoria's golden jubilee year.

The building designed by F.W. Steven has Corinthian columns, domes, spires, and arches, with artwork by Bombay School of Art students and local craftsmen. The showpiece is a huge central dome surmounted by a statue, Progress, by Thomas Earp, executed by Bombay School of Art. Just below the dome are stained glass windows with foliage and locomotive

motifs set in a tower.

In front of the terminus is the municipal office building, which is another Steven showpiece. The Crawford Market (now known as Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Market) nearby is a work of William Emerson who later built Victoria Memorial in Kolkata and has fine stonework on its façade.

A walking distance from CSMT is Horniman Circle, earlier Elphinstone Circle, around which are located historic buildings such as the neo-classic Town Hall and the Doric Mint of the 1820s, Venetian Gothic buildings of the 1870s and St. Thomas Cathedral.

Considered to be the oldest British structure in Mumbai, this is a simple but charming church in Classical and Gothic styles. The church has white-washed interiors with polished wooden furniture and brass, and ornately carved grave-stones of British parishioners.

Not far from this church is the blue-washed Knesset Eliyadoo synagogue, built by the Sassoon family in the 1880s. It has an Indo-European façade, and the interiors are beautifully dec-

orated with ornate pillars and a well-preserved stained glass arch window. The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sanghralaya (Prince of Wales Museum), founded to commemorate the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1905, was opened in 1922. Designed by architect George Wittet, it is an impressive blending of Victorian Gothic

(From top): The Trimurti or three-headed sculpture of Lord Shiva at Elephanta Caves; UNESCO World Heritage Site Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT), formerly called Victoria Terminus



(Clockwise from left): The Bandra–Worli Sea Link; Kanheri Caves; Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sanghralaya (Prince of Wales Museum)



and Indo-Islamic features. A short distance from here is the green ground called Oval Maidan, surrounded by imposing Victorian civil buildings and art deco apartment blocks.

Overlooking the Oval is the 1857 Mumbai University campus designed by Gilbert Scott, famous for the Gothic architecture of St. Pancras Station in London.

The university's convocation hall has often been compared to fifteenth century Italian and French buildings and the Rajabhai clock tower standing about 79m high is said to be based on Giotto's campanile in Florence.

The neighbouring High Court has a high central tower flanked by octagonal towers with figures of 'Justice' and 'Mercy'.

The Old Secretariat which now serves as a civil and session court, the Public Works Office and Elphinstone College are other good examples of Victorian period architecture near the Oval. Across the Oval is Churchgate Station, another structure where young architect Stevens had an opportunity to show his design skills.

Where Nature Meets History

A healthy break from the busy metropolis is the Sanjay Gandhi National Park—one of North Mumbai's most well-liked tourist destinations. The park is spread over 104 square kilometres and is quite wooded, with magnificent lakes and trekking locales.

There were 175 caves in and around Mumbai,

mainly Buddhist and Hindu. The 129 caves of Kanheri, in Borivali, behind Sanjay Gandhi National Park, are a statement on the way in which the Buddhist monks lived. The biggest attractions here are the 22-23 feet high Buddha figures, the 11-headed Avalokiteshvara, and the panel of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara. Jivadani caves are in Virar. Magathane caves are six km to the west of Kanheri caves. These caves are worth a visit for the beautiful Makara decoration in the main cave. Some of its sculptures date back to the sixth century CE.

Located in Andheri, the Mahakali caves, also known as Kondivate, is a cluster of 19 caves. One of the caves here is interesting for its double-chambered arrangement. Closeby are the Jogeshwari caves that date back to 520 CE.

Just 11 km off the Mumbai Harbour are the Elephanta Caves dedicated to Shiva. The site is connected to the mainland by ferry services from Gateway of India. Hewn from solid basalt rock, it is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



04

Architecture

WHERE EDIFICES ENTHRAL

In Maharashtra, there exist several centuries old temples of wonder. These stone marvels embody devotion, beauty, perfection, and stories. A visit to these landmarks promises an enriching experience both spiritually and historically

Ajanta Caves, Aurangabad

The 29 rock-cut caves of Ajanta at Aurangabad feature paintings and sculptures that are considered masterpieces. One of the first World Heritage Sites of India recognised by UNESCO in 1983, these caves are believed to have been built between 2-6 BCE. The cave complex was built in two phases: the first in the Satavahana period in 2 BCE and the second in the Vakataka period around 6 BCE.

Encompassing both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist traditions, the caves have successfully preserved some of the best decorated paintings and frescoes of Buddhist art in India.

Ellora Caves, Aurangabad

Located northwest of Aurangabad, Ellora is an archaeological site ranging 29 km. This group of rock-cut caves was recognised by UNESCO as a heritage site in 1983. Built by the Rashtrakuta dynasty, the group of caves represents a mix of Hindu, Jain and Buddhist art. The caves are a series of 34 monasteries and temples.

Designed to suggest Kailash, the mountain abode of Lord Shiva, this temple—gateway, pavilion, assembly hall and sanctum—is made from a single rock and is double the area of the Parthenon. Over 2,00,000 tonnes of rock were excavated, and 7,000 labourers created this temple over 150 years.

Gondeshwara Temple, Nashik

The awe-inspiring temple is a majestic tribute to Lord Shiva. Located to the northeast of Sinnar town, 26 km away from Nashik, the temple is known for its outstanding construction and use of local black stone and lime, a brilliant showcase of native craftsman-

ship. The temple was built in the Hemadpanthi style of architecture, which was popularised by Hemadri Pandit, a minister in the Yadava court. It is a Shaiva Panchayatan, or a group of five temples within one enclosure.

Mahalakshmi Temple, Kolhapur

An architectural marvel, the Mahalakshmi temple is truly the pride of Kolhapur. The temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity, Mahalakshmi, who is worshipped here in the form of a four-armed, 40-kilogram idol, decorated with precious gemstones, and believed to be at least five to six thousand years old.

The complex displays a mortarless construction, reflecting the style of the early Deccan temples. The depictions of dancers, musicians

and deities make this Mahalakshmi temple a rich exhibition of Maratha sculpture.

Trimbakeshwar Temple, Nashik

The temple was built under the patronage of Peshwa Nanasaheb. The marvellous structure of black stone right is situated at the foothills of the Brahmagiri mountains from which the three sources of River Godavari originate. The temple is one of the 12 jyotirlingas in India.

The Nagara or 'northern' style of architecture is how this temple is typified, with its long, beehive shaped tower. The temple is enclosed within a spacious courtyard. The garbagriha or sanctum is a square internally and stellar on the outside. It houses a small shivalinga, which lies in a small depression on the floor of the sanctum, with a steady stream of water discharging from its top.

Grishneshwar Temple, Aurangabad

The temple belongs to the celebrated list of 12 Jyotirlinga temples of Lord Shiva.

It is nearly 3000 years old and the Linga faces east. The sanctum sanctorum includes Lord Grishneshwar and his consort Grishneshwari. Situated at Devagiri, close to the Ellora caves, the residing deity has several names, such as Grushmeswara and Grishneshwar. Though it is still unknown as to who exactly built the original temple, records state that Maloji Raje Bhosale (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's grandfather) re-constructed it in the 16th century. Later, Ahilyabai Holkar undertook some more reconstructions.

This huge structure is made entirely of spotted red stone. Borne by 24 intricately carved stone columns, the temple is richly decorated with carvings, exquisite friezes and





(From above): Kailash Leni, the sixteenth cave and one of the 32 cave temples and monasteries forming the magnanimous Ellora Caves; Trimbakeshwar Jyotirlinga located on the banks of river Godavari, 28 km from Nashik city.

sculptures.

Elephanta Caves, Mumbai

This celebrated network of sculpted caves is located on the Elephanta Island or Gharapuri in Mumbai Harbour, 11 km east of the city of Mumbai. Carved in solid basalt rock, the cave has a main entrance on the north with two other openings on the east and west, and a central hall with six rows of pillared columns, six in each row except on the western corner, where lies a shrine of the lingam.

The caves are known for their rock-cut sculptures depicting Shiva. One idol shows Shiva bringing river Ganga down to earth. The others show him as Lord of Yogis seated on a lotus, and as Nataraja, the many-armed cosmic dancer. Constructed between the sixth and seventh century, the cave complex of Elephanta was recognised by UNESCO as a heritage site in 1987.



