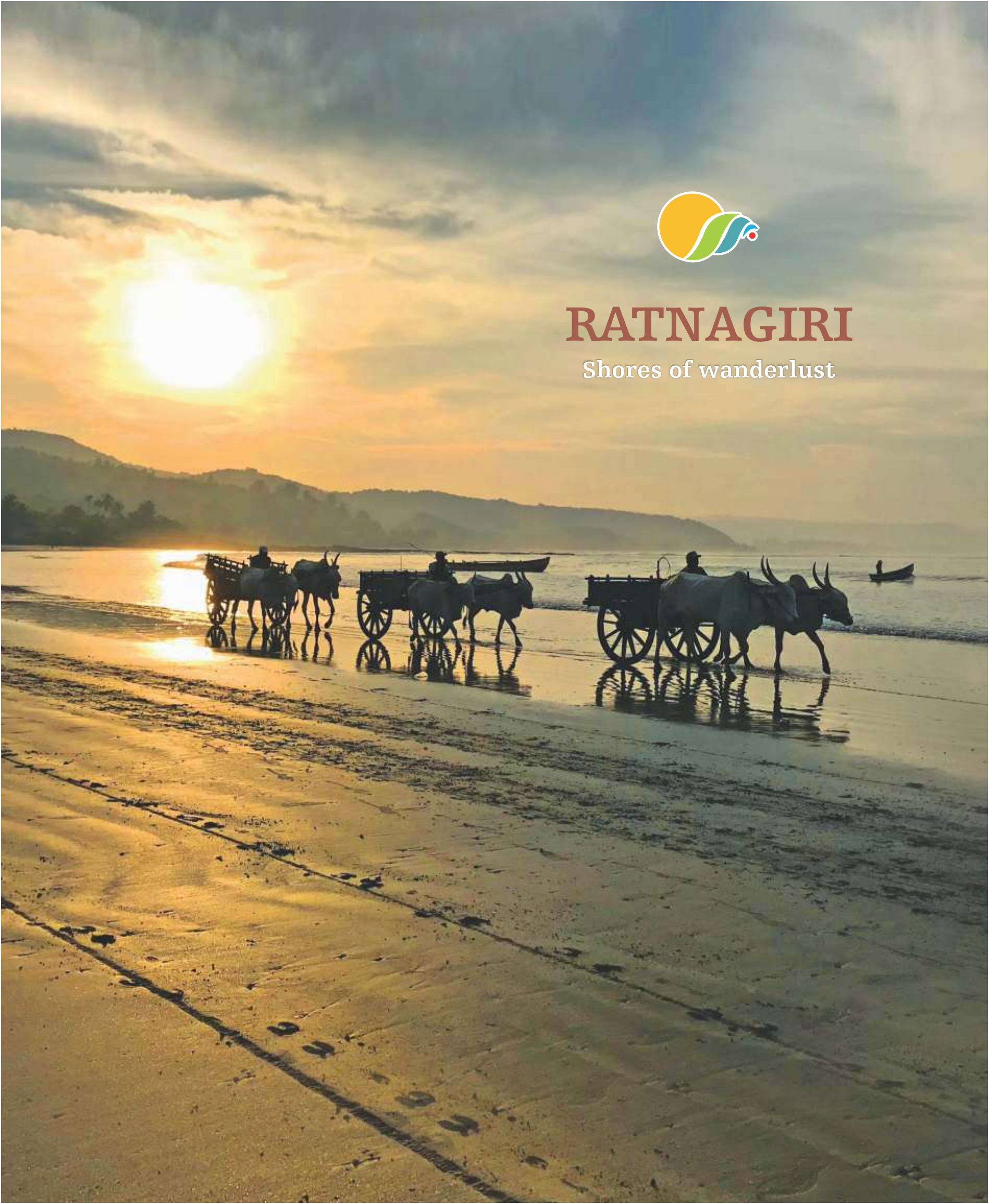




RATNAGIRI

Shores of wanderlust









**Government of
Maharashtra**

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RATNAGIRI
Shores of wanderlust









सत्यमेव जयते
महाराष्ट्र शासन

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Guardian Minister, Ratnagiri

MESSAGE

Firstly, I thank Shri Uddhavji Thackeray for giving me this opportunity to serve the residents of Konkan in the capacity of Guardian Minister of Ratnagiri district. This of course was inspired by the Veteran Founder of Shiv Sena, Late Shri Balasaheb Thakare who believed more in serving society than getting involved in politics. I also would like to thank Hon. Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Shri Devendraji Phadnavis.

My home town is a *Khed* in Ratnagiri Dist., so I had a firm bonding with the Konkan right from childhood; which explains why I have a clear understanding of the problems of the residents here. The Konkan has a spectacular shoreline of 720 kms, blessed with a bounty of nature along with several historical monuments and tourist spots. This district has borne several personalities that have offered their heart and soul for the sake of the Freedom Struggle of India. Several instances from their lives are a matter of pride for me as well as the entire district. After I took the responsibility as Guardian Minister, several activities are underway which focus on attracting more tourists from the country and abroad...along with providing them with more facilities and also creating employment through promotion of tourism. For several years, Ratnagiri was deprived of quite a few basic amenities. Several people's representatives, social service organisations and some eminent figures came together for a discussion and charted out a plan worth 670 crore, for the progress of the district. Some novel ideas have been implemented for its beautification...and this is going to be an ongoing process.

For the promotion of tourism, recently Mega Tourism Festivals of three days were organised in Ratnagiri and Chiplun. There was an overwhelming response from the residents as well as tourists. This opened a new avenue for the locals to earn a livelihood. There are several memorials of those who fought for the freedom of our country.

The land also has reason to boast of several ancient stone sculptures, temples and forts. This place is famous for its natural beauty, amply populated by various birds, animals, rare plants and an abundant number of flowers, butterflies, snakes and insects. Researchers, scientists and nature lovers throng here to study the rich treasure of nature. The presence of the Malabar Pied Hornbill and the white bellied sea eagle stand testimony to the clean environment here.

An ample number of marshlands are found in the Vashishthi and Jagbudi creeks. These rivers have a large population of fresh water crocodiles. Olive Ridley turtles come onto the beaches of Dabhol, Gavkhadi, Anjarli, Velas to lay their eggs. The waterfalls at Marleshwar, Raanpat, Dhamapur, Chunakolvan are attractions to tourists from all over the world. Tourists cannot help swaying and tapping to the beats of Jakhadi folksongs.

To showcase the natural beauty and tourism spots of Ratnagiri, a wonderful, colourful and informative Coffee Table Book is being published. This book is going to reveal several facets of the tourism spots here by giving an enticing glimpse of the beauty that lies here. This will not only enhance the tourism industry here but also give rise to various occupations. I am sure that whoever is able to lay his hands on this book is going to consider it a collector's item. My best wishes to all those who took efforts for this book.

Ravindra Waikar



सत्यमेव जयते
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MESSAGE

The Konkan region of Maharashtra, which has a rich coastline of about 750 km, is diverse in its characteristics. Ratnagiri district is just like 'the jewel in the crown' of the five Districts of Konkan. The Talukas Khed, Chiplun, Sangameshwar and Lanja, which lie in the vicinity of the mighty Western Ghats, are famous for the thick forests and biodiversity. We can find large fresh water crocodiles growing up to 10 to 12 feet long in the rivers like Jagbudi and Vasishthi, whereas various wild animals like Leopard, Wild dogs, Hyena, Sambar etc. are found in the rich forests. The coastal talukas namely Mandangad, Dapoli, Guhagar, Ratnagiri and Rajapur, are absolutely magnificent. The clean and secluded beaches, the beautiful bays adding to the scenic picture, the dense coconut groves, rich mangrove forests, the coastal and sea forts, local fisherman's life- All this have to be experienced visiting again and again. The Hot water springs found at number of places in Ratnagiri district are a natural wonder. The Rajapur's Ganga springs near Rajapur where it is believed that Ganga descends to meet lord shiva at Dhoot Papeshwar Temple, the 'Baman Ghal' of Hedavi where the sea waves splashing and towering around 10 meters high at the time of high tide through a narrow crack in the rocky shore, are also wonders of nature.

Over the past few years, hundreds of Rock Carvings(Petroglyphs) on the vast Lateritic plateaus, showing human figures, shapes of different animals and also some unknown figures, have been discovered by local history lovers and researchers from Ratnagiri. Because of this, a prehistoric aspect of Ratnagiri has been revealed to the world. I am sure that a deep study of these Petroglyphs will definitely throw some light on prehistoric human habitation in kokan region. Lacs of devotees throng the numerous temples all around the year in search of spirituality with the devine Ganpatipule being the center of attraction. Apart from this, Ratnagiri District is an inviting place for many historians, anthropologists, geologists, Indologists and nature lovers from all over the world.

In the monsoon season, the vast lush green paddy fields and the cascading waterfalls gushing down from the mighty Western Ghat ranges is a feast for eyes.

District administration has initiated many different activities to promote tourism in the district. This coffee table book, which gives in a nutshell information about the unique places and features in the entire district, is a part of the project. I congratulate the District Administration on this occasion and offer my best wishes for all such projects in future.

Jagdish Patil

Divisional Commissioner,
Kokan Division



Collector Office,
Jai pillar, near bus station,
Ratnagiri - 415612

सत्यमेव जयते
महाराष्ट्र शासन

PREFACE

It's my great pleasure to present the Coffee Table Book of Ratnagiri district, a district which is worth calling the "Jewel in the Crown" of Konkan region. As the district is blessed with a treasure of natural beauty, glorious history, ancient sculptures and temples, serene beaches, scenic waterfalls, formidable forts, traditional culture and heritage, Ratnagiri is no less than any popular tourist spot in India. It is also home to various personalities who shaped India through their wisdom and valour.

Ratnagiri is known as a progressive district of Konkan and is a rich tourist destination with varied attractions. The district administration has consistently taken many initiatives to ensure maximum publicity for tourist places in this district. This Coffee Table Book is a part of this initiative. This Coffee Table Book is designed to act as a Gateway to Ratnagiri. It gives a glimpse of what is in store for travellers of every kind and taste. It contains pictures intended to give a slice of every shade of Ratnagiri. This book is an effort to present Ratnagiri in such a way that it shall highlight all the facets of tourism like Nature tourism, Heritage tourism, Spiritual tourism, Eco-tourism, Cultural tourism, Agro tourism and Adventure tourism.

Ratnagiri, the home to Alphonso Mangoes and Cashew, has its own unique identity in the tourism map of India. I hope this book will serve the purpose of promoting Ratnagiri as a global tourist destination. I warmly welcome the tourists visiting our district and wish them an enriching and pleasure filled journey here.

P. Pradeep (I.A.S.)

District Collector,
Ratnagiri

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The Land Of Konkan

Konkan, a boon to Maharashtra is the leitmotif of poets, writers, sculptors, explorers and historians. It has mesmerised tourists galore and has been hailed as an endless expanse of land bound by the sea on the west. Mythological texts of the Puranas state that it was created by Lord Parshuram, one of the ten avatars of Lord Vishnu, who warded off the sea by several hundred miles. It is the firm foundation of the robust Sahyadri mountain range replete with beautiful seashores, the frothing, roaring sea, silver beaches, lush green forests, thickset mangroves, bottomless valleys, red soil, massive creeks with marshlands, and coconut-betel nut plantations. It is equally laden with a rich historical and cultural heritage. The Konkan has a history that spans several millennia. It has seen the rise and fall of several regimes. It has given birth to distinct personalities whose names can be carved in gold. References to the Konkan can be seen since the 4th century AD. It has been mentioned in ancient texts such as the Mahabharat, Vishnu Puran, Bruhadsanhita, as well as the inscriptions during the Chalukya regime.

*The foothills of the Sahyadri mighty
Ethereal, Green is the Konkan
Celestial Creation of Mother Nature
Paradise it is, No less...one in a million.*

It also finds a mention in the writings of ancient travellers such as Periplus, Ptolemy, Pliny, and Achrunia. In his travelogue Ptolemy has referred to north Konkan as Larika and the south Konkan as Arika. Some ancient texts also refer to it as Kunkun or Kunkan. In different eras it has been ruled by Maurya, Saatvahan, Chalukya, Shilahaar, Shalivahan, Kalchuri and Yadav dynasties. After the fall of the Vijaynagar Dynasty, foreign powers took hold. It was ruled by Muslim rulers of the Bahamani, Nijamshahi, and Adilshahi empires. After the defeat of the Maratha dominion, this land was under the British rule since 1818 all the way to India's independence.

The Konkan coast is spread across 720 kilometres on the western shoreline of India right from Zaai creek to Terekhol creek in the South. According to geologists this land was created due to the geological changes that took place in the Deccan plateau. The history of the rulers of Konkan for the last 2000 years has come to surface from evidences found in sculptures and scriptures. However the recently discovered prehistoric rock carvings narrate the history of the last 10,000 to 40,000 years.

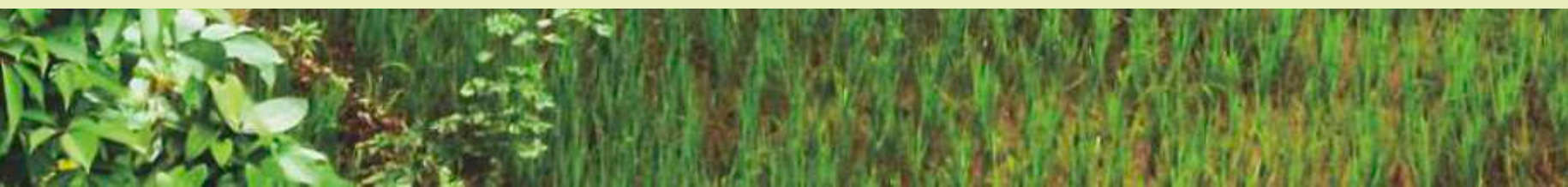




Ratnagiri district is a prime part of the rich terrain of Konkan because of its special identity. In earlier times it was known as a region which survives on money orders sent by those who work in cities. However, today it is carving a new identity as a land that is prosperous and modern which also adheres to tradition and culture.

True to its name, Ratnagiri is a treasure trove of assorted gems – natural, geological, geographical, historical, social and cultural. Previously it stretched from Bankot to Sawantwadi.

However for administrative purposes it was divided into two parts forming Ratnagiri district covering the area from Bankot creek to Savitri river and Sindhudurg district forming from Shastri river in Rajapur taluka till Vijaydurg of Waghotan creek. The geographical boundaries of Ratnagiri include Raigad district which is situated in the North on the other shore of Bankot creek. In the West beyond the Sahyadri mountain range lie Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur districts.



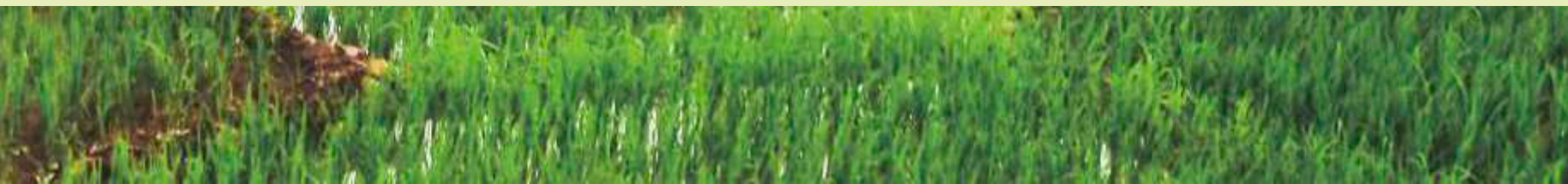


Ratnagiri

Beyond the Waghotan creek in Vijaydurg, lies the newly formed district of Sindhudurg and on the West lies the Arabian Sea.

Ratnagiri which covers 8327 sq kms is spread in the North-South direction and consists of 9 talukas. Mandangad, Dapoli, Guhagar, Ratnagiri and Rajapur lie on the coast while Khed, Chiplun, Sangameshwar and Lanja are situated in the East at the foothills of Sahyadris.

Ratnagiri has seven major creeks of Vashishthi, Dabhol, Bhatye, Jaitapur, Jaigad, Purnagad and Waghotan. The creek from Dabhol to Chiplun is used as a waterway for travel and trade even today. Ratnagiri also has rivers such as Savitri, Jagbudi, Vashishthi and Shastri and tributaries such as Baav, Kajali, Muchkundi, Arjuna and Shuk which forms the border between Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg.



Unique Taluka Places

The travel through the 9 talukas from Mandangad to Rajapur is very enriching and reveals several facets of Ratnagiri. Mandangad which is situated in the North is the smallest taluka which is separated from Shrivardhan in Raigad district by the Bankot creek. The Southernmost taluka is Rajapur, which is also the largest one stretching from the sea coast to the foot hills of the Sahyadris. Between Rajapur and Sindhudurg lies the Waghotan creek of the Shuk river. The hot water springs in Rajapur, Sangameshwar, Dapoli and Lanja are manifestations of the wonders of nature. Tourists who visit during the monsoons can enjoy the sights of the Savatsada and Nivali waterfalls beside the Mumbai-Goa highway. In the interiors of Ratnagiri, waterfalls such as Marleshwar, KhorNinako, Dhamapur, Chuna

kolvan, Ranpat and Devpat are mesmerising sights. Atop the tall, precarious Sahyadris, there are several forts that have been protecting the Konkan for centuries. These have now become hotspots for tourists and trekkers. During the monsoons the green pathways in the Sahyadris keep luring all types of nature lovers. Machal, which is located atop the Sahyadri in Lanje is rapidly developing as a hill station. Dapoli too is well known for its cool climate while Chiplun is famous for its crocodiles that swarm the waters of the Vashishthi creek. The entire coast is laced with pristine, pollution-free beaches such as Velas, Kelshi, Anjarle, Karde, Murud, Guhagar, Velneshwar, Bhatye, Ganeshgule, Ganpatipule, Gavkhadi and Vetye.



The mangroves here too are a special feature of Ratnagiri. The jungles which are the habitats of various birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians, the shores that are home to a lot of aquatic organisms and the marshlands with their rich biodiversity together are the prominent signs of a rich ecosystem. Several places have come into limelight due to the rock carvings discovered here.

The Bamanghal at Hedvi, the Ganga at Rajapur that has been appearing in Rajapur for centuries, Hot water springs at Tural, Rajwadi, Unhavare, all these are manifestations of the magic of nature one cannot afford to miss. Ratnagiri taluka is famous for its religious and historical sites at Jaigad, Malgund, Ganpatipule, Kolisare, Pavas, Harne, Kasheli, Adivare, Ambolgad and Rajapur.

Ratnagiri city has developed quite rapidly. It is an important place on the Mumbai-Goa highway. The speedy urbanisation is due to increase in trade, renowned education institutes and a modern railway station. Just as you step out of the city, the green woods and the white frothing sea beckon you.





