Nashik Travel Circuit

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Enchanting Abode of the Gods

Ganapatipule

Vandana Joshi | Photographs © Sachin Naik

‘One impulse from the vernal woods will teach you more of man, of moral, of evil and of good, than all the sages can.’

This verse aptly describes the beauty and grandeur of a place called Ganapatipule in Maharashtra. Believed to be the abode of the gods who rule the world from this divine seat, every tourist who comes here is said to experience the presence of the supreme powers in every wave of beauty and peace. A journey to Ganapatipule is not just the crossing of distance but the crossing of the frontiers of negativities and malice, of human failures and shortcomings. It is a journey that enraptures, enthralls and elevates you to heights that you have never known.

Ganapatipule is a small town located on the west (Konkan coast) in Ratnagiri district. Nature here is serene, sedate and unspoiled. It is described as a beach with “sparkling blue water, endless stretches of silver sand, sunbeams dancing through the swaying palms, waves playing with the sand dunes, a cool breeze whispering sweet nothings in the ear.” The beach is natural and pristine and so is considered to be one of the virgin beaches. To go by what a poet once said, “What is this life, so full of care. We have no time to stand and stare?”, Ganapatipule, for the stress-tossed modern man, provides a respite from all the pressures of an urban life.
The Divine Presence

The name of this picturesque town is derived from the temple of Lord Ganesh or Ganapati which is built on the fine white sand, also known as the ‘pule’. The idol of Ganesh is ‘swayambhu’ (self-originated) and the temple itself is almost 400 years old. This Ganapati temple is referred to as one of the four ‘dwar-dewata’ (welcoming deities) to the Indian sub-continent and that is the reason why Lord Ganesh at this site faces the west unlike the other deities who face the east. He guards the Western Ghats. The idol of Lord Ganesh is carved from one massive rock and is in the sanctum sanctorum or the garbhagriha. The golden rays of sunset penetrate the garbhagriha and illuminate the idol.

At this place the river Shastri meets the Arabian Sea and the hill that is shaped like...
Ganapati enchants the visitors. Instead of ‘pradakshina’ of the temple the devotees perform ‘pradakshina’ of the hill which they consider sacred. In the rainy season a spring flows from the hill to the pond besides the temple, thus adding to the touch of serenity. From the hill top tourists can enjoy an idyllic view of a small creek which passes across the beach and goes behind the hills.

**Simply Refreshing**

Here the cup of joy is full to the brim and overflowing. The beach is one of the most spectacular getaway places for peace-seekers, beach lovers and pilgrims. It is a unique place as the scenic nature is combined beautifully with spirituality. Even the road makes for a scenic experience through the Western Ghats.

*It is described as a beach with “sparking blue water, endless stretches of silver sand, sunbeams dancing through the swaying palms, waves playing with the sand dunes, a cool breeze whispering sweet nothings in the ear.”*
- the chain of green hills along the Konkan coast. The presence of a lagoon adds more beauty to this site. Tourists can also go for romantic seaside walks to enjoy the beautiful surroundings along the shoreline.

Ganapatipule is an ideal place for relaxation and a chance to leave behind the hectic world by stretching out on its silver sands or through an exploration of the many trails that lead to the beaches. Situated in the evergreen ranges of the Sahayadri, Ganapatipule is rich in flora and has an abundance of trees like the mango, cashew, betelnut, jackfruit, coconut, palm and casurina, to name just a few. Located around 375 kms off Mumbai by road, the beauty of this small town is enhanced by a beach of six kilometers which is not so commercialised as the other famous beaches on the western coast. This tiny town is mainly

Ganapatipule is an ideal place for relaxation and a chance to leave behind the hectic world by stretching out on its silver sands or through an exploration of the many trails that lead to the beaches.
marked by neatly drawn roads, red soil and roofed houses which have clean boundaries.

Apart from the beach, Ganapatipule offers many interesting spots of importance to the tourists. The backwaters are worth exploring. MTDC Beach Resort, one of the premier properties of the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation caters to the recreational and relaxation needs of the tourists. The water sports complex of MTDC offers a variety of water sports like row boats, motorboats, aero boats, pedal boats, etc for recreation. The adjacent beach provides facilities like swimming, sun bathing and so on. Tourists can also enjoy paragliding.

Climate

The coastal climate is generally moist and humid. The climate in winter (October to mid-February) is the most pleasant season. The ideal period to visit is from November to January.

Other Attractions

Pracheen Konkan

This is a museum in Ganapatipule depicting life as it was in the earlier years on this coastal belt. Set up by Mr Vaibhav Sardesai with the help of the state government, it imparts information about the region to the tourists.

Malgund

Located just a kilometre away from Ganapatipule, it is the birthplace of the famous Marathi poet Keshavsut. The Marathi Sahitya Parishad (Marathi Literature Society) has constructed a beautiful monument called the Keshavsut Smarak which displays information about most of the modern poets of Marathi language.
Ratnagiri

It is located about 25 kilometers away from Ganapatipule and is known for being the birthplace of the great freedom fighter Bal Gangadhar Tilak. His house - Tilak Smarak - is a landmark and open to visitors. Also of importance is the Patit Pawan Mandir. It was the first temple built for the non-Brahmins by revolutionary leader Swatantryaveer Savarkar. Some of the other attractions are the Bhatye Beach, The Coconut Research Center, Ratnadurg Fort, Bhagwati Bunder (sea port), the Seafood Processing Centre at Mirya and Thebaw Palace which was built for the exiled king and queen of Burma (now Myanmar) in 1910-11.

Jaigad Fort

Located 35 kms away from Ganapatipule is the Jaigad Fort, situated at the entrance of the river Sangameshwar. This 17th century fort offers a commanding view of the sea and is also famous for a unique view of Konkan’s village life.

Pawas

Pawas is famous for its scenic beauty and serenity. The place is also prominent for the ashram of Swami Swaroopanand, a spiritual leader who influenced an entire generation of Maharashtrians.

Velneshwar

Around 170 kms away from Ratnagiri, located north of the river Shastri, is this small village called Velneshwar. This peaceful, coconut-fringed beach is famous for water sports. During Mahashivratri pilgrims in large numbers visit the Shiva temple.

Shopping

Ganapatipule offers a variety of local preparations like ambapoli (thin pancakes of crushed and dried mango) and phanspoli (thin pancakes of dried and crushed jackfruit). In summer, tourists can buy the world famous ‘Devgad Hapus’ mangoes.

Food

Fish curries and the kokam kadi/sol kadi (a pink-coloured digestive drink) are the specialty of the region. Modak, a sweet (and a favourite dish of Lord Ganesh) is also available.

Accommodation

The MTDC resort is the ideal place to stay. It faces the sea and is located amongst the beautiful mango trees and coconut palms. It offers a variety of options like sea view cottages, tents, Konkani houses, etc. Other accommodation options are also available.

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Blend of Old and New

Nashik

Manjiri Bhalerao | Photographs © Manjiri Bhalerao, Anita Joshi, Saili Palande-Datar, Rohan Sonar

Most of the visitors who go to Nashik have religion on the mind. But Nashik also offers a fascinating mix of a peep into the past and a relaxing time with its serene present, writes Manjiri Bhalerao

Nashik is one of the most popular destinations for the pious Hindus, Jains and the Buddhists. Due to its association with the epic Ramayana, it is a preferred destination in India. The legends tell us that epic characters Rama, Seeta and Lakshman had stayed in the forests near this place, then known as Janasthana. The nose-cutting episode (San-skrit Nashika) of Shurpanakha at the hands of Lakshmana is believed to be the etymological explanation for the name of the city. Various places in the city are shown as being visited or associated with Rama. Alternatively, the city has also preserved a tradition of a proverb in Marathi, ‘Nashik navashikharan-var vasavale’ (Nashik was settled on nine peaks). According to many scholars, this is a more plausible explanation for the origin of the name. Even today those nine mounds are known as teks (peaks) in Nashik.

Be that as it may, Nashik is one city that has lured people from distant regions for hundreds of years. Historically speaking, the antiquity of the city goes back to prehistoric times. Archaeological excavations have been carried out here on the banks of river Godavari and have revealed the evidence of habitation from the Chalcolithic age dating back to approximately 1,400 – 1,300 BCE. Since then the city has been inhabited all throughout history.
Historically speaking, the antiquity of the city goes back to prehistoric times.
The History

During the early historic times people seem to have settled on the bank of the river Godavari. The area is locally known as the ‘juni matichi gadhi’. The excavations, carried out at this place and at the Gadage Maharaj Math, have revealed the remains of houses belonging to the 5th – 4th century BCE. Along with this are the Buddhist rock-cut caves, locally known as the Pandav Leni. This group of 24 Buddhist caves in the Trirashmi hill (as known from the inscriptions), were excavated from circa 1st century BCE to circa 6th century CE. These caves contain inscriptions written in the Brahmi script using Prakrit language.

Many of these inscriptions are extremely important as they were written by the Satavahanas as well as the Shaka Kshatrapa rulers. They throw welcome light on the history and interactions between these two dynasties ruling over Maharashtra in the early centuries of the Common Era. The historical fact that the Satavahanas completely exterminated the Shakas is mentioned in the inscriptions in Cave 3. This accomplishment of the Satavahana ruler, Gautamiputra Satakarni, is also attested by the contents of the Jogaltembhi coin hoard. This coin hoard was discovered in 1906 from Jogaltembhi, district Nashik. It contained 13,250 silver coins of the Western Kshatrapa ruler Nahapana.

Most of these coins were counter-struck by Gautamiputra Satakarni, indicating his victory over Nahapana. Hence the calendar that was started by Chashtana (the next Shaka Kshtrapa ruler after Nahapana) is still known as the Shalivahana Shaka Era. Many dynasties ruled over this part of Maharashtra after the Satavahanaas and the Kshatrapa rulers. The Abhiras, Traikutakas, Chalukyas, Harishchandras, Rashtrakutas and Yadavas are the most notable among them. They have left traces of their rule in the form of inscriptions or the copper plates and the monuments at different places.

The city of Nashik and the surrounding region also saw the contribution of these rulers in the form of a unique form of architecture. This comprises the rock-cut caves as well as the structural temples. The Buddhist rock-cut caves are seen in the city of Nashik itself but the Jain caves are located some way off. There are many places with Jain caves near Nashik. The most famous are those at Chambharlena (Chamaralena), Anjaneri, Ankai Tankai, Trigalwadi, etc. Many of these hills had forts constructed on them during the medieval times.

Temples And Forts

Numerous temples constructed during the reigns of different rulers include the magnificent ones at Sinnar, Anjaneri, Tryambakeshwar and those in the city. Out of these, the temples at Sinnar on Nashik – Pune road and Anjaneri on the Nashik – Tryambakeshwar road were constructed in around 11th – 12th century CE by the Yadava kings and their feudatories. Out of these the Aishwaryeshwar temple and the Gondeshwar temple at Sinnar are the most impressive with their beautiful sculptures. The temple complex at Anjaneri was also constructed during the same period and consists of Jain and a few Hindu temples at the foot of the Anjaneri fort.

The legends identify the Anjaneri hill as the birthplace of Hanuman. Today the small town of Anjaneri is also famous for the internationally acclaimed Indian Institute of Research in Numismatic Studies. It has a very informative money museum explaining the development of currency in India through...
the ages. The temple at Tryambakeshwar, one of the twelve jyotirlingas (the phallic emblem of Shiva with fire), is considered the most sacred of all such places. The town of Tryambakeshwar is located at the origin of the river Godavari, considered the Ganga of the Deccan.

The archives of the Brahmin priests in this town are remarkable for preserving the records of the families for whom they have been conducting the rituals for generations together. The Kumbh Mela is celebrated here during Simhastha (i.e. when Jupiter and Sun are in the zodiac sign Leo) which comes after every 12 years. At this time, millions of Hindus - both ascetics and other devotees - gather and bathe in the river. The next Kumbh Mela will be in 2015. Tryambakeshwar is also associated with Nivruttinath, brother of Sant Jnaneshwar and is therefore considered a special seat of the Naath Sampradaya.

Vani is also an extremely important place in the Nashik district. It is 60 kms to the northwest of the city and is known as the seat of Goddess Saptashrunga, meaning the one who resided on seven hills. The temple is located high up on a hill and a bus service is available from its base. This is one of the three and half shakti peethas (places of goddesses) in Maharashtra.

Frequently visited are also the temples such as Kala Rama (called so because black stone was used to make the image of Rama), Naro Shankar and Sundarnarayan. All these temples were built approximately in the 18th century by the rich devotees of that period. The picturesque Someshwar Mahadeo temple on the Gangapur Road is a popular pilgrim-cum-picnic spot for the locals and tourists.

The significance of Nashik and environs is further highlighted by the presence of forts at politically strategic points. This district is connected with the neighbouring states of
Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Moreover, its unique geography has provided it natural protection by the Sahyadri mountain ranges. These natural posts have been converted into political watch towers by the various dynasties that ruled this region. As a result, we find up to 38 major and minor forts constructed in these mountain ranges, making for a veritable treasure for those who love trekking. Among the most important forts are Ankai-Tankai, Salher-Mulher, Ramsej, Dhodap, Ahivant, etc. The Ankai–Tankai hills near Manmad have a medieval fort and some Hindu and Jain caves carved into them.

Vast Variety

Nashik has also become well known because of the Vipashyana International Academy located at Igatpuri. It was established in 1976 with the objective of conducting vipashyana courses for those seeking spiritual healing. This centre, named as Dhammagiri, is 40 kms away from the city on the Mumbai – Agra road. A city with a lot of vibrancy, it has successfully preserved a perfect combination of traditional and modern cultures. It is also known as the ‘wine capital of India’.

What also gives Nashik a different hue are the mansions built out of wood. Despite the growing trend of modern-day construction styles, there are many in the city who prefer to stay in the old buildings with their paintings on the walls depicting the city’s links with its history. With a climate that does not go to the extremes during summer or winter, Nashik is also the haunt of many migratory birds. Also located here is the Nandur Madhameshwar Sanctuary with its rich flora and fauna.

People And Places

The city’s legacy also includes the significant role played by some of its people in the freedom struggle of India. These include Anant Laxman Kanhere, Krishnaji Gopal Karve and Vinayak Ramachandra Deshpande who were sentenced to death by the British government for killing the collector of Nashik. A small town nearby known as Bhagur was the birthplace of the great freedom fighter Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. In 1930, Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar launched here the Kala Rama Satyagraha for the entry of the Dalits into the Kala Rama Temple.

Nashik has also been chosen by the Indian government for its various nodal defence centres that include the artillery centre, the Government Security Press, the Deolali camp, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and the Air Force Station at Ozar. On the cultural side, it was here that the pioneer of the Indian film industry, Dadasaheb Phalke, was born. The city also boasts of being the base for the literary activities of Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar
alias Kusumagraj, the great Marathi writer and poet. He was conferred with many national awards, including the Sahitya Akademi Award and the Jnanapeeth Award.

The Sarvajanik Vachanalay in the city has got a fantastic collection of some of the most significant publications of Maharashtra. It also houses a small museum with stone and metal sculptures as also manuscripts. There is another museum near Nashik at Gargoti which has a collection of zeolites. Similarly, the Archaeological Museum housed in the Dadasaheb Phalke Smarak at the foot of the Pandav Leni also has a noteworthy collection of antiquities recovered from various places in the district. Today Nashik has become a flourishing industrial district in the last few decades with the establishment of sugar factories, vineyards, reputed and large companies like Mahindra & Mahindra, Siemens, Crompton Greaves, Kirloskar, Samsonite, Glaxo India etc. to name just a few. The new city is also bustling with malls like most metropoles of India. For tourists coming here, Nashik offers a perfect blend of the old and the new. There is peace and quiet, there are wine festivals, there is history and there is the somber religious environment. It is up to you to choose.