05

Experiences



NATURE'S EXTRAVAGANZAS

The Konkan, well known for its natural beauty, stretches along a 720 km coastal line from Raigad to Mangalore. Bounded by the Sahyadri hills on the east and the Arabian Sea on the west

Mesmerising Kaas Plateau

If one ever has wished to be surrounded by a bounty of colourful flowers and nothing else for quite a distance, the Kaas Plateau is just the place to be. Just 278 km from the bustling city of Mumbai lies this pristine and wonderfully unique ecosystem nestled in the Sahyadri Mountains. The metamorphosis that takes place here during the monsoon season is like witnessing Mother Nature unfolding a miracle that astounds the world and leaves it speechless. Known as the 'Plateau of a Million Flowers', Kaas has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the reason is quite clear—it is acknowledged as home to endemic life forms that are found nowhere else in the world! But what truly amazes is the carpet of wildflowers in variegated colours as more than 850 species of flowering plants bud and blossom, some of which are unique to this area. Further, this carpet of flowers changes colours every fortnight as the cycle of the plants progresses with the monsoons. This extravaganza begins late July and continues to October.



Over 1 lakh flamingos flock to the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary, Sewri, and adjacent areas until May.

A Date with Olive Ridleys

The Velas beach in Maharashtra's Ratnagiri district has something interesting every year. This beach witnesses the newly hatched Olive Ridley turtles finding their way to their real home. Located almost 300 km from Mumbai, inside the Konkan coast, Velas would have continued with its near-anonymous existence if it was not for a chance discovery by Sahyadri Nisarga Mitra, a Maharashtra-based nature club. It was in 2002, when the members, during a survey of sea eagles that nested in the rocky patches along the beach, discovered small mounds of sand littering the beach. They asked the local people and learned that these were nests of turtles that came from the sea to lay eggs. The female turtles begin to lay their eggs in February and hatching takes place March to April. Supported by the club, the villagers participate actively in the protection of the turtle eggs and hatchlings. This conservation

project is celebrated with an annual festival that draws visitors from all corners of India and the world.

A Pastoral Affair

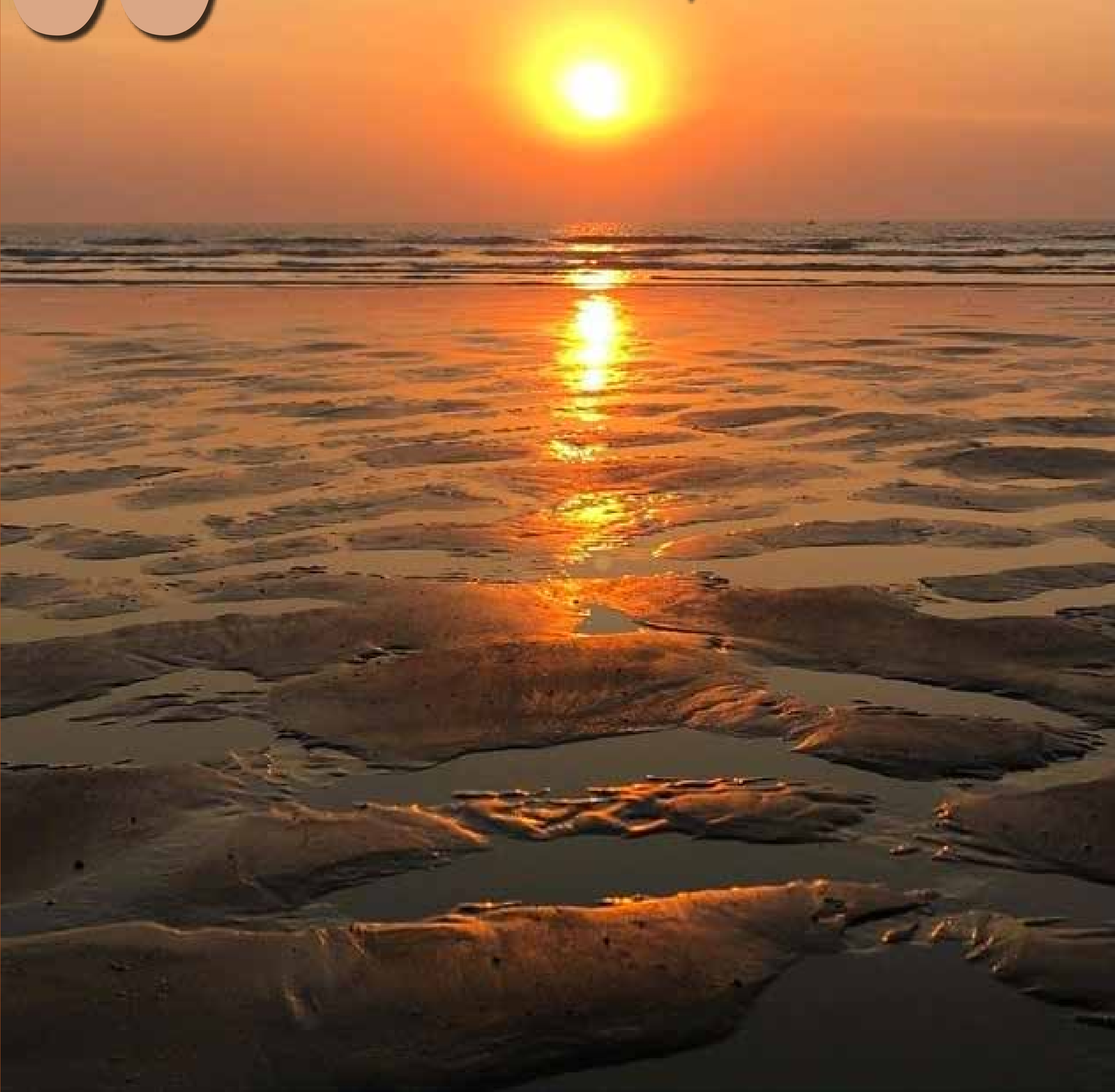
Agro tourism is all about living a rural life, where swimming in rivers, streams, wells or ponds is a daily routine. It involves staying on a farm and helping in farming activities for the experience. The visitor gets familiarised with the community's culture by participating in the village traditions, engaging in village arts and crafts, and learning about crops and animals and the food process. Adventure sports, bird watching, visits to monuments, religious pilgrimages, exploring forts and caves, are all value additions. There are 328 agro tourism centres spread across Maharashtra in Baramati, Satara, Pune, Nashik, Nagpur and Kolhapur.

A Sea of Pink

Every year the metropolis of Mumbai thrills with excitement as the shores around the Thane creek turn pink. It signifies the arrival of the annual visitors—the flamingos that migrate here from Gujarat and even as far as Iran. The flamingos are born greyish white but turn pink after feeding on the algae in the wetlands. The best place to spot them is at the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary where they number tens of thousands. They arrive sometime in October and stay on till May, returning to their breeding grounds with the onset of the monsoon.

Over 1.33 lakh flamingos were observed across the Flamingo Sanctuary and adjacent areas until May 2022. This is the highest number of the migratory birds ever spotted in the region.

06 Escapades



ADRENALINE RUSH

Get lost in the treks off the undulating hills of Maharashtra or snorkel in India's most blessed coastal state to rediscover yourself

For those looking to venture beyond the beaches, hill stations, jungle resorts and tiger reserves, Maharashtra is the right place for thrill seekers. Blessed with tapering mountain ranges, raging rivers, deep oceans, unique marine life and formidable rockscapes, the State offers a range of adventure sports enough to make it an attractive destination for adventure tourism.

Treks to Remember

Maharashtra has hundreds of forts across its region. These forts have a mesmerising history. A trek to one of these forts will not only satisfy the adventurous spirit but will also provide a learning experience through its history, architecture and engineering marvels. In addition, these forts often present an amazing birds' eye view of the surroundings.

Treks to Rajmachi, Kalvantin Fort, Harishchandragad Fort and Kalsubai Peak are worth remembering.

Soak in the beauty of nature as you hike through the scenic trails of Maharashtra.



A World Underwater

If swimming with the fish is the attraction, there is much to satisfy that yearning. The coast near Tarkarli is abundant with coral reefs and marine life, and blessed with clear waters making it a great site for scuba diving and deep sea diving.

There are a few sites in and around Tarkarli, such as Sindhudurg Fort, Devbaug Sangam and Vengurla Rocks, which are also ideal for snorkelling.