Sea Shores

Lo and behold, at dusk, The sun landing on the sea
And the waves kissing its soul, No less than a miracle be...

These words by the poet laureate Keshavsoot capture the beauty of the fathomless ocean in words that describe the magic of Ratnagiri.



◀◀ Waves kiss the sun's reflection as it lands on the twilight sea at Guhagar



Ratnagiri is adorned by a coastline of 167 kilometres and the sand that resembles silver dust has always been drawing tourists. Life on the shores, creeks and the deep sea is rich in variety.

The immeasurable blue meets the languid beach at Aare-Vare ▼





Whether you witness the golden sunset in the company of silvery waves, or take a dip in the safe waters, you will never feel quite quenched to leave them behind. Walking on the silken beaches and the Casuarina and Kevada (Pandanus plant) groves is like gliding through a dream.

◀ The Sun peeping through the Suru trees.

The abundance of golden orange at Guhagar shore ▼

▼ Tourists blending with nature at Bhatye beach

Adventure meets sport in the waters at Murud ▼



Sunsets at Guhagar, Velneshwar, Hedvi and Gavkhadi are straight from an artist's dream!







The beaches at Murud, Karde and Ladghar offer water sports that have an edge of adventure. Ganpatipule has a rare phenomenon in store nearby – twin beaches called Aare-Vare that reflect twice the beauty. Watching the fort Suvarndurg standing in the midst of the sea at Harne, or Jaigad Fort on the shore at Jaigad, or Purnagad at the mouth of the creek Muchkundi are bewitching sights as you wander by the coast.

Harne, Dabhol and Jaitapur are ports that have retained their historical importance and do deserve a visit. Observing the fish trade at Dabhol and Harne is the best way to understand the life of fishermen. Being in the midst of seagulls and other birds at Kelshi and Dapoli will transport you to another level of tranquillity and a visit to the temples at Ganpatipule and Velneshwar will be an experience nothing less than divine.

Fishermen and the Sea ▼
Anjanvel still holds the fort ▼

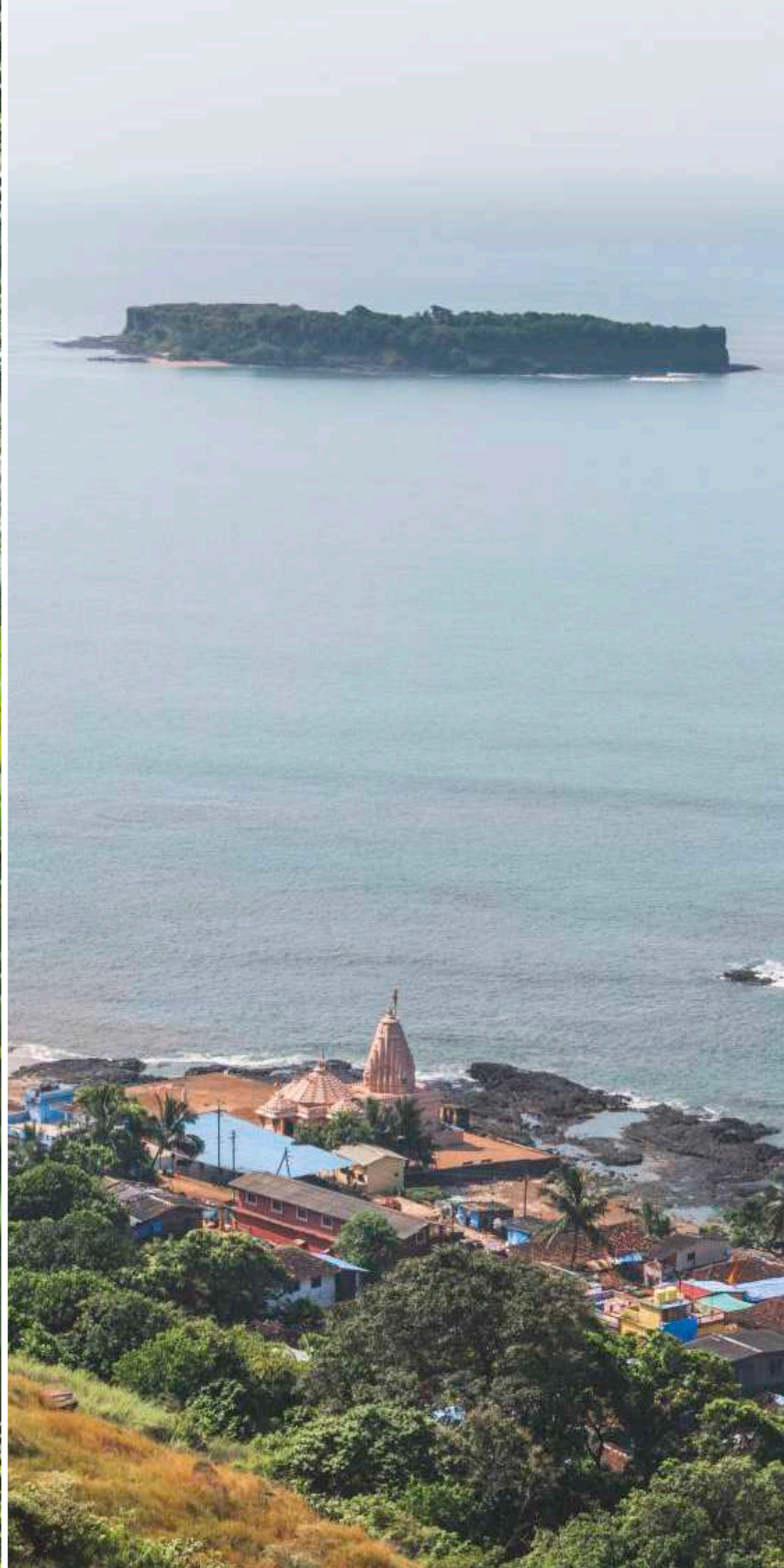




Beautiful Landscapes









Rich Creeks

The pollution-free mangroves rich in biodiversity need special mention. A significant population of fresh water crocodiles can be found in the marshes at Vashishthi and Savitri. Sea Forts can be seen built at the mouths of Waghota, Shastri, Arjuni, Muchkundi and Vashishthi rivers. The forts Anjanvel, Govalkot, Poorngad and Jaigad standing strong at the mouth of creeks are the sights that can instil awe. The picturesque sights of the creek, the immense ocean and the captivating history of these forts persist in the mind for long time. A fleet of colourful boats bobbing in the water is a trademark sight at Ratnagiri. The mangroves, a testimony to a prosperous environment, the expansive scenery of creeks with bridges across them, and a boat ride down the creek are truly moments that tempt you to capture them in your cameras as well as your soul.









Land Forts and Sea Forts

In all there are 28 forts in Ratnagiri, some are mountain forts hidden in the folds of the Sahyadri, some sea forts stand guard in the Arabian Sea, while some are on the shores or estuaries. When you visit them, these forts narrate their glorious history of several centuries, their strategic importance, architectural speciality, the attacks they have withstood, the victories they have witnessed and the defeats they have endured.



Rasaalgad, Sumargad, Mahipatgad, Maimatgad and Prachitgad are forts situated at Khed and Sangameshwar in the mighty Sahyadris and are famous as the defenders of the Konkan. The relevance of these mountain forts has been changing according to the times. The challenging pathways to these forts have been beckoning adventurous trekkers for time immemorial.

- ◀◀ Ratnadurg Fort – Standing strong since the 12th century
- ▼ Triangular ramparts of Mahimatgad, Sangameshwar
- ▶ Mahimatgad, Sangameshwar





Sculpture at the entrance gate of Mandangad



Artistically sculpted arches



A charming piece of woodcarving





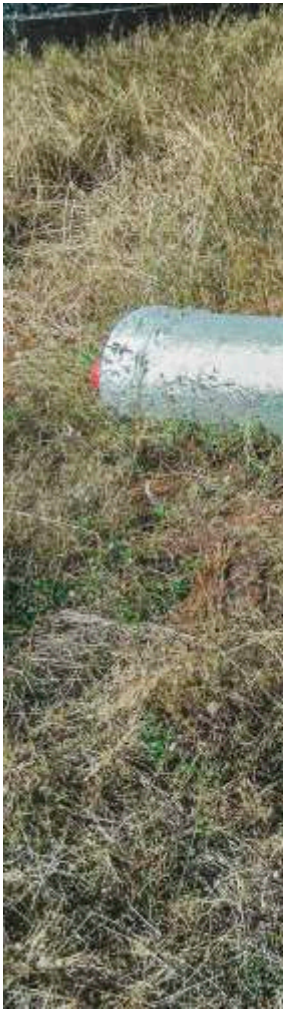
The Suvarndurg, Kanakdurg, Harne or Goa Forts that stand in the middle of the sea, the Bhagwati Fort or Ratnadurg which is the identity of Ratnagiri, and several other forts are important for their strategic position and history. These forts have defended the shoreline of the Konkan for centuries.

Poornagad at the mouth of the Muchkundi creek, Gavkhadi • ◀
Govalkot •

Suvarndurg - The spread over 8 acres into the sea at Harne • ▼
The shoreline of Gavkhadi as seen from Poornagad •



The Maratha King Shivaji envisaged the importance of naval supremacy and reinforced these forts. During the realm of General Admiral Kanhoji Aangre, these forts did a stupendous job and emphasised their own exceptional significance.



- ◀ • Cannon at the entrance of Bankot
- Hanuman Idol at Rasalgad Fort
- Entrance Gate of the fort
- Ratnadurg Fort
- Govalkot fort
- Infallible Entrance Gate





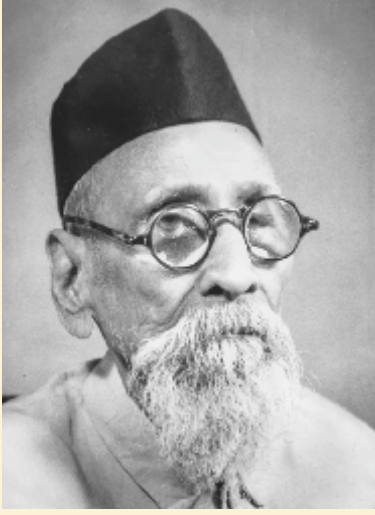
Forts built in prominent positions in creeks at the mouths of rivers had a vital role to play in controlling passage from and into the sea. Anjanvel, Govalkot or Govindgad, Poornagad, Jaigad are situated on rivers such as Vashishthi, Muchkundi and Shastri. These were important checkpoints in olden times. Today, their majestic presence has turned them into monuments of admiration.



▲ Historical site on Jaigad

◀ Entrance to Jaigad fort
Expansive Gopalgad or Anjanvel

Maharshi Karve



The land of Konkan is truly blessed. Describing the qualities of the sparkling personalities born here goes beyond the capacity of mere words. Marshi Karve who lived a long and active life of 104 years was born in Murud. He was born on 18th April 1857 and died on 9th November 1962. In his lifetime he gave a definitive direction to women's education. Women were being oppressed and deprived for centuries and Karve's struggle to grant them social status began in the 19th century. Over a hundred years ago, in 1891, after the demise of his wife he had married a widow, which was a bold and progressive step in those times. In 1916, he established the SNTD College in Pune to reform women's education. This college is proving to be a lighthouse to women even today. In 1899, he established a shelter for orphaned and homeless women, at Hingne in Pune. For his invaluable contribution to the cause of women's reformation he was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1958. The memorial which holds a museum too was built in his honour.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar



Though Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar was born in 1891 in Indore, his childhood was spent in Dapoli. Babasaheb Ambedkar, the Architect of the Constitution of India was a multifaceted personality. He was an economist of international standards along with being a political scientist, India's first Law and Judiciary Minister, writer, social reformer, philosopher, barrister, orator, journalist and a promoter of Buddhism. He studied in Mumbai University, Columbia University, London School of Economics, Grey's Inn, London and Bonn University, Germany. He had been awarded 32 degrees including MSc, PhD, Bar at Law, LLD and DLit. He was a polyglot with a mastery over languages such as Marathi, English, Hindi, Gujarati, Pali, Sanskrit, Bangla, German, French and Persian. He was the editor of journals such as 'Mooknayak' and 'Bahishkrut Bharat'. He spent his life in the cause of reformation of the downtrodden communities in India which had been oppressed for centuries. He was awarded the Bharat Ratna for his selfless and truly vital contribution to society.

Bharat Ratna Awardees



Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. P.V. Kane



Dr. P.V. Kane, a Sanskrit scholar, was known internationally for his work on ancient Oriental research and the writer of a learned analysis of religious sciences, dharmashastra. This massive body of scholarly writing runs into 6500 pages contained in 5 volumes.

Pandurang Vaman Kane was born on 7th May, 1880 in Chiplun, Ratnagiri. He was a child prodigy with a phenomenal memory. His first Marathi article was published when he was merely 11 years old. He performed extraordinarily well in all exams and wielded a command on Sanskrit, Marathi, English, French, Urdu and Persian. Likewise, he was also a master of dharmashastra, prachyavidya (Oriental research) and poetics. His spectacular talent had been honoured with several national and international awards. He wrote scholarly, copious treatises on several topics such as the the vedic ideology of Hindu law, history of dharmashastra, history of Sanskrit Poetics, Poorvmimansa, Dharmsootra etc...

Kane's views about old religious texts were radical and did not fit in the conventional frame of scholarly dogmatic wisdom. He was considered an intellectual critic who questioned old beliefs and doctrines. He was a staunch opponent of abhorrent practices such as balding of widows, ostracization of untouchables and other such inhuman acts. He firmly promoted the idea that society must change according to the times. Kane has performed the prodigious task of helping Sanskrit get accepted as the mother of all ancient languages. He has also toiled hard to win international honour for Indian Culture.

He was awarded the Bharat Ratna in 1963 for his lifetime of priceless contribution.

Maharshi Karve Memorial



The Konkan has borne several personalities that proved to be gems. Maharshi Karve was the pioneer social activist who spent his entire life promoting widow-remarriages to give them a respectable status in society. His memorial has been erected in his birthplace – Murud. The memorial displays his entire social work along with his life story. His photos with other stalwarts are also on display. This museum also has his life size statue as homage to his contribution to society. In 1957, the Government of India awarded him the Bharat Ratna, the highest award given to a civilian and thus his work of social awareness was given the honour it certainly deserved.



Historical Monuments

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Memorial

The architect of the Constitution Of India Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar's native place was Ambadwe village in Mandangad Taluka. Ambadwe is 18 km. from Mandangad Fort and can be reached by taking the road to Pachral. Dr. Ambedkar's ancestral home has been converted into a memorial where his belongings are also displayed. His contribution in India's freedom struggle and to the cause of downtrodden communities in society is immeasurable. This memorial stands in an ambience that is pleasant and reminds us of his positive attitude towards life.



Poet Keshavsoot Memorial



The pioneer of modern Marathi poetry, Poet Laureate Keshavsoot alias Krishnaji Keshav Damle was born in 1886 in Malgund. As a tribute to him, the Konkan Marathi Sahitya Parishad has built a memorial at his birthplace, which is merely 2 km from Ganpatipule.

In his short lifespan of 39 years, Keshavsoot's 103 poems have attained the stature of a literary treasure. As an occupation he was a teacher, however his heart and soul always resided in the domain of poetry. The aficionados of his work consider him synonymous to the true essence of Marathi poetry. His best known poems are 'Tutari' and 'Nava Shipaee'.



Birth place of Lokmanya Tilak

The initiator of civil unrest in Pre-independence India, and an aggressive leader of the Indian freedom movement, Lokmanya Tilak was born in Ratnagiri in 1856. It is a cosy little home on Tilak Lane in the heart of Ratnagiri. Tilak stayed in this house till the age of ten. This place is under the patronage of the government of Maharashtra and has been officially declared as a memorial. A full size statue of Lokmanya Tilak graces the courtyard. Tilak's birth anniversary is celebrated here every year with festive enthusiasm.



Swatantryaveer Savarkar Memorial



An intense revolutionary fighter, a thinker, an influential author, and poet, Swatantryaveer Savarkar is a proud and priceless gem of Ratnagiri. The memorial of Swatantryaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar has been erected in the compound of the Patit Pavan temple in Ratnagiri.

'Gatha Balidanachi' (An Epic of sacrifice) has been exhibited on the first floor of this memorial, from the clarion call of independence in 1857 to the attainment of actual independence; it showcases the inspiring, revolutionary and glorious history of the country's patriots, revolutionaries and martyrs.

You get inspired by seeing the things which were used by Savarkar to create history such as the two guns that he sent from London, his walking stick, his dagger and the equipment he used for exercising. The replica of 'Maria' boat is also kept here from where Veer Savarkar took the historic jump in the ocean on the Marseilles port to meet his motherland.



Historical Thibaw Palace

The Thibaw Palace was the place of residence of the King of Myanmar. This huge historical palace is the main tourist attraction of Ratnagiri city. Ratnagiri shared a relationship with Myanmar as way back as 1885 AD. In 1910 this extravagant three storied Burmese palace was built over more than 27 acres, costing 1,37,000 rupees as a place of residence for King Thibaw and his family. Today it is located in Shivajinagar area.

Thibaw was the last king of Myanmar who ruled for duration of 7 years. He had to leave Myanmar with a handful of servants and whatever jewels he could bring along. In 1885, the British escorted him along with his relatives via Madras (Chennai) to the Konkan so that he would not lead an uprising again. Away from his homeland and his supporters Thibaw stayed in imprisonment for 30 years till the end of his days to the age of 57 in 1919—a tragic tale by any standards.

The Thibaw Palace which was witness to several historical events has a dance floor paved with marble. From the terrace of the palace one could catch sight of the sea. The roof of the palace was decorated with designs carved in wood and the windows were adorned with Italian glass. The palace is now a museum which houses several ancient and historical artefacts. The ground floor has beautiful statues and the painting gallery on the upper floor is an irresistible tourist attraction. The Thibaw Palace is open up to 5pm every day except Mondays.

In close vicinity to the Thibaw Point, now stands the Jijamata Garden which offers a picturesque view of the setting sun along with its orange hue spread over the Bhatye river, Rajiwada harbour, the sea and the Bhagawati fort which stands tall and majestic. Despite this mesmerizing sight, the heart keeps aching for the tragic end of King Thibaw.