Modern Nashik - Shopping malls, wineries and vineyards

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Yashawantraoji was born on March 12, 1913 at village Devrashtra in the then Satara district of western Maharashtra. His father, who was a bailiff, passed away when Yashawant was only four years of age. At this critical stage, Yashawant's mother, Vithabai, took the decision to shift the family to Karad for the education of her children. Though illiterate, she was very sensible. She knew that for poor people education was the only source of power and her decision of shifting to Karad was an important milestone in the life of Yashawantraoji. Years passed by.

Facing British Ire

September 1929. There was an outburst against British rule in India. The Britishers were hell-bent on sending the freedom fighters to prison. There they were brutally tortured in protest of which Yatindra Das started a fast in Lahore Jail. On the 66th day of his fast, Das breathed his last. Yashawant, then just 16 years old, was deeply moved by this incident and decided that he would devote his life for the country. It was a mission that drove his entire life.

He therefore started to actively participate in the independence movement. In January 1932, at a secret meeting held at village Tamhavane taluka Karad, he was assigned the responsibility of organising the celebrations of January 26. On the night of the 25th he and his team pasted bulletins in the town and hosted Congress flags all over. One of his teams even dared to hoist the flag on the municipal council building of Karad. The next morning Yashawantraoji hoisted the Congress tricolour on a tree in the school compound and shouted the slogan ‘Vande Mataram’. He was immediately arrested but refused to ask for mercy in front of the magistrate as suggested by his school teacher. In fact he told the magistrate that nothing would stop him from his fight for the country’s freedom. He was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment sent to Yerawada Jail.

Entering Politics

August 8, 1942. An Indian National Congress meet was organised at Gawaliya Tank, Mumbai. Yashawantraoji was also present with his teammates. Pandit Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi addressed the Congress. Panditji presented the legendary proposal of ‘Quit India’. Mahatmaji gave the country the stimulating mantra of ‘Karenge Ya Marenge’. Yashawantraoji returned to Karad with his team full of new-found enthusiasm. Assuming that he would be arrested for openly participating in the Gandhian movement, which in turn would restrict his work, Yashawantraoji went underground along with many of his co-workers.

Their efforts soon found the freedom fighters marching to the tehsil offices at Karad, Patan, Tasgaon, Vaduj and Islampur. The railway station of Shirawade near Karad was burnt. The movement for freedom from British rule began to spread across the whole of western
Maharashtra. Such was the heat building up then that he had to go to Phaltan to meet his ailing wife Venubai under cover. However, he was arrested and sent to Yerawada Jail for six months of rigorous imprisonment.

The period of the ‘Samyukta Maharashtra’ movement was a testing time for political maturity and the leadership qualities of Yashwantraoji. He himself was firm about the concept of ‘Maharashtra including Mumbai’. But at that time he had to work in the ministry of Morarjibhai Desai who was against this idea. Also, senior congress leaders in Delhi were then not in a mood to entertain the fair and rational demands of Maharashtra. Yashwantraoji thus faced crisis on two fronts. In 1955, the State Reorganisation Commission submitted its report which, because of its recommendations, was received with rage. Chief Minister Morarjibhai resorted to using police force that led to the death of 105 Samyukta Maharashtra Samitee workers. The fallout was that many of the Congress leaders openly joined this movement.

At The Helm Of Governance

The unrest that followed led to the formation of a bilingual Mumbai state and Yashwantraoji was assigned the responsibility of taking on the role of the chief minister. Acceptance of this responsibility at such a time was like sitting on the tip of a fuming volcano. During that period, leaders like Nanasaheb Gore, Barrister Nath Pai, Acharya Atre, Bapusaheb Kaldate were in control of the mindset of the Marathi people. All the Congress workers in Maharashtra were caught in a thorny situation. Although Yashwantraoji himself was in favour of Samyukta Maharashtra, he felt that in a parliamentary democracy it is necessary for everybody to honour the decision of the parliament. He regarded national integrity as more important than the problems of Maharashtra.

Due to such an approach he had to bear with a lot of criticism. He was called a cheater and fraud. But Yashwantraoji remained firm on his decision. He then started to conduct public meetings in the mofussil regions of the state. His simple, attractive and thoughtful use of communication that was always peppered with the day-to-day experiences of the rural people influenced all. People felt the warmth in the heart of their leader. He never criticized anybody. Therefore, when the elections were held in February 1957, Yashwantraoji pulled off an impossible looking victory for the Congress party. He was once again sworn in as the Chief Minister of Mumbai.

During his tenure, Yashwantraoji also won the trust of the people of Gujrat. He never used any force against the Samyukta Maharashtra activists. The approach initiated a process of change in the opinion of those who ruled from Delhi about the demands of the Marathi people. After Indira Gandhi became the Congress President, Yashwantraoji made her aware about the fair demands of the Marathi people during her Mumbai visit. After convincing all the senior leaders, Yashwantraoji put forth the proposal of ‘Samyukta Maharashtra’ to the Congress Working Committee. Pandit Nehru and Home Minister Pant gave their approval.

Creation Of The State

A resolution was then passed in the parliament which led to the formation of the Maharashtra state which came into official existence on May 1, 1960. Before the formation of this state, Yashwantraoji had always maintained that Maharashtra should lead in making every sacrifice required for this country. His concept was very clear: ‘Maharashtra can prosper when India prospers’. His definition of a Maharashtrian was not restricted to a Marathi-speaking individual. He always said that every individual living in the state and who contributes to this state and himself as
per his individual capacities is a Maharashtrian. “All the people in the state should live in harmony irrespective of their religion, caste, political affiliation, etc,” he often said.

To solve the basic economic and social problems of Maharashtra, Yashawantraoji always thought of the bigger picture. At the time of the formation of the state, he initiated the cooperative movement and paid attention to the importance to the development of dry and underdeveloped areas along with educational and industrial facilities. Yashawantraoji was deeply influenced by Mahatmaji’s humanism. He was a constant champion of the cause of the common man and a keen advocate of social justice and equitable development. Due to his cultured, scholarly, humanitarian and strong leadership, he came to be known as the ‘architect of modern Maharashtra’.

Agricultural Reforms

Yashawantraoji’s ideology about agriculture was that every person engaged in agricultural activity should be the owner of that land. The government should support them with a cooperative movement and achieve the development of the farmers. He always said that our country is an agro-based economy and the success of the government lies in making all the poor farmers and farm workers happy and prosperous. As most part of Maharashtra was dry and rain-dependent, he initiated the works of weirs, bunds, percolation tanks, etc to increase the availability of water.

He expedited two major projects viz. those of the Koyna and Ujani dams. He also planned for the development of land lying barren for thousands of years. Yashawantraoji also implemented various schemes of small-scale rural entrepreneurship. He combined the techniques of time-tested traditional agriculture with the new developments taking place all over the world. For this he established agricultural universities and colleges in Maharashtra. The objective was to create the means for the progress of the farmers, 70 percent of whom were poor.

Decentralisation

At the time of the formation of Maharashtra, the responsibility of development of rural areas was with district local board, Janpad Sabhas and the gram panchayats. Yashawantraoji knew that true development would need the active support and participation of the people. For this he made the first move towards the formation of the ‘Panchayat Raj’ system of governance. He formed a chain consisting of zilla parishads, panchayat samitis and gram panchayats which connected the common man to the government. This concept was much appreciated and accepted all over the country. Until then the works taken up by these institutions were only of social development, which was restricted only to bringing about an improvement in living standards. Yashawantraoji assigned these institutions the work of the overall economic development of the rural areas.

He provided these institutions with the necessary power and the required machinery to effectively implement programmes of social and economic development. He also made provisions for access to finance, technical advice and expert guidance for these institutions. Yashawantraoji’s faith in the democratic process was unshakeable and he always felt that such institutions would provide the reins of future leadership across the nation. While laying the foundation of the overall development of Maharashtra, he was always aware about the integrity of the nation.

He considered the emergence of egotism with respect to languages, areas and castes as a major catastrophe for our country. In a speech in 1961, he said, “Some people are becoming ambitious. They think that they can use caste, language and religion to their benefit and grab hold of the democratic system. We all should take efforts to preserve the integrity of our country and move towards the progress of our beloved nation.”

Defending The Nation

October 20, 1962. The Chinese army launched an unprecedented attack on India in the Aksai China and NEFA sectors. Thousands of Indian soldiers sacrificed their lives. India suffered a humiliating defeat with heavy losses. Due to this shameful defeat, Krishna Menon, then the defence minister, was compelled to resign. Pandit Nehru called Yashawantraoji to take on the mantle of the defence minister. Over the next 22 years, Yashawantraoji shouldered various responsibilities such as that of the home minister, finance minister, external affairs minister and deputy prime minister. In this period he left important imprints at the national level. Maharashtra, in the meanwhile, missed him. The nation’s gain was the state’s loss.
India’s foreign policy and defence: Role of Yashwantraoji Chavan

The first chief minister of United Maharashtra and the architect of modern Maharashtra, Yashwantrao Chavan, was a great national leader with a mass appeal, a statesman, an outstanding administrator, a thinker and a scholar. In a career spanning 40 years, he guided the nation through turbulent times. He served several times as a cabinet minister in the Central Government of India heading the portfolios of home, defence, finance and external affairs and later went on to become the deputy prime minister of India. Foreign policy and defence were the two areas which were very close to Shri Yashwantrao’s heart. In both these areas he made a seminal contribution to our nation’s security and economic well-being which is relevant and significant even today after several decades. This year celebrates his birth centenary.

As is well-known, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru invited him to Delhi to be the defence minister in the wake of the Chinese invasion in 1962. As defence minister, Yashwantrao first restored the morale of our armed forces which was deeply affected by the debacle against China in October-November 1962. He also restructured and modernized the military, brought about better inter-services and intelligence coordination. Indigenous defence production was restarted. The improvements enabled India find new confidence and strength vis-a-vis China and Pakistan. In the 1965 war against Pakistan, the Indian armed forces routed the invading troops and gave a fitting reply. His balanced judgement, in-depth understanding of situations and quick decision-making abilities helped effectively overcome many a national crisis.

Four decades later, India’s security environment in its neighbourhood and extended neighbourhood still remains highly volatile and fragile. Today our neighbours, Pakistan and China, have ever-expanding nuclear arsenals and a large modernized military machine. Besides traditional security threats there are now non-traditional security threats such as cross-border terrorism, illegal migration, piracy, etc. It will be instructive to study and analyse in detail how Yashwantrao handled two front threats when India’s resources were far too small and international environment for the country was also not very conducive.

The two fields, namely foreign policy and defence, are such that there is a continuing link about the issues and challenges that Yashwantraoji dealt with, and what the country is faced with today. As in defence so also with foreign policy, he had to deal with a series of complex issues relating to our neighbours. Yashwantraojii served as foreign minister from 1974 to 1977, at a critical time in India’s relations with the outside world.

He handled the difficult situation with Bangladesh following Sheikh Mujibur Rahman’s assassination in August 1975, with Pakistan in its post break-up situation. During his tenure as foreign minister, Yashwantrao was able to bring about a balanced relationship with super powers while succeeding in the restoration of diplomatic relations with China. As foreign minister, Yashwantrao dealt with numerous foreign policy challenges in his characteristic style using both persuasion and spirit of cooperation at the same time being firm and decisive.

It is for his focus on specific India-related issues and solutions that he has been regarded by one eminent author as the most ‘India-centric foreign minister’ till his time. The principles and parameters of India’s foreign policy and the main challenges that India faces today are curiously not very different from Yashwantrao’s time. The depth of understanding, sagacity and leadership that he provided as foreign minister from 1974-77 will be an excellent study and reference for our foreign policy makers today.

Yashwantrao Balwantrao Chavan’s great contribution towards democratic institution building and development processes in India helped strengthen the socio-economic and political fibre of India. He was responsible for many development initiatives like the Agricultural Land Ceiling Acts, to name just a few. His intervention in labour disputes too produced satisfactory results. His vision of agro-industries with an emphasis on the cooperative sector and regionally balanced industrial development of Maharashtra resulted in putting the state in the forefront of the nation.

As home minister, Yashwantraoji directed his energies towards purposeful welfare activity. The result was an impressive movement of development and administration and people worked in close and constant collaboration. The scholar that he was, he set up in Delhi a major think-tank - the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) - with an objective to promote national and international security through the generation and dissemination of knowledge on defence and security-related issues. The IDSA is an autonomous body dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security.

The author is former Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.
Perpetually Pretty

Pench

Anirudh Chaoji | Photographs © Anirudh Chaoji, Trishant Simlai, Ashish Nerlekar

“And don’t spend your time lookin’ around
For something you want that can’t be found
When you find out you can live without it
And go along not thinkin’ about it
I’ll tell you something true
The bare necessities of life will come to you.”

This probably makes for one of the simplest lessons in terms of the ‘art for happy living’, provided not by any spiritual leader but by Baloo the bear from Rudyard Kipling’s masterpiece creation ‘The Jungle Book’. Many of us have grown up reading stories of Mowgli, Baloo, Bagheera, Sherkhan and other characters who gave us an insight about the simple but enjoyable life in a central Indian forest. But do you know where the inspiration for ‘The Jungle Book’ was derived from? It came from the beautiful forests of Pench and its surrounding areas.

Pench is located on both sides of the Maharashtra - Madhya Pradesh border. Many sites mentioned in the book are actual locations in the Seoni district, including the gorge of the Wainganga River where Sherkhan was killed, the Kanhiwara village and the Seeonee hills. In fact, Rudyard Kipling studied Robert Armitage Strendale’s book ‘Seonee’ and other natural history books available then to under-
stand and so effectively describe the animal behaviour in his captivating work. The character of Mowgli himself was inspired by the accounts of a 'wolf boy' nurtured by wolves in their dens near the village of Sant Baori in Seoni district.

**Historical Background**

Ever since the times of Ain-i-Akbari, this area’s rich natural wealth has been to the fore. A number of British officers too were very fascinated, including Capt Forsyth, the discoverer of the hill station of Pachmarhi, who paid rich tributes to Pench in his work ‘Highlands of Central India’.

These forests that led to the creation of ‘The Jungle Book’ continue to attract a large number of nature lovers, birdwatchers, photog-

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**Wildlife**

A sambar male showing off its new set of antlers

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**Reaching There**

About 80 kms from Pench, Nagpur is the nearest airport and railway Junction and is well connected to all the cities of India.

Park details:
The best time to visit the park is between February and April. (May is hot... but you tend to get good sightings, if you can tolerate the sun) The Park is open to visitors between 6 am to 10:30 am and 3 pm to 6 pm. The park remains closed during the months of July, August and September. It can be accessed by road as well as railway. The nearest rail-head is at Ramtek (Its a very small station. Nagpur is a better place to change and drive) and a bus can be taken for the next 35 km to the Park.

Other places of interest:
The Nagzira Sanctuary and the Navegaon National Park in the neighbouring District of Gondia.
raphers and holiday makers to travel the short distance of 70 kms from Nagpur. The bio-diverse habitat of Pench was officially recognised as a national park by the Government of Maharashtra in 1975 and received an elevation in its status as India’s 25th ‘tiger reserve’ in 1999.

It was the vision of one of our most eco-friendly politicians ever – the then Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi - that ensured the survival of tigers in India. Their number had gone down to a measly 1,800 from around 80,000 at the turn of the twentieth century. Unchecked hunting and habitat destruction had together brought the royal Bengal tiger close to extinction. Incidentally, Pench was also a part of the ‘shooting block’ system created in 1927, which allowed the rich and famous to shoot game, more specifically tigers and leopards. Ironically, it was only in 1961 that the Bombay Wild Animals and Wild Birds Act, 1951 was extended to Vidarbha to provide a ‘very small’ protection by prescribing a closed season for hunting from April 1 to October 31 every year.