Amidst the Blue Sky

A flight in a colourful hot air balloon can be mem-





Rafting in the Kundalika river is an outstanding experience; one can enjoy snorkelling and dolphin safari in Tarkarli.

Look beyond the sun-kissed sands on the beaches, the picturesque hill stations, the mesmerising jungles and tiger resorts, you will be surprised to learn that Maharashtra is the right place for adventure seekers. The State offers a range of adventure sports to make it an attractive destination for adventure tourism.

orable for life and Lonavala is the place for it. While floating gently through the stunning valleys of Sahyadris, among the towering cliffs and over the gleaming lakes, peer down at the patchwork of colours and contours to spot the ornate caves of Bhaja and Karla, known worldwide for Buddhist stupas and intricate carvings.

The Sahyadri ridges such as Panchgani, Kamshet, Bhandardara and Chikhaldara make for perfect lift and landing sites with panoramic views.

The other sites are Khinger and Bhilar near Panchgani and Tapola near Mahabaleshwar. Maharashtra is probably the only state in central India with an established system of paragliding training and sites, and with trained professional fliers to assist during the flight. If touching the skies seems too much, try parasailing. It is a common sport across most Konkan beaches.

Braving the Waves

To set the heart racing, try rafting the rapids. At Kolad, when the Bhira dam opens each day, the serene river Kundalika transforms itself magically into full-blown river rapids.

The river, 110 km from Mumbai and 100 km from Pune on the Mumbai-Panvel-Goa highway, is a

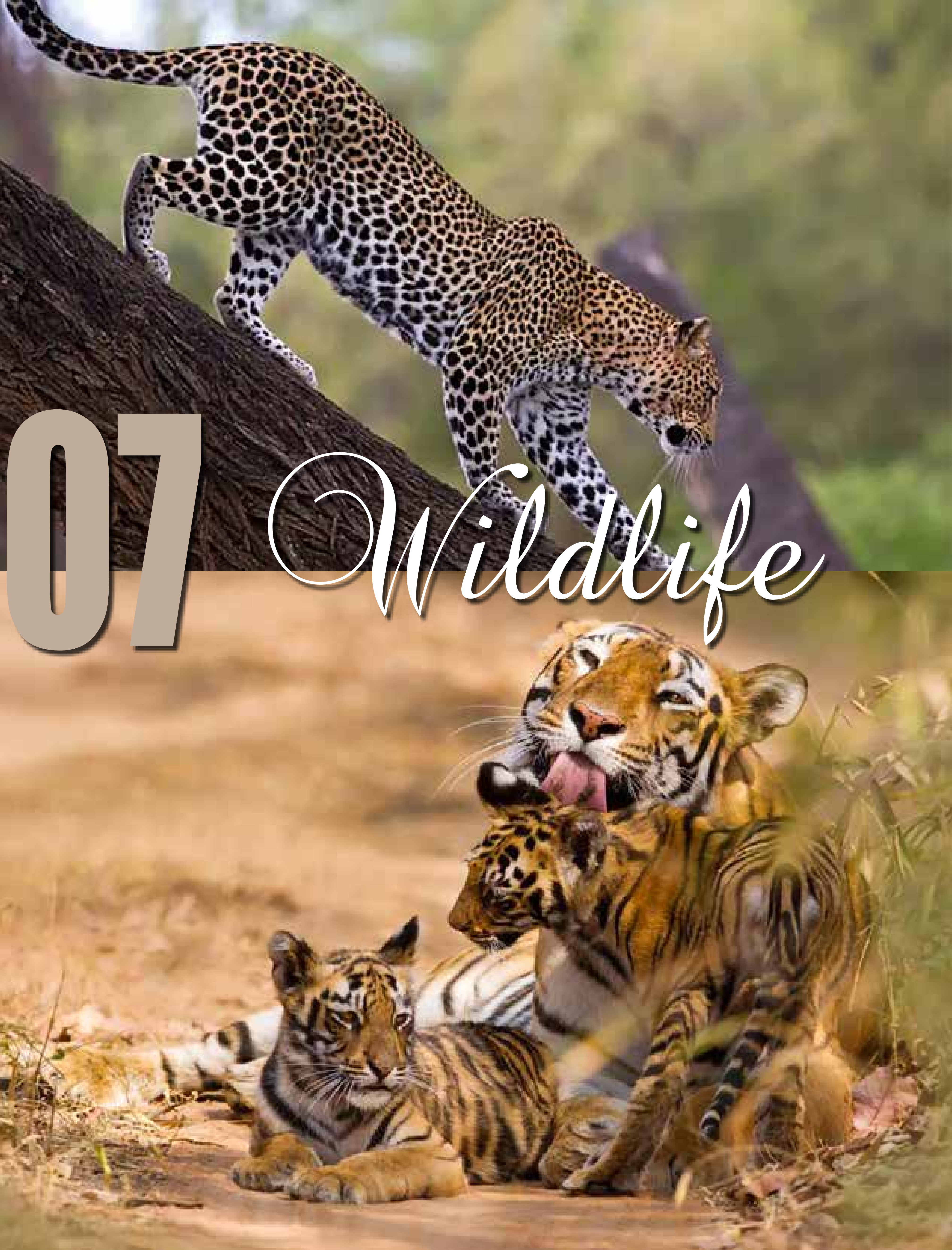


paradise for campers and white-water rafting enthusiasts. Originating in the Western Ghats, the river flows through thick forests and rice fields before meeting the Arabian Sea near the creek at Roha.

On either side of its banks are the towns of Salav, Roha and Kolad. Rafting experience in the Kundalika river is awesome along with adventure activities like kayaking, canoeing, and boat-

ing. The total length of the river rafting circuit is 14 km with two difficulty levels, grade 2 and 3.

Another interesting place to visit is Devgad, famous for Alphonso mangoes, temples, trekking, and petroglyphs. It has got the only coastal zipline in Maharashtra. Visit this sleepy coastal town to experience 1,885 feet long and 280 on-coast zipline.



07 *Wildlife*

JUNGLE BOOK ENCLAVE

The magical forests of Maharashtra and its rich biodiversity are home to a variety of birds, animals, insects and reptiles. The State's nature reserves are a must-see especially for a sight of the magnificent tiger

Ranging geographically from the coastline in the west to the thickly forested Vidarbha region in the east, Maharashtra offers a unique array of wildlife sanctuaries.

Nandur Madhmeshwar Sanctuary in Nashik district is an avian sanctuary. It harbours more than 230 species of birds of which 80 are migratory, and 460 species of plants of which almost 80 are aquatic.

Marine National Park of Malvan is a draw for its variety of fish and aquatic fauna. Its crystal clear waters offer a spectacle of seaweed, coral, molluscs, pearl oysters, sea anemones and the like.

One of the most likely sites to spot the tiger is the **Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve**. Protected in 1935, it became Maharashtra's first national park in 1955-56. The reserve lies in Chandrapur district and covers about 1727 sq. km.

It was declared one of the State's six tiger reserves under Project Tiger in 1995. The area, with mixed deciduous forests along with more open scrub-and-grasslands, supports sambar, spotted deer, barking deer, blue bull and gaur.

These animals, prey of the big cat, in turn make Tadoba a compelling habitat for tigers.

The hill station of Chikhaldara, set in Gawilgad hills in the Satpura range, has a sizeable sloth bear population. The hill ridges also form the western boundary of the **Melghat Tiger Reserve** which is a prime tiger habitat with its rivers and tropical deciduous forests. Here one can spot an excellent variety of birds.

A special feature of the **Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve** in Bhandara district of eastern Maharashtra is the presence of perennial water bodies. The lakes of Navegaon and Nagzira are

two important water bodies in the reserve that provide drinking water and lakeside vegetation for wildlife throughout the year. The wildlife here includes the tiger, leopard jungle cat, sloth bear, sambar, spotted deer, langurs, peafowl, gaur, and birds like barbets, shrikes, cormorants, egrets and herons to name a few.

Pench Tiger Reserve, named after the eponymous river in Satpura Hills as it flows from Madhya Pradesh into Maharashtra's Nagpur district, has been widely documented. It has been mentioned by Rudyard Kipling in *The Jungle Book*.

Home to a sizable population of endangered species of flora and fauna, it became the country's 25th tiger reserve in 1998-99. Sprawled over 741 km, it is home to a large tiger population, as well as leopards, most of which live around the Pench River which affords a high concentration of prey.

