

## **Mumbai local- Allow unvaccinated to travel, HC asks Maharashtra Govt.**

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The Bombay High Court on Monday asked the Maharashtra government to withdraw ban on unvaccinated and allow them to travel in Mumbai local trains as Covid situation has improved, according to news agency PTI.

Hearing two public interest litigations (PILs) seeking that all people in Mumbai be allowed to travel in local trains, irrespective of their vaccine status, Chief Justice Dipankar Datta said: "Let bygones be bygones. Let there be a new beginning."

The chief justice said Chief Secretary Debashish Chakraborty must inform the court on Tuesday if the state government will withdraw its decision to permit only fully vaccinated people to travel in the suburban trains.

The PILs challenged three notifications issued by the Maharashtra government in July and August last year that prohibited unvaccinated people from travelling in local trains, considered as lifeline of Mumbai.

During the previous hearings, the HC had asked for the state files on the three notifications under challenge and found that the decision to prohibit non-vaccinated people from travelling in local trains had been taken unilaterally by the then chief secretary Sitaram Kunte.

According to PTI, the high court today said, "Chief Secretary has to withdraw order (the notification on such prohibition). Whatever has been done by his predecessor (Kunte) is not in accordance with law."

"Withdraw this and allow people. Now, the Covid situation has improved. Maharashtra handled it beautifully. Why are you inviting a bad name?" the court was quoted as saying by the news agency.

Seeking the chief secretary's response by tomorrow afternoon, the court said the state must be sensible and not treat the issue as an adversarial litigation.