**Wildlife Treasures**

Once you leave the Nagpur Jabalpur highway behind and move towards Totladoh and S illari guest houses of Pench, it is like leaving the civilised world behind and driving into the wilderness in the midst of the Satpura – Maikal hill ranges. However, soon you realise that these wilds are actually more civilised with their ‘real’ beautiful people sharing the 257 sq kms of forest home. I personally am
mesmerised by the wilderness of Pench. It actually gives one a realistic chance of meeting the carnivores like the tiger, leopard, jungle cat, wild dog, hyena, jackal and the civet. During the safaris, visitors often come across pugmarks, strong smells of territory markings and even direct sightings of these superstars.

Supporting these carnivores is the strong number of the prey species of herbivores, including the sambar, spotted deer, Indian gaur (wrongly referred to as the bison), neelgai, four-horned antelope, barking deer, wild boar and the absolutely elusive ratel. However, one animal that has fascinated me the most has been the sloth bear. Nature lovers often get a darshan of these fruit and insect relishing mammals in Pench.

A Wonderful Sighting

One summer evening, a few years ago, we were waiting at a waterhole. Light was fading by the minute. A short while ago we had seen the pugmarks of a tigress on the forest path and a little later the loud alarm call of a sambar deer had also announced the presence of a big carnivore around. Needless to
say, everyone was on the lookout for a dash of yellow to suddenly make an appearance on stage. Necks were craning out when someone excitedly pulled my T shirt to point out in exactly the opposite direction. A huge black object with two little soft ‘toys’ came bounding out of the forest and headed straight for the waterhole.

A mother sloth bear had brought her two small cubs for a much needed drink at the end of a long hot day. Even as they had just started to quench their thirst, something seemed to disturb the mother and she started to beat a hasty retreat. The thirsty cubs however didn’t want to leave just yet. She tried to coax them initially, but when all her cajoling from a distance failed, she rushed back to the waterhole and in a distinctly alarmed call ‘reprimanded’ the cubs to follow her and very soon all of them dissolved into the darkness of the forest behind. She was right about the disturbance. Almost immediately, a huge male gaur arrived on the scene, who I thought must surely be over a ton in sheer muscle weight.

In the past my friends had witnessed violent encounters of mother bears and tigers. Jim Corbett too mentions one such fight, where eventually both the animals met their bloody end. But in this case, the mother played it very safe and ensured that she did not have any confrontation with the huge bovine, which normally wouldn’t have bothered too much about the hairy mammal sharing his watering hole.

**Feathered Friends**

Many such experiences from Pench are deeply engraved in my mind. Though, I must confess, I have been enticed to Pench more by its wonderful avi-fauna. The colourful for-
est birds here are very well complimented by the large number of migratory visitors. These arrive every winter on the huge reservoir formed by the damming of the north-south flowing Pench River. This water body now politically separates Maharashtra’s Pench National Park from its Madhya Pradesh cousin sharing the same name. Pin tail duck, shoveller, gargeny duck, pochard, Indian skimmer and large number of residents like the comb duck, spotbill, coot, heron and moorhen can be seen sharing the water eco-system. Importantly, it was a judgment of the Indian Supreme Court that totally banned fishing in this lake – keeping with the spirit of human non-interference in the wilderness.

The birds of prey who rule the skies in these forests include the serpent eagle, changeable hawk eagle, grey-headed fish eagle, white-eyed buzzard and honey buzzard. Barred jungle owlet, collared scops owl and the weird looking mottled wood owl keep the death watch during the nights. Malabar pied hornbill, scarlet minivet, painted francolin, oriole, barbets, kingfishers and other colourful feathered bipeds bring up the bird list to over 225 species.

**Woods And Beyond**

When the Totladoh hydroelectric project was built, a large part of the forest, mainly in Maharashtra, underwent submergence. But now, the stabilised eco-system is a rich mix of dry and moist tropical deciduous forest with teak (Tectona grandis) being the dominant species. This is found in association with ain (Terminalia tomentosa), mahua (Madhuca flava) and palas (Butea monosperma).
The ghost tree draws its name from the smooth greenish white papery bark that has a ghostly shine in the forest on a moonlit night.

But for me, three trees that really stand out in the Pench forest are the ghost tree (Sterculia urens), arjun (Terminalia arjuna) and palas (Butea monosperma). The ghost tree draws its name from the smooth greenish white papery bark that has a ghostly shine in the forest on a moonlit night. This papery bark peels off, giving it the other interesting name - that of ‘the naked lady’ of the forest. No wonder, there are many tales associated with this tree. The ghost tree is also very useful to the local Gond tribals, who extract the ‘karaya’ gum from the bark and also eat the roasted seeds. The Sterculia part in its scientific name comes from Sterculius, the Roman god of dung, since the flowers of this tree have a strong foul smell.

Second on my special list is a large handsome tree with its conspicuous grey buttressed bark. Many of these can be seen dotting the streams and rivulets in the forest. These are the arjuna trees. Mythology has it that Kunti, the Pandava mother named her son Arjuna to motivate him to grow up and become as strong and stately as an arjuna tree. The bark of this tree is extracted for leather tanning and leaves are also used to feed silkworms in sericulture.

The third is the Palas tree, which probably is my most favourite tree. It is better known as the ‘flame of the forest’ as its orange flowers burst open in January and February to decorate the tree and actually give the appearance of a tree being on fire. And a large number of such trees create an effect of a flame in the forest. This is one of our best known bird-attracting trees, whose flowers are pollinated by babblers, sunbirds, starlings, bulbuls and others who are attracted to the brilliant flowers in large numbers. I too have found myself attracted to the ‘birds and the bees’ and also the beautiful flowers.

Symbiotic Existence

The Gond and the Bhil tribals of central India have used the leaves of palas to prepare degradable plates and bowls. Also, the safe col-
ours for Holi from the orange flowers do not cause allergies. The so called ‘illiterate tribals’ also use numerous roots, fruits, barks and flowers to cure many illnesses. These tribal communities have come to depend on the forest produce to earn a living since time immemorial. Unfortunately they are now being isolated from the sources of their livelihood. Even today one of the biggest challenges for Pench is perceived to be the existence of the Fulzari village inside and the nine other villages on its periphery. It could be the best conservation solution to involve these sons of the forest in its protection.

So, pack your bags, get set and go...discover Pench and the simple message left behind by Baloo. Happiness and the bare necessities...

Ghost tree - also known for its very useful Karu gum.

The author is Director, Pugmarks, Pune
When Love Goes ‘Rustic’

The Gaathaa-Sapta-Shatee

Nalini Joshi  |  Photographs © Saloni Luktuke, Vijay Ghodekar
Illustrations: Saloni Luktuke

Love, whether in its emotional or physical state, is always hard to describe. Authors and poets have often fumbled when it comes to exploring the inner depths of the unique bond that ties up a man and woman. It therefore turns into quite an exciting trip when one comes across literature that is perfection personified when it sails over the uncharted waters of love. As such, every Sanskritist, and particularly Prakritist, in the world knows the uniqueness of the anthology called ‘Gaathaa-Sapta-Shatee’. At the very outset one may think about it as a religious work but it is not so. In this article an attempt has been made to highlight the soul of Gaathaa-Sapta-Shatee in which the poetic love expressions of contemporary Maharashtra are documented. This collection of 700 verses (gaathaaas) belongs to the 1st century CE.

Haala Satavaahana, a ruler of the Saatavaahana dynasty, is the compiler of this work and it is noted in the third verse of this text that ‘out of ten millions of verses adorned
with ornaments (or rhetorical figures of speech), only 700 have been collected (or compiled) by Kavivastala (meaning ‘compassionate towards the poets’) Haala’. Ancient Pratishthaana (Paithana) was the capital of the Saatavaahanas.

The Beginning

Haala, the present compiler, was a great lover of Prakrit, particularly Mahaaraash-tree Prakrit. He appealed and encouraged his subjects to write their poetry in their colloquial language. The appeal of the king was welcomed enthusiastically and literally hundreds of poets and poetesses showered king Haala with their muktakas (gaathas, twoliners) in torrents. He offered one gold coin per couplet.

After going through the whole collection carefully, he selected 700 best verses and divided them into seven parts, each called ‘shataka’ (a collection of one hundred couplets). Thus, the Gaathaa-Sapta-Shatee manifests the poetic competence and the intellectual abilities of the common people of Maharashtra. The expanse of the Saatavaahana kingdom was a large one and therefore this unique anthology acquired tremendous popularity. It is a grand package of poetry and wisdom, a rich-socio-cultural data and the aspirations of common people, mainly belonging to rural areas. No wonder that this anthology is enumerated among the world classics.

In its true sense, it is the Gangotri of the vast and rich lokasaahitya (folk literature) in Marathi.

This anthology was first translated

The monsoons have arrived and thunder clouds have gathered in the sky. The rains are showering the earth and the muster of peacocks is dancing with joy. They appear all the more graceful because of the darkened day time backdrop.
The forest fire had lit the surrounding area in such a way that the naïve deer felt that it was the Flame of the Forest in full bloom and so the poor soul did not flee.

Studied from the view of rhetoricians, this anthology is full of poetic excellences but ‘dhvani’ or suggestiveness is the salient feature of almost every verse. Several renowned commentators have exerted a lot to explain the hidden meaning within these verses (popularly known as ‘double meaning’). It may be believed that the vibhaava (ensuant feeling), anubhaava (manifestation of feeling), vyabhichaari-bhaava (accessory feeling), love in association or union, love in separation and even illicit and unbridled kind of love have always churned the human mind in the same form throughout the ages.

A great deal of delight can be derived by the readers from the suggestive words and expressions of various kinds of erotic ideas inlaid in them. It has been said (viz. shataka i.e. chapter) that if read by men of sentiments, a ‘gaathaa’ in this treatise may seem to him as sweeter than ambrosia. Some beautiful examples exhibiting all possible shades of ‘love’ will help the reader to know the essence of this anthology: the initial benediction is

into German by Weber. It is available in English and French. To date it has been translated into all the chief modern Indian languages. We find many imitations of this unique treatise in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsha. Bihari Lal’s Sata-Sai in ‘vraja-bhaasha’ attained great popularity.

Spectrum Of Love

A wide range of subjects have been explored in this anthology. There are some good sayings (subhaashitas), quotable quotes, descriptions of good and bad persons (verses dedicated to sajjana and durjana), the ethical teachings, universal value judgments, the role of destiny and death in worldly activities, serene beauty of nature, the outlook of commoners towards the ways of life, and so on. But it is observed that the spontaneous, natural and unrestricted outburst of erotic sentiment (shringaara rasa) is the soul of this anthology. Most of the verses are full of erotic ideas which are exhibited with unique imagery.

The relation between the young lady and her husband’s younger brother (devara) is one of the favourite subjects in this anthology. The flirting of the ‘devara’ is often mentioned and the different reactions of three different young ladies are quite amusing.
dedicated to the intense love of god Shiva and Gauree and says, “Salute the twilight offering of a handful of water by Shiva, on which remains reflected the moon-like face of Gauree (Paarvatee), red in anger, and which therefore looks as if it bears the red lotus of adoration.”

At the very outset, a rasika gets thrilled with the beauty of imagery used by the compiler (i.e. Haala) as an apt benedictory expression for this anthology. The fourth verse of the first chapter is often quoted in the books of poets by Indian rhetoricians and the purport of the verse can be summarised as: “Look here, the female crane appears splendid while sitting steady and motionless on the lotus leaf, just like a conch shell placed on a spotless vessel made of emerald.” Actually it is a beautiful description of nature but commentators say that here, a ‘meelanoitsuka naayikaa’ is suggesting to the hero that “this place is safe and suitable for our secret meeting.”

Exploring Relationships

In another verse (1.19), the romance of a newly-wed couple is described. The husband is wondering when he observes the two different moods of his newly-wed wife - the most romantic mood at night and the most obedient daughter-in-law among the elderly family members during the day and exclaims, “The beloved lady, who with her cheeks blooming with joy, gave in that way hundreds of directions to me at the time of dalliance during the previous night, could not be believed by me the next morning to be the same lady with her downcast face.”

The relation between the young lady and her husband’s younger brother (devara) is one of the favourite subjects in this anthology. The flirting of the ‘devara’ is often mentioned and the different reactions of three different young ladies are quite amusing. One lady encourages him, another lady bears him with great distaste and the third one instructs him properly by showing the pictures of Lakshmana, so devoted to Rama, recorded in the paintings on the walls of their house.

The sentiment of love is so subtle that in different situations it appears before us in altogether new manners and modes. A young lady whose beloved is embarking on a long journey the next day expresses her feelings by saying, “It is reported that my tough-hearted beloved husband will go abroad tomorrow. O Lady Night, I request you to so lengthen yourself that ‘the tomorrow’ does not at all come into actuality.” Some of the couples live together with certain adjustment and patchwork. One of the poets of this anthology aptly says, “The feeling of that love, which is first estranged and then composed, and in which the fault (of either of the pair) is directly visible, becomes flavourless - like water (first) heated and then made cold.”

One of the poets describes the pseudo anger in the love sport of a young couple. The meaning can be paraphrased as, “The feeling of displeasure towards her lover adopted by the lady, fretted by jealous anger, slips away quickly like a handful of very fine sand.” The onomatopoetic word ‘surasuranto’ – an adjective to describe fine sand - is quite noteworthy. Actually, in this anthology, the power of words consists in the usage of proper ‘desi’ (local) words, having the flavour of the rustic ideas of village-dwellers. Thus, half of the credit of its success goes to the apt use of proper desi words that have no remote connection with refined Sanskrit words.

At another place the jealousy of co-wives (sautana) is captured and stated by using unique poetic imagination, which is really rare. The verse means, “The red colour of her lips, which was wiped off by the kiss of her lover on the previous night, is seen reflected next morning in the eyes of her co-wives.” A typical filmy love triangle is reflected in the expression, “She is your beloved, but you are mine. You are an object of hatred to her, and I am hated by you. O boy, I plainly state this - love is said to have many transformations.”

The psychology of a widow or widower is expressed thus: “The couple had shared many moments of joy and misery throughout their life. Their love was matured. In this case, when (he or she) dies, the dead one remains immortal in the memory of the other. But the living person feels as if he is dead.”

The attitude of a flirtatious youth is described in a unique way: “O fortunate one! Having had no place (for herself) in your heart, full of other thousand women, she is making her thin body thinner, in order to get a place in your heart.” The unsatisfied sex instinct of a middle-aged woman is expressed without any constraint in a verse that states, “The village is full of young men, the month belongs to the spring season, she possesses youth, her husband is old, and the matured liquor is handy. Under these circumstances, will she die? How can it be that she is not unchaste?”

On the same lines, the unfulfilled one-sided love of a younger girl is described as: “Perhaps my qualities are trivial, or he is not an
appreciator of them, or I am myself devoid of any qualities or his favourite girl possesses many more of them.” Meanwhile, true friendship is defined in several places in this anthology with the help of using off-beat and non-traditional images viz. a doll painted on the wall or a rough woolen blanket. Interestingly, the river Godavari is often presented as a witness in love matters. One young girl exclaims, “The flood water of Godaa and the midnights of the rainy season - both are aware of his attractive youth and of the daring feat of mine which is not woman-like.”

Further on, the totally shameless behaviour of a wanton woman is presented in one verse very artistically. The poet says, “The wanton woman has so tamed the dog with food and drink that the dog welcomes her paramour but barks at the owner of the house (i.e. her husband) when he comes in.” Several references of harlots, courtesans and unchaste women are found in this anthology along with the kula-vadhus (chaste daughters – in law) and kula-baalikas (chaste daughters). If we compare the present anthology to a decorated hall, the subhaashitas, descriptions of nature, ethical teachings and philosophical reflections, etc are the peripheral decorations while the glittering chandelier of ‘shringaara-rasa’ hanging in the middle of the ceiling is the crest jewel of all such decorations.