One of the most distinctive wildlife reserves is the 103 sq. km. **Sanjay Gandhi National Park** in Mumbai. Although about 40 sq. km. of the park fall within the municipal limits of the bustling met-



Maharashtra has multitude of jungles with a wide variety of flora and fauna, (clockwise from top) cobra; Nilgai; Sloth bear and Maldhok (The Great Indian Bustard), is a large bird with a horizontal body and long bare legs, giving it an ostrich like appearance, this bird is among the heaviest of the flying birds.





and abundance of grass-covered plateaus, has long been known for its high density of herbivores. Once a favoured hunting reserve for the maharajas of Kolhapur, it is strictly protected as the **Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary**. Notified in 1958, it is the first wildlife sanctuary of Maharashtra. It is popularly referred to as the Bison Sanctuary as the Indian Bison or gaur is the prime species found in the region.

The sanctuary also has an amazing variety of fauna including the leopard, slender loris, giant squirrel, mouse deer, Malabar pit viper and Indian pangolin, besides bigger mammals like the tiger, leopard, sloth bear, bison and a variety of deer.



(Clockwise from left) Corals are related to sea anemones, and they all share the same simple structure, the polyp; The Indian Bison or Gaur (*Bos gaurus*) is the tallest species of wild cattle found in India and largest extant bovine; Wildlife census in Pune division shows increase in number of sambar deer, chinkara, antelope

ropolitan city of Mumbai, it harbours a rich biodiversity of flora and fauna. The park is home to more than 40 mammals, from bats to leopards, and more than 250 species of birds endemic to the Western Ghats forest ecosystems and winter migrants.

It also has more than 40 species of reptiles and amphibians, including the marsh crocodile and rock pythons plus a huge variety of insects and spiders. Besides, it is one of the most popular butterfly-spotting areas in India, especially the Blue Mormon, the State's butterfly.

Set in the Western Ghats, the Radhanagiri-Dajipur area, because of its thick forest cover

08 *Hill Stations*



ALLURING RETREATS

Maharashtra's long list of hill stations offers getaways that will create memories of a lifetime

When mountains call, one must go. More so, in Maharashtra, where quaint hill stations make perfect destinations for a halcyon holiday. But for solitude amidst pastoral settings, take a break from the popular resorts of Lonavala, Matheran, Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani and explore the State's other hidden gems.

Toranmal: Set between two hills in the Satpuda range, Toranmal resembles a huge saucer. Its chief attraction is the Yashwant Lake, which is around 27 m deep and spread over 1.5 km. The Lotus Lake, on the north of Yashwant Lake, is full of blooming lotuses that make the spectacle memorable. A waterfall which comes rolling down from a cliff into a valley nearby completes the picture. The Seetakhai Fall flows in full force during the monsoon.

Tamhini Ghat: About 140 km from Mumbai on the Mumbai-Goa Highway this is an exotic place of natural beauty and adventure sport. To get to it, traverse along the highway till Kolad. After crossing the bridge over river Kundalika, take the left turn that leads to Pune via the Mulshi Dam backwaters. Tamhini Ghat is the stretch between Kolad and these backwaters. The gradual climb opens the doors to a vista of green velvety carpets, gushing streams, dark grey clouds stooping low, and the occasional waterfalls. These impromptu waterfalls caused by the rains, some trickling down the hill smoothly and some literally gushing down in torrents attract tourists from far and wide.

Amboli: A quiet but pleasant hill resort near Sawantwadi, it is 690 m above sea level and is surrounded by dense forest. The sea viewpoint offers a panoramic spectacle of the Konkan coast. There is a 30 m waterfall just 1.5 km away.



Sahyadri Ranges of the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, is part of the ecoregions of North Western Ghats moist deciduous forests and North Western Ghats montane rain forests; Matheran is known for its mild climate and well-preserved colonial architecture



Mhaismal: Located in Aurangabad district, Mhaismal is a part of the extreme eastern limits of the Sahyadri ranges with its unique mountain topography. Verdant valleys and sylvan surroundings make Mhaismal one of the most visited hilly terrains of this part of Maharashtra. Its main point overlooks a horizon of over 30 km with neatly

laid farms, hamlets, and forest patches at regular intervals. Mhaismal is also a testimony to the remnants of an ancient temple dedicated to Shiva. The whole area is managed by a joint forest management committee that promotes it as an ecotourism destination.

Gaganbavda: Located in Kolhapur, this hill station offers a fantastic view of the Konkan coastal region and the lush green Karul Ghat apart from emerging as a favourite destination for trekkers. In fact, it is quite easy to travel to Konkan from the two passes nearby. Given its topography, the place is enriched with natural beauty.

Pal: Located in Raver taluka, about 80 km from Jalgaon, Pal is an ideal getaway, with its cool peaceful environment, dense forests and a small river flowing by. The Yawal Wildlife Sanctuary



Maharashtra has a few hidden, cool corners for those who wish to avoid the summer rush of tourists. Though lesser known, these hill stations are nevertheless scenic and quite breathtaking. The Sahyadri range is replete with green hills and blue lakes all around. This region is popular for its incredible historic forts, wonderful Buddhist caves and Hindu temples.

nearby, surrounded by the river Suki, is an abode for a variety of wild animals and birds and is a protected site.

Jawhar: Located at an elevation of 447m above sea level, Jawhar the hill station is known for its scenic beauty and tribal culture. The climate stays favourable throughout the year. The Katya



Maruti temple, Hanuman Point, Jaivilas Palace, Dadarkopara falls, Kalmundavi waterfall, Jai Sagar dam, Shirpamal and Warli paintings are a few important attractions of the place.

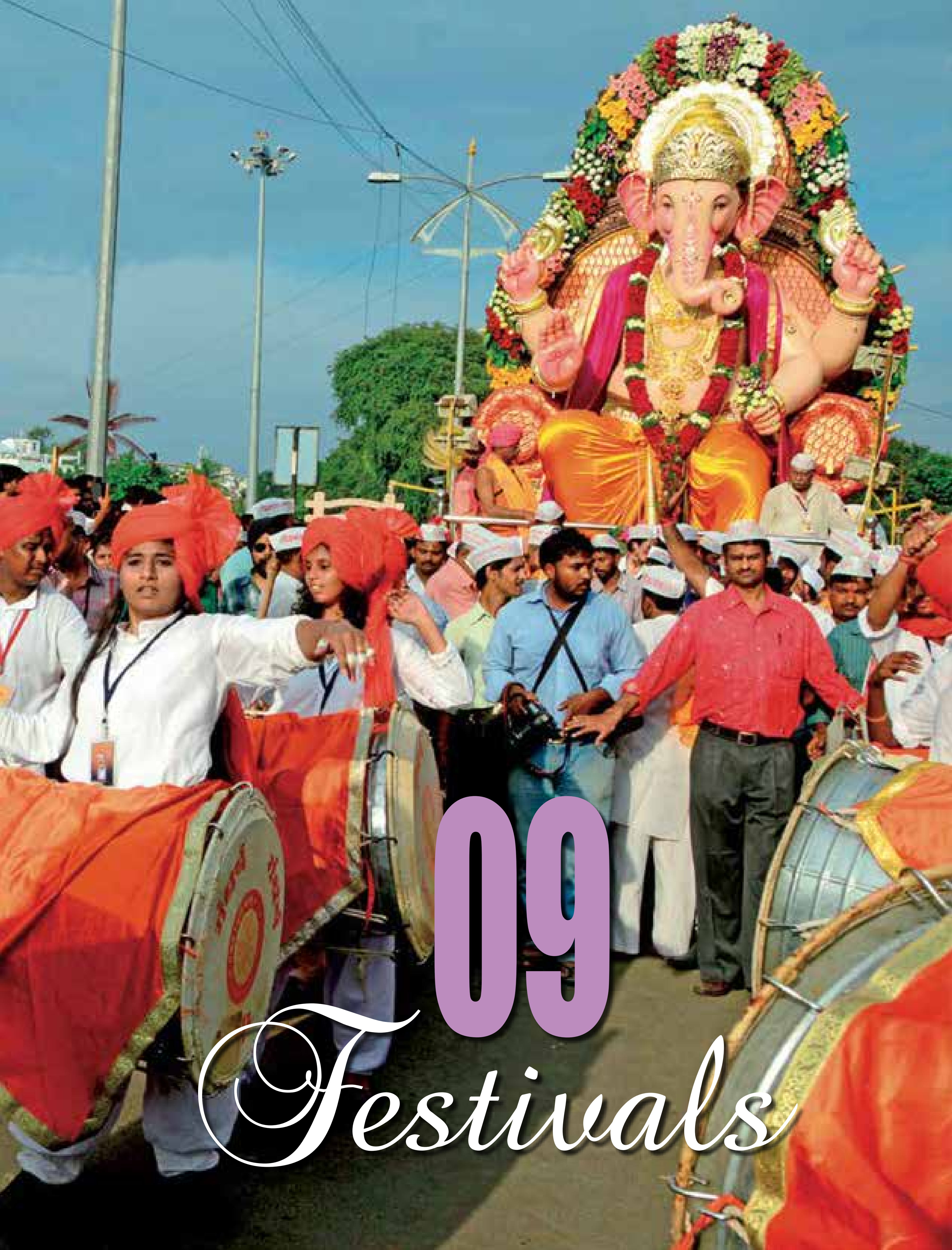
Unapdev: Unapdev is located in the foothills of the Satpuda hill range and it is one of the remote holy places to visit in the district. Hot water fountain is one of the key attractions of this temple. The hot water is seen to have been flowing throughout the year through the mouth of the godly cow, which adds another dimension to the tourist attraction. It is said that it has the power to cure the skin ailments.

