

Arabian Sea to the west, the Indian states of Karnataka and Goa to the south, Telangana to the southeast and Chhattisgarh to the east, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh to the north, and the Indian union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu to the northwest.[16] Maharashtra is the second-most populous state in India and the third-most populous country subdivision globally.

The state is divided into 6 divisions and 36 districts, with the state capital being Mumbai, the most populous urban area in India, and Nagpur serving as the winter capital.[17] The Godavari and Krishna are the two major rivers in the state and forests cover 16.47 percent of the state's geographical area. The state is home to six UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Ajanta Caves, Ellora Caves, Elephanta Caves, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus), The Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai and The Western Ghats, a heritage site made up of 39 individual properties of which 4 are in Maharashtra.[18][19]

Maharashtra is the single largest contributor to India's Economy with a share of 14 per cent in all-India nominal GDP.[20][21][22] The economy of Maharashtra is the largest in India, with a gross state domestic product (GSDP) of 35.27 trillion (US\$440 billion) and GSDP per capita of 242,247 (US\$3,000).[7] The service sector dominates the state's economy, accounting for 69.3 per cent of the value of the output of the country. Although agriculture accounts for 12 per cent of the state GDP, it employs nearly half the population of the state.

Maharashtra is one of the most industrialised states in India. The state's capital, Mumbai, is India's financial and commercial capital.[23] India's largest stock exchange Bombay Stock Exchange, the oldest in Asia, is located in the city, as is National Stock Exchange, which is the second largest stock exchange in India and one of world's largest derivatives exchanges. The state has played a significant role in the country's social and political life and is widely considered a leader in terms of agricultural and industrial production, trade and transport, and education.[24] Maharashtra is the ninth-highest ranking among Indian states in the human development index.[25]

The region that encompasses the state has a history going back many millennia. Notable dynasties that ruled the region include the Asmakas, the Mauryas, the Satavahanas, the Western Satraps, the Abhiras, the Vakatakas, the Chalukyas, the Rashtrakutas, the Western Chalukyas, the Seuna Yadavas, the Khaljis, the Tughlaqs, the Bahamanis, the Deccan sultanates, the Mughals, the Maratha Empire founded by Shivaji, and the British. Ruins, monuments, tombs, forts, and places of worship left by these rulers are dotted around the state. At the time of the Indian independence movement in the early 20th century, along with British ruled areas of Bombay presidency, and Central Provinces and Berar, the region included many British Vassal states. Among these, the erstwhile Deccan States Agency included Kolhapur, Miraj, Sangli, Aundh, Bhore, Sawantwadi and Marathwada of Hyderabad State.

The state was formed on 1 May 1960 after a long struggle for special state for Marathi language speaking people through Samyukta Maharashtra Movement (transl. United Maharashtra movement).

Etymology

The modern Marathi language evolved from the Maharashtri Prakrit,[26] and the word Marhatta (later used for the Marathas) is found in the Jain Maharashtrian literature. The term Maharashtra (Marathi: महाराष्ट्र) along with Maharashtrian, Marathi, and Maratha may have derived from the same root. However, their exact etymology is uncertain.[27]

The most widely accepted theory among the linguistic scholars is that the words Maratha and Maharashtra are ultimately derived from a combination of Mahā (Marathi: मह) and Rāshtrikā (Marathi: राष्ट्र),[27][28] the name of a tribe or dynasty of chiefs ruling in the Deccan region.[29] An alternate theory states that the term is derived from mahā ("great") and ratha/rathi ("chariot"/"charioteer"), which refers to a skilful northern fighting force that migrated southward into the area.[29][28]

An alternative theory states that the term derives from the word mahā ("great") and rāshtra ("nation/dominion").[30] However, this theory is somewhat controversial among modern scholars who believe it to be the

Sanskritised interpretation of later writers.[27]

History

Main articles: History of Maharashtra, Maratha Empire, and Samyukta Maharashtra Movement

See also: Chronology of statehood of Maharashtra

Late Harappa figure from Daimabad hoard, Indus Valley civilization

2nd century BCE Karla Caves are a group of Buddhist caves near Lonavala.

Numerous Late Harappan or Chalcolithic sites belonging to the Jorwe culture (c. 1300–700 BCE) have been discovered throughout the state.[31][32] The largest settlement discovered of the culture is at Daimabad, which had a mud fortification during this period, as well as an elliptical temple with fire pits.[33][34] In the Late Harappan period there was a large migration of people from Gujarat to northern Maharashtra.[35]

Maharashtra was ruled by Maurya Empire in the fourth and third centuries BCE. Around 230 BCE, Maharashtra came under the rule of the Satavahana dynasty which ruled it for the next 400 years.[36] The rule of Satavahana dynasty was followed by that of Western Satraps, Gupta Empire, Gurjara-Pratihara, Vakata, Kadambas, Chalukya Empire, Rashtrakuta Dynasty, and Western Chalukya and the Yadava Dynasty. The Buddhist Ajanta Caves in present-day Aurangabad display influences from the Satavahana and Vakataka styles. The caves were possibly excavated during this period.[37]

The Chalukya dynasty ruled the region from the sixth to the eighth centuries CE, and the two prominent rulers were Pulakeshin II, who defeated the north Indian Emperor Harsha, and Vikramaditya II, who defeated the Arab invaders in the eighth century. The Rashtrakuta dynasty ruled Maharashtra from the eighth to the tenth century.[38] The Arab traveller Sulaiman al Mahri described the ruler of the Rashtrakuta dynasty Amoghavarsha as "one of the four great kings of the world".[39] Shilahara dynasty began as vassals of the Rashtrakuta dynasty which ruled the Deccan plateau between the eighth and tenth centuries. From the early 11th century to the 12th century, the Deccan Plateau, which includes a significant part of Maharashtra, was dominated by the Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola dynasty.[40] Several battles were fought between the Western Chalukya Empire and the Chola dynasty in the Deccan Plateau during the reigns of Raja Raja Chola I, Rajendra Chola I, Jayasimha II, Someshvara I, and Vikramaditya VI.[41]

In the early 14th century, the Yadava dynasty, which ruled most of present-day Maharashtra, was overthrown by the Delhi Sultanate ruler Alauddin Khalji. Later, Muhammad bin Tughluq conquered parts of the Deccan, and temporarily shifted his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in Maharashtra. After the collapse of the Tughluqs in 1347, the local Bahmani Sultanate of Gulbarga took over, governing the region for the next 150 years.[42] After the break-up of the Bahmani sultanate in 1518, Maharashtra split into five Deccan Sultanates: Nizamshah of Ahmednagar, Adilshah of Bijapur, Qutubshah of Golkonda, Bidarshah of Bidar and Imadshah of Elichpur. These kingdoms often fought with each other. United, they decisively defeated the Vijayanagara Empire of the south in 1565.[43] The present area of Mumbai was ruled by the Sultanate of Gujarat before its capture by Portugal in 1535 and the Faruqi dynasty ruled the Khandesh region between 1382 and 1601 before finally getting annexed in the Mughal Empire. Malik Ambar, the regent of the Nizamshahi dynasty of Ahmednagar from 1607 to 1626,[44] increased the strength and power of Murtaza Nizam Shah II and raised a large army. Ambar is said to have introduced the concept of guerrilla warfare in the Deccan region.[45] Malik Ambar assisted Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in Delhi against his stepmother, Nur Jahan, who wanted to enthrone her son-in-law.[46][47] Both Shivaji's grandfather, Maloji and father Shahaji served under Ambar.[48]