



ANCIENT FORTS OF MAHARASTRA: HISTORY

NEWS: Maharashtra government moves to safeguard ancient forts from encroachment

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

The Maharashtra government has established district-level committees to identify and address encroachments on ancient forts by January 31, ensuring their preservation and protection. Significant forts like Raigad, Shivneri, and Sindhudurg, crucial to Maharashtra's history, are central to this conservation initiative.

Context and Government Initiative

- The **Mahayuti government of Maharashtra** has taken proactive measures to protect the State's historical forts from encroachment.
- District-level committees have been formed and tasked with:
 - Creating a comprehensive list of encroachments on forts by January 31.
 - Submitting the findings to the government for further action.

Objective of the Committees

- **Primary Goals:**
 - Remove **existing encroachments** on forts.
 - **Prevent future encroachments** through monitoring and law enforcement.
 - Ensure **structural integrity** and **historical conservation** of the forts.
- **Additional Responsibilities:**
 - Address concerns related to law and order at these sites.
 - Maintain proper documentation of the forts' conditions and encroachments.

Significance of the Move

1. Cultural and Historical Legacy:

- Maharashtra boasts **47 centrally-protected forts** (under the Archaeological Survey of India) and **62 State-protected forts** (managed by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums).
- These forts are key symbols of Maharashtra's rich cultural and historical identity.

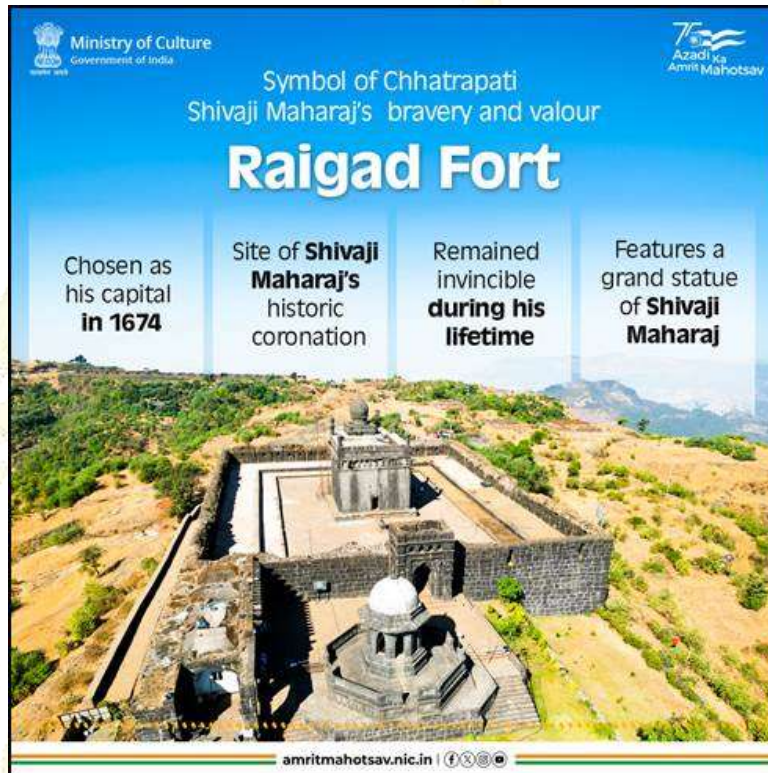
2. Tourism and Educational Value:



- Preserving forts attracts **domestic and international tourists** and supports local economies.
- Promotes historical awareness and national pride among citizens.

Notable Forts in Maharashtra

1. Raigad Fort:



- **Historical Importance:**

- Selected by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in 1662 as his permanent capital; officially shifted there in 1670.
- Site of his **Rajyabhishek (coronation)** in 1674, where he adopted the title of 'Chhatrapati.'

- **Strategic Importance:**

- Called the "**Gibraltar of the East**" due to its steep, solid, and inaccessible construction.
- Played a vital role in defending the Maratha Empire.

- **Current Status:**



- A major heritage site attracting historians and tourists.

2. Shivneri Fort:



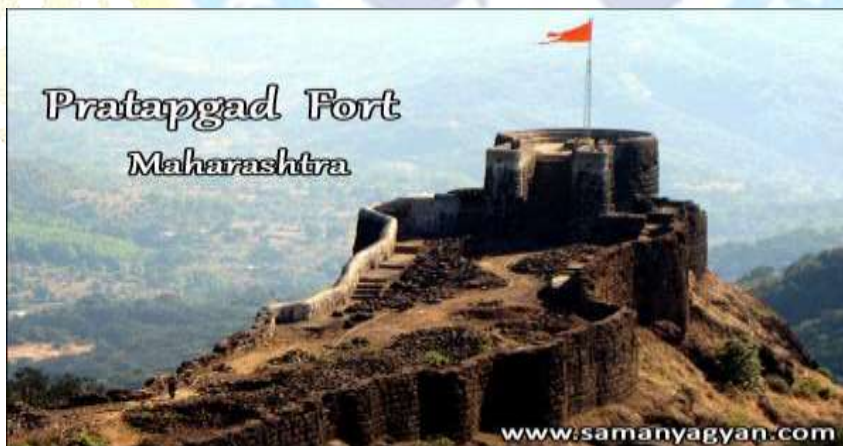
- **Significance:**

- Birthplace of **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**, the founder of the Maratha Empire.

- **Legacy:**

- Symbol of Shivaji's early years and leadership development.

3. Pratapgad Fort:



- **Historical Battle Site:**

- Witnessed the famous battle between **Shivaji Maharaj and Afzal Khan** in 1659.
- Key turning point in consolidating the Maratha Empire.



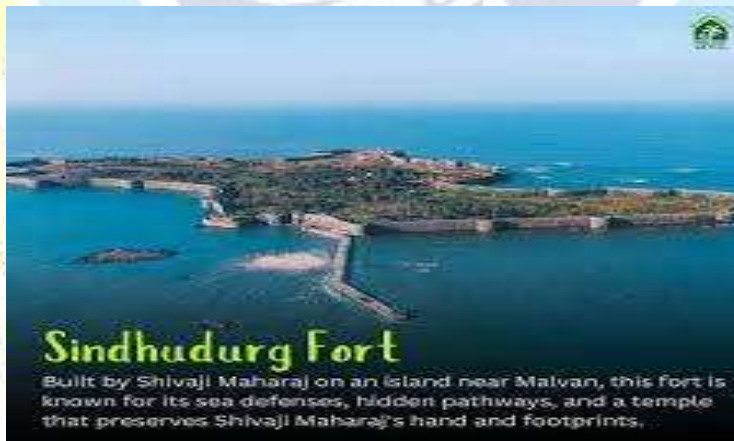
4. Sinhagad Fort:



- **Battle of 1670:**

- Renowned for the battle where **Tanaji Malusare** led Maratha forces against the Mughals.
- Known for the bravery and sacrifice of Tanaji, earning him the title "**Sinha (Lion)**."

5. Sindhudurg Fort



- **Coastal Defense:**

- Built in **1664** by **Shivaji Maharaj** to protect the Konkan coastline from foreign invasions, particularly by the Portuguese and Siddis.
- Constructed on a rocky island, the fort remains a symbol of naval excellence.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/maharashtra/maharashtra-government-moves-to-safeguard-ancient-forts-from-encroachment/article69112755.ece>