Somnoor: A unique place to visit in Maharashtra is Somnoor in Gadchiroli district, where three rivers, Godavari, Pranhita and Indravati meet.

Clockwise from top: Lonar Lake, also known as Lonar crater, is a notified National Geo-heritage Monument. It is an astrobleme created by a meteorite impact during the Pleistocene Epoch; Gaganbavda; The hot water is seen to have been flowing throughout the year through the mouth of the godly cow at Unapdev

The place is also where lie the borders of three Indian states, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.

Lonar Lake: Lonar, in Buldhana district, ranks amongst the world's five largest craters. It was created by a meteor hitting the Earth during the Pleistocene epoch. It is a saltwater lake and is surrounded by forests with a large variety of birds, particularly peacocks, owls, red-wattled lapwings and ducks.



09 Festivals

DIVERSITY AT ITS BEST

India's cultural hotspot in a true sense, Maharashtra is where you find people from all parts of the country living and celebrating together

The vibrant culture of Maharashtra is enlivened by colourful festivals and lavish celebrations. **Ganesh Utsav** is the main festival. It is a ten-day event when millions get together to worship Lord Ganesh, the deity of wisdom, knowledge and prosperity. The festival was turned into a public event by eminent Indian nationalist Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak as a means of mass rising during the freedom struggle. It is now celebrated throughout the State with much fanfare by people of all communities, even Indians settled abroad.

Gudi Padwa is celebrated on the first day of the Chaitra month of the Hindu calendar, welcoming the arrival of spring, the time of colour and joy. It is celebrated all over India, though under different names. In Maharashtra, it is hailed as the New Year Day of the Hindu calendar.

Gudi Padwa is dedicated to the worship of Lord Brahma, the Creator of this universe. A day for fresh beginnings, be it a business venture or just to buy something new, devotees also entreat the God to banish evil and bring prosperity and good luck to the house.

Another festival that has caught on rapidly is **Gokul Ashtami**, also called Janmashtami, that celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna. In popular lingo, it is called **Dahi Handi** (the earthen pitcher). The festival falls in August-September. Handis are hung up at a height in every village, town and city in Maharashtra.

Groups of youngsters called Govindas, regarded as companions of Lord Krishna, move around to make human pyramids, and break the handis, which are filled with cash and other prizes.

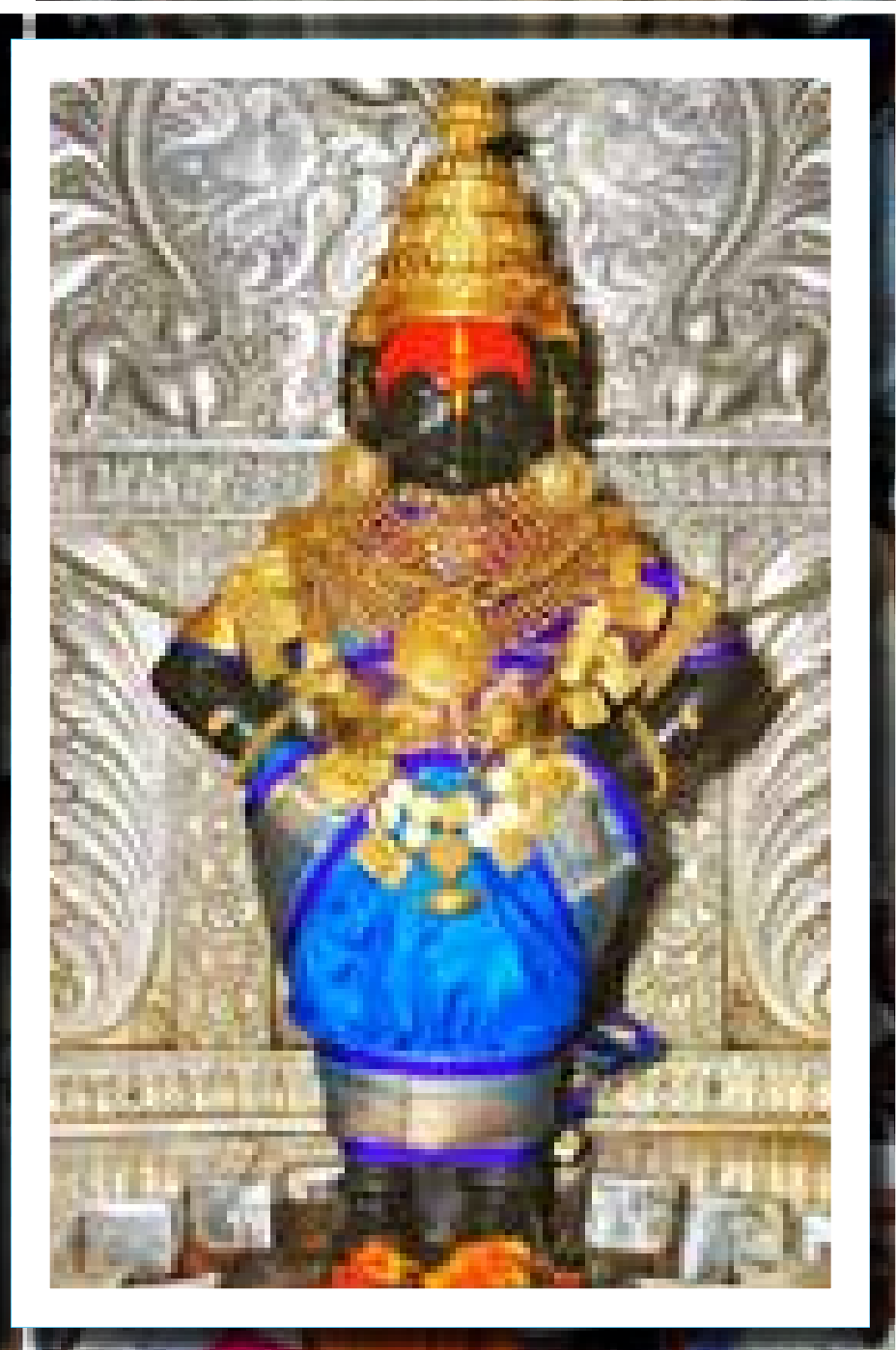
Diwali, Holi, Dasara and Navaratri are other joyous festivals, each with its own significance. There are some local or regional festivals, too.

One such festival celebrated in Vidarbha is **Bail Pola** (feed bullocks), a day to honour the bullocks used for farming. Every farmer that day bathes and decorates the animals, feeds them sweets and gives them a break from labour.



(From top): Haldi-kumkum (turmeric-vermilion) is a big festival for Maharashtrian married women; til-gul, a Makar Sankranti delicacy, is prepared in every Hindu home in Maharashtra







(From top) Dahi handi, a team sport observed during Gokulashstami; Pola is a thanksgiving festival celebrated by farmers in Maharashtra to acknowledge the importance of bulls and oxen, a crucial part of agriculture and farming activities; Gudhi Padwa is a spring-time festival that marks the traditional new year for Marathi and Konkani Hindus

There are also festivals important for each community. The complete symbiosis of Hindu, Muslim, Jain, Buddhist, Christian, Parsi, and Jewish religious celebrations is an integral part of Maharashtra's culture.

