



Thirsty For History

Imagine a city with two rivers, but no clean water to drink. **The solution?**



Swipe to know all about
The Underground Canals of Pune



PUNE WAS ONCE A SMALL TOWN LOCATED AT THE CONFLUENCE OF TWO RIVERS, THE MULA AND THE MUTHA.

During the Peshwas' rule in the 18th century CE, the town expanded rapidly. More people meant a greater need for drinking water.

There were many wells, but there was just one problem- the *water in most wells was salty or 'brackish'*. So they could not be used for drinking. To add to this, Pune is in the rain shadow region, so water would not stay in the city.

So the Peshwas faced a challenge that many of us are familiar with.

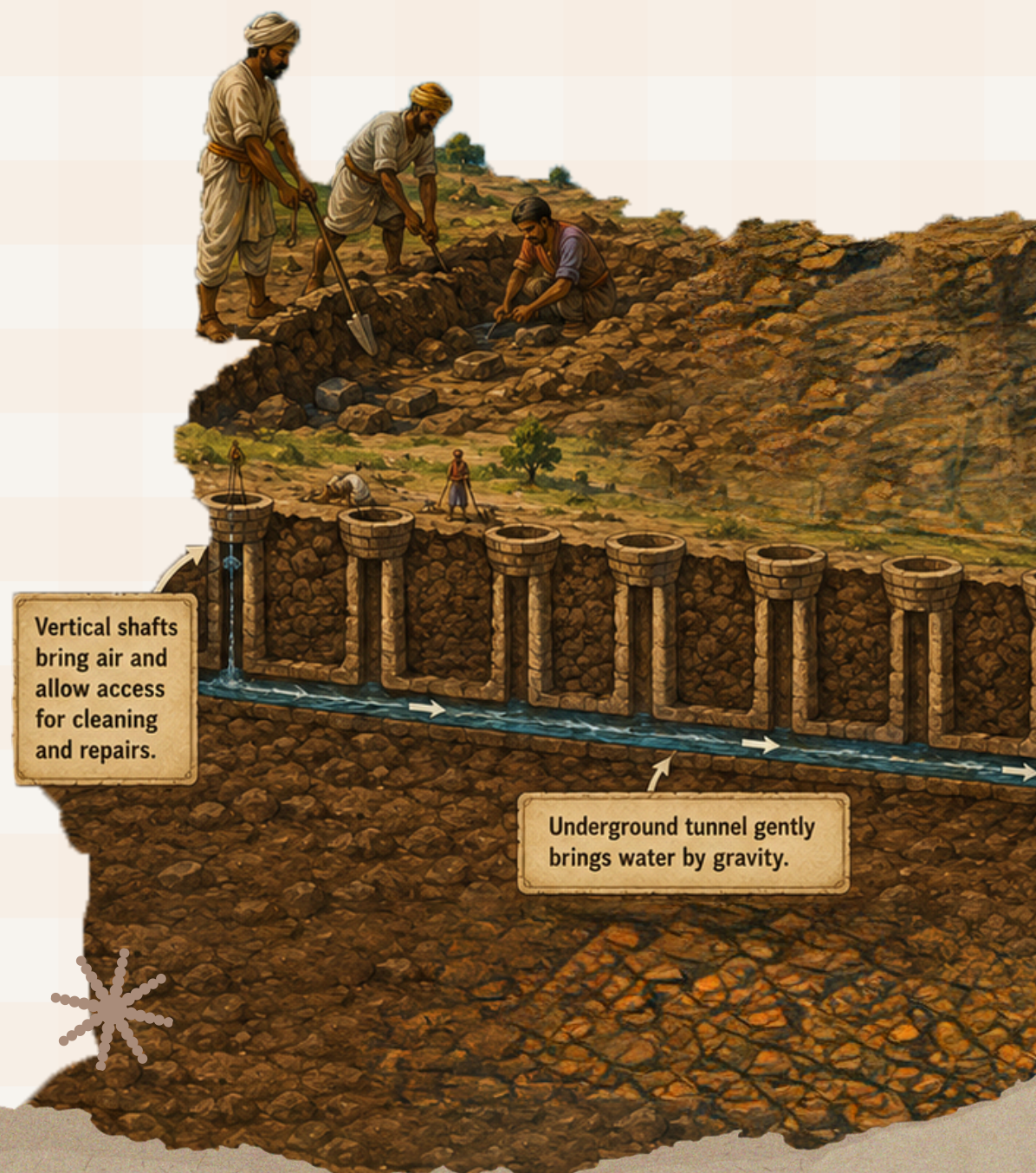
WHERE DO YOU FIND CLEAN WATER FOR A GROWING CITY?



THE SOLUTION WAS INSPIRED BY A 3,000 YEAR OLD PERSIAN TECHNOLOGY KNOWN AS THE QANAT OR KAREZ SYSTEM.

Instead of open canals where water evaporates in the sun, this system uses *underground tunnels*. It keeps the water cool, clean, and hidden.

Similar systems already existed in cities like Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, and Burhanpur.



THE PESHWAS ADAPTED
THIS IDEA TO SUIT
PUNE'S LANDSCAPE.

THE JOURNEY OF PUNE'S DRINKING WATER BEGAN AT THE **KATRAJ RESERVOIRS**, LOCATED ON THE HILLS IN THE SOUTH OF THE CITY.