These rustic love expressions of Maharashtra start with the divine love of Lord Shiva and Gauree and the last auspicious salute at the end of the 7th chapter is also dedicated to the same celebrated pair - the spring well of all the patterns of acting, music and dance. Indeed, the Gaathaa-Sapta-Shatee stands as incomparable in Indian literature.

“It is reported that my tough-hearted beloved husband will go abroad tomorrow. O Lady Night, I request you to so lengthen yourself that ‘the tomorrow’ does not at all come into actuality.”
If we compare the present anthology to a decorated hall, the subhaashitas, descriptions of nature, ethical teachings and philosophical reflections, etc are the peripheral decorations while the glittering chandelier of ‘shringaara-rasa’ hanging in the middle of the ceiling is the crest jewel of all such decorations.

“The beloved lady, who with her cheeks blooming with joy, gave in that way hundreds of directions to me at the time of dalliance during the previous night, could not be believed by me the next morning to be the same lady with her downcast face.”

The author is Professor, Jain Chair, University of Pune
A group of 18 caves located just about 80 kilometres from Aurangabad once served as a Buddhist monastery and now are a valuable link to the Satavahana period, writes Suraj A. Pandit.
The story of Pitalkhora begins somewhere around 65 to 67 million years ago, when even the Himalayas were yet to be born. A series of volcanic eruptions defined the fate of these caves which got formed naturally on a hill called Chandora, a small part of the Satmala range. This is the northern edge of the Marathawada highland meeting a comparatively lower geographical region today known as Khandesh. This beautiful valley, imitating melted brass in twilight, was used by the ancient Indians as a major pass on the trade route linking Ujjain – Mahishmati (Maheshwar) – Bahal with Elapur (Ellora), Pratishthana (Paithana) and Tagara (Ter). This seems to be one of the most popular passes on the Dakhshinapatha. The historicity of the place is supposed to go back to the Mauryan period. Few scholars believe that the name Pitanika or Petenika referred to in Ashoka’s Edicts is thought to be of a tribe from the region Pitana or Petana which has been identified with the Pitalkhora-Patane region.

There are 18 caves in all and are numbered by the Archaeological Survey of India from 1 to 13, including chaityas (prayer halls) and viharas (residential cells). A group of three viharas have been numbered as Cave 1, another vihara next to Cave 6 is numbered as Cave 6A and Cave 9 is again a cluster of three viharas. Apart from these caves, the site is also known for the major antiquities reported in the clearance conducted in the vicinity of the caves. These caves are divided into two groups. Except four caves numbering 10 to 13, all the other caves form a cluster.

Both the groups are located facing each other on each side of the water stream. The smaller group comprises only chaityas, while the larger group is a complex of chaityas and viharas. Chronologically, the spread of the caves can be placed from 2nd century BCE to 3rd century CE. There are painting fragments of 5th – 6th century CE in Cave 3. All the caves here follow the architectural tradition of western Indian Buddhist rock-cut cave pattern. No antiquity of other than Buddhist affinity is reported from the site.

**Reflecting The Past**

The most important cave at the site is Cave 3, which is the main chaitya. This is apsidal in plan with a vaulted roof. There are a total of five crystal reliquaries in the shape of a Stupa found in its structural portion. Today, one can see only the base of the Stupa. The architectural style reminds us of Ajanta’s Cave 3.

**Reaching There**

80 kms from Aurangabad and more or less the same distance from Ajanta, 51 kms from Ellora.

**Geographical Details**

Name of the site: Pitalkhora

Nearest village: Bhamarvadi (9 kms). Nearest city: Kannad (17 kms), Chalisgaon (40 kms).

**Other places of interest:**

Patana Devi, Gautala Wildlife Sanctuary, Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad.
10. The original complete pillars, though less in number, demonstrate beautiful painting fragments of the Ajanta style. Many images of standing and seated Buddhas are clearly visible even today. Apart from this, four other chaityas can be seen at Pitalkhora viz. Caves 10 to 13. Caves 12 and 13 are in the lower contour and follow the early chaitya tradition, while the other two at a slightly upper level seem to be caves housing small monolithic stupas. This can be referred to as ‘the hall of memorial stupas’ similar to the one at Bhaja and Kanheri.

Viharas 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 again follow the early vihara tradition. There is a hall in the centre with small residential cells along three walls. This reminds us of the viharas at Kondane, Nasik and the early vihara at Ajanta. There are small benches and sometimes niches in the cells. Cave 4 is an elaborately carved vihara with pillars, pilasters, lattice windows and other decorations on the wall. One of the most beautiful miniature chaitya windows with ornamentation of animal motifs and lattice net is seen in this cave.

Pitalkhora executes the best specimens of sculptural art in stone of the early Satavahana period. Some of these antiquities can also be seen in the National Museum, Delhi. The most important of them is that of a Yaksha. It is today displayed at the same museum in the entrance hall. This has been identified as Yaksha Sankarin by M N Deshpande on the basis of a Buddhist text called Mahamayuri, where the Pitalkhora is mentioned as Pitangalya. There is an inscription on his hand which says that ‘this is a creation by Kanhadasa, the goldsmith’. Apart from this, four more Yaksha and Yakshi figures have been reported in the process of the debris clearance in front of Pitalkhora.
Caves 3 and 4. Sculptural panels of Kinnara-Gandharva, musicians, mahouts, a royal couple, Gajalakshmi and a narrative of the ‘Great Departure of Prince Siddhartha’ are reported. No less than nine panels of Mithunas are seen here. All these scattered panels can be dated to the Satavahana period.
Still, the best of the lot is yet to be mentioned. The panel associated with the name Pitalkhora is placed at the entrance of Cave 4. The elaborate entrance of this cave is through a small passage with a flight of steps leading to the open space above in front of Cave 4. This is located on a high plinth with panels carved by the artists. There are two dwara-palas at the entrance, one on each side of the door. Their costume reminds us of the Shaka influence. Above the door, a panel of Gajalakshmi was placed, which has been reported from the debris. In the adjacent wall, a five- hooded cobra was carved with holes in his hoods. The arrangement was made in such a manner that the water flowing through a channel behind used to get sprinkled through the cobra’s hoods. The plinth of the vihara in the wall adjacent to the entrance has a series of nine elephants ending with an almost life-size horse in profile with a male figure - a chauri bearer. The last panel has been identified as that of the ‘Great Departure of Prince Siddhartha’.

Among the four inscriptions found at the site, two are fragmentary and one of the complete inscriptions, as referred above, is as written on the outer palm of the Yaksha Sankarin. The other complete inscription is of a donor Kanha, son of Samasa, from Dhenukakata. A fragmentary inscription records the donation of a pillar in Cave 4 by a nun. Both the inscriptions are reported from Cave 4. The fourth fragmentary inscription is reported from Cave 5. It records the donation by a guild of bankers. All these inscriptions throw light on the socio-cultural background of the caves.

The most interesting set of antiquities reported from the site are made of crystal. Six of them are reliquaries and the seventh is a ring. The five reliquaries are in the shape of Stupas and the remaining one is in the shape of a bead. They all have been reported either

The architectural style reminds us of Ajanta’s Cave 10. The original complete pillars, though less in number, demonstrate beautiful painting fragments of the Ajanta style.
from the main chaitya or from the debris in front of Cave 4. Pitalkhora was a very prosperous Buddhist monastery in the early period which continued even up to 6th century CE. The site is located in the Gautala Sanctuary, which gives us a fair idea of its ancient environment. This, in real sense, is the forgotten ‘jewel’ of Maharashtra.

Among the four inscriptions found at the site, two are fragmentary and one of the complete inscriptions, as referred above, is as written on the outer palm of the Yaksha Sankarin.
Blessed by the Goddess

Mahalakshmi
Aruna Dhere, Varsha Gajendragadkar  |  Photographs © www.ambabai.com, Sachin Naik

She stands alone in the holy sanctum, resplendent in her fine robes and jewels. The holy sanctum is illuminated by just two oil lamps, when the rising sun rays pierce the darkness and fall on her feet to seek blessings. The next day the rays reach upwards and on the third day the golden rays fall on her face and in moments the sanctum is bathed in luminous sunlight. This spectacle occurs twice every year, once in the month of Kartik and later in the month of Magha (November 9 to 11 and January 1st or 2nd). Thousands of people gather at the famed Mahalakshmi temple at Kolhapur to witness this ‘luminous miracle’ where nature meets divine power.

Similar congregations are seen during the month of Chaitra, the first month in the Hindu calendar and during the ‘Navratra’ and ‘Dassera’ festivals in the month of Ashwin. The Mahalakshmi temple of Kolhapur is full of devotees - men, women and children - all year round. This abode of Lakshmi, the god-
Shrines

Reaching there
Distance from Mumbai - 403 kms.
Connected by air, rail and road from Mumbai
Mother Amba, the symbol of truth and sacredness, stands to bless her children for eternity.

dess of wealth and prosperity, is situated in Kolhapur which lies close to the border of the southern state of Karnataka. Kolhapur, or the ancient city of Karaveerm, figures prominently among the most visited places of pilgrimage in India.

The Mahalakshmi temple is among the most revered ‘Sade Teen Shakti Peeth’ or the major pilgrimages of the four goddesses worshipped by Hindus. Kolhapur is also called the ‘Kashi of the South’ by the devotees. In the ancient Puranas of Devi Bhagwat the temple is mentioned as one of the foremost in the country which every devotee of the goddess must visit in his or her lifetime.
The Roots

The name Kolhapur comes from a folklore. The goddess Lakshmi or Amba came to the ancient city to free it from the atrocities of a demon named Kolasura. After a fierce combat the demon was killed. Since then the goddess made Karveer her home. Though no historical records of the beautiful temple are available, it is widely believed that around the 9th century a temple was built around the statue of the deity by the then ruling dynasties. The kings from the Rashtrakut, Kadamb, Shilahar, Sind, Chalukya and Yadava dynasties find mention in the ancient stone etchings. All the royal patrons worshipped the goddess and gave away land, jewels and silks to the reigning deity. The Rashtrakuta king Amoghavarsha alias Virijaraj is said to have cut his small finger in order to please the goddess as

The Mahalakshmi temple is among the most revered ‘Sade Teen Shakti Peeth’ or the major pilgrimages of the four goddesses worshipped by Hindus.
her wrath had killed his numerous subjects in an outbreak of an epidemic.

Many historians (V V Mirashi and others) believe that the descendants of the Sind dynasty may have built some parts of the stately temple during the 9th century. It is also certain that even before that some structure existed from ancient times. Other than the main deity, smaller temples dedicated to other gods and goddesses like Bhairav, Ganesh, Katyayani, Temlai and Kapaleshwar Shiva are housed in the same establishment. All these deities are in some way or other connected to the main deity through folklore.

**An Awesome Presence**

However, is this deity Lakshmi who made Kolhapur her abode the consort of Lord Vishnu or is she Parvati, the consort of Shiva? There are different opinions about it. The beautiful statue of Mahalakshmi carries the symbols of the Shaivas, the followers of Shiva, and the Vaishnavas, the followers of Vishnu. This aspect sets apart the statue and makes it unique in its design and grace. Mahalakshmi has a mace in one hand and ‘mhalunga’ (a fruit) in the other. She holds a shield in her third arm and ‘panpatra’ (a pot to drink water) in the fourth. She balances a Shivalingam on her high crown with a coiled Nag. The statue is carved out of black stone, about three feet tall with a lion standing majestically in the background. The goddess Lakshmi has priceless jewels covering her and a solid silver frame adorning her benign face. During the Navaratri she is decorated in her nine different manifestations - a sight to behold.

The devotees who flock to catch her glimpse and seek her blessings are touched with happiness and fulfillment. She is the ‘shakti’, the mother of the universe who blesses her children and protects them from evil. She is the embodiment of Mahakali, Mahasaraswati and Mahalakshmi together, representing the power of the trinity i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. The mother of the universe is the only true divine power controlling the ‘panchmahabhutas’ or the five elements of earth viz. water, energy, wind, fire and earth.

**Architectural Wonder**

The temple which existed originally has been lost to natural forces of floods or earthquakes. It may have been built in the 7th or 8th century by the Chalukya king, Mangalesha. Later the temple was reconstructed by the many rulers that followed. Today it stands in an area of 27,000 sq feet and 45 feet from the ground. The outer wall has four entrances and a main entrance. The main entrance leads to the main hall or the Garud mandapam and the Ganapati mandapam. The Kurma mandapam follows, flanked by the statues of Mahakali and Mahasaraswati. Straight ahead lies the sanctum of the temple with the main deity Mahalakshmi.

On the left side of the Kurma mandapam, a staircase leads to the upper floor which houses a Shiva temple. This temple is situated directly above the deity below. The Shivalingam is also known a Matulinga. This shrine may have been built later in the 12th century. Behind the Shiva lingam a Ganesh statue is situated on a high stone pedestal. Situated directly opposite is a beautifully carved figure of Nandi, the vehicle of Shiva.

This spacious and lofty temple is nothing short of an architectural marvel of its time. The exquisitely carved stone pillars and the lofty arches are spectacular. The temple has a large courtyard which also houses a Siddhivinayak temple. One of the pillars has an inscription of Emperor Shinghan, a descendant of the Yadava dynasty. Along the outer wall of the temple are situated the shrines of Navgraha, Vishnu, TulajabHAVani, Radhakrishna, Vithal, Dutta, Ram and Hanuman.

The path leading up to the temple is a busy market full of attractive curios and puja items. Inside the temple the small stalls of coconuts, flowers, garlands, haldi-kumkum, sarees, prasad, etc attract tourists and devotees. Married women seeking the blessings of the Mother invariably buy bangles and other items which are considered auspicious. The Mahalakshmi temple and the bustling market around attract hordes of devotees from across the country and also from abroad all the year round.

The Mahalakshmi temple is a symbol of the rich heritage of Maharashtra and a tribute to our religious ethos.
Togetherness

According to a famous legend, Lakshmi is the beloved consort of Lord Vishnu or Balaji. It is said that after having a tiff with her husband Balaji, Lakshmi left the famous Tirumala hills of Andhra Pradesh and settled at Kolhapur. In order to mollify her anger, a lovely saree is presented to the goddess by the Balaji temple authorities every year. To this day the pilgrimage to the Balaji temple is not complete till every devotee visits his consort at Kolhapur. The Mahalakshmi temple is a symbol of the rich heritage of Maharashtra and a tribute to our religious ethos. Mother Amba, the symbol of truth and sacredness, stands to bless her children for eternity.
An Oasis of Empowerment

Anandwan
Ashok Mahadevan | Photographs © Anandwan

Ashok Mahadevan, former editor of the Indian edition of Reader’s Digest and now a freelance writer, writes about how the Amte family has made Anandwan in Maharashtra an icon in terms of the welfare of the disadvantaged, especially those stricken by leprosy, not through charity but through integration and commitment.

Production Units at Anandwan
Three dozen people file into the reception room and sit down facing a stocky man dressed in a crisply ironed cream-coloured kurta pyjama. He asks them to introduce themselves. One by one they get up and say who they are and where they are from. Nearly all are middle-class Maharashtrians—housewives, teachers, accountants, students, clerks, scientists, government officials—and most of them are from Pune and other towns in the state. Some of the visitors are very young and although they are at first too shy to speak, the stocky man jokes with them and gets them to laugh and talk too. The atmosphere in the room is so relaxed and friendly that it’s hard to believe that we are in the centre of the one of the world’s most revered institutions—Anandwan, the legendary community of disabled people.

And the man the visitors are talking to is Vikas Amte, elder son of one of the greatest Reaching there

Anandwan is located in Warora tehsil of Chandrapur district in Maharashtra, Nearest Railhead: Warora (2 Km) or Wardha (90 Kms from Anandwan)

Nearest Airport : Nagpur (110 km from Anandwan).

Anandwan is about 1.5 hours drive from Wardha and Nagpur.