The **Christmas** festivity begins with attendance at Mass, a sacred prayer service, which is attended in large numbers by Christians and people of other faiths too. Churches distribute gift hampers to the poor and needy from donations made by people.

For the Parsis, the vernal equinox is celebrated as New Year Day. **Navroz** literally means new day, and the festivities officially last 13 days. Navroz begins with a visit to the Fire Temple or Agiary for a special thanksgiving prayer called jashan. **Pateti**, meaning repentance, is observed the day before and is marked by introspection and prayer.

The entrances of houses are decorated with rangoli-like designs and floral garlands, and a burning coal scuttle sprinkled with sandalwood powder is placed there to keep the air clean and fresh.

The highlight of the festivity is the Navroz lunch consisting of rich non-vegetarian delicacies. The thirteenth day, which is also known as **Sizdah be**

Dar, is when public celebrations are held, with lively get-togethers of family and friends.

Harvest festivals are other festive occasions observed popularly in the State. **Makar Sankranti** is celebrated mid-January to mark the start of the sun's journey to the northern hemisphere (zodiac Capricorn or Makara in Sanskrit).

Makar Sankranti holds special significance for a young bride in Maharashtra, as the newlywed makes offerings of oil, cotton and sesame seeds invoking the gods to bestow long life and prosperity upon her and her family.

Relatives are invited to attend the haldi kumkum celebration to welcome the new bride into the family.



SPICES, SEASONINGS AND SENSES

Maharashtrian cuisine has everything for everyone, from the vada pav to the Bombay duck. A sensory experience often based on seasons and occasions, the food is the fastest way to know the richness of Maharashtra

The cuisine of Maharashtra has its own distinctive flavours and tastes. Wheat, rice, jowar, bajra, lentils and seasonal fruits and vegetables are common in the fare, with the use of peanuts and coconut in most dishes as the highlight. The cuisine can be divided into two major sections, coastal and interior.

Regional Cuisine

The coastal region of Konkan stretches from Maharashtra to Mangalore. It boasts a unique **Konkani cuisine** with a range of flavours and dishes. Seafood is predominant thanks to the rich fishing grounds. This cuisine is a homogeneous combination of Malvani, Gaud Saraswat Brahmin, and Goan cuisines. Featuring coconut quite heavily, it is characterised by a balance of spices and sour elements such as kokum, tamarind or raw

mango. A famous Malvani dish is **Kombdi Vade**, a spicy chicken curry that is served alongside hot puffed vades (flatbreads).

The interior part of Maharashtra, Vidarbha, has its own distinctive cuisine known as the **Varadi cuisine**, which is a lot spicier than Malvani cuisine. The Varadi dishes prepared are also more exotic than their coastal and southern counterparts. They mostly use gram flour, ground peanuts, and powdered coconut. Chicken and mutton are popular in this region. A culinary treat to the taste buds, this cuisine is worth trying. Nagpur, the largest city of Vidarbha, is popular for oranges. A visit to the city is incomplete without trying the Orange Burfi.

Observers note that **Marathi cuisine** is based on ayurvedic and scientific principles. Subtle and understated, the flavours are heavily dependent on the seasons—raw mango (kairi), kokum

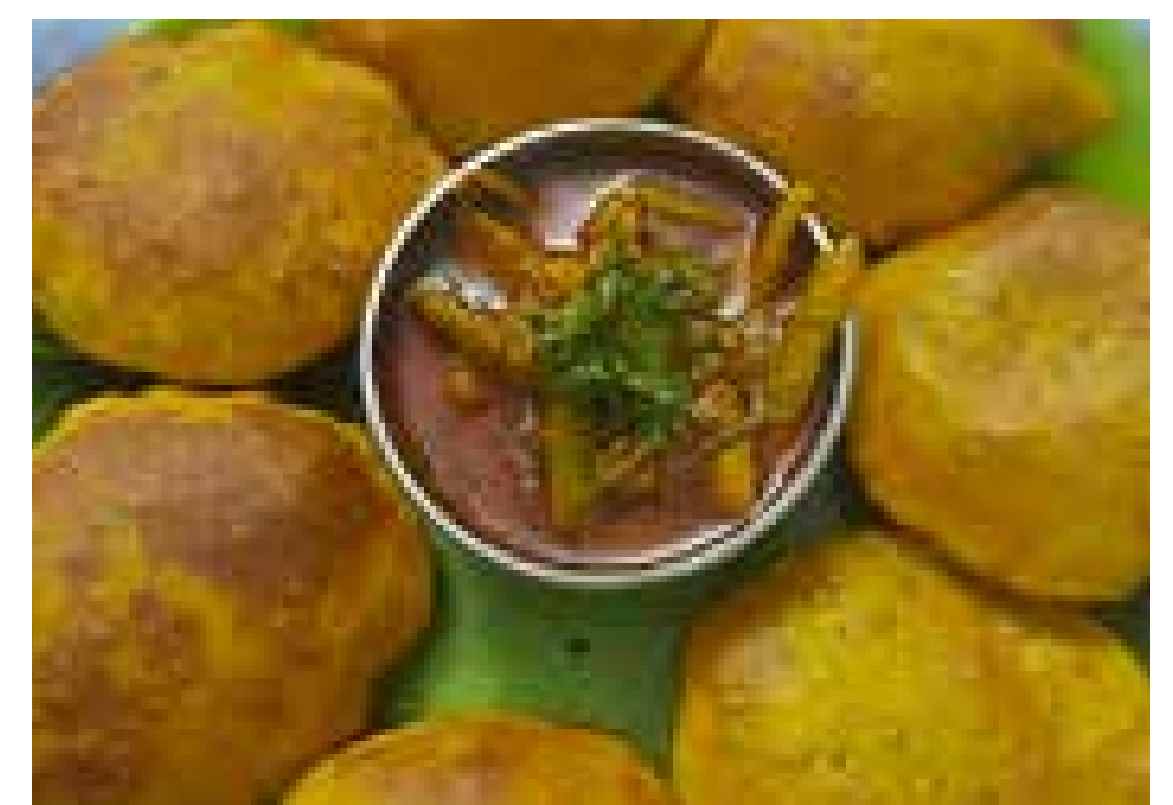
and coconut make their appearance in the heat of summer, deliciously crispy gram-flour batter coated, deep-fried vegetables in the monsoon, and rich sesame and jaggery based sweets in the winter. For instance, on Makar Sankranti til (sesame) is used in the delicacies prepared. Sesame builds immunity and helps fight seasonal changes, and so is a reason good enough to consume. The festival is incomplete without the tilgur laddoo. Likewise, a summer treat is **kokum sharbat**, which not only cools the body, but also helps in digestion.

Festive Food

The cultural diversity of Maharashtra has influenced its food as well. Today, its opulent platter has a variety of delicacies, ranging from the very economical **vada pav** to the elaborate fish curries. Every festival is an occasion to cook something special for that season. Ganesh Chaturthi is marked by the presence of **naivadyache paan** (meal offered to the elephant-headed god on a banana leaf) with **panchamrut** (made of milk, ghee, sugar, yogurt and honey), **panchakhadya** (a coarse mixture of dry dates, sugar,



(From left): While Malvani cuisine is predominantly non-vegetarian, it has many vegetarian dishes; kombdi vade is a dish native to the Konkan region.



(Clockwise from left): Chimboricha kaalvan or crab curry; pithala bhakri; red and green chilli thetcha



poppy seeds, raisins, and dry coconut), and his favourite **modak**, which is fried in the Deccan region and steamed in Konkan.

Famous, Must-Try Dishes

The amazing variety of food one can taste in Maharashtra is unmatched. For instance, the **puranpoli** is undoubtedly an authentic Marathi creation served on almost every important occasion. It represents the whole of Maharashtra, albeit coming in different avatars, depending upon the area where it is made. Connoisseurs can easily recognise the region where the food has been made from the very first mouthful.

No trip to the rural belts of the state is complete without a taste of **pithala bhakari** (chapati made with gram flour) and **thecha** (a spicy chutney) which is eaten with pickles and buttermilk. The food is cooked in an earthen chulha (hearth). Another special dish famous is made up of brinjal called **bharit**.