Ancient Caves



Panhalekaji Caves

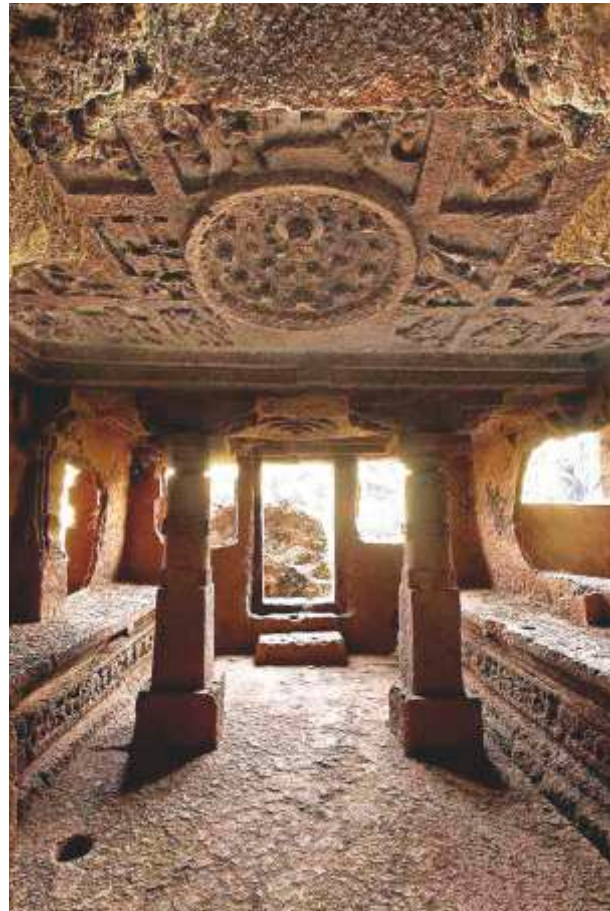
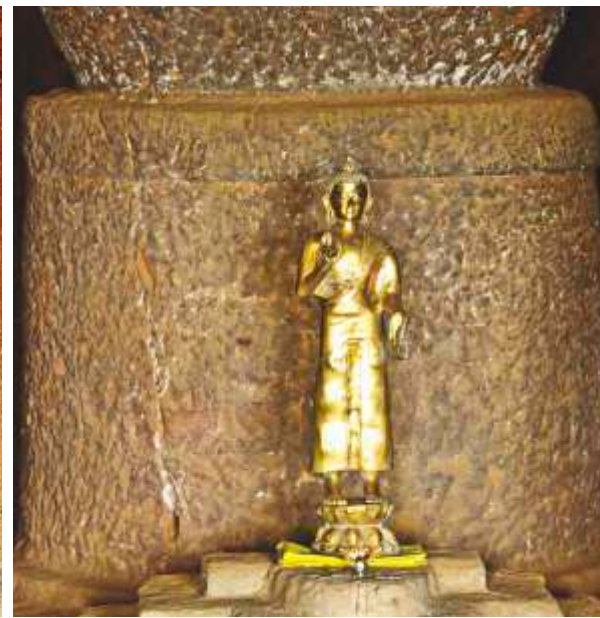
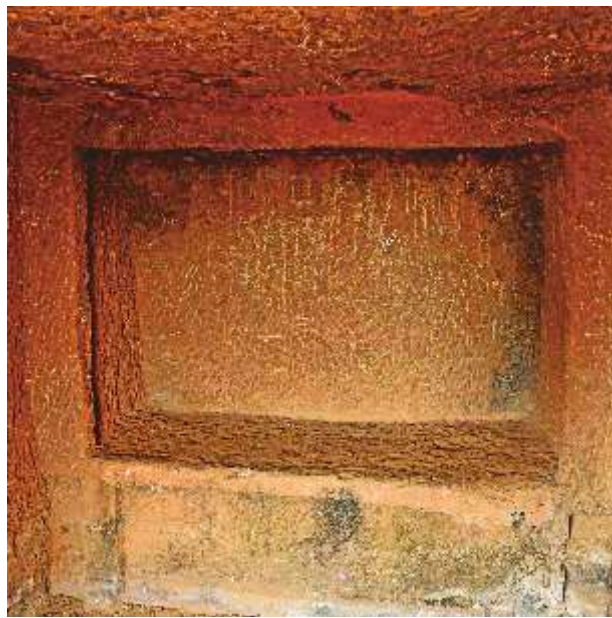
When you travel through Dapoli for about 20 km. you come across these Panhalekaji caves at Nanate village on the Dapoli-Dabhol road. At the union of the Kotjai and Dhakti rivers, there is this cluster of caves designed by the Hinyaan Buddhist, Ganpatya and the Nath communities. These 29 caves that have held up their esteem for centuries are famous for their sculptures. Historian Anna Shirgaokar from Dabhol brought them to public attention in 1970.

Caves of Khed

The caves in any region tell the tale of its past—from the Pandava era, the Buddhist era and the Hinyaan era. These caves which bear similarity with the Buddhist sculptures are quite close from the bus station.

◀ Caves – The oldest evidences of artistic human existence

Stupa and Buddha's statue ▼





Rock Carvings

Rock Carvings dating back to the prehistoric era have been discovered in several places. Gavdewadi and Nivli in Ratnagiri, Nachane in Rajapur and Ukshi in Sangameshwar have several prehistoric manmade carvings on lateritic rock. Historians believe that these are at least 10000 to 30000 years old. Nothing is known about the sculptors or the motives behind their artistic expression. Researchers are doing their best to unravel this mystery. These carvings have a large variety. Some have squares while others have serpentine forms on them. One of the lateritic rocks has the figure of a fish etched 3-4 cm deep. Figures of discs, lotuses and even a huge elephant have been carved on some rocks.

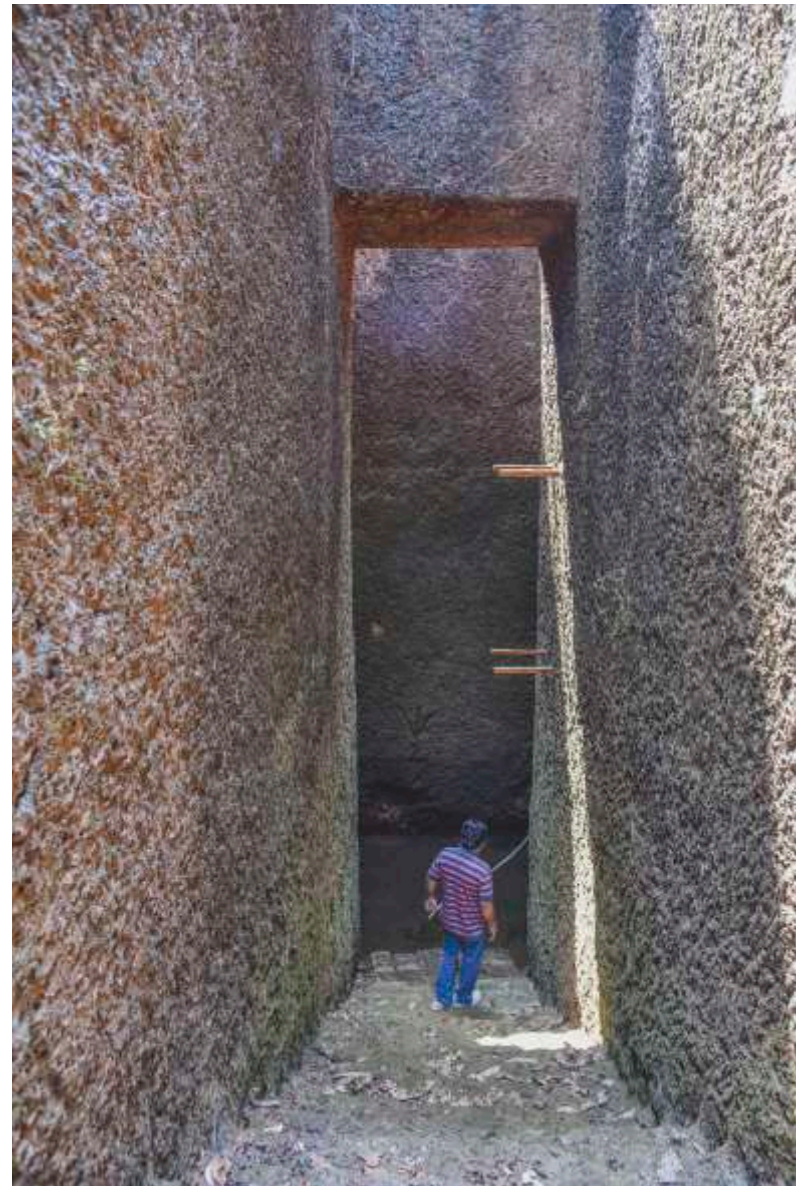
Though the solution to the mystery is not evident yet, there certainly would be a singular underlying aim behind all these carvings. If this picto-script is deciphered several puzzles hidden in the labyrinths of time will come to surface. Some of the carvings have been destroyed during the passage of time, which makes it imperative that the surviving ones be provided better care.

In close vicinity of few carvings there are wells with steps dug in the rocks. These wells have water for most of the year and are very much in use today.

◀ Human and animal figures carved on lateritic rock



A well with stairs dug in lateritic rock ▼





Ancient Temples

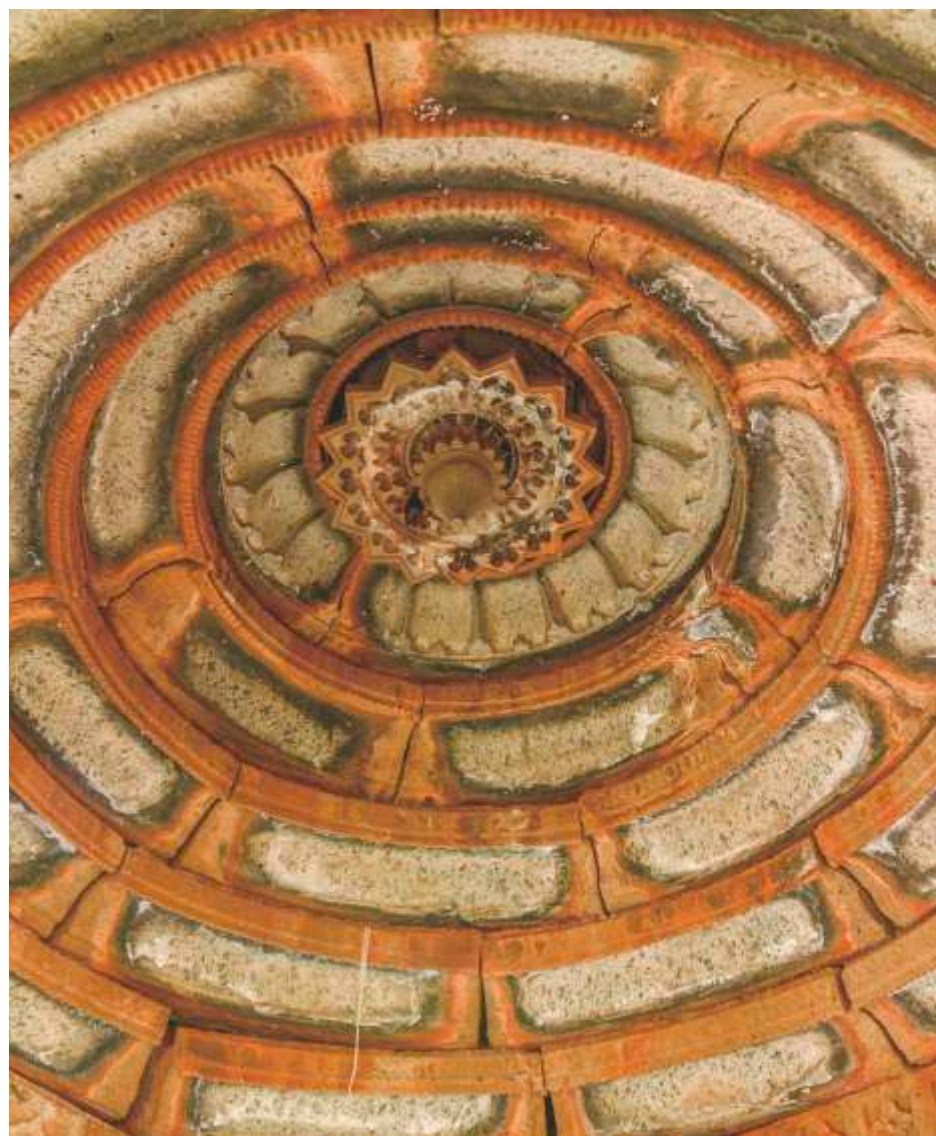
Sangameshwar is famed as the Tapobhoomi of Lord Parshuram, where the rivers Alaknanda and Varuna meet. The place has a history that goes far back in time. Sangameshwar studded in the lap of nature has been a place of attraction to several rulers. From the time of the Chalukya dynasty, 2000 years ago, the importance of Kasba Sangameshwar has been emphasised. 1600 years ago, King Karn of the Karveer dynasty built the elegant Karneshwar temple. History notes that in 1108 AD, in the 12th century several devotees built a set of 306 temples. This shows that the region was prosperous during those times. This can be said because such superlative art can be produced only when socio-economic conditions of the land are conducive.

Group of ancient temples at Kasba Sangameshwar





The structure of the temples is truly aesthetic with elegant effigies chiselled on them. These temples are an invaluable treasury of the art of sculpting. Time has taken its toll and only a few of these temples survive. The reason why they have stood their ground for so long is because they were protected by thick jungles. Watching these temples certainly transports you into a different time zone while your feet are very much on the soil of Sangameshwar.





Temples

There are several old and ancient beautiful temples that have been there for centuries. The temples here have a special place in the hearts of worshippers due to traditions that have been going on for centuries. Ratnagiri is well known as the land of Lord Parshuram. There are several sacred shrines where devotees come for festivals, celebrations and pilgrimages all year round. The lush green ambience around the captivating architecture of the temples along with the nearby sea shores, the ancient finely carved idols coupled with their mythological importance and the serene silence are compelling reasons for everyone to revisit these places. Devotees who get drawn here by their faith receive an ethereal experience of a rich, exuberant culture that induces enrichment of body, mind and soul.



- ◀◀ The Karneshwar Temple built in 16th century at Sangameshwar
- ▼ The most adorable Shree Kshetra Ganapatipule Temple



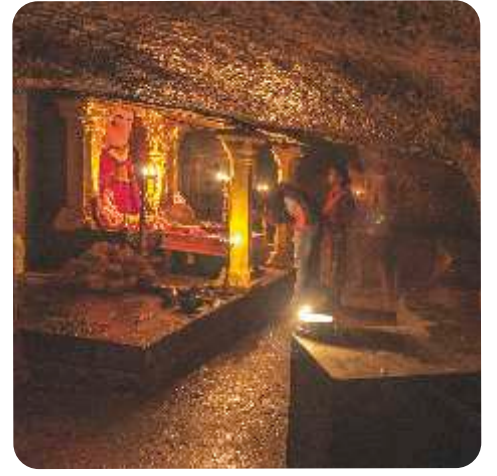






◀ The Dhootapapeshwar Temple in lush green surroundings

- ▲ • Dhootapapeshwar • Lakshmi Keshav
- Durga devi • Lord Ganesh



Ancient Chandika Devi Temple, Dabhol ▼



- Tikaleshwar, Devrukh
- Velaneshwar Temple, Velaneshwar

- Kadyavaracha Ganapati, Aanjarle ▶
- Sharada Devi Temple, Tumarav
- Shri Kshetra Parashuram, Chiplun

- Mallikarjun Temple, Shirambe ▼

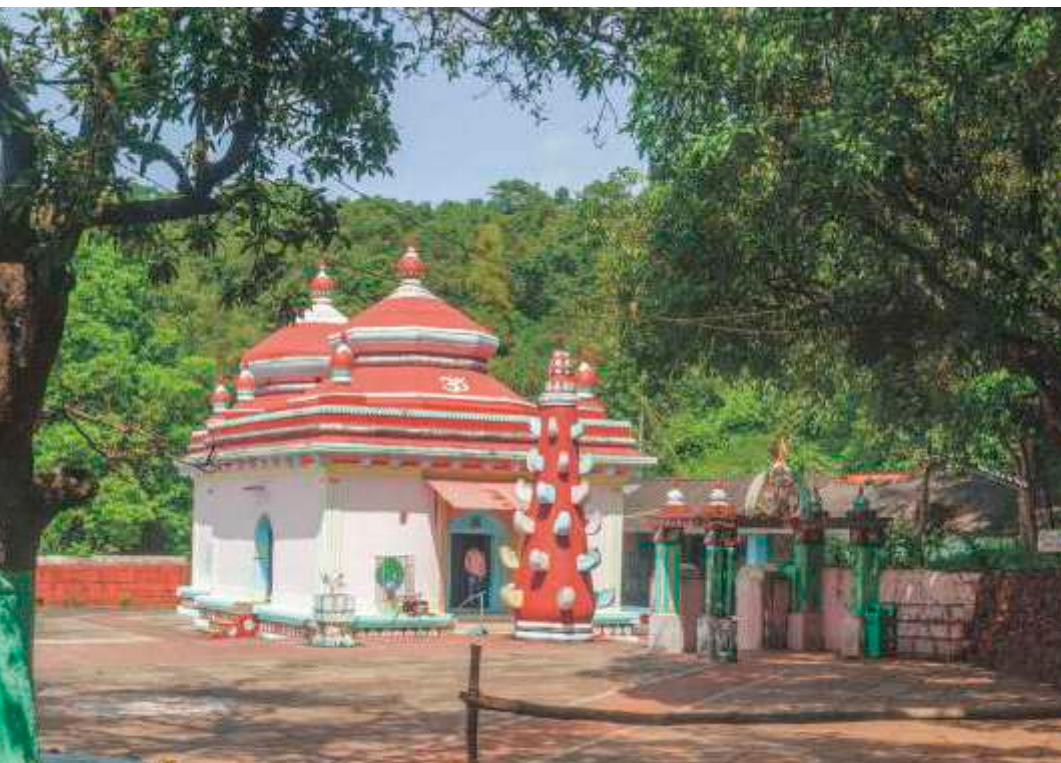






- The ancient Vyadeshwar Temple ◀
- Lord Shiva
- idol of Eagle
- Hanumana
- The Ganesh Temple of Hedavi
- Ganesha holding weapons

The historical Yakutbaba Dargah, Kelashi ▶





In Kelshi, the Hajrat Yakutbaba Sarvari Rahamtulla Dargah is historically famous and is 386 years old.