All buses from Wardha/ Nagpur to Chandrapur pass through Anandwan Square at Warora town. On request by the passenger, the bus stops at the square. From the Square, Anandwan is just five minutes walking distance.

Buses and taxis are available from Wardha as well as from Nagpur. With prior intimation, taxis can be booked on our behalf by calling Anandwan’s Sarpanch Raju Sasagade on 9011094626 or by writing to anandwan@gmail.com.

All the information about Anandwan is available on www.anandwan.in.
and most loved Maharashtrians of his time—Murlidhar Devas ‘Baba’ Amte. Everyone knows that Baba Amte started Anandwan in 1949 to treat and rehabilitate leprosy patients. Over the years, Baba also started schools for blind and deaf children, began youth camps to encourage youngsters to take up social service, taught small farmers to improve their crop yields, and provided vocational training for the physically handicapped. But few people realise that long before Baba’s death in 2008, Vikas had taken over the reins of the organisation and much of the credit for the way Anandwan has grown in the last 40 years should largely go to him.

**An Impressive Achievement**

The achievements of the Maharogi Sewa Samiti of which Anandwan is the biggest and most developed centre are indeed staggering: it has helped more than 2.3 million disadvantaged people—including a million leprosy patients—improve their standard of living and lead a life of purpose and dignity. Nobody can ever believe that Anandwan, a cooperative village that alone has built more than 40 social enterprises for the disabled with an annual turnover of more than Rs 20 crore, was once carved out of barren land by crippled social outcasts! It is no empty boast that the residents of Anandwan produce almost everything except salt, sugar and kerosene.

Anandwan’s leprosy hospital, which is one of the world’s best, is totally managed by cured leprosy patients. Anandwan has organised medical camps for cataract and reconstructive surgery in which well over 16,000 operations have been performed. Its mobile dental unit was the first in Vidarbha. Its Swaranandwan orchestra comprising handicapped people has given more than 750 well-received performances all over Maharashtra and Goa. Anandwan’s spotless and green campus full
Everyone can learn skills: One patient dresses another’s wounds

Transplanting rice for yet another bumper crop
Returning to work after morning prayers at Baba's samadhi.
of colourful flowers and trees and lakes is so attractive that tourists come here not only to see and learn about the community’s activities, but simply to relax and enjoy themselves in beautiful surroundings.

Labour of Love

Baba Amte’s motto was “Work Builds. Charity Destroys.” He knew that leprosy patients and other handicapped people didn’t just need physical care. Because society looked down on them, their self-worth was very low. Therefore, they could only be made psychologically whole again by creating a community in which they could work and become productive people. Anandwan has no spiritual talkshops, no ideological debates, and no political gossips. It’s just all about dedicated family aligned to alleviate human sufferings. The mere sight of people working - people who have suffered so much rejection in early life due to leprosy and now going out of bounds to help others is quite spectacular. Perhaps that is why the joy in Anandwan is much more infectious than the disease itself!

The currency of this place is indeed love’s labour, which is evident by the testimonies left behind by about one lakh people about their Anandwan experience. Every year in winter, hundreds of foreign nationals from Europe flock in to stay with the residents. They enjoy dressing the wounds of leprosy patients, making sandals out of airplane tyres, milking cows and helping the aged - something they have rarely done before.

Carrying the Legacy Forward

The Vikas Amte phenomenon cannot be defined in a single word. Though he is a qualified medical professional, through his work he has demonstrated that he is nothing less than an expert engineer, architect, agriculturist and a human rights activist. He, who has been heading MSS for the last 31 years, is a visionary, resourceful and versatile social entrepreneur responsible for ushering in a number of disabled-friendly, eco-friendly, cost-effective, innovative, harmonious, sustainable and replicable technologies, development strategies and rehabilitation measures for the benefit of people with other disabilities.

His is a life of selfless service, drenched with the adventure of purpose, pouring uncondi-
tional love on all the wounded souls, dedicated to uplift the poorest of the poor and to promoting national integration and communal harmony. He believes as fervently in this motto as Baba did. Indeed, he is even readier than Baba to give people positions of responsibility, to permit them to experiment, commit mistakes, and grow. There are innumerable handicapped people whose lives would have wasted away quietly and unhappily if Vikas had not given them a chance to prove their worth.

For example, Gajanan Vasu, who was driven away from his village after he contracted leprosy in his early 20s around 30 years ago, and who has never finished school, is the manager of Anandwan’s highly successful dairy. Thanks to Gajanan’s various initiatives, which include advertising on the local cable TV network, he has made the dairy a flourishing business. There are 108 buffaloes and 25 cows in the diary and the daily milk production averages close to 500 litres. “Vikasbha has made me what I am,” Gajanan says proudly. “And he’s like that with everyone.”

Vikas’s own motto is “Jack of all trades and master of some.” And indeed he is a very versatile man. He was initially trained as a doctor and then took a postgraduate course in leprosy. He thought of making a career in this field, but he had too many other interests. His numerous initiatives include starting new in-
dustries such as creating mattresses and pillows out of waste plastic, designing tools for people without fingers, solving Anandwan’s perennial water problem by building lakes and tanks, and erecting model housing that is cheap, sturdy and comfortable.

Although Vikas does not have Baba’s charisma, his quiet but effective management style has won him many devoted fans. “I pray that in my next life too, I can work with Vikasbhau to help people,” says Gangadhar Laxmanrao Nirgudkar, who runs Anandwan’s power-loom unit. Although Vikas remains the head of Anandwan, these days he spends much of his time meeting and talking to the huge number of visitors who come to Anandwan every year.
The Third Generation

Much of the work he used to do is now handled by his two children—Kaustubh, a chartered accountant and Sheetal, a doctor who also has a degree in social entrepreneurship from Mumbai’s Tata Institute of Social Sciences. One of Kaustubh’s and Sheetal’s main tasks is to get Anandwan’s finances on a sound footing. More and more residents of the community are becoming too old to work, and this, along with high inflation and insufficient government grants has resulted in costs exceeding income.

Recently, however, Kaustubh and Sheetal, after a lot of effort in which they met President Pratibha Patil and Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, and numerous other influential people, were successful in getting the Maharashtra government to announce a four-fold hike in its allowance for the care of leprosy patients. The allowance had not been raised for 20 years, and after some careful research, Sheetal was able to prove to the authorities that whereas the National Institute of Nutrition’s recommended menu for one person per day cost Rs 52, the government was only providing Rs 7.50. This so surprised the chief minister that he immediately initiated action besides making a personal donation to Anandwan’s corpus funds.

Financial Dilemmas

While the hike will help cover Anandwan’s running costs, much more money is needed to achieve the ambitious goals that the community has set for itself—it would like to become a major medical and educational centre. The Maharogi Sewa Samiti has therefore launched a Rs 55 crore fundraising drive, and donations to this are eligible for deductions under the Income Tax Act.
A Weekend in the Hills
Chikhaldara
Pinakin Karve  |  Photographs © Rahul Rao

Away from the hustle and bustle of urban areas, Chikhaldara is a quiet hill station in Maharashtra that offers a wide variety of flora and fauna. What also makes it special is its proximity to the Melghat Tiger Sanctuary says Pinakin Karve.
The glory of Maharashtra lies in the historic fact that it has constantly fought against intruders and never truly surrendered. It therefore has, in the true sense, an unbroken spirit. This spirit of freedom was always kept alive by the mountain ranges which border Maharashtra from two sides – the mighty Sahyadris from the west and the Vindhya ranges from the north. These mountains are dotted by hundreds of forts and remote places where earlier it was almost impossible for an outsider to gain access. Subsequently, with the closeness of metro cities like Pune and Mumbai, many places in the Sahyadris got established as hill stations and popular weekend destinations. Comparatively, the Vindhya mountain ranges remained unnoticed. The hill stations in this area have remained mostly low profile and Chikhaldara is one of them.

Located about 100 kms north of Amravati, Chikhaldara is the only well-established hill station in Vidarbha. It is situated on a mountain range beyond which Maharashtra ends and Madhya Pradesh begins. It is a mountain-top plateau with an average height from the mean sea level of about 1,088 meters (3,570 feet). Because of its unique location, Chikhaldara has an average rainfall of 154 cms which is almost twice as compared to the other parts of Vidarbha. The good rainfall and the remoteness have allowed this area to host an excellent forest and this is the primary attraction of this place.
Chikhaldara is surrounded on three sides by the borders of the Melghat Project Tiger Area which is spread over an area of about 1,676 sq kms. This Project Tiger area is divided into several smaller wildlife reserves to enable efficient management and the Melghat wildlife reserve, which is about 780 sq kms, forms the entire southern border and partly the western border of Chikhaldara. The Gugamal National Park, which is about 320 sq kms, is the core zone of the Project Tiger reserve and forms the eastern border of Chikhaldara and partly its northeastern border. This part being a core zone is one of the most untouched and pristine parts of the reserve.

Flora And Fauna

Chikhaldara and Melghat Project Tiger (MPT) are two inseparable entities. Unless one knows about the natural wealth of the tiger reserve it is very hard to understand the importance of this hill station. The MPT area contains about 700 species of plants belong-
Nijamshah and Adilshah and the rulers kept on changing. Finally, it came into the hands of the Marathas with Sambhaji Maharaj, the eldest son of Shivaji, taking over its reins.

Gavilgad and Narnala are two extremely large forts with perimeters of more than 15 kms each. Of these two forts, Gavilgad is situated right next to Chikhaldara. Narnala, on the other hand, is at a distance of about four hours from Chikhaldara. Both these forts are interesting from the archaeological and architectural points of view. Gavilgad is just 5 kms from Chikhaldara’s main bus station. The fort is situated on two adjoining hills connected to each other and protected by fortification from all sides. You enter through the main gate on the first hill which is smaller of the two. After crossing three gates, you come to the main area which looks as if it was primarily designed for battle purposes alone.

More than 350 species of birds reside here that include hunting birds like the crested serpent eagle, changeable hawk eagle, shikra, besra, white-eyed buzzard, honey buzzard, etc. Attractive birds like the flame-backs, orioles and pea fowls are common enough too. The chatter of birds like parakeets, iora, magpie robin and shama keep the jungle alive during the day time while the night shift is taken over by the owls and the night jars.

Sights And Sounds

Chikhaldara has great historical references. It is said that Bhima, the second-eldest and strongest among the Pandava brothers in Mahabharat times, killed King Kichek in this area and threw his body into the valley. The valley is now known as Kichekdara and the water reservoir in which Bhima washed his hands is called the Bhimkund. This area is dotted by extremely small villages inhabited by the Korku tribals. It was originally ruled by tribal kings who were defeated by the Bahamani dynasty which later was ruled over by five smaller dynasties. Among these, Imadshahi was the one which started ruling this area. The Gavilgad and Narnala forts were built by Imad Shah. Later on, the Imadshahi dynasty was exterminated by the Moghuls Nijamshah and Adilshah and the rulers kept on changing. Finally, it came into the hands of the Marathas with Sambhaji Maharaj, the eldest son of Shivaji, taking over its reins.

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To enter the second part of the fort, you must again cross three huge gates.

This part of the fort has ruins of the palace, mosque and other residential quarters. It also has several water reservoirs. The forts are now the abode of sloth bears, hyenas and leopard which venture out after sunset. Apart from this fort, Chikhaldara has several other spectacular places such as the Panchbol point, Hariken Point, Mozari Point, Devi
Point, Sunset Point, Prospects Point, Monkey Point, etc. The Panchbol Point is famous for multiple echos while the Hariken Point is known for its high-speed winds. Though all of Chikhaldara has a good population of Rhesus monkeys and langoors, Monkey Point specifically has a huge number of them. The Sunset Point provides a spectacular view of the jungle with different shades of green that resonate with the sounds of the wild animals and birds as the sun goes down.

Chikhaldara has good rainfall but being located on the top of a mountain, the drainage makes it necessary to conserve water. The government has therefore built many water conservation projects, thus leading to the formation of reservoirs such as the Bir Dam, Kalapani Dam and the Shakkar Lake. To go camping, one must visit village Semadoh, which is just about 20 kms from Chikhaldara on the banks of the river Sipna. Nature lovers can book this place through the Amaravati Forest Department’s office at a very nominal cost and get a real feeling of living in the woods. It is also quite possible to get a sighting of the shy flying squirrel at this camp site which is also a gateway to the Melghat Wildlife Sanctuary.

The best season to visit Chikhaldara is from October to June. Chikhaldara is not closed during the monsoon season but access becomes difficult. However, it is an ideal time to see the waterfalls and the rivers in full spate.

At Chikhaldara you will find a fair number of hotels in various price ranges. The most interesting property is owned by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC). They have a spacious and well-wooded property with comfortable rooms at very economical rates.

Reaching there

Chikhaldara is situated about 100 kms from Amravati which is the nearest railway station as well as the main town. If you want to hire any vehicle or want to take a bus to reach Chikhaldara, you have to go to Amravati first. The distance to Nagpur is approximately 230 kms which is the nearest airport. For a Pune or Mumbai resident, the travelling distance is about 750 kms. There are many luxury buses that ply on Mumbai – Aurangabad – Nagpur highway.

The author is Director, Tekdi, Pune
India is bestowed with rich natural and cultural diversity. Communities in different regions of India have proudly preserved their cultural identity, manifested through the variety of their costumes, food, rites, rituals and festivals. Gudhi Padwa is one of the prominent festivals in India. It marks the beginning of the New Year, especially in Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. The festival is known as Ugadi in South India and is celebrated on the first day of the month Chaitra, according to the Indian lunar calendar.

The word Padwa comes from the Prakrit word whose Sanskrit equivalent is Prathama which stands for the first day of the bright phase of the moon called Pratipada in Sanskrit. It is believed that Lord Brahma created the universe on this day. Therefore this day carries special importance for Hindus and people celebrate it with a heightened sense of joy and abandon.

According to Brahma Purana, an ancient Indian text, this is the day on which Brahma created the universe after the deluge, and time began to tick from this day forth. In mythological terms, this festival is celebrated to commemorate the coronation of Lord Ramachandra on his return to Ayodhya after slaying Ravana. Gudhi Padwa also commemorates the commencement of the Shalivahan calendar named after the emperor Shalivahan who vanquished the Huns, his enemies. Gudhi Padwa is one among the three-and-a-half auspicious days (muhurtas) in the Indian lunar calendar. The special feature is that every moment being auspicious, people can initiate new ventures on these days.

On Gudhi Padwa, a Gudhi which is believed to be Brahma’s flag (Brahmadhwaj), is hoisted outside every house as a symbol of victory and joy. In Maharashtra, it is reminiscent of the valiant Marathas returning home from their successful expeditions of the war. Since the symbol of victory is always held high, so is the Gudhi. Gudhi is a bright green or yellow
On Gudhi Padwa, a Gudhi which is believed to be Brahma's flag (Brahmadhwaj), is hoisted outside every house as a symbol of victory and joy.
silk cloth adorned with brocade tied to the tip of a long bamboo pole over which gathi (sugar crystals), neem leaves, a twig of mango leaves and a garland of red flowers is tied. All these things symbolize nature’s bounty in spring. A silver or copper pot is placed on the raised Gudhi in the inverted position. This Gudhi is then hoisted outside the house, in a window, terrace, or a high place so that everybody can see it. Gudhi is also believed to ward off evil, invite prosperity and good luck to the house.

On the festive day, courtyards in village houses are swept clean and plastered with fresh cow dung. Even in the city, people take the time out to do some spring cleaning. Women and girls work on intricate rangoli designs on their doorsteps, the vibrant colours mirroring the burst of happiness and joy associated with the spring. Traditionally, families are supposed to begin the festivities by eating the bitter leaves of the neem tree. Usually, a paste of neem leaves is prepared and mixed with coriander seeds, jaggery and tamarind. All the members of the family consume this paste, which is believed to purify the blood and strengthen the body’s immune system against diseases. There is also a belief behind this tradition that if you start a new year with a bitter taste, the year ahead brings you happiness and sweet success.

