

## **Maharashtra budget 2018-19: State to develop tourist spots with focus on Konkan**

The state government, in its annual budget, has laid substantial emphasis on tourism, especially in the picturesque Konkan region. From buying a battery-operated submarine for underwater tourism at Sindhudurg to developing a new tourist place in Ratnagiri to an annual festival at Nandurbar, various initiatives were announced in the budget.

The Ganpatipule temple in Ratnagiri, with its beaches and forests, will be developed as a tourist destination and a budget of Rs79 crore is allotted for the same. The nearby Machal area in Ratnagiri is also being developed as a tourist destination.

With Konkan, the state government has also approved plans to develop Ramtek, a religious place, with its association with Lord Ram and allotted Rs150 crore for this purpose. A fossils museum at Sironcha in Gadchiroli district is on the cards as well. Similarly, a Chetak festival would be organised annually at Shahada in Nandurbar district.

The Hotel and Restaurant Association of Western India (HRAWI), welcomed the move. “We need to take a holistic view instead of a piece meal approach. Tourism will boost both the local economy and also generate employment for the local population,” said Dlip Datwani, president, HRAWI.