- The Hot water springs – Tural
- The bubbling Hot water of the springs at Unhavare ▼
- The quiet and pleasant Rajwadi Hot water geysers at Sangameshwar ▶



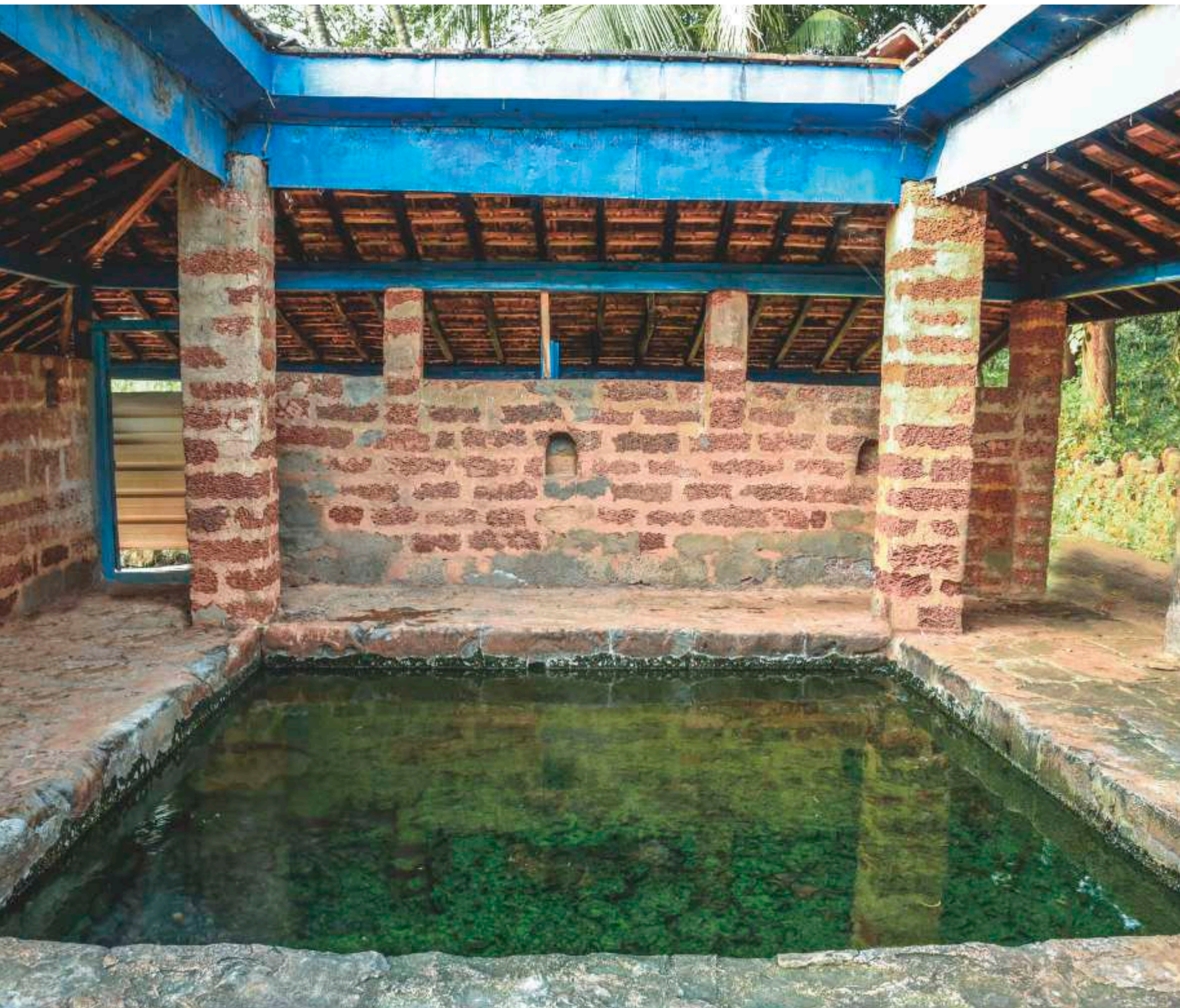
Natural Wonders

Hot water springs

Wonders of nature have always been a point of attraction to man. A hot water geyser or a hot water stream is one such natural novelty. The extreme heat that emanates from the core of the earth heats up the rocks that lie in the womb of the earth. So the water streams beside these rocks are also hot when they gush out onto the earth's surface. This water has traces of sulphur along with several other minerals. This water works as an effective medicine against many skin diseases. A bath in such a spring is not only medically beneficial but also a soothing experience. Usually one does not find life forms in such water

but if it is lukewarm it is a likely situation to come across some species of algae and micro-organisms.

The terrain here has several such geysers and in places such as Khed, Dapoli, Unhavare, Tamhane, Aravali, Tural, Rajwadi, Sangameshwar, Phansavane, Math and Rajpur these geysers have kunds or tanks constructed around them. Most of them are close to the Mumbai-Goa highway where you can avail the facility of a bath.



Bamanghal, Hedvi

The Bamanghal at Hedvi is an enraged avatar of Nature. As you pass the Uma-Mahesh Temple beside the shore, when you walk upon the rocks you come across a huge crevice. At high tide your attention is caught by drops of water which spray out upwards and literally form a water-pillar. The sea waves that have been crashing onto the rocks for centuries have carved a

crevice that is one metre broad ten metres long and 5 metres deep. During high tide the water from the sea gushes into the crevice with immense force, thrashes against the rocks inside and a water pillar is created which is 15-20 metres tall. Though it is an enthralling sight, watching it from a safe distance doesn't diminish its beauty at all.



Ganga of Rajapur

The Ganga of Rajapur is an amazing creation of nature. It makes an appearance at Rajapur once in three years. It appears approximately 1 km. away from the hot water tank at Unhale in Rajapur. There are 14 such tanks on the banks of the river and as soon as the Ganga makes an appearance these tanks fill up and spill over. The Ganga makes the first appearance in the Kashi Kund or tank under a banyan tree and flows quite a distance for several days. The other tanks here are named Varun, Heera, Vedika, Narmada, Saraswati, Goda, Yamuna, Krushna, Agni, Chandra, Surya and Baankund. The Kashi Kund is the largest of them all. Surprisingly, the water smells of sulphur and the

temperature of the water in each tank is noticeably different. During this period, this place gains the status of a pilgrimage. This is a natural wonder that has become a subject of study for several researchers. According to them this works on the phenomenon of a siphon. The Ganga disappears the same way it makes an appearance, which is all of a sudden with no predictable pattern of day, month or period. This makes the Ganga worthy of worship for the devotionally inclined.

Records of the last two centuries regarding the appearance and disappearance of the Ganga are available.





Rainy Season

Welcoming greens.
A serpentine road into the mist





Shades of green blend with hues of blue
How green is my valley?





Rice fields that mesmerise



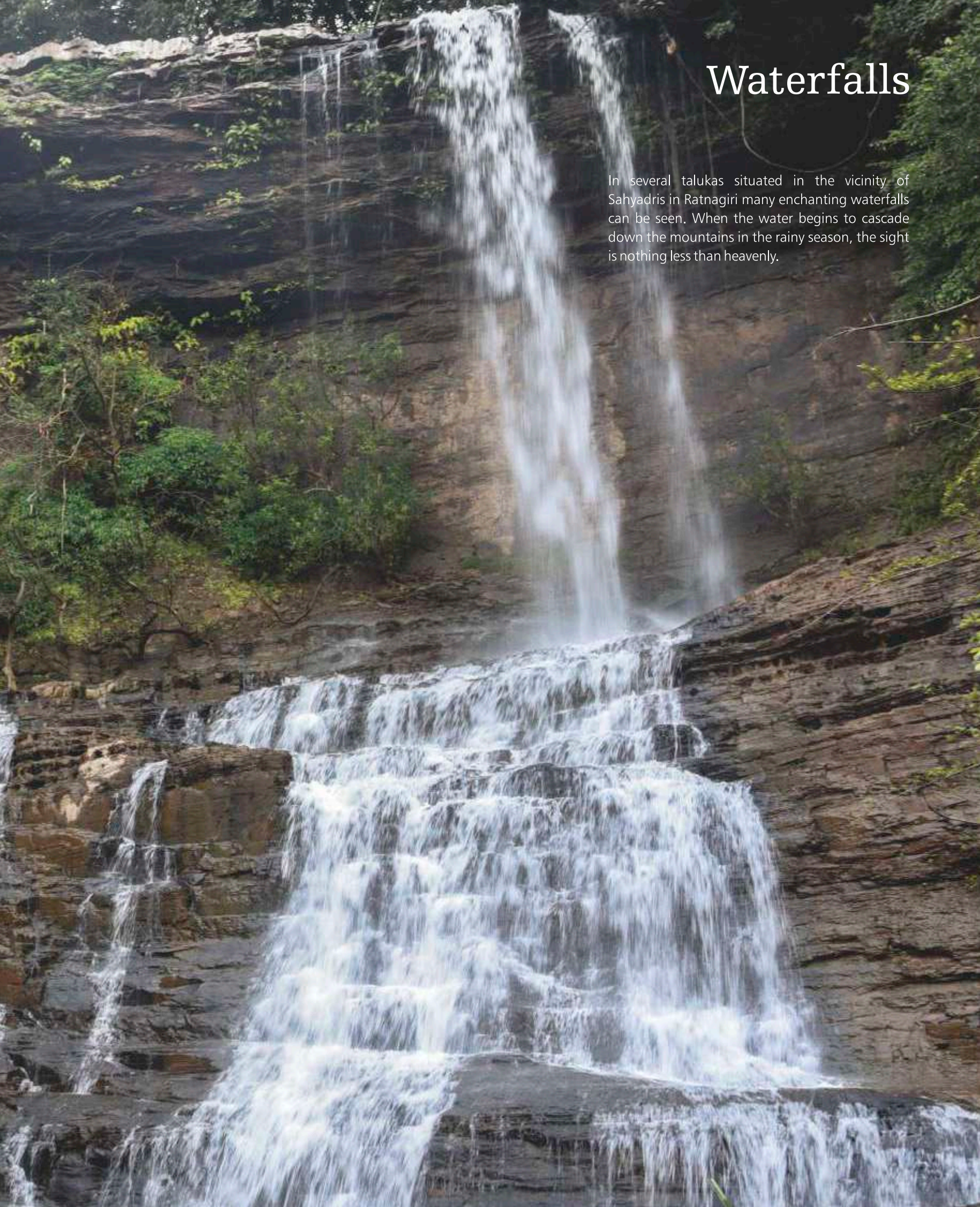






Waterfalls

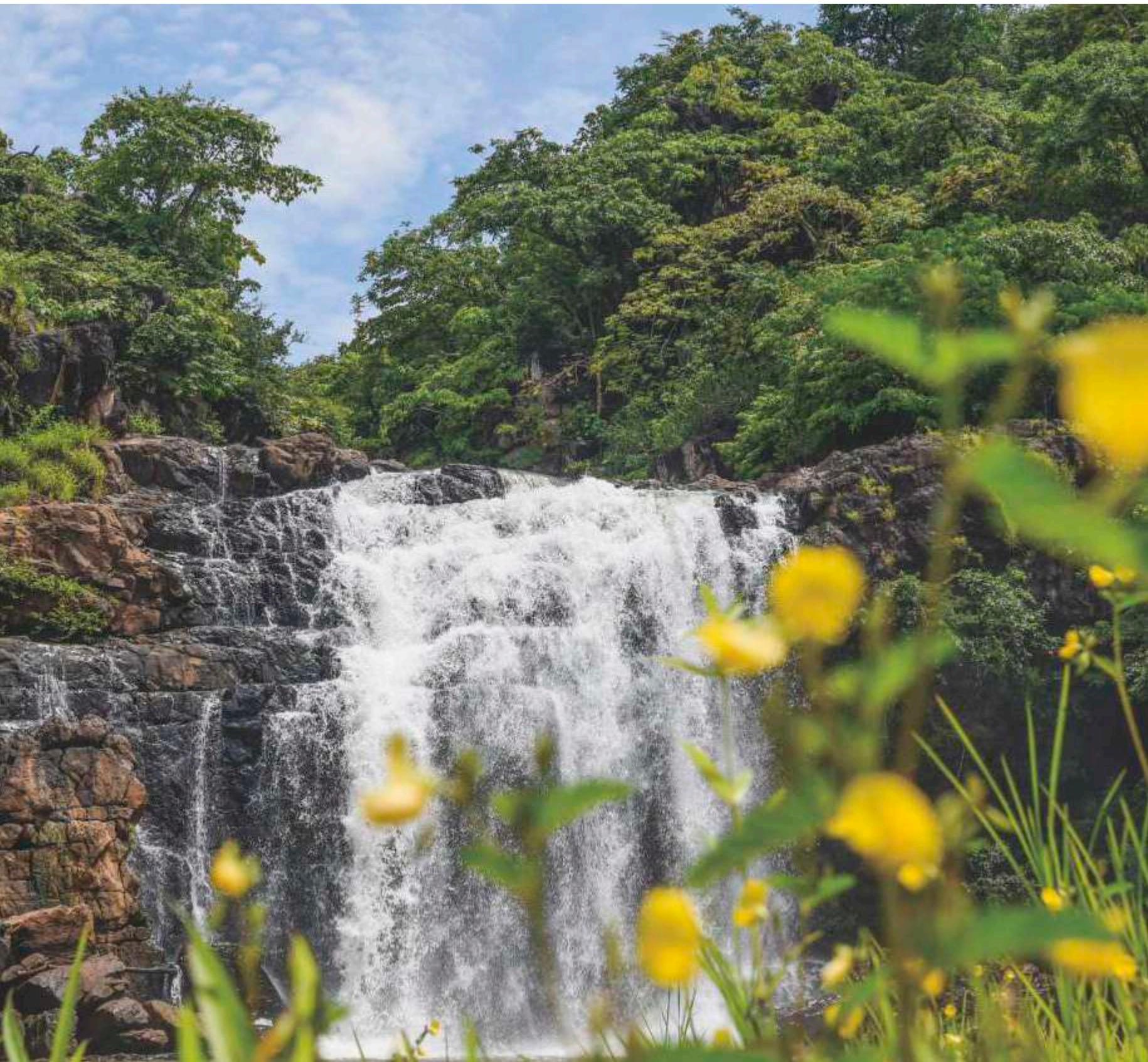
In several talukas situated in the vicinity of Sahyadris in Ratnagiri many enchanting waterfalls can be seen. When the water begins to cascade down the mountains in the rainy season, the sight is nothing less than heavenly.



These frothing white torrents gushing down mountaintops and forging through the green ambience vanquish the heat of the recent summer. Sangameshwar, Khed, Lanja, Chiplun, Ratnagiri and Rajapur are adorned by a series of waterfalls such as Marleshwar, Chuna Kolvan, Khorninko, Raanpat, Dhamapur, Savatsada, Ozarkada, Dhareshwar and Veerdevpat. Waterfalls are constant companions of any tourist during the monsoons.

Flowing silver, Chuna Kolvan Waterfall ◀◀
Ozarkada, The gargling flow of water ▼

Veer Devpat, ▶
The gashing torrents flowing through the rocks







Khorninko waterfall ◀
The artificial waterfall with natural grace

Placid waters and the pristine reflection of Sahyadris ▼





◀ The mighty Marleshwar-
Waters cascade from the heavens to reach a spot of divinity

- ▶ Nivali Waterfall
- ▼ Chuna Kolvan Waterfall





Habitats and Bio-diversity

While traversing through Ratnagiri you come across a wide variety of geographical diversity such as serpentine pathways, jungles, mountain slopes, sea shores, lateritic plateaus, extensive grasslands and marshlands, river mouths turned into creeks, mangroves and Konkani settlements. Each of these terrains has distinct characteristics.

Travelling through the jungle you can notice a large variety of trees. This jungle is home to an array of wild life creatures.

The woods are richly populated by leopards, hyenas, foxes, wild dogs, deer, porcupines and Indian gaurs along with hundreds of birds, reptiles, snakes, amphibians and insects. The mangroves that border the seashores are a sign of a thriving ecosystem. The organisms in the sea are also noteworthy. Enthusiastic explorers can experience the company of these living beings if they wish so.



Birds on the Shores

The king that rules the sea is the regal Sea Eagle. A sharp hooked beak, white belly, and black wings are its features of identification. Watching a White bellied Sea Eagle clutching a huge fish or a wriggling snake in its powerful claws is an incredible moment to catch...and eavesdropping on these parents as they feed their young in their home atop a Casuarina tree is an indelible sight by all standards.

The shores are shared by several birds such as the Grey Heron along with Seagulls, Curlews, Plovers and Terns that have migrated from the Middle East and Europe. Sandpipers and Redshanks which belong to the wader family also populate the shores.

▲ White Bellied Sea Eagle

▶ Reef Heron



Life on Wings

Guest at the beach – Seagulls, Rudy Turnstones, Dunlin







Yellow footed Green Pigeon ▲

- Coppersmith Barbet
- Grey Tit
- Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher
- Black-naped Monarch ◀◀
- Huppo
- Yellow-fronted Pied woodpecker
- Small Green Bee-eater
- Indian Pitta
- Indian Roller
- Pied Kingfisher

Birdwatchers always get a chance to observe birds in any season in Ratnagiri. Indian pitta, Coppersmith barbet, Kingfishers, Woodpeckers, Tickell's blue and Paradise Flycatcher are a colourful feast to the eyes. The lora, Common cuckoo, Malabar whistling thrush, Shama, Purple sunbird, Parakeet and the handsome White bellied sea eagle are the natives of Ratnagiri.

The Woodpecker with its golden back and red head and the Green barbet with its green and red band are so busy pecking away at the tree trunks and branches.

The Oriental Dwarf Kingfisher which keeps craning its neck in various directions is yet another attraction of the Ratnagiri.





◀◀ • Purple Sunbird
• Weaver bird

• Shrike
• Red Avadavat

• Asian Paradise Fly catcher

Malabar Pied Hornbill ▲▲

Indian Grey Hornbill ▲

The Great Pied Hornbill which stays in hollows created in tree trunks is the star attraction and king of the aviation world here. It makes its home in majestic trees such as the banyan or the pipal and that is where it nurtures its young. Several species of hornbills such as Malabar Grey Hornbill, Malabar Pied Hornbill and Great Pied Hornbill are also found here.

Birds of Prey

Any ecosystem is complete only when its food chain is intact. You can find birds of prey such as Crested Hawk Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Osprey, Marsh Harrier, Kestrel, Shikra, White shouldered Kite and Bramhani Kite in Ratnagiri. Also different species of Owls can be seen here that inhabit the interiors of jungles.

- Brown Wood Owl
- Shikra ▶▶
- Fishing Owl
- Crested Hawk Eagle

Pallid Harrier ◀

Spotted Owlet ▼







- Common Bronzeback Snake ◀
- Nocturnal – Cat Snake • Olive Forest Snake • Coral Snake ▼
- Russell's Viper ▼



Reptiles and amphibians

The wilderness of Ratnagiri is infested with a plethora of snakes, reptiles, scorpions, skinks and the wizard of camouflage—the Chameleon.

