

SAUD SHEIKH
LOCATION MANAGER

SHOOT KIT
EDITION 2026-27

A PRODUCTION GUIDE · MAHABALESHWAR · PANCHGANI · WAI · SATARA

Shooting in the Sahyadris

Locations, permissions, crew, transport and the season calendar, in one place. From Saud Sheikh, location manager in these hills for over 15 years.



SAUD SHEIKH · SHOOT KIT

YOUR PERSON ON THE GROUND

One call covers the hills.

Saud Sheikh was born in Mahabaleshwar and has spent over 15 years scouting, clearing and running film, TV and ad shoots across the plateau. Through Sahyadri Filmworks he manages locations, permissions, crew and gear. Through Dizzyland Tours & Travels he moves the unit.

15+

years on film sets in these hills

20

years running the Dizzyland fleet

4

towns: Mahabaleshwar, Panchgani, Wai, Satara

Selected credits

RRR · Singham Again · OG · Peddi · Fauji · Freddy · Golmaal 5 · Shastry Viruddh Shastry · Shayad Yahi Hai Pyaar · Nain Tara · Tripling S3

01

Locations

What the region offers

02

Permissions

Who clears what

03

Crew & Gear

What's available locally

04

Transport & Stay

Moving and housing the unit

Four bases, one plateau.

Mahabaleshwar

The hill station itself, at about 1,350 m. Bungalows, forest, viewpoints, Venna Lake, the market and strawberry farms. Most units base here.

Panchgani

About 1,290 m, roughly 19 km before Mahabaleshwar. Table Land plateau, boarding-school campuses, old bungalows and long valley views.

Wai

At the foot of the Pasarni ghat on the Krishna river. Stone temples, river ghats and old-town lanes, a short drive from Panchgani.

Satara

The district headquarters and nearest railhead. District-level permissions are handled here.

Getting the unit up

FROM	DISTANCE	BY ROAD
Pune	~120 km	3 to 3.5 hours
Mumbai	~260 km	5.5 to 6.5 hours
Pune Airport	~125 km	Nearest commercial airport
Satara station	~55 km	Nearest major railhead

Approximate. Ghat traffic on weekends and holidays adds time. Saud plans unit moves around it.



Pick the weather, then the dates.

The plateau has three distinct looks a year. The monsoon here is among the heaviest in Maharashtra, so it changes the plan, not just the sky.

JAN Clear, cool. Morning mist	FEB Clear, dry. Strawberry season	MAR Warming, haze builds	APR Warm, hazy. Summer crowds	MAY Hottest, busiest. Pre-monsoon clouds	JUN Monsoon arrives. Fog	JUL Heaviest rain. Dense fog	AUG Heavy rain. Waterfalls	SEP Rain easing. Deep green	OCT Post-monsoon green, clear air	NOV Crisp, clear. Best light	DEC Cool, clear. Holiday crowds
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Prime shooting
Good, plan around crowds
Warm and busy
Monsoon: dramatic, needs cover sets

Monsoon (Jun to Sep)

Fog and rain no art department can fake. Some viewpoints, boating and forest areas are restricted. Plan cover sets and waterproof the unit. Leeches appear on forest trails.



Crowds

Weekends, Diwali, Christmas to New Year and April to May fill the points and the market. Early calls and weekday schedules keep frames clean.



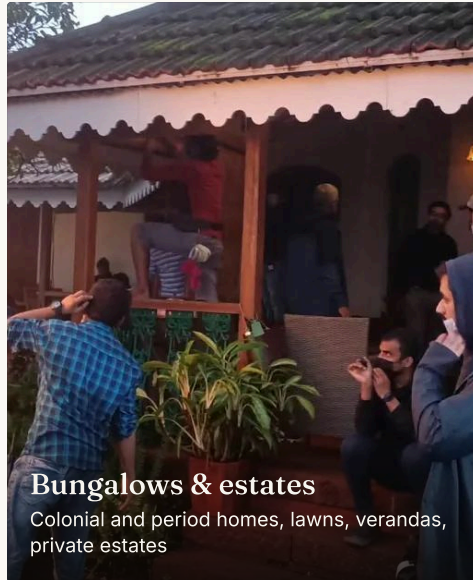
On the ground

Mobile signal drops in valleys and forest, so plan walkie and generator cover. Monkeys are bold at the viewpoints. Maharashtra's plastic ban applies on set.



