

Bihar Government eases coronavirus curbs-colleges, gyms to reopen

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The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar on Monday allowed reopening of colleges, universities and senior sections in schools, besides easing several other curbs that are in place as part of the COVID-induced lockdown clamped on the state two months ago.

The announcement to the effect was made by the chief minister on his Twitter handle after he chaired a meeting of the high-powered crisis management group which reviewed the COVID-19 situation in the state.

According to detailed guidelines issued by the home department later, the next phase of unlock will begin from Wednesday, July 7, and remain in force for a month.

During the period, lessons will be imparted in schools for students of classes XI and XII with not more than 50 per cent attendance and the same will be applicable to colleges, universities and technical institutes.

However, none of these educational institutions was given permission to conduct examinations during the period. Coaching institutes, too, will remain closed.

Strict compliance of standard operating procedure and special arrangements for vaccination at all educational institutions will be a must, the home department stated.

Gyms, clubs and swimming pools would also be allowed to resume business with 50 per cent capacity, and only those who have been vaccinated would be permitted to use these facilities.

Stadiums and sports complexes may permit entry of sportspersons for their practice sessions, though no other activity shall be allowed, the notification said.

Restaurants have been told to resume dine-in facilities with 50 per cent capacity.

All government and private offices will be able to function "normally", doing away with the previous cap of 50 per cent attendance, though those in charge of these establishments will have to ensure that only vaccinated people are given entry.

Other restrictions such as shops except those dealing in essential items being allowed to open only on alternate days and not beyond 7 pm, besides night curfew from 9 pm to 5 am, will continue to remain in force.

Places of religious worship will remain closed. However, the number of people allowed to take part in wedding ceremonies or funeral has been raised to 50. Earlier, only 25 people were permitted at such gatherings.

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