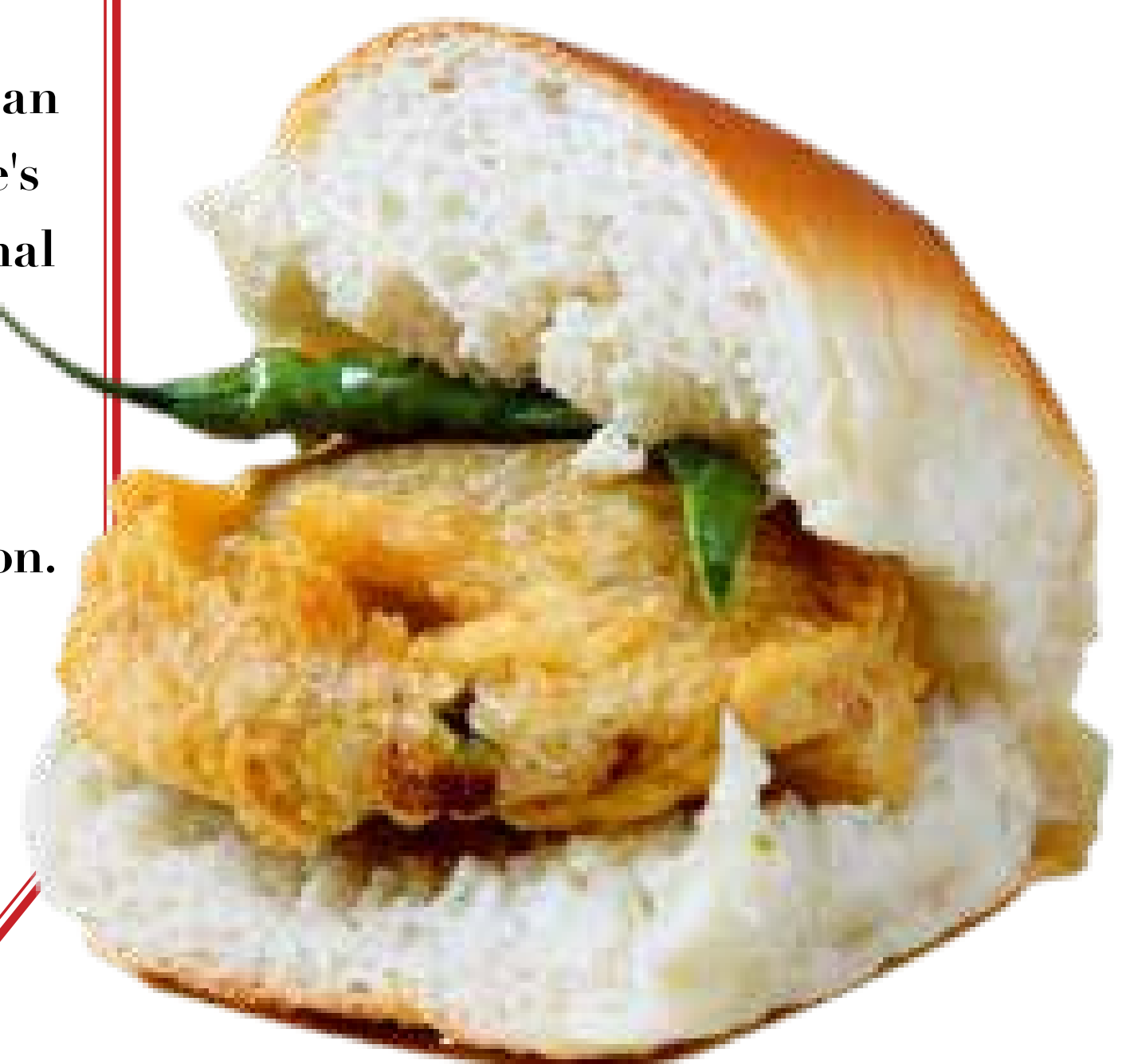
A popular drink of the Konkan belt, **sol kadhi** is a spicy drink made with coconut milk and kokum. It is a common practice to enjoy a glass of



The amazing variety of food one can taste in Maharashtra is unmatched. Rice, jowar, bajra, wheat and millet are the staple grains that are prepared and presented in myriad forms. Food, daily and celebratory, is an inseparable factor of the State's culture. It has local and regional flavour, but the *puranpoli* is undoubtedly an authentic Marathi creation served on almost every important occasion. It represents the whole of Maharashtra.

the drink at the end of a meal, as it has many digestive properties. The dish has many variations along the Konkan coast.

Another must try is **chimboricha kaalvan** or crab curry, which is ample during the monsoon season. A classic from the region, this coastal Marathi dish is made with a coconut and onion base and a complex set of spices, with kokum added for sourness.



11 Art



TRANSCENDING ERAS AND BORDERS

A haven for art lovers, Maharashtra is an open gallery. From outstanding paintings in its medieval caves to simple Warli art made on the walls of tribal homes to the Indo-European genre of painting to Schools of Art, the art spans trends and times

The caves and grottos found in Bhaja, Karla, Kanheri, Gharapuri, Ajanta and Ellora draw a steady number of tourists annually. Their sculptures and paintings have influenced the Indian ethos down the ages. But equally noteworthy are the walls of thousands of Maharashtra temples with visual depiction of Gods in vibrant colours.

Though these works were always linked to religious beliefs and rituals, they are an important element of the State's vibrant visual culture. Images of Buddha, Shiva, Vishnu, Ganpati, Parvati, Saraswati, Laxmi and Tirthankars along with pictorial stories painted along the inner walls of the temples add to the treasure.

Inspired by several socio-political developments of bygone eras, the paintings and sculptures are not just a record of life in those times, but also capture the creative imagination of an artist or a group of artists working on a fresco then. In the medieval period, most of the visual art was either temple art or decorative art done on residences and castles of rich and influential regional satraps.

The wall paintings of Wai, Chandwad and Nashik show how richly they evolved over the years. Chitrakathi and Ganjifa are two forms of visual art of Maharashtra that have been preserved well.

Warli art is a painting style of the tribals who predominantly inhabit the north Sahyadri ranges. The origin is in Maharashtra and continues to be done in Thane district. The art uses very basic representation—a circle, a triangle and a square—to depict nature and daily activities of the tribals.

The circle represents the sun and the moon, the triangle is derived from mountains and pointed trees, and the square indicates a sacred space



or a piece of land.

The central motif in these ritual paintings is surrounded by scenes portraying hunting, fishing and farming, festivals and dances, trees and animals. Two triangles joined at the tips represent humans and animals. Apart from ritualistic paintings, the other Warli paintings portray the daily activities of the people.

Today, designers and artists are using Warli paintings on clothing, purses, and book covers, among other things.

Crossing Boundaries

European influence in India in the early 18th century gave rise to a new school of painting. The officers and employees of East India Company wanted to capture images of India and send these

back to their homes in Britain. They first called in artists from Britain, but later began to depend on local artists.

Their preference was for Indian images done in the European style. This synthesis, wherein an Indian artist imitated European style to depict Indian landscapes, people and rituals, gave birth to a new Indo-European genre of painting known as Company style. The British set up schools in major Indian cities such as Bombay (now Mumbai) and others to train local artists in the European style of painting.

The artists associated with these schools were known as Company School artists. Sir J. J. School of Art, in Mumbai, founded in 1857, imparted training to many students who dominated the Indian art scene in the pre- as well as post-



impact on the world of art, as artists edged away from accepted norms and expressed their solidarity with those fighting for freedom.

With the same spirit of freedom and search for a new medium, a group of artists began making waves under the banner of Progressive Artists Group in Mumbai. This group dominated the Indian art scene for quite some time giving new dimension and direction to young artists coming to Mumbai to showcase their works. The founder members of the Progressive Artists' Group were F.N. Souza, S. H. Raza and K.H. Ara with S. K. Bakre, H. K. Gade and M. F. Husain. V.S. Gaitonde and Krishen Khanna joined up at a later stage.

