



3. NASHIK CITY

1. Introduction

The city of Nashik is situated in the State of Maharashtra, in the northwest of Maharashtra, on 19 deg N 73 deg E coordinates. It is connected by road to Mumbai (185 kms.) and to Pune (220kms.). Rail connectivity is through the Central railway, with direct connection to Mumbai. Air link is with Mumbai, though the air service is not consistent and a proper Airport does not exist.

Nashik is the administrative headquarters of Nashik District and Nashik Division. It is popularly known as the "Grape City" and for its twelve yearly 'Sinhasta Kumbh Mela', it is located in the Western Ghats on the banks of river Godavari, and has become a center of attraction because of its beautiful surroundings and cool and pleasant climate. Nashik has a personality of its own due to its mythological, historical, social and cultural importance. The city, vibrant and active on the industrial, political, social and cultural fronts, has influenced the lives of many a great personalities. The Godavari River flows through the city from its source in the holy place of Tribakeshwar, cutting the city into two.

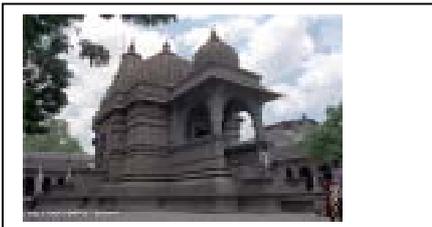
Geographical proximity to Mumbai (Economic capital of India) and forming the golden triangle with Mumbai & Pune has accelerated its growth. The developments of the past two decades has completely transformed this traditional pilgrimage center into a vibrant modern city, and it is poised to become a metropolis with global links. New Nashik has emerged out of the dreams, hard work and enterprising spirit of local and migrant populace.



2. Historical Perspective

Nashik has a rich historical past. It is believed that Nashik got its name during the Ramayana period, during Rama's 14 years exile, part of which he spent in Nashik. Shurpanakha, the sister of the demon Ravana had proposed to marry Rama. Hearing this Rama ordered Laxman to cut off Shurpanakha's nose (Nasika). Thus Nashik got its name. But in still earlier times it was known as 'Trikantak' (in Kritayuga), 'Janasthana' (in Dwaparyuga), and 'Gulshanabad' (during Mughal rule in 1487 A.D. and it was famous for its roses). During the rule of the Peshwas it was renamed Nashik. The Peshwas (Raghobada and his wife Anandibai) settled at Anandwalli in Nashik where they built Anandibai's fort and the Navsha Ganapati temple.

2.1. Peshwa Period



Peshavas from Pune took keen interest in the renovation and development of Nashik city. They invited various craftsmen to construct temples and buildings. They encouraged traders to settle and start business in Nashik.



The city flourished during this period. New temple complexes were constructed in 17-18 century in Nashik and its surrounding villages such as Trimbakeshwar, Sinnar and Anjaneri, which are within a 20 km radius. The 'Sarkar Wada', was constructed during this period. Anandibai's fort at Anandvalli and the temple of Navsha Ganapati were also built in this period.



2.2. British And Post Independence Era

Nashik came under the British rule in 1818 and they fell in love with it. The Sarvajanic Vachnalaya (Public library) was established in 1840, and the Sharanpur Colony was formed in 1854. The railway line joining Mumbai to Nashik was constructed in 1862 and the Nashik road railway station built. This necessitated the introduction of the tramcar to link Nashik city with Naskik Road railway station, which was a distance of about 10 kms from the city. The highway connecting Mumbai to Agra in North India passing through Nashik was constructed and the construction of the Victoria Bridge over the river Godavari was commenced in 1894. Saint Andrew's Church at Sharanpur was also built in 1894.

Nashik was appointed with a local self-government by enactment of municipal law by the then British rule, in 1882.

Establishment of India Security Press in 1925 and the Currency Note Press in 1928 were the major additional activity attracting a workforce. Military cantonment areas at Deolali and artillery center at Nashik Road were established during the war period (1918). All these additions were outside the then city limits of Nashik, located about 8-10 km away, near the railway stations of Nashik Road. Introduction of electricity in 1929 did bring about certain changes in the city. Dadasaheb Phalke of Nashik, pioneer of Indian cinema produced the first Indian film in 1913.

The highway (old Bombay Agra road) running north to south defined the new settlement pattern. This road was located at some distance on the west of the old city. New expansions took place on the three major roads, the Trimbak Road, the Sharanpur Road, and the Gangapur Road, running towards west, emanating at right angles to the old Bombay Agra road. The Canadian Missionaries library and hospital on Sharanpur road, and the Police Training School (1910) on the Trimbak road, marked the fringes of the new urban expansion.

