

OVERVIEW OF THE STATE

Maharashtra is located on the coast of the magnificent Arabian Sea and occupies the western & central peninsular region of India. The State has 720 km long coastline & Sahyadri mountain ranges on the west, the Satpuda hills along the north and Bhamragad-Chiroli-Gaikhuri ranges on the east as its natural borders. The State is surrounded by Gujarat to the north west, Madhya Pradesh to the north, Chhattisgarh to the east, Telangana to the south east, Karnataka to the south and Goa to the south west. For administrative convenience, the State has been divided into 36 districts and six revenue divisions.

Maharashtra experiences a tropical monsoon climate with hot, rainy and cold weather seasons. The month of March marks the beginning of the summer and is followed by monsoon in early June and winter season in November.

The State ranks 2nd by population & 3rd in terms of geographical area and is one of the highly urbanised states in India. The State is well connected through roadways, railways, airways, waterways and ultra-modern transport systems like monorail & metrorail. The *Atal Bihari Vajpayee Sewri-Nhava Sheva Atal Setu*, is the longest sea bridge in India with an engineering innovation is located in Mumbai. India's first coastal road having undersea tunnel is also located in Mumbai.

Well developed infrastructure, abundant natural resources, connectivity to all major areas, skilled manpower and quality education make Maharashtra an ideal destination for setting up of new industries.

The State capital Mumbai is the financial capital of India. Mumbai is home of nationalised banks, leading finance institutions, corporate houses & firms as well as has Asia's oldest Stock Exchange, the Bombay Stock Exchange.

Maharashtra has a rich cultural heritage and is known for its vibrant traditions and festivals. Varied customs and traditions co-exist peacefully in Maharashtra. The State is well known throughout the country for its rich music and dances. *Povada*, *Bharud*, *Gondhal* and *Lavni* are the major forms of folk music in the State. Maharashtra also has a very good theatre tradition which includes *Sangeet Natak*. Maharashtrian cuisine varies with the regions. *Malvani (Konkani)*, *Kolhapuri* and *Varhadi* cuisins are examples of well-known regional cuisines. Maharashtra celebrates all major religious festivals in a peaceful and harmonious manner.

The State houses world heritage sites such as Ajanta, Ellora & Elephanta caves, 19th century Victorian Neo-Gothic public buildings & 20th century Art Deco buildings and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus. There are three Ramsar sites viz. Nandur Madhameshwar in Nashik district, Lonar crater in Buldhana district and Thane creek. These world heritages, architectural structures like Gateway of India, Viharas & Chaityas, wild life sanctuaries, bird sanctuaries, beaches, forts and Ramsar sites attract tourists from all over the world.

The State has sizable contribution in sports, arts, literature and social services. The State is also home to 'Bollywood', a world famous entertainment industry.

Maharashtra has time and again showed its pragmatic & progressive nature and the State continued to walk on the path of sustainable development.

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