- ▶ Cobra
- ▼ Bamboo Pit Viper
- ▼ Vine Snake







- Deccan Banded Gecko
- Bark Scorpion
- Caecilian ◀
- Chameleon
- Bull Frog





The Vashishti and Savitri rivers are swarming with huge, ferocious freshwater crocodiles. Watching them sprawled lazily on the shores as you float by in a boat is even more thrilling than it sounds.



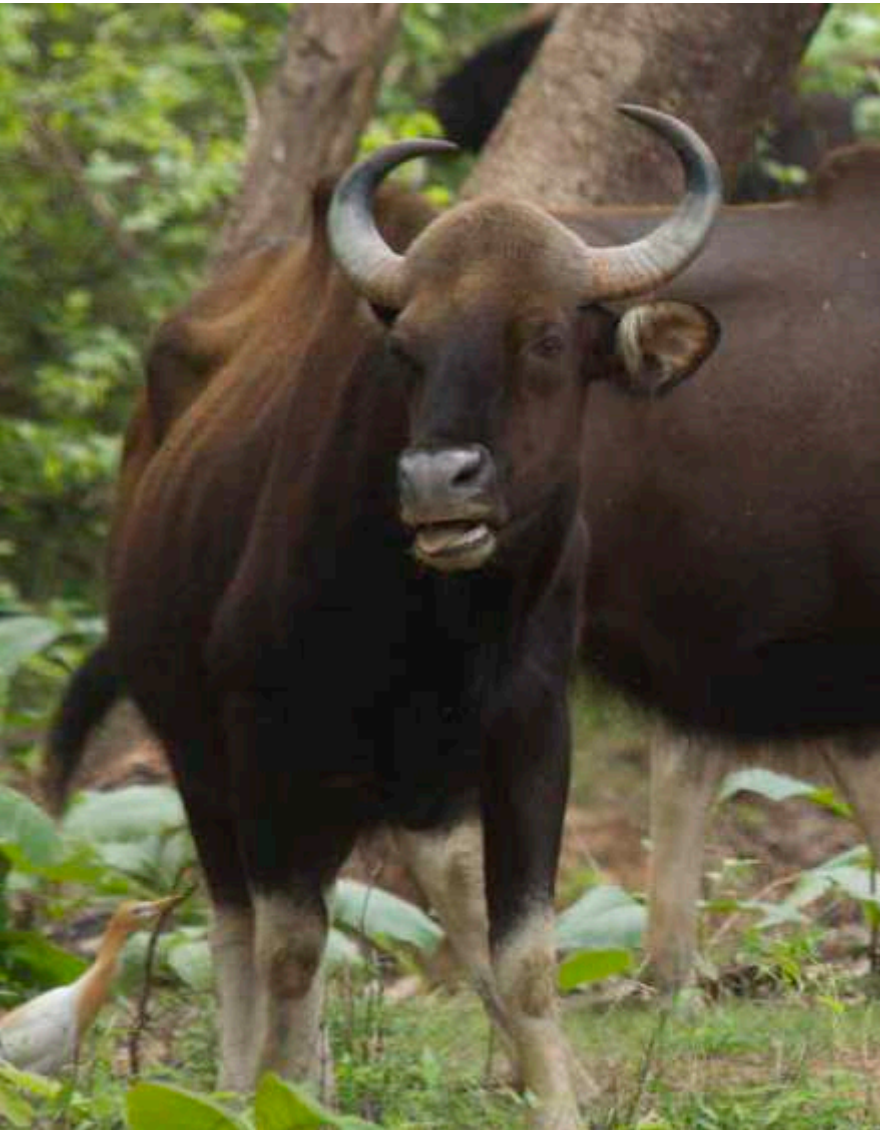


There is also a large population of fresh water turtles in the ponds and rivers. The Olive-Ridley female sea turtles that lay eggs on the shores of Velas, Anjarle, Kelshi, Murud, Guhagar, Kadadhe and Ganeshgule are a great tourist attraction.



A Jungle Safari

- ▼ • Wild Dog
- Indian Gaur
- Mongoose
- Sambar Deer
- ▶▶ • Leopard
- Giant Squirrel
- Mountain Hare



The Sahyadri mountains and valleys are the abode of a large wildlife. Several talukas are located at the foothills of the Sahyadris. Thick mangroves, uninhabited landscapes and abundant water together create an ideal environment for wild animals. Rabbits, Barking deer, wild boars and porcupines have leopards at the top of the food chain. The sub ranges of the Sahyadris have a profusion of trees in the interiors, so there is an abundance of monkeys and sambar deer. In the woods of

Sangameshwar and Lanjha, one can get an occasional glimpse of the striped tiger too. Along with foxes, hyenas and bears there are Indian Gaurs which can weigh up to one ton. The Giant Squirrel, the state animal and the Yellow footed Green Pigeon, the state bird of Maharashtra can be found in plenty. The terrain of lateritic rock provides homes to rats, rabbits and mongooses. The plethora of wild life is a healthy symbol of a thriving ecosystem.





Butterflies and Insect

At the end of monsoon the entire ambience is wrapped in greenery generously sprayed with flowers. Delicate butterflies fluttering amidst equally delicate wild flowers shows of youthfulness of nature. These most beautiful representatives of the insect world are doing the precious job of pollination in such a poetic way all the way from October to January. The number of species of butterflies observed here has crossed a century which includes some that have migrated here. After winter their

number seems to decline. By sitting on a mountain, beside a river or any water body for a couple of hours you can spot over fifty species including Brown butterflies, Common Jezebel, Tawny rajah, Common Nawab, Oak Leaf, Common Baron, Yellow Pansy, Common Map and Sahyadri Lacewing. One can also observe the phenomenon of mud puddling behaviour of butterflies. It is literally a paradise for photographers.

- ◀◀ • Great Emperor Moth
- One Spot Grass Yellow
- Red Spot Duke
- Peacock Royal
- Red Helen
- Common Leopard
- Common Blue Bottle
- Common Jezebel
- Sahyadri Cruiser

- ▼ • Red Pirate



There are other agents of pollination too. Spotting the Velvet Bug is an indication that monsoon has arrived. Likewise, dragonflies and beetles try to steal the show by flashing their colours...and it would be wise to watch out for ants which are found in the settlements, trees, the ground...practically everywhere. It is a treasure to unveil this world which operates beyond our normal scope of attention.

- Various Beetles ▶
 - Caterpillars
 - Tarantula
- Stick insect

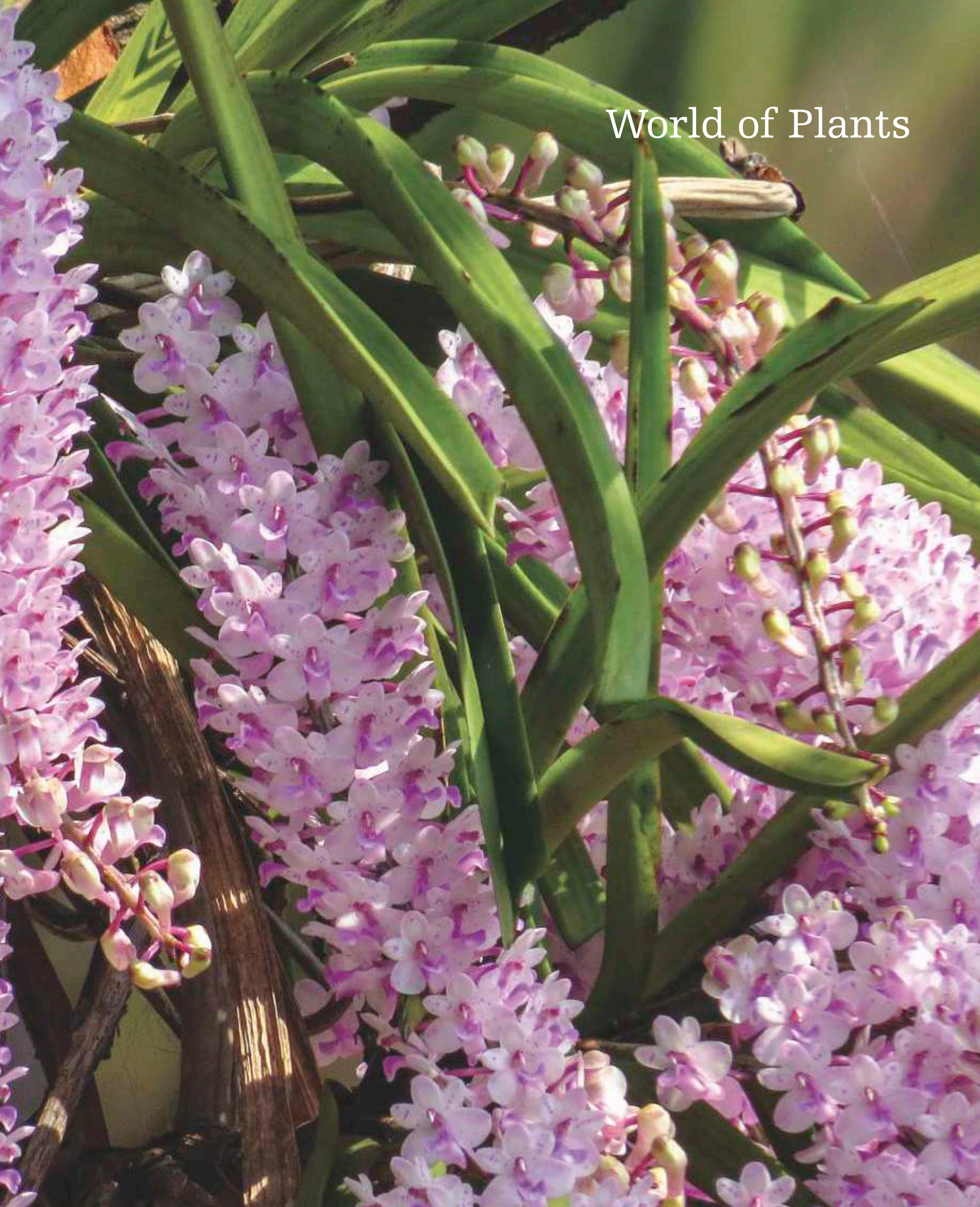
- Mud Puddling ▼







World of Plants





Treasury of Trees

Travelling through Ratnagiri, you will come across bountiful species of trees. Rich in biodiversity this terrain is a host to trees such as Banyan, Pipal, Arjun tree, Cassia fistula, Queen crape myrtle, Indian coral tree, Teak, Flame of forest, Indian silk cotton, Terminalia belerica, Acasia sundra . You also find forests rich with Casuarina and kevda (Pandanus plant). While exploring the interiors you can see the plantations of mango, cashew, coconut and betelnut surrounding the settlements. Plants and shrubs on mountain slopes fend the ground from the onslaught of torrential rains and avoid soil erosion. Medicinal herbs found here are used as effective cures to several ailments. Vegetation such as ipomoea biloba spreads across the sand protects the shores. The leaves, flowers, fruits and coverings of several plants serve as spices which enhance the taste of plenty of delicacies. Mangroves prove to be ideal abodes for several life forms and also play a vital role in protecting the shores.

Fox-tail Orchid ◀◀

Casuarina forest lost in the mist ◀

- Mangroves
- Red silk cotton ▼
- Rose apple Flower
- Rose apple Fruit







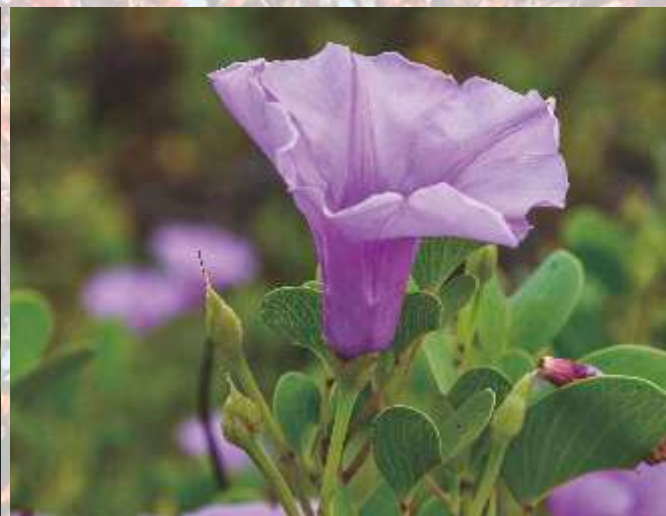
Flowery Delight

- Net Veined Bladderwort
- Peacock orchid
- Bambakhu
- Jungle Flame ▲
- Bearded Lip
- Wild Flower
- Alexandrian Laurel
- Sonaki
- Flowers on Lateritic rock ◀

Spring brings into bloom several flowers that enhance the charismatic expression of Ratnagiri. The Sonki flowers strewn everywhere during monsoons truly paint a picture of bliss. A pond covered with lotuses is a typical sight in the Konkan. Several species of hibiscus are seen being used in worship of Lord Ganesh and

garlands of aboli flowers woven into the hair of fisherwomen draw our attention.

Orchids that sprout everywhere are famous for their alluring appearance. Several species of orchids such as Bearded lip, First shower orchid and peacock orchid grace the ambience with their inherent splendour.



◀ • Indian Coral Tree

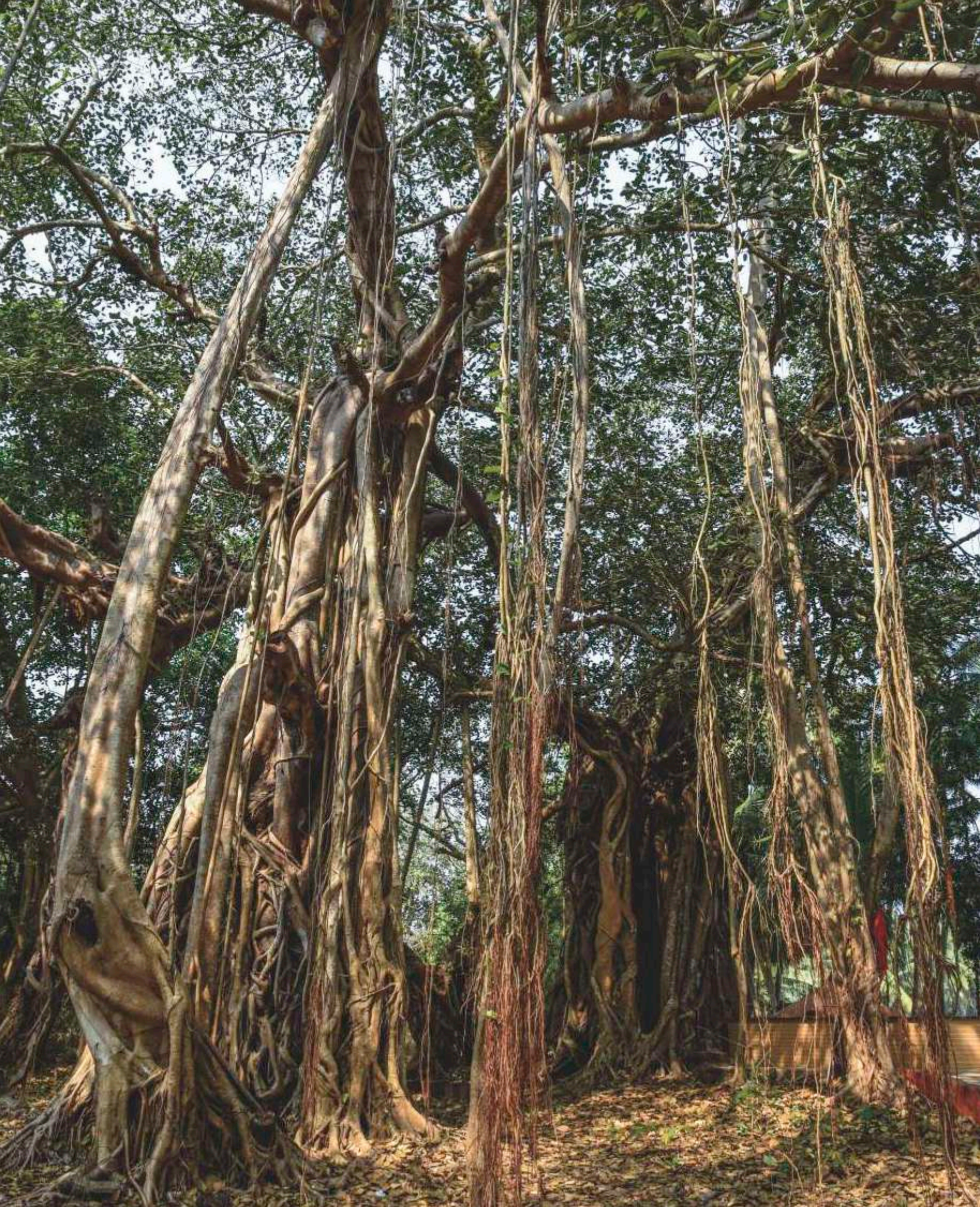
- Spiral Ginger
- Combretaceae
- First Shower Orchid
- Ipomoea Biloba