India is a predominantly agrarian society. Celebrations and festivals are often linked to the turn of seasons and to the sowing and reaping of the crops. This day marks the end of one agricultural harvest and the beginning of a new one. It is the time when the heat of the sun starts intensifying. Farmers start ploughing the soil on this day. As a result the soil below is churned up. The subtle soil particles get heated in the sun and the ability of the soil to germinate the seeds increases manifold. Towards the first day of the month of Chaitra, the sun assumes a position above the point of intersection of the equator and
the meridians and the spring season commences. In Bhagwad Gita, a sacred tome of the Indians, Lord Krishna says, “Among the seasons, the exhilarating Vasant (spring) is my manifestation.”

It is because nature is vibrant with life in the spring. It is for this reason that Gudhi Padwa is also celebrated to welcome the colourful spring which awakens the spirit in each living thing and rejuvenates the beauty of nature. Though mythological and historical references to this festival hold some significance, its close link with the perpetual cycle of seasons is more important. Ancient Indian tradition which always experienced oneness with the nature was aware of the three stages of life - Utpatti, Sthitee and Laya. It means that there is a cycle of birth, state and destruction in the universe. Destruction is not the end of life but just a temporary stage which ultimately leads to new creation.

This ancient Indian philosophy has its roots

In Bhagwad Gita, a sacred tome of the Indians, Lord Krishna says, “Among the seasons, the exhilarating Vasant (spring) is my manifestation.”
in the rotation of seasons. After the fall, spring again brings the promise of life. New foliage on the trees, colourful blossom of various flowers, ripening of mangoes and other seasonal fruits, chirping of birds and butterflies let our spirits to soar high. Gudhi Padwa is an occasion to relate ourselves to the nature around us. It is a time to celebrate life. It is a time for romance which adds colour to all life forms while maintaining its continuity. It is a form of magic in the atmosphere during the spring that awakens lust, lure and love in the hearts.
The great Sanskrit poet Kalidas in his legendary work ‘Kumarsambhavam’ has narrated a picturesque beauty of spring which triggered Parvati, the wife of Shiva, to express her intense love for him. So the festival which announces the commencement of spring is also believed to be a festival of true love. It is this love that makes life complete. Gudhi Padwa is thus a celebration of life. It is a reminder by nature itself to live and let live in a harmonious relationship.

Gudhi Padwa is an occasion to relate ourselves to the nature around us. It is a time to celebrate life. It is a time for romance which adds colour to all life forms while maintaining its continuity.

The author is a noted scholar of Indian Culture, Pune
Touring with the Tamasha
Traditional Performing Folk Art

“\nThere is a difference between my vision of tamasha and the picture of tamasha that exists in the average person’s mind. Through my pictures I am trying to bring to life the tamashas that are performed at fairs, their role in social life and their function,” says Sandesh Bhandare who takes us on an in-depth journey of this traditional folk art of Maharashtra.

{Excerpts from the book ‘Tamasha’ by Sandesh Bhandare, a work (2002-2003) sponsored by the IFA Research Grant}
It is often said, “Smiles break out on the faces of Maharashtra’s farmers on only two occasions: during the harvest season and when the tamasha comes to the village.” Tamasha has a very important place in the public life of Maharashtra and has been surviving on the strength of the support of the common people. The words ‘tamasha’ and ‘shahir’ may be foreign but one can see that the powada and the lavani (and the format in which they are presented) are rooted in the Maharashtrian soil.

The Origins

The word ‘tamasha’ is derived from Arabic: it can roughly be translated as ‘sight worth watching’. Similar is the case of the shahirs who developed the art of tamasha: the word shahir (root ‘shayar’) also comes from Arabic. Therefore, some experts are of the opinion that the tamasha must have arisen and developed due to Muslim influences. According to some researchers, tamasha has its roots in the custom of ‘Holi’ (bonfire). The tradition of spending the night awake, gathered around the bonfire, is still prevalent in parts of the Konkan. In small villages around Chiplun, Guhagar and Ratnagiri, one can yet see the custom of playing the duff (percussion instrument) and singing gan-gavlan before lighting the bonfire.

The tamasha actually is a multi-faceted form of entertainment. It is a combination of bhakti (devotion), Kalgi-Tura shahir, Kalgi being the (Shiva devotees) group or from the Tura (Shakti devotees) group with metaphysical
elements, folk poetry, discourses from the *puranas*, the luminous poetry of the *powada* (ballad) and its presentation, and the singing that bursts forth in conjunction with the dance drama of the *lavani*. *Tamasha* entertains young and old alike.

As soon as a Maharashtrian hears the sound of a duff and *taal* (cymbals), his mind blossoms with joy. As soon as the *shahir*’s palm strikes the duff, the Maharashtrian’s chest swells with pride. As he becomes engrossed in the *abhangs* (devotional songs) of Jnana-dev and Tukaram, so also is he enraptured by the poetry of the *shahir*. That is why *tamasha* is the most popular of all the folk art forms prevalent in Maharashtra. The roots of *tamasha* are to be found neither in the poetry of the saints nor in any of the Bhakti traditions of Maharashtra but in all of these, and it does have some points of similarity with the prevalent folk song forms.

There are differences of opinion among experts on exactly how and when the *tamasha* evolved. But it is known that *tamasha* performers received royal patronage in the late Peshwa period, during the reigns of Sawai Madhavrao and Bajirao II (late 18th to early 19th centuries). Experts agree that on account of this patronage the *tamasha* – the form of theatre devoted to people’s entertainment – prospered during this period.

*The folk art of tamasha is an art form performed by the people for the people, and its focus is on ordinary’s people’s experiences and lives.*
With the rise of the political power of the Maratha Empire, its grandeur also increased. Social life also became more splendorous. In response to changing social tastes, folk singers from the Chitrakathi, Gondhali and Bharadi communities made changes in the compositions and the presentations with a view to making them more entertaining. New folk singers and poets came to the fore. It was in fact in response to social tastes and the profane concerns of society that the tamasha was born.

Between 1850 and 1900 or so, the lavani tamasha in Maharashtra remained the exclusive preserve of the Dalit castes. In this period, the bards Uma and Bapu of Ped and Savlaj villages in Sangli district composed the folk play ‘Mohanabatav’, focusing on the evils of child marriage. This folk play became extremely popular. The Uma and Bapu duo are among the earliest playwrights in Marathi. It was around this time that Mahatma Jyotiba Phule used the medium of tamasha to spread his message of social reform. In this respect, his powada on Shivaji has great significance. Mahatma Jyotiba Phule included social themes in this structure. He used it to honour those who had devoted their lives to society and nation. In this manner, the foundation of the ‘satyashodhak tamasha’ was laid.

The Structure

The main form of folk theatre presented in fairs during festivals and other such occasions in Maharashtra was known as ‘gammat’ (literally, fun). The word ‘gammat’ itself indicates entertainment. In earlier times, all
the forms of entertainment that appealed to the common people were collectively termed ‘gammat’. Both the public and the state accepted this folk art. Later it began to be known as ‘khel tamasha’. For this purpose, a certain sum (called dekar) would be set aside from the village income for this purpose.

In the month of Ashwin (September-October) there is a large fair of the goddess Mahadevi in Ahmednagar district. Performers perform at this fair on the day after Dussehra, a custom that is followed to this day. The outstation performers are given a dekar on behalf of the villagers. Till today tamasha troupes make it a point to perform at this festival, including the troupe of veteran performers Haribhau Badhe Nagarkar and Shivkanya Badhe Nagarkar of Ahmednagar, that of Mangala Bansode from Karodi village in Sangli district, and Raghuvir Khedekar and Kantabai Satarkar’s troupe, etc. After taking the blessings of the goddess and accepting the dekar from the villagers, the tamasha companies set out on their tour of performances for the year.

A number of big and small tamasha companies perform all over Maharashtra from Dussehra (September-October) to Akshaya Tritiya (April–May). In this period, they accept contracts to perform at various villages during the annual fairs after fixing up ‘supari’ (a fixed contracted sum). Earlier the contract would be sealed by ceremonially handing over an areca nut (supari). On other days, the companies stage performances in the large market areas of villages and towns. Small companies that stage tamashas out in the open air or under trees cannot levy a charge for entrance. They are completely dependent on the honorarium given by the villages. But they no longer accept whatever honorarium the villages decide to give as they did earlier – now the sum (supari) to be paid is fixed in advance.

The audience of the tamasha consists of the rural masses: peasants, workers, labourers, etc. Ordinary folk brought up in the tradition of folk culture, be they from the Gondhali, Waghya Murali, Vasudev, Bharadi, and Bahurupi or Kirtankar traditions perform the tamasha. It is important to understand that
there were very few among them who had any experience of established upper-class literary forms. The folk art of tamasha is an art form performed by the people for the people, and its focus is on ordinary people’s experiences and lives.

The Status

Unfortunately, today the tamasha has become associated in the public mind with shows on the highways, the popular lavani performances and the relationships of the tamasha performers with various bigwigs. As such, tamasha has become an object of contempt in society. With changing times and locales, the tamasha has gone through many changes. The circumstances of the times, the sensitivities of the performers and the needs of the audience and the creative ability of the shahirs and their passion to say something to society have determined these changes. These days it is often said that tamashas are no longer performed as of yore. Yet villagers from all over Maharashtra go to towns like Narayangaon, Kalaj, Satara, Karad and Vita to arrange tamasha performances in their villages at the time of the annual fairs of their village deities.

Tamashas are also performed in many villages on festival days. On account of this, it becomes difficult to arrange a performance at these times. To avoid this problem, the dates for the performances in the month of Chaitra (March-April) are decided during the annual fair at Alandi six months earlier. Every year there is a demand for plays on particular subjects. In general, in western Maharashtra districts like Satara, Pune and Sangli, there is a demand for historical themes, whereas social themes are preferred in the eastern regions. Around the Western Ghats and in the Konkan coastal strip, there is a leaning towards plays dealing with kings and the aristocracy. In some parts of Kolhapur, Pune and Satara districts, one often sees plays on contemporary patriotic themes like the Kargil conflict. In some villages, the youth demand that the performers sing Hindi and Marathi film songs.

Tamasha is a rich folk art that is the expression of the spirit of the Maharashtrian masses. In the course of time, it has taken many twists and turns. Forms have changed and it has experienced both good and bad times. As Maharashtrians, it is but natural that we be proud of the tamasha as it is our cultural need. With pride we claim that it is ‘our’ very own folk art with a long illustrious tradition.
The Songadya

A large part of a tamasha’s success depends on the songadya. The famous tamasha troupes usually had excellent songadyas, which helped the troupes win public favour. The songadya—dancer plays, mimics and parodies a wide variety of roles—sometimes the female lover, sometimes the female lover suffering the pangs of separation and at other times the devoted wife. He is versatile and well-informed. He keeps track of contemporary social and political events. With his acting skills and clever repartee, his task is to keep the audience laughing. Songadyas are experts at mimicry. They can mimic a snub-nosed woman, a ghost or a corpse. Besides, they also achieve their humorous effects through intelligent use of costume and makeup. Double entendre dialogues are the stock-in-trade of their brand of humour.

Minimal Props

One of the most entertaining things about the tamasha is the setting in which it is performed. The audience rings the ‘stage’ on all sides or, at most, a curtain is used as a backdrop. Palaces, cemeteries, a street full of people, a marketplace, a ghost’s cave—all these and more are evoked merely through the dialogues in the tamasha. Not only the setting, but even a journey can be recreated in the imagination. If the performers twirl around a few times, the audience knows that the next village has been reached. All these situations are created merely through the use of description and dialogue.

Unique Dance Form

‘Nach’ or the danseuse wears a Paithani sari, tucked in at the waist on both sides. She wears a beaded blouse. Round her neck is old-fashioned Maharashtrian jewellery in the Maratha style and on her wrists are thick bangles, more like bracelets. An ornamental belt round her waist and plump, dangling earrings complete her traditional attire. The dancer first stamps the ground with her big toe and the part of her adjoining this toe. She quickly moves them forward and then balances on her heel. Holding the end of her sari outstretched, she curtsies to the audience. Swinging her shoulders, she takes big, mincing steps round the stage in rhythm with the music, meanwhile casting challenging (and alluring) glances at the audience. Sometimes she dances in rhythm, holding the end of her sari outstretched over her shoulders.

A Strong Chorus

The two chorus singers (surte) stand at the back of the stage, zanja and tuntune in their hands. The practice of repeating the refrain of the song is known as ‘jheel dharane’ among tamasha performers. The chorus singers have powerful voices and commonly sing the refrains like ‘ji ji, ho ji ji ji, aho majhya Rama, aga nari ga tu’. The chorus singers are proficient at giving long hails (haali) in a deep-throated tone. This hail often earns them the applause of the spectators.

Making Social Connections

Another characteristic of the tamasha is that after the gavlan, there are usually acts like ‘rangbaji’ (variety entertainment), ‘farce’ and ‘batavani’. These are usually skits on a particular incident, story or joke. Using hyperbole, irony and sarcasm, they enact small scenes, as for example, a skit in which a con man dupes an innocent villager. Sometimes these skits present incidents taking place in contemporary society in an ironical light. If the batavani performers are imaginative, versatile and talented, they can bring the viewers to engage in some critical introspection.
Reliving the Might of the Marathas

Shivneri

P.K. Ghanekar | Photographs © Atul Kajale

A visit to Shivneri fort in Maharashtra not only provides an emotional and historical connect with the place where the great Maratha king Shivaji was born but also proves to be an opportunity to test your trekking skills, says

P K Ghanekar
Maharashtra, is a land of forts and within the walls of these fortified bastions pulsates the heartbeat of the great Maratha history, which continues to be vibrant even 200 years after the sun set on this empire. The part played by the forts in shaping the history of Maharashtra is well known through our academic literature. And one such fort that has become popular is that of Shivneri.

Shivneri is a hill fort located to the northern side of Pune district and has Junnar at its base. Junnar or Jirnanagar was an important town on the famous trade route of Naneghat during the Satavahana era, in the vicinity of which are a bunch of forts such as Jivdhan,
Chavand/Prasannagad, Hadsar/Parvatgad and of course, Shivneri. Of these, Shivneri commands greater importance because it is the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. He was born in this impregnable fort on Falgun Vadya Tritya Shaka 1551 i.e. February 19, 1630, or March 1, 1630 according to the Gregorian calendar. Unfortunately he never ruled Shivneri, though he tried to capture it in 1657 and 1673, both the attempts being in vain. In 1716, during Shahu Chhatrapati’s reign, the possession of Shivneri by Maratha rulers took place as an outcome of a treaty with the Mughals.

**The Routes**

To visit Shivneri, one has to first go to Junnar which is well-connected by road to Pune and Mumbai. The fort can be scaled using two routes. A regular tar road leads halfway up the hill in its southerly direction, following which one has to ascend the steps of Rajmarg and pass through seven age-old magnificent gates. The second route is tough. It is in the easterly direction and known as ‘Sakhalichi Vat’. Halfway up this trek is a series of rock-cut caves, some of which are very difficult to access. Further ascent is in the form of extremely narrow-cut steps. Both the paths require about an hour to reach the top.

While climbing upwards, one remembers the remark made by Sir Richard Temple, an administrator in British India, “You will see what a rugged precipitous place this is and what a fitting spot it was for a hero to be born in.” Most of the visitors prefer Rajmarg with the grandeur of the seven doors one after another. The names of the doors are Maha Darwaza, Peer Darwaza, Parwangicha Dar-
waza, Hatti Darwaza, Shipai Darwaza (after this one can take a detour to Shivai Temple through Shivai Darwaza), Phatak Darwaza and Kulabkar Darwaza.

