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Maharashtra at 66 — From Samyukta Movement to Third- Largest State Economy

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POLITY**ECONOMY**

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Maharashtra at 66 — From Samyukta Movement to Third-Largest State Economy

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WHY IN NEWS

May 1, 2026 marks the **66th anniversary** of Maharashtra's formation under the **Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960**. The principal observance was the parade at **Shivaji Park, Mumbai**, attended by CM **Devendra Fadnavis** (in his third term, sworn in December 2024). PM Modi extended Maharashtra Day greetings, highlighting the state's contributions to India's progress.

MAHARASHTRA BY THE NUMBERS (2026)

INDICATOR	VALUE
Population	~13 crore (12.5% of India)
Area	307,713 sq km (3rd largest by area)
GSDP (2024-25)	~₹40 lakh crore (largest state economy)
GSDP per capita	~₹2.7 lakh (above national average)
Urbanisation rate	~48% (highest among major states)
Districts	36
Lok Sabha seats	48
Rajya Sabha seats	19
Assembly seats	288

Maharashtra is **India's largest state economy** — contributing approximately 14% of national GDP. Mumbai is the financial capital; Pune is a major IT and education hub; Aurangabad and Nagpur are industrial centres.

POLITICAL TRAJECTORY — 66 YEARS

The Congress Decades (1960-1995)

Maharashtra was a Congress stronghold from formation. CMs included **Yashwantrao Chavan** (first CM, 1960-62), **Vasantrao Naik** (longest-serving, 1963-75), **Sharad Pawar** (multiple terms), and **Sushilkumar Shinde**. Maharashtra Congress played a kingmaker role in national politics, with Sharad Pawar emerging as one of India's most consequential regional leaders.

Shiv Sena's Rise and the Saffron Wave (1995-2014)

The Shiv Sena, founded by **Bal Thackeray** in 1966, transformed Maharashtra's politics with its Marathi-first agenda. The 1995 Sena-BJP victory marked the first non-Congress government. **Manohar Joshi** became CM (1995-99). **Vilasrao Deshmukh** (Congress) returned the state to Congress-NCP alliance from 1999.

The Modi Era and Post-2019 Realignment (2014-present)

Devendra Fadnavis (BJP) led Maharashtra from 2014-2019. The 2019 election produced a complex result that ended in **Uddhav Thackeray** (Shiv Sena) becoming CM with Congress and NCP support — a historic alignment. The 2022 Sena split (Eknath Shinde faction) and 2023 NCP split (Ajit Pawar faction) produced the current **Mahayuti** government — BJP + Shinde Sena + Ajit Pawar NCP — with Fadnavis as CM since December 2024.

MAHARASHTRA'S ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

SECTOR	MAHARASHTRA'S SHARE
Banking and finance	RBI HQ (Mumbai); BSE; NSE; SEBI HQ
Bollywood / entertainment	Mumbai-based; ~95% of Hindi cinema
Pharmaceuticals	Sun Pharma, Cipla, Lupin — Maharashtra-based or major operations
Auto manufacturing	Pune-Aurangabad belt — Tata Motors, Mahindra, Bajaj Auto
Sugar industry	India's largest sugar-producing state
Cotton and textiles	Vidarbha region — major cotton belt

Mumbai alone generates approximately **6.5% of India's GDP** despite having less than 1% of India's population — illustrating extreme economic concentration.

THE MARATHI LINGUISTIC IDENTITY

Article 351 of the Constitution provides for the development of Hindi as a national language; Maharashtra's identity rests on Marathi linguistic identity. Marathi has been included in the **Eighth Schedule** since the original Constitution. In 2024, Marathi was granted **classical language status** alongside Pali, Prakrit, Bengali, and Assamese — a major linguistic recognition.

MAHARASHTRA'S CONSTITUTIONAL LANDMARKS

PROVISION	APPLICATION TO MAHARASHTRA
Article 371(2)	Special provisions for Vidarbha, Marathwada, and the rest of Maharashtra — allowing the Governor to ensure equitable allocation of funds
Eighth Schedule	Marathi included from 1950
Mumbai as financial capital	Concentrated Reserve Bank, SEBI, BSE, NSE in Mumbai

Article 371(2) was a key compromise in the 1960 Act — recognising the development concerns of Vidarbha (which had nearly become a separate state) and Marathwada.

CHALLENGES AT 66

- ❶ **Vidarbha and Marathwada disparities** — Eastern and central Maharashtra trail Western Maharashtra in industrialisation and per-capita income
- ❷ **Mumbai's overstrain** — Mumbai's population density and infrastructure limits constrain its global competitiveness
- ❸ **Agrarian crisis** — Vidarbha's farmer suicide crisis remains unresolved
- ❹ **Migration pressure** — Internal migration to Mumbai-Pune places stress on housing, water, sanitation
- ❺ **Linguistic chauvinism vs cosmopolitan identity** — Tension between Marathi-first agenda and Mumbai's multilingual character

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — Polity	Article 371(2); coalition politics; state-level political economy
GS3 — Economy	India's largest state economy; manufacturing belts; financial centre
GS1 — Indian Society	Marathi linguistic identity; Shiv Sena's social movement

Mains Keywords: Maharashtra 66th anniversary, Devendra Fadnavis, Article 371(2), Marathi classical language, Vidarbha, Marathwada, Shiv Sena, Mahayuti, GSDP, Mumbai financial capital

Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
Maharashtra formation	May 1, 1960
First CM	Yashwantrao Chavan
Current CM	Devendra Fadnavis (3rd term, since Dec 5, 2024)
Population	~13 crore (12.5% of India)
GSDP	~₹40 lakh crore (largest state economy)
Mumbai's GDP share	~6.5% of India's GDP
Article 371(2)	Special provisions for Vidarbha, Marathwada, rest of Maharashtra
Marathi classical language	2024 (alongside Pali, Prakrit, Bengali, Assamese)
Lok Sabha seats	48
Assembly seats	288

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