Rainwater collected in these tanks flowed downhill and was directed towards the city. Before entering the city, the water passed through settling tanks, where mud and silt were removed.

From there, it travelled through underground stone channels known as ***nahars***.

THIS ENSURED
THAT **CLEAN**
WATER REACHED
THE CITY.



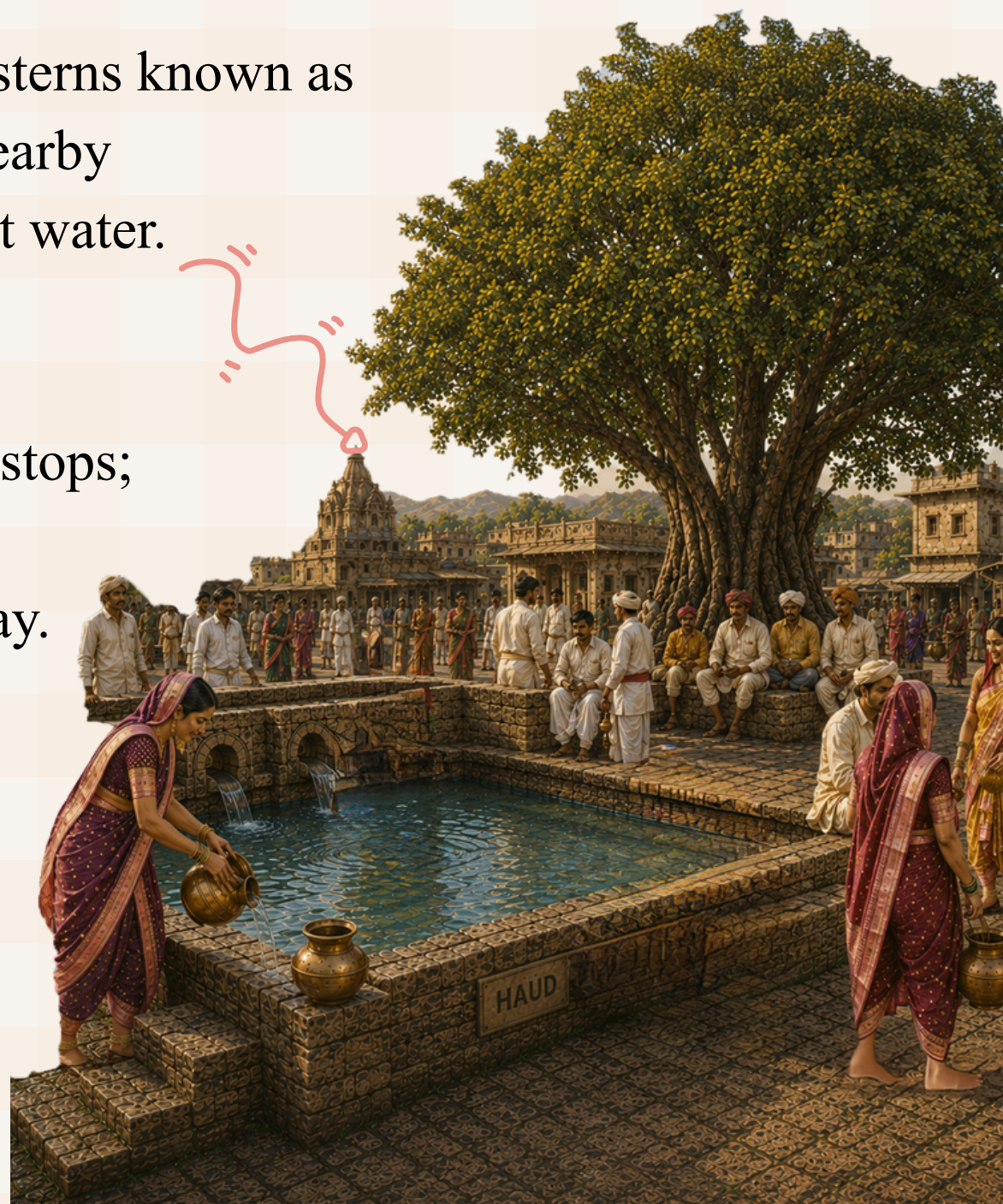
AT ITS PEAK, THIS SYSTEM STRETCHED ACROSS MORE THAN **20 KILOMETRES OF UNDERGROUND CHANNELS.**

Along the way, the water reached over 200 outlets across the city.

These outlets filled public cisterns known as **hauds**, where people from nearby neighbourhoods could collect water.

The hauds weren't just water stops; they were spaces where the community gathered every day.

PEOPLE COLLECTED
WATER, SHARED NEWS,
AND DISCUSSED
EVENTS.



THIS SYSTEM ALSO SUPPLIED WATER TO SHANIWAR WADA, THE GRAND RESIDENCE OF THE PESHWAS.

This wasn't even the coolest part, though! After serving the city, the *remaining water eventually flowed back into the Mutha River*, ensuring nothing was wasted.

Nearly three hundred years ago, the haud network showed how thoughtful planning and engineering could save water.

OLD CITIES KNEW THE SECRET TO SAVING WATER. IT'S TIME WE REMEMBERED IT, TOO.