• Flame of the Forest

• Blossom – Bonfire Tree ▼

- Bonfire Tree





The Immortal Banyan Tree

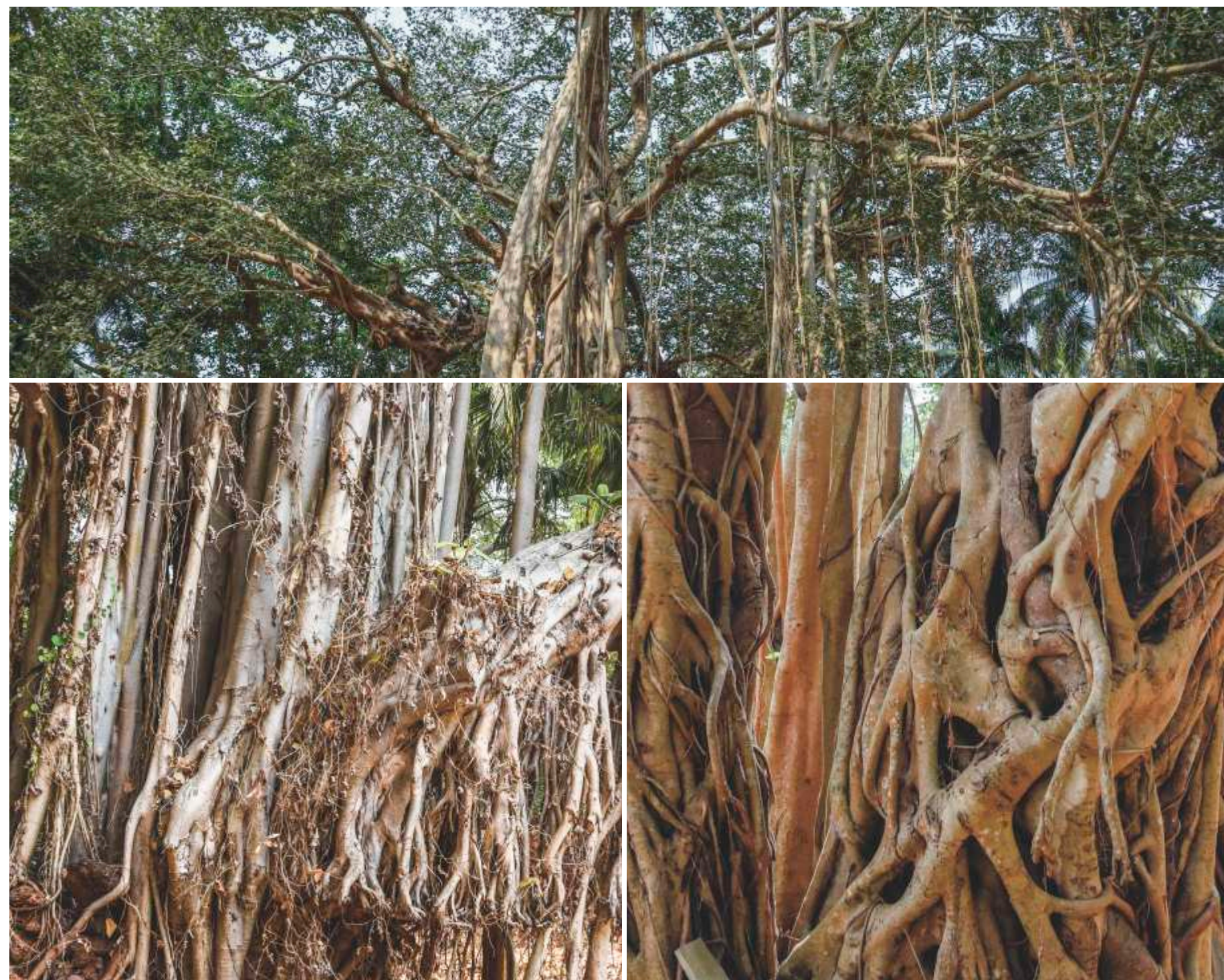
Right from the ancient times the banyan tree is one of the prime symbols of timelessness. The Banyan tree is known for its longevity. This majestic tree which grows outside an ancestral home standing witness to several generations is considered as the true progenitor of the family. In the Konkan this has led to a ritual where every evening an oil lamp is lit beside it with great reverence and faith. This tree which borne from a seed no larger than a speck, acquires such humungous dimensions that it cannot be supported by a single trunk. Its aerial roots hang down branches and turn into supporting trunks. Thus it spreads further, increasing its expanse. This unique quality of growth and prosperity gives it the rightful status of a 'Family Tree'

The leaves of a Banyan tree are egg shaped and flat. They are green on the upper surface while they are yellowish underneath. During springtime, the tree bears red berries which are food to several birds, animals and insects. The tree is home to several

birds and animals. Travellers too, seek its shelter as their rightful place to rest.

Several spiritualists, seekers and scholars have known the greatness of this tree and thus the Banyan tree finds a sacred mention in the Vedic Scriptures. The first Teerthakar, Rishabhdev's Chaitya Vriksh, Swami Samarth's Aradhya Vriksh are all this very tree. Even the great symbol of fidelity Vat Savitri who resurrected her husband Satyavan through prayer, had considered this tree as her friend.

Even today, it is equally significant, because any such tree is undoubtedly an inexhaustible oxygen bank. Conservation of such trees is of vital importance if we are hoping to get out of the vicelike grip of pollution. Ratnagiri is filled with such ancient well-wishers of life. Seeing them gives us the warm assurance that mankind is truly blessed by nature.





Mangroves

The sea and the adjacent ecosystems are mines of nourishment for several life forms. The existence of a marshland beside seashore is the sign of a thriving ecosystem, which can be seen by the creeks at Kelshi, Padale-Anjarle, Guhagar, Bhatye and Dabhol. These marshlands spread on the shores beside creeks, where high and low tide are a chronic phenomenon. These marshlands provide food and shelter to several animals, birds and amphibians. The water here is calm and comparatively warmer so they are ideal breeding grounds for several fish, crabs and mudskippers since they are safe for their young ones. These are perfect places of rest for migratory animals and birds...and prove to be the last hope for species that are on the verge of extinction.

Mangroves are doing a brave job of resisting the onslaught of the ocean waves and cyclones. They also absorb a significant amount of the colossal assault of tsunamis.





Laterite Plateaus

Another specialty of Ratnagiri district is the wide-spread laterite plateaus. This type of rock which is less hard than the basalt rock is an inseparable part of the Konkani life.

The Konkani houses built from these red bricks of laterite are very suitable for living in Konkani's humid atmosphere. These bricks are used in constructing the Pakhadi or the steps made in the highlands of Konkani, the rock compounds built around the coconut gardens, temples, houses and also to build the pathways.

Due to the huge demand of bricks made from laterite in Konkani and the outside areas, the laterite mining industry is developing in Ratnagiri district. The process of cutting these bricks from the underground mines with minimum use of machines is taking place here since many years.

◀ Lateritic stone mine

▼ Omnipresent lateritic rock

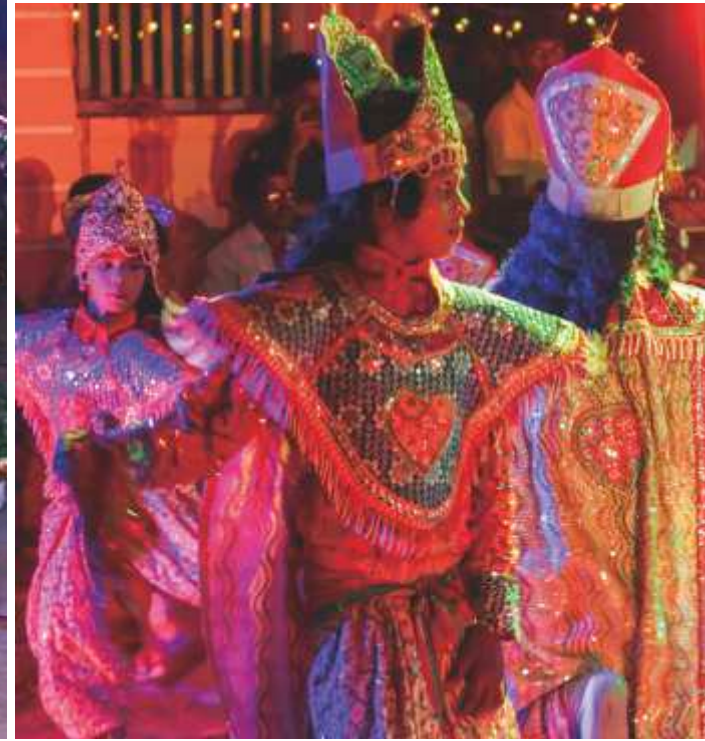




The grass blooming on these widely spread plateaus during the rainy season looks really beautiful. It is also an unforgettable experience to see colourful flowers blooming on the laterite plateaus in the monsoon.



Art & Culture



◀ Jakhadi Or Balya Dance

As the month of July draws to an end, the joyous atmosphere of the month of Shravan takes over. Everyone is awaiting the arrival of the Ganesh Festival. The mind goes into a festive spell and the energising notes and beats of the Jakhadi fill the air everywhere. When the beat of a drum is heard, as if on cue, the singer begins to sing - 'Lord Ganesh... Lord Ganesh! Give me your blessings...' And the dancer dressed in brocaded apparels and with a chawl trinket in his right foot, begins to dance, matching the rhythm of the drums. Even the onlookers begin swaying to the music. This drum beat which pumps in the desire for life in every Konkani heart carries on all the way to Shimga.



▼ Dhangari Dance – Dance of the Shepherds

The red soil of the Konkan has given rise to several artistic qualities. The atmosphere here is rich and overflowing with music. During the Navratri festival people from the shepherd or Dhangar community choose a particular day to visit all homes and perform their traditional Dhangari Dance. Adorning their distinctive dress and whirling in their characteristic way, they blend rhythm and melody seamlessly as they present their dance in various places.





Clay Sculpting

As the Ganesh festival draws near, the sculptors of Ganesh idols get really busy. Much before the festival, devotees book their idols of Ganesh in the avatar that they wish. Accordingly, the skilled sculptors bring the Ganesh of their imagination into the physical dimension. These idols made of clay are so finely done that the divine expressions on the Lord's face come alive and make you bow to it with joined palms. This skillful job of sculpting Ganesh idols is a family tradition for many. It not only gives them a livelihood, but also grants them inner peace.



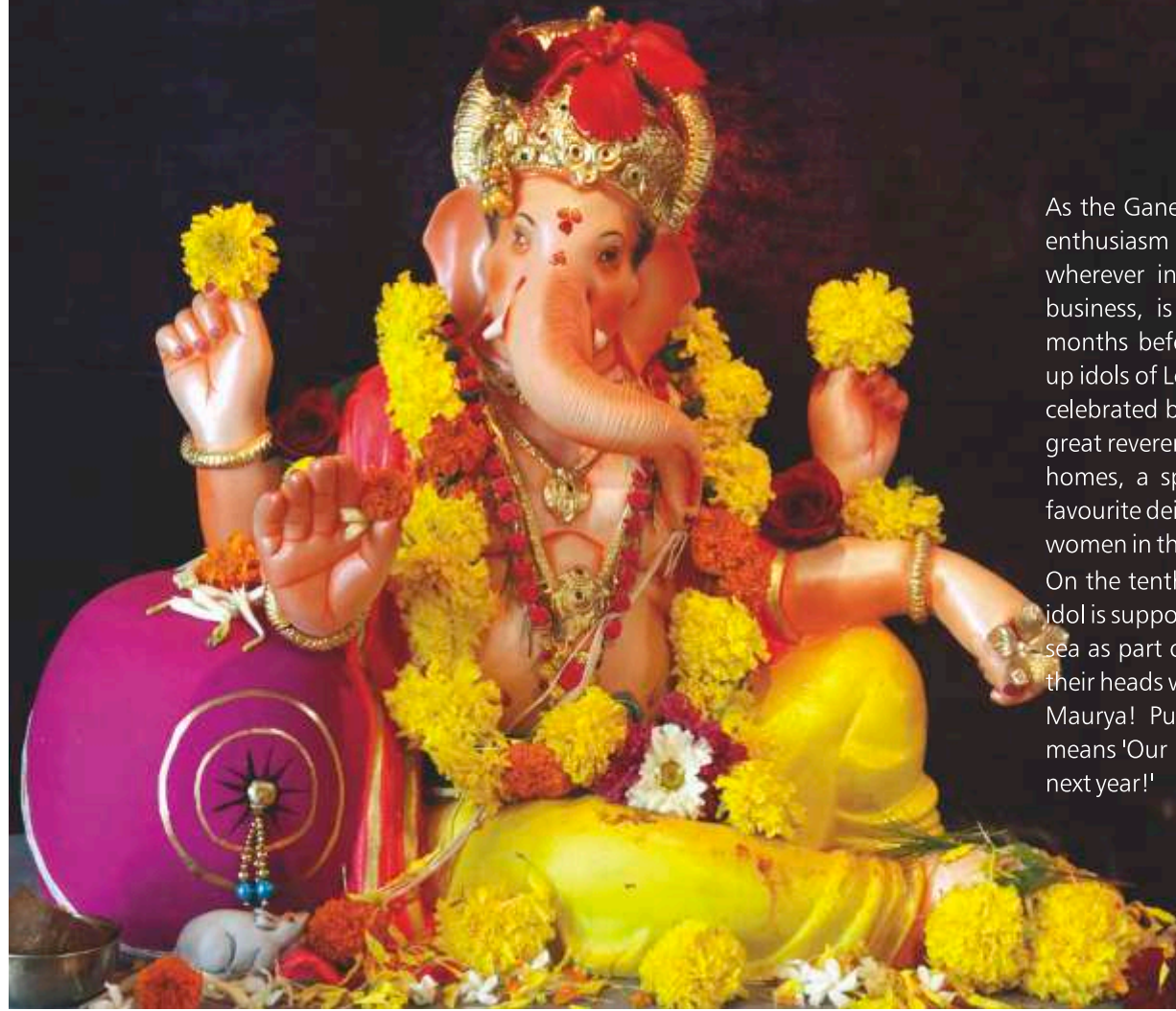


Festivals

Ganesh Festival

As the Ganesh Festival draws near, an atmosphere of enthusiasm begins to fill the air. The native of Konkan, wherever in India he may be residing for a job or business, is homeward bound for this festival. 3-4 months before, the sculptors get engrossed shaping up idols of Lord Ganesh in various forms. This festival is celebrated by everyone, so these idols are carried with great reverence and devotion into every home. In these homes, a special place is neatly decorated for their favourite deity. As part of worship of Gauri-Ganesh, the women in the family prepare delicious sweetmeats.

On the tenth and final day of the festival, the Ganesh idol is supposed to be submerged in a river, pond or the sea as part of the ritual. Devotees carry these idols on their heads with heavy hearts, chanting 'Ganpati Bappa Maurya! Pudhchya Varshi Lavkar Ya!' which literally means 'Our Lord Ganesh Dear, please come back soon next year!'





Holi, Shimga and Palkhi Dance

The biggest celebrations in the Konkan are the Holi and Ganesh festivals. Towards the end of winter the Holi festival gives an indication of the upcoming summer. Holi or Shimga is a festival that is celebrated in a very amusing way in the Ratnagiri. During the eight days of Shimgostav everyone is in a playful mood. It is as though they have a licence to pull each other's legs or ambush friends with taunts and pranks. So, they take this opportunity to pelt each other with abuses and holler and swear at each other, of course in good intention. A huge palm tree is carried by hundreds of villagers who run in tandem, hurl it in the air and

catch it. This way they bring it to the spot of the Holi festival. This tree is then held upright and affixed in the ground and hoisted up. The Holi is lit up and several sweetmeats are given to the Fire God as sacred offerings.

During the Shimga celebrations the Palkhi Dance is a traditional ritual that is performed with a lot of devotion and faith. There are several groups that perform this Palkhi Dance. Watching them handling the Palkhi with careful, synchronised and disciplined movements is an enthralling experience.

Devotees keen to carry the palanquin during Shimgotsav ▼



Navratri

As the monsoon season comes to a close, ten days before Dussera, the Navratri Festival begins. Idols of goddesses are ceremoniously decorated in all temples such as the Mahalakshmi Temple at Kelshi, Bhagwati Devi Temple at Ratnagiri, Mahakali Temple at Adivare, Shardadevi Temple at

Tumbarav, Durgadevi Temple at Guhagar. The temples are decorated and set aglow with oil lamps. As part of the festival, carnivals are set up outside the temples during this time, which prove irresistible to children and elders as well.



Glimpses of Navratri festival ▼





Fairs & Carnivals

Gatherings and fairs are an integral part of the rural social life. Led by faith and wrapped by tradition, these religious festivities occupy a very significant position in the hearts of the native residents. These pump in a lot of energy in the people as well as provide entertainment for young and old. They are ideal occasions where everyone can indulge in savouring sweet delicacies of their liking. While jalebis are being prepared in one stall, there are pakodas being fried in another. On red hot sand urns, corns are popping up while the aroma of corn pods being roasted over coal beckons you.

Home makers are eager to visit these festivals where they can buy various items of home decor. Visitors can play the various games available there and show their sporting side. Colourful balloons sway in the wind and wave at little children. Traders and sellers from all over the state come here with their wares. Being a part of these festivals make visitors feel they have tasted the true flavour of the Konkani tradition.





Cuisine Culture



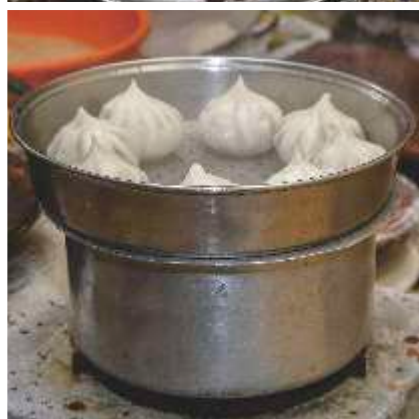
Ratnagiri has a lot to offer the gourmet, the glutton and the connoisseur of food. The delicacies made using special Konkani spices, local vegetables and coconut are quite popular with those who know how to pamper their taste buds.

Breakfasts offer a range of items from potato poha, piping hot panagi, ghavan made of rice, special Ratnagiri missal, batata wada, sabudana khichdi and sabudana wada.

If non-veg food is your weak point, then Ratnagiri is the place to visit. There is a variety of fresh fish, prawns and chicken dishes prepared using distinctive Konkani spices. As for the curries, there are several to choose from and then there is the unique pink, coconut flavoured solkadi the culinary signature of the Konkani.

For the vegetarians there is the birda usal, cashew usal, jackfruit fry, coconut curry, kulitha pithla, rice bhakari, poha papad, an assortment of pickles, fresh mango pulp alias aamras and the divine sweet dish – modak which is figuratively the icing on the cake!

Spices – the soul of taste ◀





- ▲ • Batata Wada • Sabudana Khichadi • Sabudana Wada • Onion Pohe
- Rice Panagi • Rice Panagi cooking in banana leaf • Rice Bhakari
- Ever popular Puran Poli with abundant ghee • Rice pancake

◀ Artistic preparation of Modak - the divine delicacy of the Konkan





Chimbori fish curry
 Surmai fish curry
 Crispy fried Indian mackerel fish ▲



- ◀ Stuffed Pomfret
- Tandoor Chicken
- Foodies Special - Crispy Prawns

- ▼ • Fried Surmai fish
- Prawns curry
- Clam – a tasty fish-dish
- Solkadi –Drink Divine



Not to Miss...