Settlement pattern of this new area development was based on the British planning principles. Road connecting Nashik to Mumbai became the new focal point of city with its new imposing stone structures constructed in neo gothic style, set back from roads and providing tree lined avenues in the administrative area. The British residential quarters were large bungalows set in landscaped gardens, located away from office areas. Buildings for District Court, Collector officers, Police headquarters and large buildings housing war offices and town hall were part of the administrative complex. Indian professionals like lawyers, doctors, administrators and neo rich, planned their residential area near this administrative complex. Smart residences in art deco style, which were popular in Europe, appeared in the city. British rule introduced formal education and many schools were constructed. Bungalows with gardens, set back from the streets became popular in the new residential developments. Golf course, then the largest in Asia, was developed for recreation for the British. Indian residents of new settlement were influenced by British education. They were conscious of Modern City development. These new classes of people were active and influential in political and social movements of the period. They had close contacts with cities like Mumbai, Pune and the outside world. This area later became the center of political movement and independence struggle. Direction of growth, away from the old city towards Mumbai and Pune is symbolic. The growth of city in this direction continued even after independence.



During this period, Nashik grew to be a flourishing center where artisans skilled in making brass and copper utensils and smiths excelling in silver and gold ornaments plied their trade. But these were home based industries located in the old city, which was getting more crowded because of the influx of people.

3. The Sinhastha Kumbhamela :

By far the most spectacular of all the events, the Kumbh Mela is a religious festival that occurs once every 12 years, and is celebrated in four major pilgrim centres around the country. In Maharashtra, the festival is held in Trimbakeshwar, Nashik. The Nashik Kumbh Mela is generally acknowledged to be the most sacred of all the festivals.



The origin of the Kumbh Mela

In **Kruta Yuga**, Durvas Rishi saw Indra - the King of Gods - sitting on elephant Airawat. Durvas was pleased to see Indra and presented him a chain. However Indra did not accept the gift. It fell down and was trodden by the elephant, Airawat. Durvas Rishi got upset due to this and cursed Indra. As an



effect of the curse, all Gods lost their powers and had to often lose a battle against Danavas (Demons). So all Gods including Brahmadeva surrendered themselves to God Vishnu to get back their power. Vishnu suggested them to approach Danavas and persuade them to perform Samudra Manthana (churning of the sea). He said

Samudra Manthana will bring out Amruta, which will bring back your power and you will not be defeated by Danavas. So Samudra Manthana was carried out.

One of the many precious things that arose from the depths of the troubled waters was a pot of nectar (Amrit Kumbh). Lord Vishnu, disguising himself as an enchantress (Mohini), seized the nectar from the demons. While fleeing from the evil ones, Lord Vishnu passed the nectar on to his winged mount, Garuda. The demons finally caught up with the Garuda and in the ensuing

Struggle, a few drops of the precious nectar fell on Allahabad, **Nashik**, Hardwar and Ujjain. Since then, the Kumbh Mela has been held in all these places, every 12 years.

Another story is that once all the Teerthas went to Adinath Bhagwan Shankara. Following Bhagwan Shankara's order they had been to Mrutyuloka (earth) to save sinners on earth. Teerthas absolved the sinners on the earth, but were themselves saturated with others' sins. They requested Bhagwan Shankara to free themselves from sins. Shankara asked them to go and live in solitude for one year at the bank of river Godavari. Shankara promised the Teerthas that he himself, with all other Gods would also stay with them. After taking bath in the sacred water of Godavari, they shall be free from their sins.

Hence during the Kumbh Mela a dip in Godavari River has attained a great importance.

In Shiva Purana there is a story explaining the importance of Sinhastha Kumbh Mela. Gautama Rishi got salvation of his cow-killing sin from Lord Shankara after a long penance. Then the river Ganges descended down on the earth. After some time she wanted to go back to her home place. However the Rishis and Gods gathered there and requested her to stay back on the earth for the prosperity of the earth. She agreed to stay back only after taking a promise from Lord Shankara that all the Rishis present there and all Gods will stay with her. Then only will she stay back. Gods and Rishis



promised her that during the period, when Jupiter and Sun will be in the zodiac sign Leo (Simha Rashi), they shall all stay on the earth.

In later years, it is said that, acknowledging importance of Kumbha Mela Lord Rama with his Guru Kashyap stayed and lived for one year in Trimbakeshwar. During this period he performed all the religious rites like yatra, shraddha etc near Kushavarta.

Why every 12 years?

Amrut had to be saved from Danavas. So Gods had to hide it at different places - Swargalok, Mrutyulok and Patallok.