Art Is For Everyone

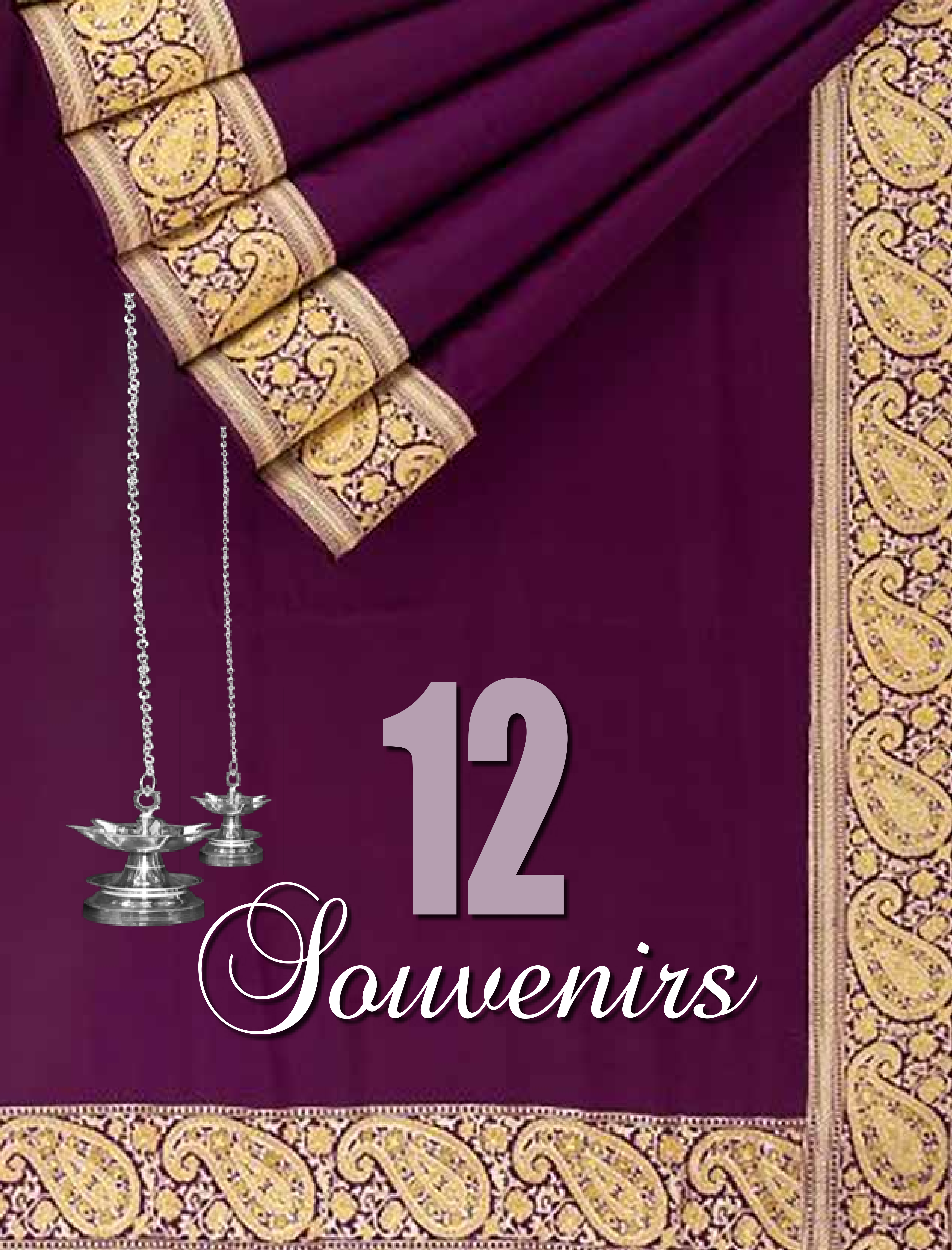
If you are still looking for more, do visit Mumbai's interesting art projects, temporary exhibitions, and annual festivals. Projects such as the Sassoon Docks project and Aravani Art Project, and the annual Kala Ghoda festival are must-see exhibitions for art lovers. These are not only a celebration of art in all forms, but also a refreshing break from the mundane life. The most important fact, the art showcased at these platforms belongs to everyone, the way it should be.

independence period.

The new tradition of visual arts created in and around Sir J. J. School of Art later spread to Kolhapur, Solapur, Nashik and Nagpur with the establishment of institutions of artists such as Bombay Art Society of India, Artists' Centre, Nashik Kala Niketan and Craft, and many more. These centres encouraged artists to work in the tradi-

tional Indian style to depict contemporary life.

Taking a break from the typical British style of realistic expressions, the Bombay School of artists began experimenting in style and content as early as the 1930s. That was a time when artists began giving more importance to the play of light and use of colours rather than drawing and sketching. The freedom struggle too had its



12

Souvenirs

SOUVENIRS FROM MAHARASHTRA

Maharashtra has in store mementoes for every taste. Let's pick some of these eclectic products that will delight your near and dear ones

Sevagram, Wardha Khadi: Khadi, a hand-woven and hand-spun cotton cloth finds favour with people who love to wear ethnic chic. The khadi spun at Sevagram, finds takers from across India and the world for its softness, comfort and style in equal measure.

Sangli Turmeric: The capital of turmeric trade in India, Sangli is also the sole turmeric exchange that boasts of a centuries-old practice—storing them in pots. The raw turmeric sold by farmers is stored in these pits for three to four years. The spice hardens and matures while it is in the pit, adding to the value of the variety.

Sawantwadi Craft: Sawantwadi, a picturesque town located at the southernmost point of Sindhudurg district is known for its exquisitely carved wooden crafts and, more specially, for its collection of brightly coloured toys or its lakda chi khelni. Mostly carved out of Pangara wood or the locally available mango tree.

Mashru: A venerable hand-woven textile craft form, Mashru means 'permitted' in Arabic. The luxury fabric is a vibrant, handwoven mix of silk and cotton textiles. It has a fine satin finish, bright contrasting stripes in vibrant colours and striped Ikat weave, and is known for its bold patterns and colours.

Nashik Silver: Nashik's silver articles have a history that dates to around 400 years and are well known for purity, skilled craftsmanship and reasonable pricing.

Bidriware: Bidri—the ancient craft of inlaying or brocading silver on black metal to create beautiful eye-catching pieces—has its origin in Persia and Syria. It is believed to have entered India more than 4,000 years ago, but the art developed during the Mughal reign.

Nashik Valley Wine: Traditional viticulture practices, mineral-rich soil, temperature, and humidity, all needed for good wines, is why this region is known as the wine bowl of India. Nashik alone is home to some 38 wineries of Maharashtra's 72 odd wineries, including Sula Vineyards—the country's top winemaker.

Kolhapur Jaggery: A melt-in-the-mouth sweet, Kolhapur jaggery finds universal appeal. Patronised and encouraged by Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, organic jaggery figures high on the list of the city's trademarks and has a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The jaggery produced in the city has more than 80 per cent cane juice and no chemicals, giving it a special taste.

Kolhapuri Chappals: Known globally for their simple and comfortable design, the handcrafted slippers have almost achieved a cult status. Originally created for the farmer's daily use, Kolhapuri sandals have become upwardly mobile and a fashion statement.

Solapur Chaddar and Terry Towels: Solapur, one of Maharashtra's largest districts and part of the State's textile zone, is the source of the Chaddar, a multipurpose cotton blanket. One of its traditional products, terry towel—an allied product of Solapur jacquard bedsheet—has given the city international fame. Both are now registered under the GI status.

Paithani Sarees: Named after the Paithan region of Maharashtra, this sari with a golden sheen always finds a place in the trousseau of a traditional Maharashtrian bride. Called maha-vastra or grand attire, the saree is an heirloom in the Maharashtrian community. A craft that goes back 2,000 years, a Paithani is more than a drape; it is a culture, a journey, and a blessing.

Kolhapuri Saaj: Known for its intricate design, unique appeal and grandeur, this piece of jewellery is popular among Maharashtrian women. Typically, a gold necklace with heavy decorative pattern, varied metals, and embellishments such as beads and stones, it is a symbol of luck, prosperity, blessing and happy married life.

Nagpur Handloom Sarees: The sari famously woven in Nagpur is known as Karvati Kathi, which gets its name due to the saw-edged design along the borders. It is woven on pitlooms using three fly shuttles with silk, tussar and cotton yarns of various counts using an interlocking technique.

Warli Painting: Warli tribe of Maharashtra use this art to embellish the walls of their homes. The monochromatic tribal paintings express folk imaginations, beliefs and customs. Believed to invoke the power of the gods, it symbolises human's harmony with each other and nature.







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