At the second gate, in addition to vyal (mythical composite animal) or sharabh (mythical combination of animal and bird) sculpture, there is a carving of an iguana (‘ghorpad’ in Marathi). On the third gate we find the carving of a ‘gandbherund’ (hypothetical double-headed bird) using the vyal or sharabha sculpture style. All along the footpath and on the hill slopes, the forest department has
planted a good number of trees, which makes the ascent more pleasant.

Structure and Style

The first ruined building we see is Ambarkhana or Dhanyakothi. In the 15th century, a Bahamani king sent his trusted aide Malik Ahmed to Junnar and Shivneri because the local subhedar had collected revenue for five years and had not paid it to the central treasury. Fortunately for him, Malik Ahmed was successful in getting possession of the Junnar town and the Shivneri fort. The granary was full of grains and all the revenue collected over the last five years was in the fort. Malik changed his mind and he declared himself a king by establishing a new dynasty - Nizamshahi. He then took the title of Nizam ul Mulk Bahiri. This dynasty, established in 1489, at Shivneri lasted till 1633 with a lineage of 12 kings. This feat of sorts was possible for Malik Ahmed because of the Ambarkhana being full of grains. Later on, the Nizamshahi shifted from Shivneri to Ahmednagar.

As we proceed further, a twin underground water tank is seen on the right of the footpath. They are ‘Ganga-Jamuna’ cisterns. Experts
date these water tanks to the Satavahana period i.e. 2,000 years ago. Interestingly, the fort has a statue of child Shivaji, appropriate since he lived here only for his first six years.

The spot where Shivaji was born had turned into a dilapidated structure and it was therefore reconstructed in 1925, now known as the Shiv Mandir. In its vicinity is a huge circular water tank called Badami Talavi. However, it does not hold water any longer. At the far side to the north is a precipitous cliff. This narrow channel is known as the Kadelot Point. It is believed that criminals awarded capital punishment were handcuffed and thrown down from here. It is from here that one can get a good view of the Manikdoh Dam as also the Hadsar and Chavand forts. A further climb provides a sight of Harishchandragad, far behind the mountains. One can also get a view of Narayangad, Lenyadri Hill, Arvi Satellite Centre’s antenna dish and the Khodad meter wavelength radio telescope.

Birthplace of Shivaji
On the top of the hill is a platform with a dome. This is called ‘koli chauthara’. In 1650, the Mahadev Koli tribe took possession of Shivneri and declared it their ‘swarajya’. But the Mughals were alert and the protest was nipped in its bud. The Mughals conquered the fort and hundreds of Kolis were imprisoned and slaughtered. Here you will also find a wall called the ‘idgah’, a pathway which leads to the highest spot of Shivneri at 420 metres, from where you can get a fascinating view of the surrounding landscape and Junnar.

**Different Influences**

As this hill was probably fortified initially by the Satavahanas and later on ruled by the Yadavas, Bahamanis, Nizamshahi, Adilshahi, Mughals and Peshwa rulers till the arrival of the British, one can witness here different architectural styles. The steep and smooth scarps surrounding the hilltops which rise hundreds of feet from the surrounding plains make for the primary natural defense of this fort. An adequate supply of water due to the large number of tanks and cisterns is one of the foremost strengths of this hill fort. The number of rock-cut caves on Shivneri and the hills surrounding it is an indicator of this being an important Buddhist centre during the first few centuries of the Common Era.

**A Tough Climb**

The difficult access to the hilltop was first recorded by an English physician traveler, John Fryer, in the 17th century who remarked, “No one could reach the top except through the seven winding gates, which were very strong and defended by murderers and good pieces of ordinance.” The famous diplomat historian and administrator Mountstuart Elphinstone visited the fort in 1814. At present, the Government of Maharashtra and the Archaeological Survey of India are taking care of this famous fort where the birth anniversary of Shivaji is celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm and pomp each year.

The author is environmentalist, historian, writer, nature lover and an avid trekker.
Lost Heritage Preserved for Posterity

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya, Mumbai

Sabyasachi Mukherjee | Photographs © CSMVS

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly Prince of Wales Museum of Western India), Mumbai is a fascinating repository of cultural heritage and an institute of learning, says Sabyasachi Mukherjee, curator of the museum.
It was on January 10, 1922 - 90 years ago - that the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya opened its doors to the people of Mumbai. The brainchild of prominent citizens of the city, the government agreed to the proposal for a good museum and provided a semi-circular plot of land aptly called the ‘Crescent Site’ near the Gateway of India, with a condition that citizens of Bombay (Mumbai) create an autonomous body and undertake the responsibility of running the museum.

The winning entry by architect George Wittet, the result of an open competition in 1909, thus saw the construction of a beautiful, solid structure of locally quarried grey Kurla basalt and a buff trachyte Malad stone. Designed in the Indo–Saracenic style, the monumental edifice is a combination of Hindu and Saracen-cenic architectural forms with some elements of Western architecture that comprises a big...
dome at the centre and two smaller domes on either side which are complimented by a beautifully landscaped garden. The museum has carefully and consciously preserved its original structure and surroundings, perhaps the only place today in this part of Mumbai, where visitors can have a glimpse of an undisturbed heritage precinct.

The Collection

The museum has a representative collection of various forms of art from the Indian subcontinent and also to a certain extent works of art from China, Japan and the European countries. In addition to these, the museum houses a very interesting collection of natural history specimens. This entire collection has come from varied sources such as archaeological artefacts from the excavated sites, and Sir Henry Cousens, were instrumental in bringing the pottery and terracotta figurines from Harappa and Mohenjodaro (about 5,000 BCE) and the early Gupta period (4th-5th century CE) terracotta Buddhist antiquities to the museum.

The museum also acquired a well-known collection of Indian miniatures and other important antiquities, more particularly the Maratha textiles, arms and armour from the collection of Seth Purshottam Mavji. The collection was once a part of the treasures of Nana Phadnis (1741-1800 CE). Nana Phadnis, the most influential minister during the reign of the Peshwas, is believed to have collected these antiquities from the distress sales of the disintegrating Mughal Empire. A part of this collection, particularly Maratha textile and costume, was later handed over through purchases and gifts. A large number of excavated antiquities from the Buddhist monasteries from Gandhara (now in Pakistan) came to the museum in 1909. Two renowned archaeologists, Mr R D Banerjee to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Museum, Satara for its new Maratha Gallery.

The major art collections of Sir Ratan Tata and Sir Dorabji Tata (the two sons of Jamsetji Tata, founder of the Tata Empire) were
bequeathed to this museum in 1922 and 1933 respectively.

This wonderful collection, gratefully accepted by the trustees of the museum, constitutes the bulk of the art section. Judging by the total of 5,161 objects that eloquently point towards the quality, quantity and variety of this priceless collection, the Tata brothers clearly possessed eclectic tastes and an immense love for art. Various documents, notes and other archival material in the museum show that both Sir Dorab and Sir Ratan were guided by expert opinion before acquiring any
European and Asian art object. Today, even after 90 years of the museum’s existence, the Tata collection still stands as its largest bequest. In recognition of the generosity of the Tata brothers in building the museum’s collection, the management named the two European painting galleries on the second floor after Sir Dorab Tata and Sir Ratan Tata. The museum was further enriched by Sir Akbar Hydari’s collection in 1934, Sir Cowasji Jehangir’s collection in 1972 and more recently, late Shri Karl Khandalavala’s collection.

**Sculpture**

Several factors resulted in the production of art during ancient times but religion was the single-most important factor affecting art production in ancient India. And it is for this reason that most of the sculptures of ancient India that we come across have a religious theme as opposed to a secular one. The museum mainly houses sculptures from the present states of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Kashmir.

Also on display are some sculptures that have their origins in present day Pakistan and Afghanistan. Notable among them are the excavated pieces from Mirpurkhas Buddha Stupa (in Sind) and the Buddhist monasteries of Jamalgarhi, Malakand, Sahri-Bahlol and Takht-i-Bahi. Sculptures from the Elephanta Caves were among the early acquisitions of the museum. So were some extraordinarily beautiful panels that were later found to be from the ceiling of a magnificent temple of Aihole in Karnataka.

**Miniature Paintings**

The Indian miniature paintings began as illustrations to religious texts. These paintings, besides being important for their aesthetic value, also help in understanding the socio-cultural conditions of their times. The dress, headgear, ornaments and costumes depicted in the paintings are indicative of the cultural identities and interactions that took place in Indian society through the centuries. The
Nainsukh - Raja Balwantsingh writing a Letter to Amrit Pal of Basohli
gallery highlights a rich miniature painting tradition which developed in different parts of India between the 14th and 19th centuries. There are many interesting and important miniatures on display such as the manuscript of Laur Chandra, portraits of Raja Balwant Singh by the legendary Pahari artist Nainsukh, an illustrated manuscript of Anwar-i-Suhayali, etc.

**Decorative Art**

The museum has a representative collection of objects in jade, wood, ivory, jewellery and textiles which highlight the rich crafts' tradition of India. Particularly noteworthy are the intricately carved ivory from Murshidabad, sandalwood jewellery boxes from Karnataka and the exquisite Mughal jades.

**Himalayan Art**

The gallery presents the complex, mystic and fascinating tantric world of the Vajrayan Buddhist pantheon. In tantric Buddhism, all deities are symbols of insight or compassion and the union of these two brings about the state of enlightenment. The gallery on the first floor has a rich collection of colourful ‘thankas’ (painted cloth hangings) from Nepal as well as Tibet. A number of Buddhist and Hindu gilded images are also on display. The extraordinary Tibetan metal image of Songtsen Gampo, the king of Tibet who introduced Buddhism in Tibet in the 7th century, is considered as one of the jewels. The tracings of the mural paintings of Tsaparang Monastery (now ruined) by Li – Gotami (gift of Li-Gotami) also forms a very important treasure of this section.

**European Paintings**

The European painting galleries in the museum were actually formed from the gifts of the Tata family. The collection includes paintings of British, Italian, Dutch, French and Flemish origin of the period 16th to the early 20th century. For example, there are small landscape paintings of Constable and several important paintings by masters like Bonifacio Veronese, Mattia Preti, William Strang, Jacob de Backer, Peter Paul Rubens and Sir Thomas Lawrence.

**Natural History Section**

The collection displayed in this section was collected by the members of the Bombay Natural History Society individually or while undertaking special expeditions. These collections were donated to the museum to enable the public to view them and display interesting compilation of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates. Of special interest are the Diorama cases which show the birds and animals in their natural habitats. The section is extremely interactive and is a favourite among children and students. Dioramas and display panels attempt to provide a natural setting for the taxidermist’s art.

The museum is a vibrant, dynamic institution, buzzing with cultural activities, rotating exhibits, outreach events and educational programmes. It has successfully completed Phase I of the modernization plan with help and support from the Ministry of Culture, Government of India. The museum now intends to take the initiative further by undertaking Phase II that aims to further modernize and upgrade its facilities, outreach programmes, research and publication and infrastructure. The modernization plan will benefit the millions of people who visit this museum throughout the year.

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Also on display are some sculptures that have their origins in present day Pakistan and Afghanistan.
Steps Beyond Traditional Confines

Warli Art

Prachi M. Chaudhari | Photographs © Prachi M. Chaudhari, Sunil Gokarn

Once limited to decorating the walls of their homes or to observe certain ancient traditions, Warli paintings have now become the rage of the contemporary art world, reaching out to countries across Europe too, states Prachi M Chaudhari.
India has a long cultural tradition of paintings. Even our prehistoric ancestors have expressed themselves through this art form in the absence of any other means of visual communication. In certain tribes, painting was also a necessity to cover up the drabness of the walls of a house. The material used during those earlier days to paint the houses was perishable and hardly any remnants of the same are left today. Though this is so, such traditions are recorded in literature like ‘Gathaa Saptashatee’ of the Satavahana period. Aboriginal tribes in India, to some extent, have preserved this tradition and one of the most important among them is the ‘Warli’.

Most of the Warlis today claim their origin to the modern Dang district of Gujrat. Their existence can be noticed in the Thane, Raigad, Nasik and Nandurbar districts of Maharashtra and the union territory of Daman, apart from Dang. The British Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency refers to three types of Warlis viz. Dawar, Murde and Nihare. In a 20th century survey, another group was reported, known
as the Shuddha, meaning pure. Warlis claim that there are sub-groups like Dongar Warli, Ghat Warli, Malhar Warli, Konkani Warli and InjareWarli. It is said that all these groups have certain social norms to follow. Though this is so, today these divisions have remained for the namesake, indicating the changing socio-cultural scenario of the tribe. Still, what is very much alive, and vibrantly so, is the unique painting tradition of the Warlis, though with minor changes but with indigenous entity. The non-commercial Warli art which has survived today is of religious nature. These paintings are closely associated with some ritual, belief or faith. Their philosophy of life, living and subsistence is reflected in the art. They accept the philosophy of a mortal body with an immortal soul. The body therefore needs to be decorated to please the soul and similarly a house needs to be decorated to please the departed ones who visit to bless you and ensure your welfare.

The Warlis genuinely believe that the walls of the houses should not be kept ‘naked’, i.e. without paintings. Warli paintings are also drawn on specific occasions such as at the time of wedding, Diwali, Gauri festival, Nagapanchami festival, etc. The wall is first prepared with the help of cow dung and fermented rice powder / paste is used as paint. The aim of these paintings is to satisfy the gods, bring prosperity and fertility, drive away evil, keep away the spirits, etc. ‘Lagna Chauk’ or the drawing of Palghat is one of the most popular themes of the Warlis. This chauk is drawn as a part of the ritual performed at the time of a wedding.

An Intricate Art

While drawing this chauk, they first demarcate the sacred space by a rectangle in which all the other elements of the chauk are drawn.
This sacred space actually indicates the place where the rituals are being performed, i.e. the house and the vicinity where the newly married couple is going to spend their married life. Most of the rituals are performed in the house itself near the chauk. Fertility gods (Palghat and Pachshirya, a god with five heads) are drawn in the centre and the sacrifice of a cock is also included as a part of the rituals near the wall where the painting is being done.

There is representation of the sun and the moon in the upper corner of the chauk. Warlis believe that these are the two eyes of the gods. Many times all the rituals performed at the time of a wedding are symbolically represented in the Lagna Chauk. There are footprints drawn at the time of the Gauri festival because they believe that Gauri, the goddess of vegetation, comes to their home during this festival. In the ritual of welcoming of Gauri, they draw the footprints on the floor as well as on the wall near the entrance of their house.

Traditional Warli paintings are symbolic representations of the rituals which they perform. Warlis believe that painting is the process of ‘jiva ghadavne’ (giving birth to the soul). As a part of these ritual paintings some narratives are also drawn as subordinate themes. Most of them are related to their daily life incidences which give them pleasure or bring prosperity home. No evil is recorded.

Warli paintings are closely associated with some ritual, belief or faith.
Aesthetically, Warli paintings are impressive mainly because of the geometric patterns which are used in the paintings. The basic forms in the painting are of triangle, rectangle and circle. They are very simple to draw and still visually very attractive. The entire painting is a geometric arrangement which sometimes indicates a complex symbolism. All the episodes of a narrative in the painting are not in a particular sequence. They are scattered in the given demarcated space. Only those aware of Warli traditions can truly interpret their paintings. This reminds us of the ancient Indian tradition of the narrative art from Bharhut, Sanchi and even Ajanta.

The painting tradition of the Warlis is not just restricted to wall paintings. They also use painted masks which are a part of the ‘Bohada’. Bohada is not a specific Warli tradition. Most of the communities in Konkan perform Bohada. The masks of various gods, goddesses, heroes and even spirits are prepared, painted and a procession of the same can be seen in the village or the pada (the tribal settlement).

