

Maharashtra: Cinema halls, restaurants allowed to function at 100% capacity

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- Swimming pools, religious places, entertainment parks allowed to function with 100% capacity in 14 districts, including Mumbai.

Easing pandemic-related restrictions, the Maharashtra government on Wednesday allowed shopping complexes, restaurants, cinema halls and theaters to operate at 100 per cent capacity in 14 out of 36 districts in the state, including Mumbai. These 14 districts are: Mumbai city, Mumbai suburban district, Pune, Bhandara, Sindhudurg, Nagpur, Raigad, Wardha, Ratnagiri, Satara, Sangli, Gondia, Chandrapur and Kolhapur. A government notification said that in these districts 90 per cent of the eligible population has taken at least one dose of anti-coronavirus vaccines, and over 70 per cent people are fully vaccinated.

The positivity rate in these areas is less than 10 per cent and occupancy of oxygen-supported or ICU beds is less than 40 per cent. Social, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural, religious, political and festival-linked events including those related to marriages and funerals and other gatherings and congregations are now permitted in these districts with attendance at 50 per cent of the capacity of the venue, the notification said. But if a gathering is expected to be of more than 1,000 persons, the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) will have to be informed and it may impose reasonable restrictions.

For other districts, attendance at such events will be capped at 50 per cent of capacity or 200, whichever is less. All shopping complexes, cinema halls, restaurants and bars, sports complexes, gyms, spas, swimming pools, religious places, drama theatres ('natyagrihas'), tourist places, entertainment parks etc are allowed to operate with 100 per cent capacity in these (14) districts," the notification said.

For other administrative units (remaining 22 districts of the state) excluded from this list, these shall operate at 50 per cent of the capacity, the notification added.

Based on inputs of the state health department as well as the government's COVID Task Force and considering the present pandemic situation, the State Executive Committee (SEC) has decided to ease the norms, it added. There has been steady decline in new daily coronavirus cases in Maharashtra.

On January 31, the state government had eased some restrictions. The January 31 guidelines had said that swimming pools, water-parks, theatres and restaurants can operate with 50 per cent capacity, subject to permission of the competent authority, in the districts of Mumbai, Pune, Bhandara, Sindhudurg, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Satara, Sangli, Gondia, Kolhapur and Chandrapur.