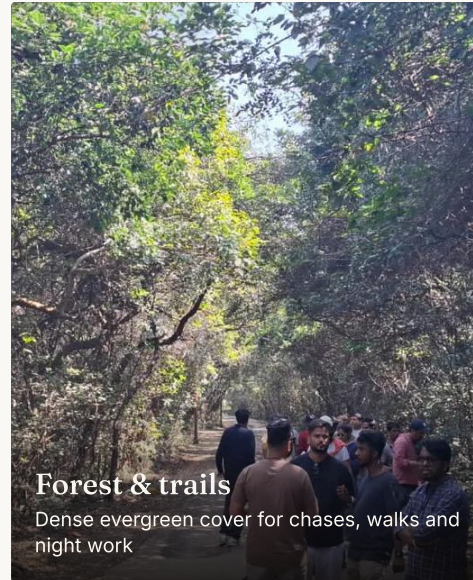
A plateau of ready-made sets.

Every frame here has been walked, cleared and run by Saud. Ask for a recce pack of any category.



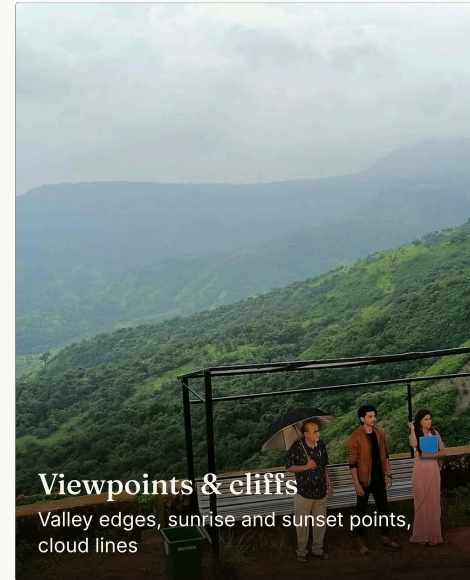
Bungalows & estates

Colonial and period homes, lawns, verandas, private estates



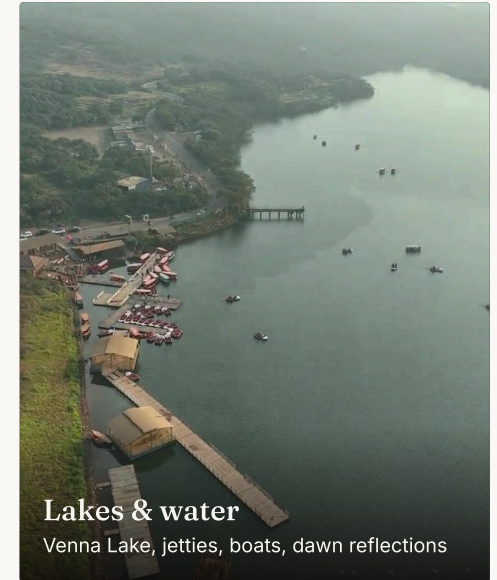
Forest & trails

Dense evergreen cover for chases, walks and night work



Viewpoints & cliffs

Valley edges, sunrise and sunset points, cloud lines



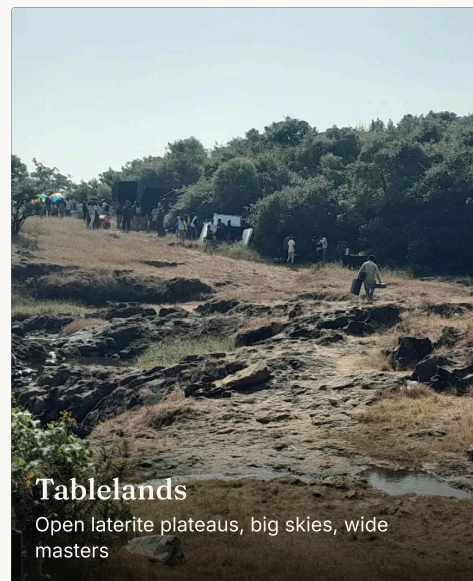
Lakes & water

Venna Lake, jetties, boats, dawn reflections



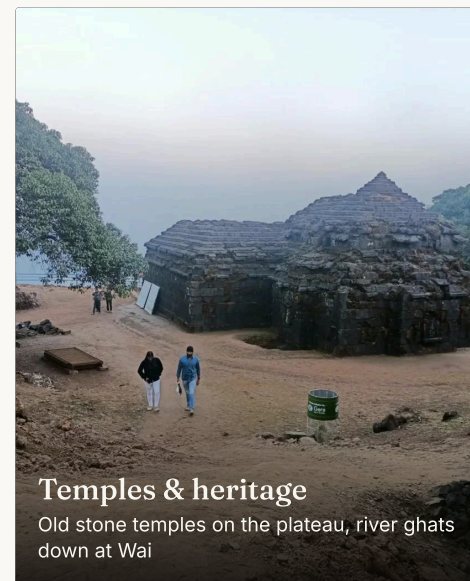
Ghats & roads

Hairpin bends, tree tunnels, open ridge roads



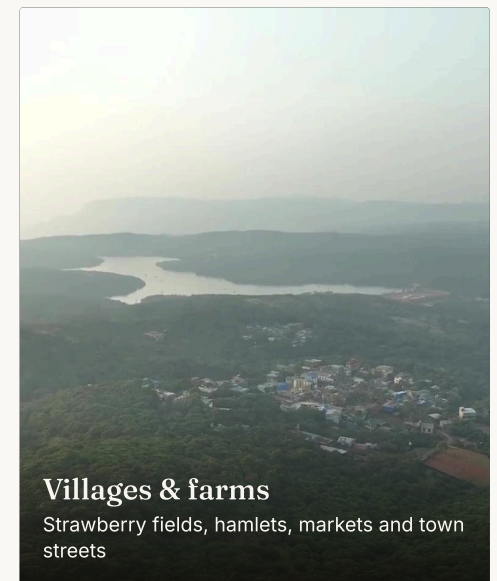
Tablelands

Open laterite plateaus, big skies, wide masters



Temples & heritage

Old stone temples on the plateau, river ghats down at Wai



Villages & farms

Strawberry fields, hamlets, markets and town streets

Who clears what.

OFFICE	USUALLY NEEDED FOR
Town council	Public roads, streets, municipal viewpoints and gardens. Mahabaleshwar Giristhan and Panchgani Nagar Parishads.
Local police	Traffic and crowd control, night shoots, public scenes, prop weapons and uniforms, drones.
Forest Department	Reserve forest, trails and forest-managed points.
District administration	Larger units and anything the local offices refer up, from Satara.
Private owners	Bungalows, hotels, estates and farms, with a written location agreement.
Drones	Registered drone and certified pilot under the national drone rules, plus local clearance. Some zones are no-fly.

Fees and lead times are set by each office and change. Saud confirms both for your exact locations and dates before you lock the schedule.

Keep these ready

Request letter on production letterhead

Short synopsis and scene descriptions

Location list with dates and call times

Crew count and vehicle list with numbers

ID of the authorised signatory

Drone and pilot details, if flying

Insurance cover, if the production has it

How it runs

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| 1
You send the list | 2
Saud maps the offices | 3
Applications filed | 4
Cleared before the unit arrives |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|

An eco-sensitive zone

Mahabaleshwar and Panchgani sit inside a notified eco-sensitive zone. Sets must be temporary, nothing is cut or painted without consent, and every location is handed back as it was found.