**Reaching Out**

Today, Warli paintings have gone beyond their rituals. They have become the cultural identity of the tribe. Somewhere in the mid 1970s, Warli art, especially the paintings, came into the limelight. In fact, such has been the increasing popularity of this art form that Warli artists like Jiva Soma Mhashe have been to Europe to conduct workshops to teach this painting style. A Warli mural can also be seen at the prestigious Tony Garnier Urban Museum at Lyon, France. There are many Warli artists who are now actively involved in popularizing this art, including Ratna Dhulasada, Nathu Deu Sutar, Rajesh Jaiya Wangad, Manaki Bapu Waida, Chintu Deu Kadu, Shanataram Tumda and Hareshvara Wanga.
The author is a research scholar, University of Mumbai
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Deccan Odyssey

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The train that has been benchmarked against the best luxury trains in the world “The Deccan Odyssey” is a Super Deluxe luxury train operated by the Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation Ltd in association with the Indian Railways and the Ministry of Tourism.
A weeklong royal journey and an unforgettable experience is what the ‘Deccan Odyssey’ is all about. The sheer luxury, the plush interiors, the delicious cuisine and the breath-taking sites make the journey a memorable one. This super deluxe luxury train takes its guests on a remarkable sojourn of a land full of grandeur - serene beaches, magnificent forts, ancient caves and divine tales etched on colossal rocks.

With onboard services being managed by the Taj Group of Hotels, everything on the train reflects the ways of Indian Royalty. Each Carriage is named after places of historical significance in the Deccan Plateau & the Konkan Coast. There are 10 Carriages of 4 Deluxe cabins each; Four Presidential suites in 2 Carriages; Two Dining Cars; One Bar Lounge; A Conference car with a business centre as well as an Ayurvedic Spa Car with a Mini Gymnasium.

The 7 Nights/8 Days Deccan Odyssey Train Tour was first introduced in 2004 to showcase the best of tourist destinations around Mumbai with Goa, but since 2009 it is also operating on a Mumbai/Delhi tour circuit under a different branding of “The Indian Maharaja Deccan Odyssey”. The interiors of the Deccan Odyssey train were totally refurbished in September 2010. Travellers visit places of tourist interest during the day and journey overnight on the train in comforts of richly furnished private cabins.

There are three different 7 Nights tour circuits being covered by this train:-

Circuit one:The Pride of Maharashtra - from Mumbai to Mumbai Covers the Sea fort of Sindhudurg; Virgin beach of Tarkarli; World Heritage Site of Old Goa Churches; Golden beaches of Goa; Typical Indian town of Kolhapur; World Heritage site of Ajanta & Ellora caves; Temple town of Nasik.

Circuit two : The 7 Nights Indian Maharaja Deccan Odyssey tour from Mumbai to Delhi Covers World Heritage sites of Ajanta & Ellora Caves; Lake City of Udaipur; Ranthambhore Tiger reserve; Pink city of Jaipur; World Heritage site of Fatehpur Sikri, Agra fort & The Taj Mahal.

Circuit three:The Delhi/Mumbai Indian Maharaja 7 Nights train tour covers World Heritage site of Agra fort & Taj Mahal; Medieval Forts & Palaces at Jaipur; Jungles of Ranthambhore; Palaces & Lakes of Udaipur; Ancient Buddhist frescoes of Ajanta & Hindu cave temples at Elora

Travel like kings and queens and discover the State with 27 wild life sanctuaries, 4 National Parks, numerous religious sites, places of scenic beauty, scores of beaches, hundreds of forts and unique culture depicted in its folk arts, the colourful festivals, its cuisine, handicraft... and all this in just seven days.

So get aboard to experience a captivating journey through Maharashtra, where the perfect blend of culture, art, nature awaits you!!
“The first river you paddle runs through the rest of your life. It bubbles up in pools and eddies to remind you who you are,” - Lynn Noel in his book ‘Voyages’.

Every river in the world has its own unique identity or personality. More so, rivers are considered as the national treasure of any country. Even India is blessed with numerous rivers, flowing through the country’s length and breadth, rising and falling with the seasons. In the olden days the Maharajas of India had harnessed the power of the rivers for transporting their armies and materials. The numerous rivers in India meant that rafts were one of the earliest modes of mass transport. Today, rafts offer the thrill and excitement of literally riding the river.

Like many other rivers emerging and flowing through the mighty Sahayadri ranges and flowing towards the western coast of India, Kundalika is a small, perennial yet beautiful river in western Maharashtra. It has its origin in Pune district and flows through the Raigad district via Revdanda, finally meeting the Arabian Sea. This, along with the fact that the river is fed by excess water from a series of hydroelectric projects and dams, makes it ideally suited for white water rafting. This is
an adventure sport activity using an inflatable raft to navigate a river or other bodies of water.

Earlier, the nearest facility to enjoy water rafting was in the state of Karnataka, but now it is available at the Kundalika River in Maharashtra. Rafting on Kundalika started around six years ago and very few adventure enthusiasts were aware about it. The activity started with only three rafts in the beginning and such has been the increasing demand that there are now available more than 50 rafts, making this river a hot spot for such an adventure activity. Rafting on the Kundalika is considered Grade III level because of its limited technical rapids.

The stretch for rafting is 14 kilometers which starts from a village named Saje, located a few kilometers away from the Bhira Dam. After the daily water release from the power plant project at Bhira, the water gushes through the channel, entering the river base and filling it up, the sight of it being enough to hike up your adrenaline and enthusiasm levels. Ending the rafting session in a village named Kamath, rafting on the Kundalika comprises 10 white water rapids to enjoy through. The amazing part about the Kundalika is that it is the only river in India where water rafting is possible throughout the year, thus making it an all-season site.

Tackling the Rapids

The most exciting rapid called ‘John Carry’ and the longest rapid termed ‘Rajdhani Express’ add that extra element of fun. The first one is so named because of John Pollard, an expert rafter who claimed for the first time that water rafting can be done safely on the Kundalika River. Interestingly, even he

Reaching There

From Pune: Via Tamhini Ghat reach Vile Phata and take left turn towards Kolad to reach Village Sutarwadi. This is where the Kundalika rafting office is located.

From Mumbai: Via Goa Highway reach Kolad and take left turn towards Pune. Drive for 15 kms to reach Sutarwadi.

To know more details about the adventure happening over Kundalika, log on to www.kundalikarafting.in.
wasn’t able to cross the difficult rapid after repeated attempts and had to carry his raft around the rapid, hence the name ‘John Carry’. The name ‘Rajdhani Express’ is quite self-explanatory as it is the longest & fastest rapid on Kundalika. Meanwhile, the excitement level on the other rapids like Butterfly, Pump House, Boom Shankar, etc is also unmatchable. During the monsoon, the river acquires the same kind of an aura as you would find in a typical Amazon basin with continuous rains and thick lush green woods on both the sides. And in winters the early morning fog on the river adds an extra dimension to the beauty of Kundalika.

More Than Rafting

Along with all the fun, thrill and excitement one can also enjoy the avian charms of the river due to the presence of such species as Common Kingfishers, Little Cormorants, Crested Serpent Eagles, Pied & Great Hornbills, many of them hovering or moving around with you while rafting. Once the rapids are done, even the still water offers a fantastic body surfing session which the non-swimmers enjoy a lot. With your life jackets on, you can enjoy the experience of floating in a river. The session of Kundalika rafting ends with a final stretch of strong rowing till you reach Kamath. The feeling at the end point is more like “Kundalika Conquered”. And if you ask me what the risks are, the biggest of them all is that you could fall in love with rafting, the river and the surrounding nature so that you would want to keep coming here again and again.
Think Maharashtrian cuisine and the uninitiated conjure up images of hot vada pavs that burst with steam when you take a bite and hotter garlic red chutney to accompany it. The image - for those not in the close coterie actually blessed with Maharashtrian home-cooking - is of a culinary heritage that is robust, spicy and hot-blooded, much like our perception of the Marathas themselves. To a large extent, the image does remain quite authentic to the Maharashtrian thali (platter). Piping hot pithla (a ground, spiced flour preparation), green chilli thechas (pickles) that you can’t stop picking on with your bhakri (bread) and hot Kolhapuri chicken curries.

But, come summers and these dietary patterns gently transform. Summers are sweltering times in almost all areas of Maharashtra – from the dry heat in the plateaus of Nagpur and Aurangabad to the Sahyadri Ghats’ scorchers to the humidity of the coastal Kon-
India for centuries in ayurvedic medicine for reliving digestive and gastric issues as well as a remedy for digestion and fever.

**Recipe**

**Sol Kadhi**

**Ingredients**

- 1 coconut, grated
- 8 pieces of dried kokum
- 1 green chilli, chopped
- 1 inch crushed garlic
- 1 tsp coriander leaves, chopped
- Pinch of asafetida
- Salt to taste.

**Method**

Soak 5 kokums in half cup warm water for 10 minutes.

Grind 3 kokums with grated coconut, garlic, asafetida and green chilies to a paste adding water.

Extract coconut milk from this paste.

Add 2 cups water. Again extract milk from this paste. Repeat the same process once more. Add the kokum water to coconut milk and add salt to taste.

Refrigerate for 15 minutes.

Serve garnished with chopped coriander leaves.

**Know Your Sol Kadhi**

There are predominantly two ways to recognise whether the *Sol Kadhi* you are being served is from an authentic culinary heritage or a modern version. The traditional cooks use kokum extract or *agal*. This will be either completely unsweetened (making it a bit too sour or tart) or naturally sweetened with jaggery. It will have an almost watery consistency. This one is strong to taste, with a rich plum colour.

On the other hand, restaurant quantities and cosmopolitan crowds often require a *Sol Kadhi* using kokum sherbet. This is a blend of kokum and sugar concentrate. The sherbet makes it thicker and milder. It is also much paler in colour - almost a pinkish cream.
Vatli Dal (Kairichi Daal)

Another Maharashtrian summer specialty is the kairichi dal or traditionally known as the vatli (meaning ground) dal. In fact, it is the making of this lentil at home that marks the beginning of spring and the month of Chaitra, the first month in the Marathi calendar. This spiced dish is served with chilled kairi panha and eaten throughout summer. It is often eaten during the haldi-kumkum ceremony where young girls and women are invited to partake of the healthy summer specialty. The vatli dal uses chana dal (yellow gram) as its base and a couple of raw mangoes plus a tempering of garlic, chillies and spices.

Kairiche Panhe

Kairi Panhe is also a Maharashtrian summer favourite. Kairi, the Marathi word for the Hindi aam (mango) plays the leading lady here. The panhe is made from raw green mangoes during summer as a healthy, quick thirst-quencher against the carbonated colas to fight the intense Western sizzling summer. Rich in sodium chloride (with its generous dash of rock salt) and iron, lost in our bodies due to sweating and dehydration, the panhe is a relief from summer fatigue and even heat-strokes.

Recipe

Vatli Dal

Ingredients

- 2 medium raw mangoes
- 2 cups chana dal
- 2 green chillies
- 2 tbsp oil
- Pinch of mustard seeds
- Salt to taste
- Pinch of cumin seeds
- Sprig of coriander leaves
- Pinch of turmeric power
- 1 tbsp sugar
- Pinch of asafetida.

Method

Wash the chana dal and soak it in water for up to three hours.
Blend the dal coarsely in a mixer.
Add finely chopped raw mangoes, green chillies and coriander leaves, a pinch of salt and sugar to taste.
Transfer the mixture to a bowl.
Now, heat oil in a pan and add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, turmeric powder and asafetida.
Pour this tempering on the mixture of raw mango and dal.
The Raw Mango Story

Raw mangoes are known for their heat-resistant properties making them a favourite for the refreshing pale-green beverage. The green, unripe mango is a rich source of pectin. This chemical gradually diminishes after the formation of the central seed in the mango as it ripens. It is the very soursness of the raw mango that is healthy – it speaks of the strong presence of oxalic and citric acids. Raw mangoes are also known to be an excellent source of vitamin C that helps in the formation of new blood cells and aids other blood-related disorders.

Other Summer Specials

Aamrakhand: This is a contemporary and popular version of the traditional srikhand. Aamrakhand adds fresh sweet ripe mango pulp for that delicious juiciness.

Aamras Poli: Sweetened mango pulp goes great with Maharashtra’s traditional poli (bread). Aamras is full of anti-oxidants and anti-inflammatory agents and is also high in iron.

Kairiche Lonche Recipe

Kairiche Panhe

Ingredients
2 large raw mangoes
2 tsp cummin seeds (jeera) powder
Black salt to taste
Pinch of asafetida (hing)
1/4 cup sugar.

Method
Wash and boil mangoes.
Let cool. Peel, mash and strain the pulp.
Add cumin powder, black salt, asafetida and sugar.
Mix well till sugar is dissolved.
Divide the mixture into four tall glasses. Fill it up with chilled water.
Stir well and serve with a dash of saffron.

Mango Lassi: Again, this is a contemporary twist to the favourite milk-based drink of lassi. This one too adds fresh mango juice to a lassi for a deliciously smooth mango drink.

Kairiche Lonche: Maharashtra’s pickles are well-known for their spice as well as their bite. And summers are pickling season. The mango pickle here could be made in the red spiced oil-based variety that’s the common popularity or a more subtle sesame and turmeric variety that uses tiny but whole raw mangoes.

Aamba Poli and Fanas Poli: Dried pancakes of mango / jackfruit juice. A favourite among children, these delicacies last long allowing us to enjoy the seasonal fruits any time of the year.
Crossword - Yazad Dotivala

Across
2 Dynasty which ruled Maharashtra in the 11th and early 12th centuries (6)
4, 15 NCP President who hails from Maharashtra (6,5)
9 31 Across’ son (8)
11 Hill station around 65 kms from Pune (8)
14 Maharashtra city famous for the Hazur Sahib Gurudwara. (6)
15 See 4
16 It is also known as the Banana City (7)
18 This fort in Satara district is now a popular tourist destination (9)
20 City famous for its oranges (6)
22 Capital of Maharashtra (6)
23 State which used to be a part of Maharashtra till 1960 (7)
24 Juhu for one, Ganpatipule for another (5)
29 Cultural capital of Maharashtra (4)
30 22 Across initially comprised of an archipelago of ____ islands (5)
31 Founder of the Maratha empire (7)
32 Hill station very close to 11 Across (8)
33 Town which houses the Volkswagen plant (6)

Down
1 High speed road linking 22 and 29 Across (10)
2 Gandhiji spent several years in this Pune jail (7)
3 31 Across’ foe who met his end at 18 Across (5,4)
5 Coastal city - “aah dun” anagram (6)
6 District in the Konkan region which shares it’s name with a fort (6)
7 Caves across the sea from Mumbai (9)
8 One of India’s & Maharashtra’s major rivers (8)
10 Tourist spot about 130 km north of Pune (7,4)
12 River near Mumbai (5)
13 Posh township near Lonavala (5,6)
17 Our neighbouring state (3)
18, 28 Our Chief Minister (10,6)
19 _____ Chavan: The first Chief Minister of Maharashtra (11)
21 Western ____ : Sahyadri (5)
24 Beach about 15 kms from 5 Down (5)
25 Forest resort in the Vidarbha area (8)
26 God of good luck riding a mouse (7)
27 National park on the Maharashtra Madhya Pradesh border (5)
28 See 18
Welcome to a wildlife wonderland called Maharashtra. Visit Nagzira, to gape at deer gambolling just a few feet away. Marvel at the majestic tigers prowling around Tadoba. Spot birds of every color of the rainbow at Navegaon. There’s more, of course. With 39 vast Sanctuaries and Parks, Maharashtra is paradise for the Nature-lover. A place to enjoy the captivating sight of fauna roaming free. And experience pure joy.

Website: www.maharashtratourism.gov.in  Tel: 91-22-22845678  Toll Free No.: 1800229930
With around 350 forts spread across the state, Maharashtra has one-of-a-kind thrilling experiences in store for you. From snorkelling in the waters near Sindhudurg Fort, to the amazing acoustics of Raigad Fort where you can hear a whisper 200 feet away, or sighting the rare Karvi flower which blooms once in seven years, near Torna Fort. Discover the surprising experiences only Maharashtra can offer.