

FAQs

Why is Maharashtra witnessing another spike in Covid-19 cases?

What is the news?

- With the coronavirus number showing an increasing trend over the last two weeks, Maharashtra has reintroduced some restrictions on the assembly and movement of people. The state government has **warned that it could even bring back the lockdown** if it was felt necessary.

What is the Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra?

- Every day of the last week, for the first time since mid-January, Maharashtra has reported more than 3,000 new cases of coronavirus infections. The new cases in the second week of February were at least 14 per cent more than the first. In the week ending this Sunday (February 14), 20,207 new cases were detected across the state, compared to 17,672 in the previous week (February 1-7). In the week prior to that (January 25-31), the state had reported 17,293 cases.
- Mumbai, Pune, their surrounding areas along with the Vidarbha region have contributed the maximum to this surge. Nearly 60 per cent of the new infections in the second week of February were reported from Pune, Mumbai, Nagpur, Thane and Amravati. With 3,228 cases in that week (February 8-14), Pune had the highest number among these. Nagpur (2,628 cases) and Amravati (2,420) discovered more cases than Mumbai (2,195). Thane reported 1,960 cases during that week.

In the last one week, Mumbai and Pune have both reported more than 600 cases in a day, something that they had not done in at least a month. Nagpur has reported more than 500 cases twice in the last week while Thane has gone past 400.

The rise is not very alarming right now. Maharashtra had been reporting between 2,000 and 2,500 cases through most of January, but the numbers were steadily, though very slowly, going down. The spike seen in the last two weeks is a reversal of a declining trend that seemed to have become permanent.

It is not a red signal yet, but definitely a yellow warning.

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Maharashtra coronavirus spike: Why is it happening?

One important reason could be the reopening of the local trains for the general public in the Mumbai region. But that does not explain the increase being witnessed in Vidarbha.

Moreover, recently-held gram panchayat elections could also have played a role.

Some areas in Vidarbha and Marathwada had reported more than 80 per cent voter turnout during the gram panchayat elections. It could have led to the spread of the disease. For instance, the Tivsa tehsil in Amravati district is now showing 32.7 per cent positivity rate. That means, every third sample is testing positive.

Similarly, the Sasurve village in Rahmatpur, Satara district recently reported 62 new infections. This village has a total population of only 1,900. Election campaigning and voting had seen good crowds in these areas.

Marriage functions and other family events, that had to be postponed because of Covid-19 last year but are beginning to take place now, could also be contributing. That is one of the reasons why the restrictions on such gatherings have been brought back.

- It is not uncommon to see gatherings of 400-500 at marriages or other events these days. But from now on, the rule of not more than 50 invitees would be strictly enforced. Also, people would have to wear masks at these functions.
- There was also a mistaken belief that the epidemic was over. One cannot let their guard down and use Covid fatigue as an excuse to not wear masks. In fact, like in the United States, there is a need to start using double-layered masks.
- State health minister Rajesh Tope agreed, and said people not following physical distancing norms, or avoiding face masks, would be heavily penalised. He said the district administration had authorised to shut schools if the situation so warranted.
- Interestingly, there has been a drop in the number of samples being tested. Contact tracing efforts have also become weaker. Districts like Sindhudurg, Wardha, Palghar, Osmanabad, Nandurbar and Chandrapure have reported very low testing in recent days, even less than the recommended 140 per million.
- Government teams are now at various places across the 14 districts that have shown an increase in numbers, and identifying the most vulnerable spots to take necessary actions.

FAQs

What are the present coronavirus restrictions in Maharashtra?

Maha restrictions

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- A **complete ban** on processions, protests, and rallies for the time being
- Buildings to be **sealed** if multiple positive cases emerge
- Stringent **fin**es for people not following norms of social distancing or not wearing face masks in public



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