No need to haul it all up the ghat.

Everything below is sourced and crewed locally, as standalone hire or bundled into one production package around your dates.



Camera & grip

Tripods, sliders and rigging for slopes, rock and wet ground.

Aerial

Licensed drone operators for valleys, ghats and lake work.

Lighting & electrical

Packages for day interiors and night exteriors.

Extras & crowd

Local background artists and crowd control for busy scenes.

Cranes, jibs & dollies

Panther dollies, jib arms and cranes, delivered to the hill.

Generators

Silent sets and backup power, independent of the local grid.

Vans & vehicles

Unit vans, equipment trucks and cast cars.

Local crew

Runners and unit hands who know the terrain and the weather.

The unit moves when the road is clear.

For 20 years Saud has run Dizzyland Tours & Travels, a car and van fleet tied up with hotels across both towns. The same drivers move cast and crew on the call sheet.

Unit moves

Vans and cars for cast and crew, timed to calls and wraps.

Stay

Hotel tie-ups in both towns, from unit blocks to cast suites.

Pickups

Airports and stations anywhere in India: Mumbai, Pune, Kolhapur and beyond, timed to arrivals.

Where to base

Mahabaleshwar for most of the plateau. Panchgani for Wai and the tablelands.

START HERE

The first message.

Send these and Saud comes back with options, permissions and a timeline. WhatsApp is fastest.

Production Company and title

Dates Recce and shoot window

Scenes Location types needed

Special Night, drone, stunts, crowd

Stay & travel Rooms, pickups

Format Feature, series, ad, music video

Unit size Crew, cast, vehicles

References Stills, mood, past frames

Gear What you bring, what you need

Contact Line producer, phone

ON THE RECCE

What Saud checks at every location

- ☐ Vehicle access and parking for the unit
- ☐ Power, generator position and cable runs
- ☐ Mobile signal and walkie range
- ☐ Sun path for the call times
- ☐ Sound: traffic, temples, schools, wind
- ☐ Green room, washrooms and holding area
- ☐ Wet-weather and fog backup
- ☐ Who owns it and who clears it
- ☐ Nearest hospital and emergency route



PLAN A SHOOT

Send the dates and the look. Saud will tell you what the hills can do.

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BASED IN

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