Shiv Srushti The Chhatrapati Shivaji Era Recreated

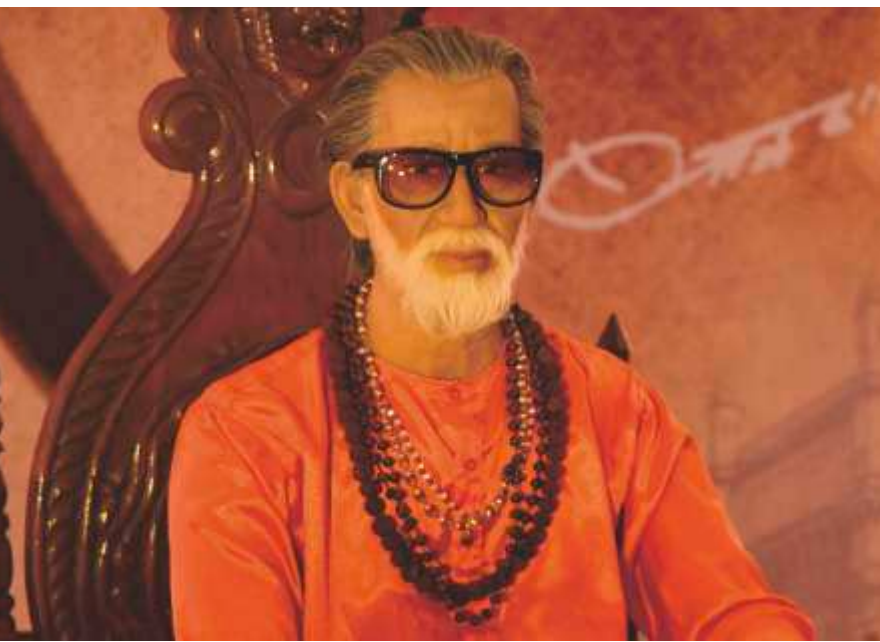
The Chhatrapati Shivaji Era has been recreated to realistic perfection at Dervan which is 2 km. from Savarde on the Mumbai-Goa Highway. This magnificent 'Shivrushti' has been designed as a tribute to Seetaram Valavarkar. The model of the Shivasamarth Fort here has key incidents from Shivaji's life carved on its rampart. These exquisite carvings literally bring the historical happenings to life and keep visitors spellbound, especially the one that depicts Shivaji's coronation. In close vicinity is the Samadhi Temple which has a very peaceful ambience. Tourists can visit Shiv Srushti from 8 am. to 6 pm.





Wax Museum

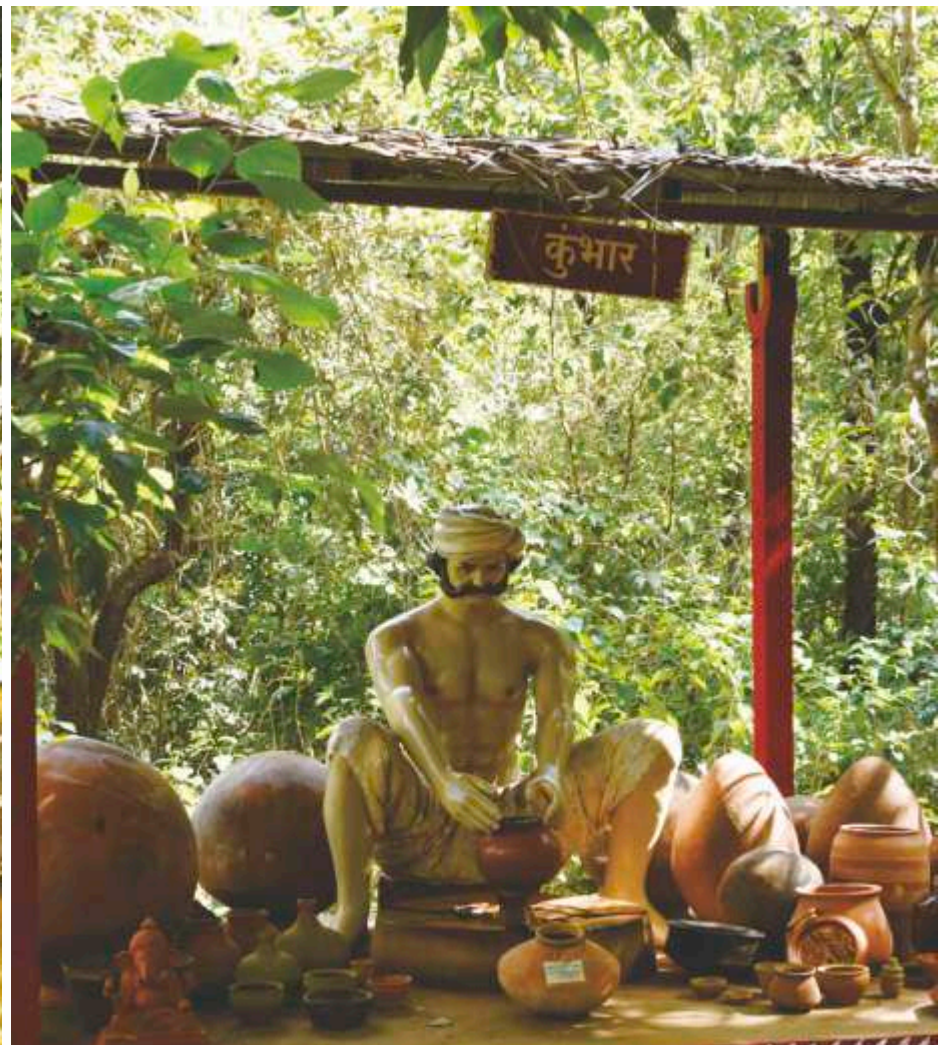
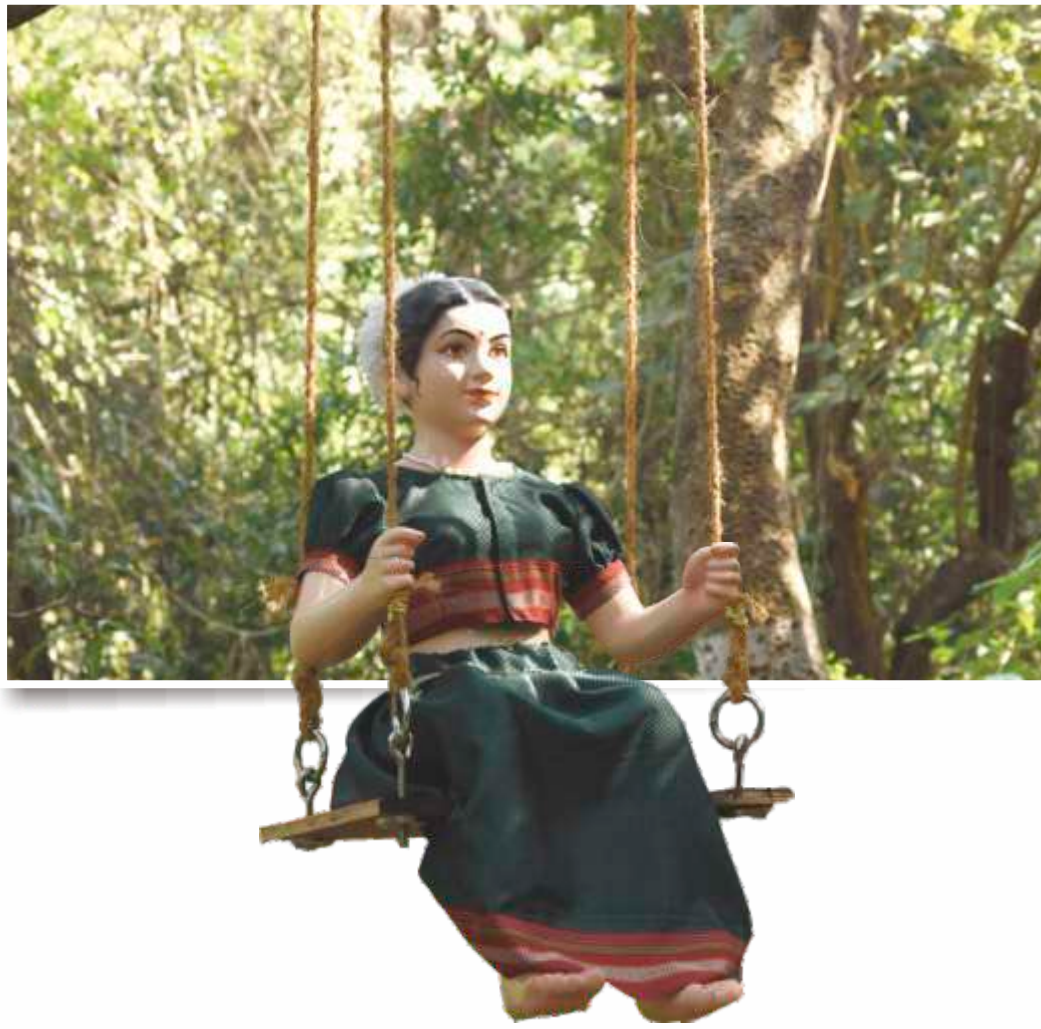
Apart from the seashore, Ganpatipule has a wax museum that certainly amuses tourists. The wax effigies of several popular Indian film stars and respectable personalities from other fields displayed here have an amazing likeness and seem truly lifelike. After roaming the shores and visiting the temple at Ganpatipule, this wax museum is bound to startle you pleasantly.



Shree Parshuram Memorial, Burondi

As a tribute to Lord Parshuram, this artistic memorial is built on the mountain slopes of Burondi, quite near the shore of Ladghar in Dapoli. Surrounded by plentiful greenery, the beauty of this place is enhanced by the distant sight of the Ladghar seashore. This background truly enhances the grandeur of the bronze statue of Lord Parshuram. Knowing the thrilling myth that Lord Parshuram had warded off the sea and reclaimed this land makes you acknowledge the glory that this statue symbolises.





Ancient Konkan Museum

This display of Konkan of the olden times is quite close to Ganpatipule. A typical Konkani village has been set up across 3 acres, atop a lush green hill. The lifelike human figures in this village depict the history of Konkani culture spanning 500 years. This includes the social structure, the communities skilled with twelve fundamental occupations. You get an opportunity to see their dressing styles, hair styles, old devices and tools. All these elements together bring the history of the Konkan to life. Here you get a glimpse of rural life through a portrayal of their traditions and festivals. Models of sea forts displayed here add extra grace to this artistic ambience.



Beautiful Jamroon

The beauty of Ratnagiri is revealed gradually like the charm of a rose while it blossoms. If you take the paths less trodden, the enchantment of the place will come to notice. Most tourists are unaware of many such places here. Jamroon is just such a spot – a picturesque slice of heaven.

Near Hathkhamba on the Mumbai-Goa bypass, there is a little road called Nivli phata which goes to Ganpatipule. Approximately 14 kms. on this road is a path that leads to Jamroon. Mother Nature has bestowed beauty upon this place with a generous heart. It is a captivating place wrapped by a thick jungle. If you visit just after the monsoons, you will behold a stream that gushes down the valley, rice fields on both sides of the slopes, hear the incessant chirping of various birds, surfaces

of lateritic rock and typical Konkani houses studded amidst mango groves – every sight enthralling enough to stun you. The streams here flow well into the summer season.

The villagers have thoughtfully channelized the water so that it irrigates their gardens and plantations. The abundant presence of the Malabar Dhanesh is live proof that this is indeed a thick jungle. The lateritic rock patches show several intriguing ancient carvings. There are some private but ancient temples in the village. These can be a matter of great study for researchers. It would be a great surprise if this ambience does not entice a visitor to stay over. Of course, there are several facilities for a home stay in this idyllic place – Jamroon.





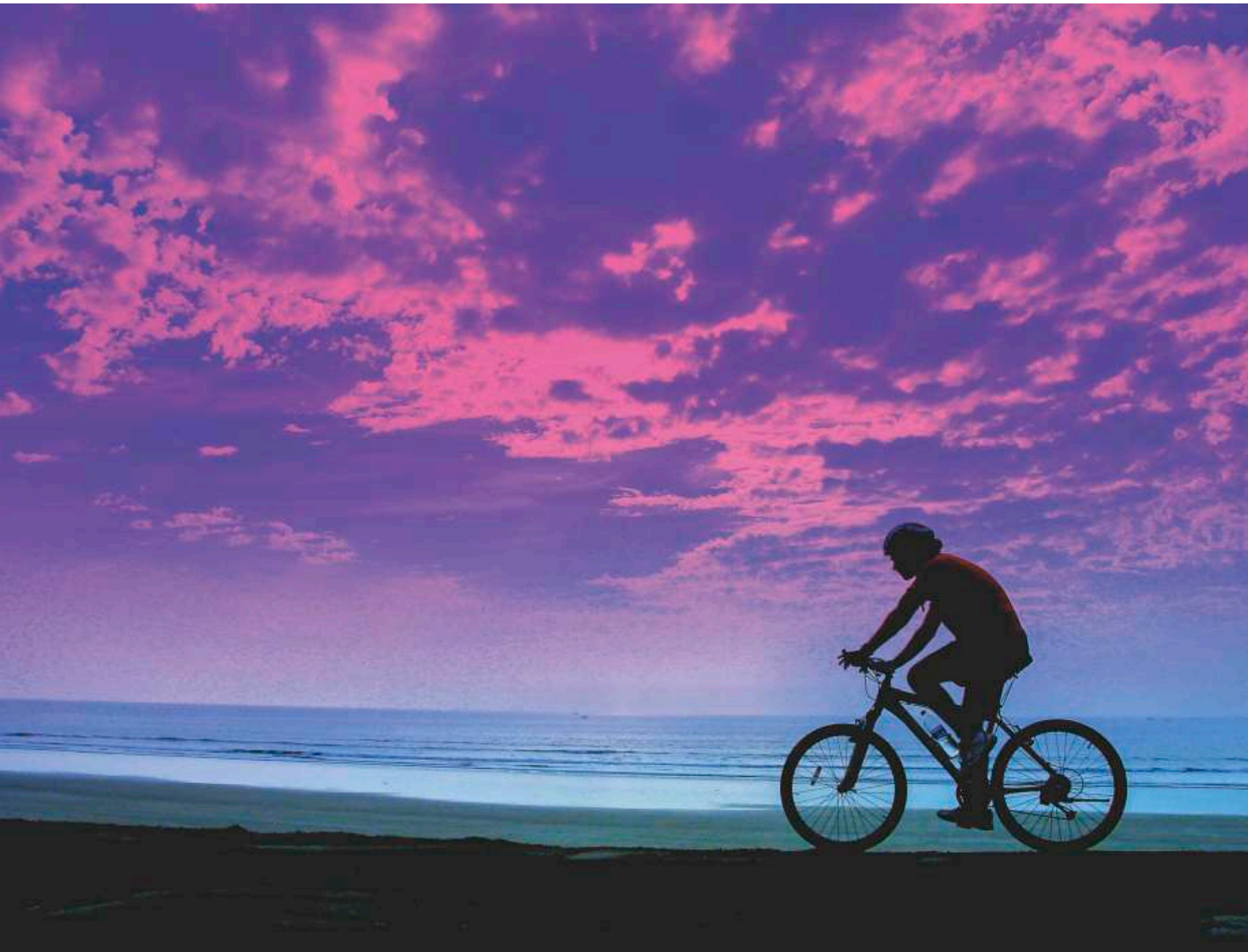


Adventure Sports

The geography of this region lends itself to adventure very naturally. The intimidating Sahyadri on the East, leading to bottomless valleys, impenetrable jungles, bountiful creeks, expansive seashores and serpentine roads...all of them are truly game for sporting adventures such as cycling, biking, trekking, valley crossing and scuba diving.

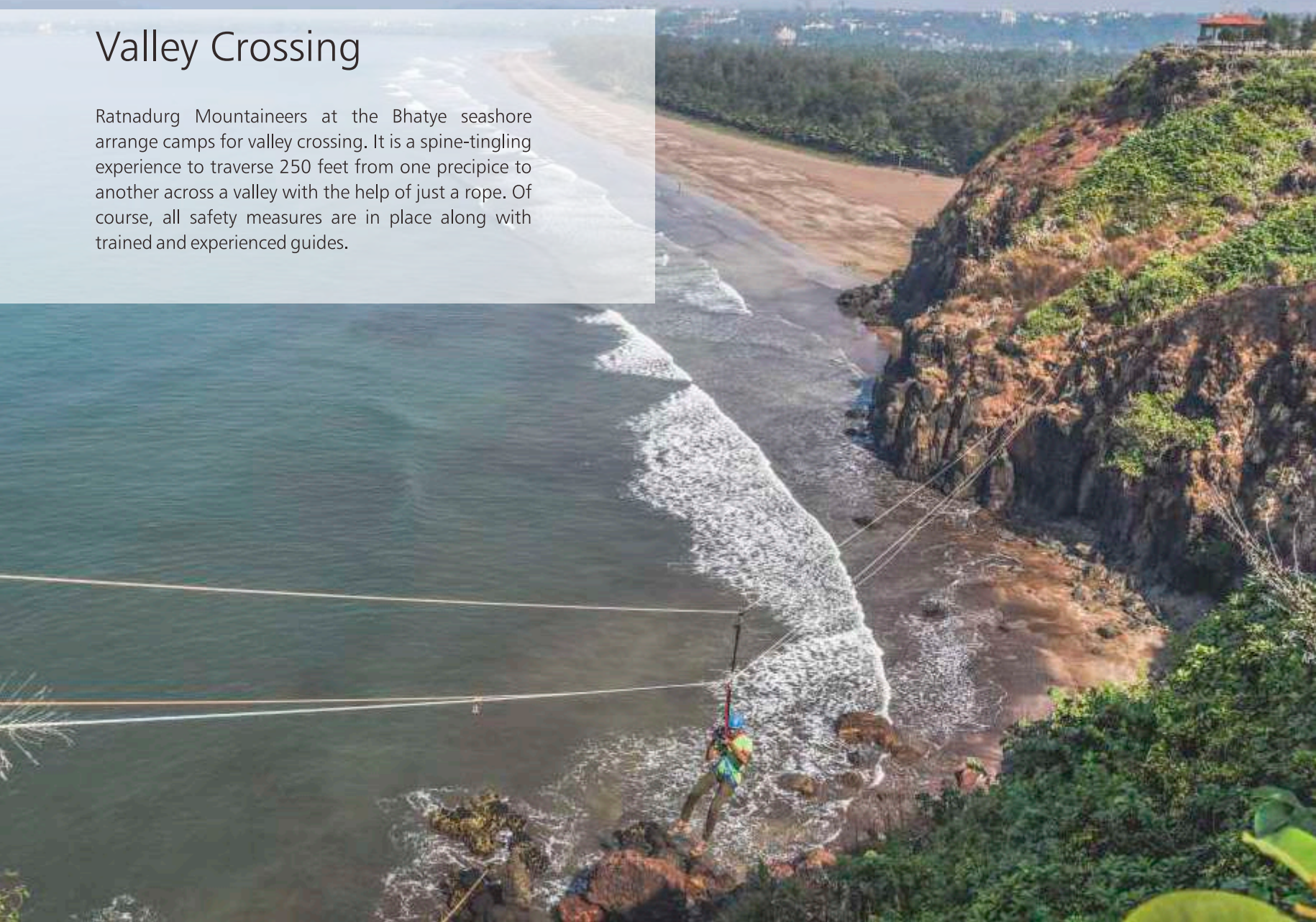
Cycling

Between November to March, what could be better than to wrap oneself in a romantic winter and enjoy misty mornings? Cycling through pathways you are sometimes surrounded by jungles or lateritic rocks. Some paths are steep inclines in the mountains while others provide the soothing sight of the boundless sea. You will turn Ratnagiri into a breathlessly enjoyable experience when accompanied by this silent two-wheeler.