Gods were on Mrutyulok (earth) for twelve days. Gods twelve days are equal to 12 years for Mrutyulok. Thus Gods were on earth for 12 years with Amrut. Hence every 12 years Kumbha Mela is celebrated at the four places, where a few drops of Amrut had fallen.

Where and when?

Kumbha Mela is a mammoth fair where saints and devotees gather. Kumbha Mela is celebrated at the aforesaid four places depending on the positions of planets and stars.

- When **Jupiter** (Guru) and **Sun** are in zodiac sign **Leo** (Simha Rashi) it is celebrated in **Trimbakeshwar**, Nashik.
- When **Sun** is in zodiac sign **Aries** (Mesha Rashi) it is celebrated at **Haradwar**
- When **Jupiter** is in zodiac sign **Taurus** (Vrishabha Rashi) and **Sun** is in zodiac sign **Capricorn** (Makar Rashi) Kumbha Mela is celebrated at **Prayag**
- When **Guru** and **Sun** are in zodiac sign **Scorpio** (Vrishchik Rashi) the Mela is celebrated at **Ujjain**.

Recognizing the importance of the Sinhastha Kumbha Mela, Shri Shankaracharya appealed to the disciples of his Vaidik Dharma to assemble at the time of Sinhastha Kumbha Mela. Following his appeal, till now devotees, pilgrims, and people of various sects and religions gather together for Kumbha Mela.

Akhadas.

There are different dwelling places for different sects. They are called "Akhada". The names of these Akhadas are - Shree Niranjani, Shree Junadatta (Bhairav), Shree Mahanirvani, Shree Atal, Shree Avahana, Shree Anand, Shree Pancha Agni, Shree Nathpanthi Gorakhnath, Shree Vaishnav Bairagi, Shree Udasini Panchayati Bada, Shree Udasini Naya, Shree Nirmal Panchayati etc. They have been established at different times and worship their own deity.

Leaders of the different sects have arrived at a consensus to follow a specific sequence for taking bath. E.g. In Haridwar Mela, Niranjani Gosawi will take their bath first and then the Nirvani Gosawi take their bath. In Trimbakeshwar, first the Niranjani Gosawi takes bath and after they leave the Kushawarta Teertha, Nirvani Gosawi takes bath. After them the old Udasee Sadhus followed by new Udasee Sadhus take bath.

The Nashik Kumbh Mela is a mammoth affair with over three and a half million people attending it. Thousands of Sadhus and holy men and millions of pilgrims immerse themselves in the **holy Ramkund and Kushavarta reservoirs**. The festive and religious mood makes people get away from their daily chores and experience the spiritual ecstasy.

In normal years tourists visit to perform certain religious rites on banks of Godavari and at the numerous temples. Beautiful old temples of Shiva at Trimbakeshwar, Kala Ram at Nashik and Devi (Goddess) temple in the hills of Saptashringi attract a large number of devotees. Modern temple complexes like Mukti Dham and church at Nashik road have become new attractions for tourists. Sai Baba temple at Shirdi in neighboring district attracts people of all faiths.



CALENDER OF FESTIVAL

<i>Festival</i>	<i>Marathi month</i>	<i>English month</i>	<i>Ritual</i>	<i>Relationship to ghat or river</i>
Padva	Chaitra	March / April		Bathing in ramkund
Ramnavami	Chaitra	April		Bathing in ramkund
Ekadashi ram rath	Chaitra	April	Ratha starts from east entry of kalaram temple and ends at kapale-shwar temple	Ratha and puja at ramkund and fire- works in vaghadi
Hanuman jayanti	Chaitra	April		Pooja
Vata pournima	Jyeshtha	June	Puja of banyan tree	Floating lamps in river
Guru pournima	Ashadh	July	Puja by disciples at the samadhis of respective gurus	
Shivratri	Ashadh	July		Bathing in ramkund
Ananth chaturdashi	Bhadrapad	August / September		Immersion of idols
Sarvapitri amavasya	Bhadrapad	September / October		Pindadaan
Navaratra	Aashwin	September / October		Bathing / ghatsthapana darshan at sandvyavarchi devi / lighting of holy stretch
Vijayadashmi (dasera)	Aashwin	October		
Diwali	Karthik	October / November		Fireworks at kapaleswar chowk
Karthik pournima	Karthik	October / November		Floating lamps in river
Datta jayanti	Margshirsha	November / December		Puja & darshan at ekmukhi datta mandir
Sankashti chaturthi	Every month	Every month		Pujua and darshan at modkeshwar mandir