Valley Crossing

Ratnadurg Mountaineers at the Bhatye seashore arrange camps for valley crossing. It is a spine-tingling experience to traverse 250 feet from one precipice to another across a valley with the help of just a rope. Of course, all safety measures are in place along with trained and experienced guides.



Biking

As soon as you can steal a break from the humdrum of daily life, the best thing to do is to gather your friends and take off with your bikes into Ratnagiri – the perfect place for bikers. Meandering roads, amicable greenery, internal roads with sparse traffic, stupendous sights to be enjoyed from the bridges over creeks, economical food and stay – it's all here, waiting for you, just mount your bikes and set off!



Trekking

This is the perfect place for trekkers. The Sahyadri mountain range perpetually beckons them all. There are several mountain forts such as Mahipatgad, Sumargad, Rasalgad and Prachitgad. Machal is a hill station in Lanjha which is an absolute haven. The monsoon-drenched, verdant mountains, crashing waterfalls and the mist-wrapped atmosphere, everything is a treasure for the senses. Organisations such as Ratnadurg Mountaineers and Kolhapur Hikers arrange various expeditions to the forts and places of respite such as Machal.



Scuba Diving

We frequently experience the colourful world of different animals, birds, plants, beautiful butterflies around us but 'There is as much life in the waters... as much as in the jungles.' The underwater world found in the fathomless sea always attracts nature lovers. Many natural wonders are yet to be explored in this water world. And the golden chance to experience this colourful world is now available at Ratnagiri's Mirya Port. An experienced team of the 'Harsha Scuba' has all the necessary equipment and materials. You can experience this magical world found at the bottom of the ocean with the colourful fishes, wonderful corals and the marine flora. The adventure activity of scuba diving must be included in your list of Ratnagiri tourism.







Nate Harbour, Ratnagiri, Mending nets - A thriving business ▼
Fishermen returning from a successful sea venture

Sorting the fish from their latest haul ►
Baskets full of fish being brought onto land

Fish market at Ratnagiri ►►
Fisherwomen selling fish – retail and wholesale



Fishing is done throughout all the coasts of Ratnagiri. However, there are three main ports of fishing here namely, Mirya port in Ratnagiri, Harna port in Dapoli and Nate port in Rajapur Taluka. The fishing business begins on a large scale during the end of the monsoon season, in the month of September. The fishing activity requires a lot of initial preparations.

The fishing nets required for fishing on the large trollers are initially repaired. All of this work is done manually. The workers

are seen busy in repairing the torn nets on the ports. After this, the giant net is transferred to the boat. These trollers or boats may stay out in the sea for 3-5 days or even up to 8 days at a time. A large amount of ice is also carried along to store the fresh catch. Every evening, a huge fish market begins here which is worth seeing. A variety of fish from Ratnagiri is in huge demand in the entire state due its freshness and rich quality.







- ▼ Skilled artisan, making tools from stone
 - Milling stone
 - Mortar and pestle
 - An artistic stone pot for the holy basil plant

Stone sculpting – a blend of artistry and machinery ►
Customers making a selection



Stone Carvers

The most required devices in the kitchen of a Konkani housewife such as stone grinder, mortar and pestle can be provided by the stone carvers, locally called Patharwat. Even the well-shaped Tulsi vrindavan or the holy Basil planter in her backyard is also carved by the Patharwat. Being the experts in making the common crafts, the skilled stone carvers can also create the beautiful artefacts. For many generations these artisans have literally worked hard to gain the mastery of this difficult art.



Abundance of bamboo leads to many bamboo objects
Burud artisans skilfully weaving multipurpose baskets

Basket weaving shop and factory at the road side



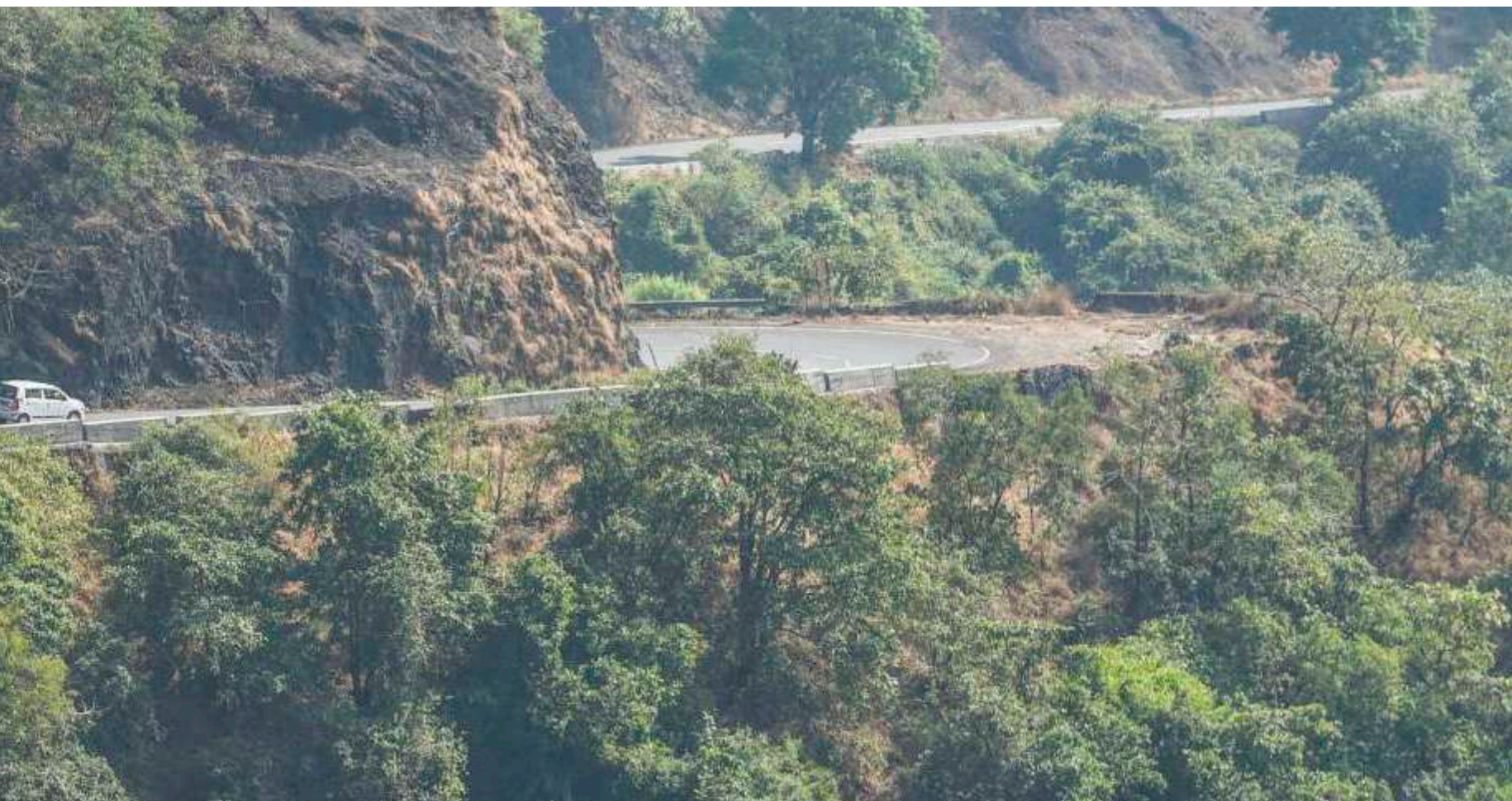
Bamboo can be found in each and every part of Konkan. No wonder, the natives prefer to use this locally available grass with such a variety of uses. The craftsmen from Burud community make bamboo baskets in a large quantity from the flexible bamboo plants. These baskets are used on a large scale during the trading of grains, vegetables, fruits, fishes and for many other purposes. The tall bamboo grass and the skilled Burud community play a major role in fulfilling the needs of the local people in Ratnagiri.



Mountainous Journey



Ratnagiri is an important city on the Mumbai-Goa Highway. There are several mountainous roads that come into Ratnagiri. On the way from Pune or Satara there is the Kumbharli Ghat. From Mahad, on the Ratnagiri-Raigad border there is the Kashedi Ghat. From Kolhapur via Lanje there is the Amba Ghat. On the way from Kolhapure is the Gaganbawda Ghat, the Anuskura Ghat in Rajapur and the Parshuram Ghat near Chiplun, all defy description in the monsoon season. Travelling on the serpentine roads that move through the greenery of small fabulous villages in the interiors of Ratanagiri is like moving through a painting.



Konkan Railway

The project of Konkan Railway which connects Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka was completed on 26th January 1998. Something that was considered a pipedream was realised despite so many challenges that it is no less than a wonder. This train covers the distance of 760 kms. from Roha to Mangalore at a speed of 160 kms per hour. The track has around 1819 bridges and 592 tunnels long and small, which makes it evident how tough the challenge must have been for the engineers.

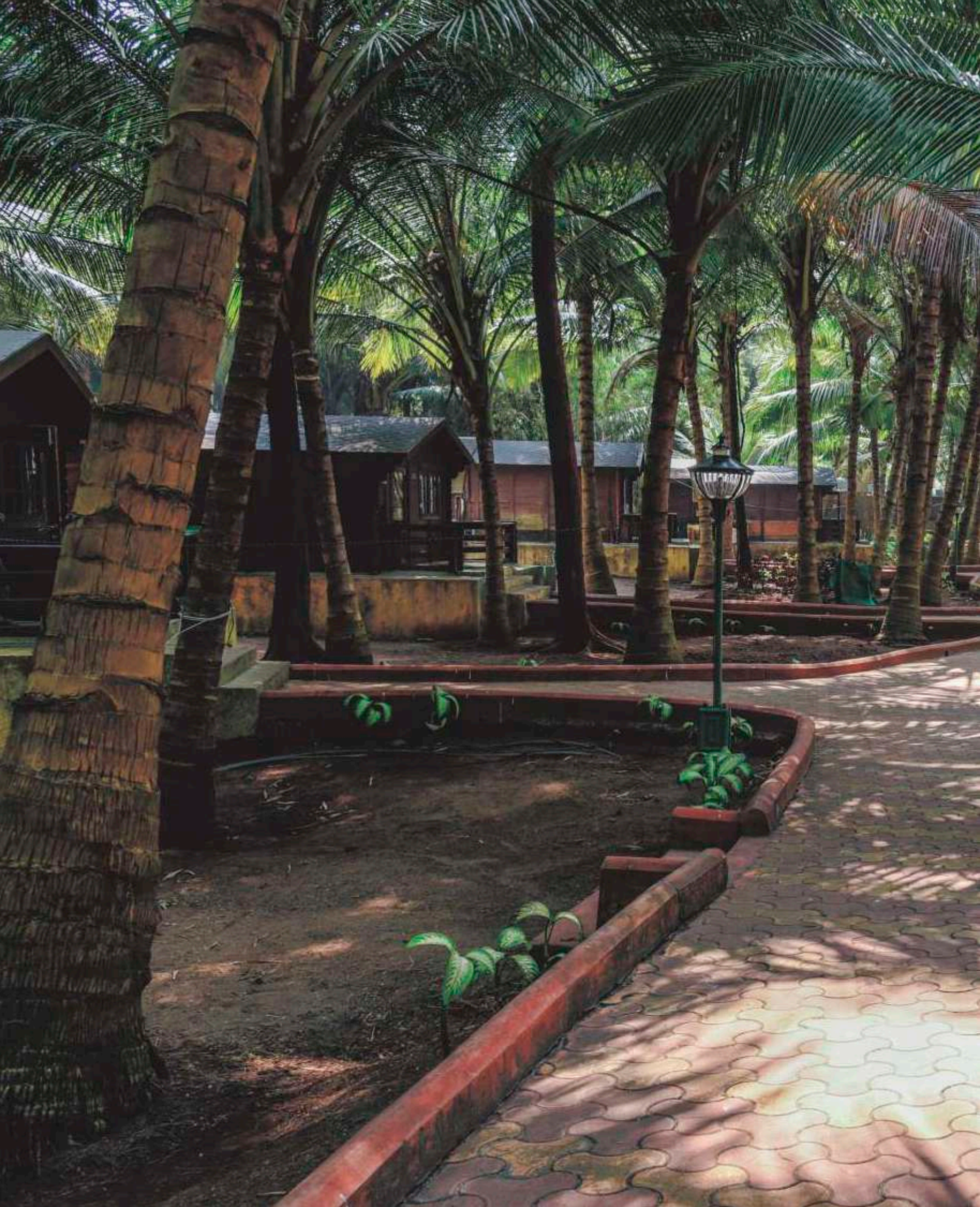
The track starts from Panvel, near Mumbai and goes into the Konkan from Roha in Raigad district. This route has stations

such as Khed, Anjani, Chiplun, Kamathe, Savarda, Aravali Road, Sangameswar, Ukshi, Bhoke, Ratnagiri, Nivsar, Adavali, and Rajapur Road. Winding through the mountains, riding with the Queen of The Konkan, it is only natural to wish this journey to be endless. Across green pathways, circumventing mountains, burrowing through long tunnels, lunging over creeks and rivers and whizzing past idyllic Konkani homes, it is a journey worth experiencing.

It is here that you see the Karbude tunnel – the largest in Asia and also the Panval bridge – the tallest in Asia!







Hotels and Places of Residence



There is a range of economical and cozy hotels and places of residence in several excellent locations. Places on the shoreline such as Karde, Guhagar, Ratnagiri, Murud, Ganpatipule and Velheshwar have plenty of options ranging from five star hotels to homely accommodations.



◀ Residence with modern facilities

▼ Hotels with picturesque views



You can stay in a wooden hut or tent and feel the cool breeze blowing towards you from the palm groves nearby. If the heat becomes unbearable, one can always seek refuge in an air conditioned hotel. The beach resorts have swimming pools that tempt you to come immerse yourself in the cool water. Several hotels on the beach offer you the pleasure of a dip in the pool while letting your eyes wade in the oceanic blue expanse. In pool side hotels you can make time stand still as you gently float in a hammock.

Hotels with Five Star facilities





If you wish to enjoy the simplistic flavour of Konkani life, Guhagar, Hedvi, Murud, Ratnagiri, Dapoli and Rajapur have several home stays that serve home cooked breakfast and offer an economical yet comfortable residence. These places near the coast offer an ambience and food that exudes warmth and affection.

Quiet places of residences in the midst of palms





Many people have helped in providing valuable information about the Ratnagiri district.

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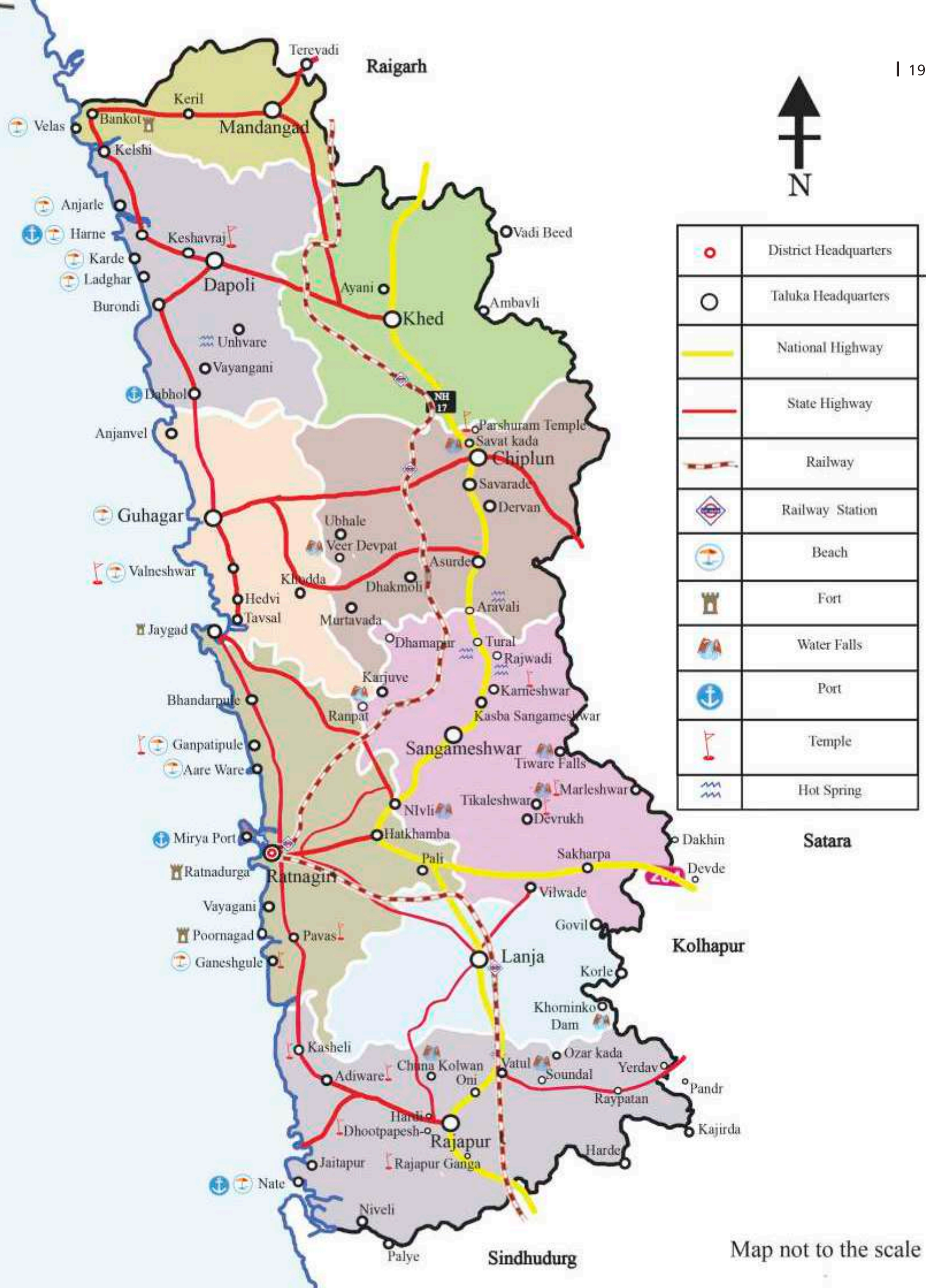
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	District Headquarters
	Taluka Headquarters
	National Highway
	State Highway
	Railway
	Railway Station
	Beach
	Fort
	Water Falls
	Port
	Temple
	Hot Spring

Map not to the scale







RATNAGIRI

Shores of wanderlust

Get lost to find yourself...

