

Maharashtra Retains Dry Days on Holi, Muharram, Gandhi Jayanti

The Government of Maharashtra has reaffirmed that Holi, Muharram, and Gandhi Jayanti will continue to be observed as designated dry days across the state, confirming that there has been no revision to the existing excise policy. The clarification follows a report by Pune Mirror suggesting that liquor outlets might be permitted to operate on select festival days to counter illegal and black-market sales. State officials have since termed the report inaccurate, reiterating that all notified dry day restrictions remain firmly in place.

According to the state excise department, the dry day framework is part of a long-standing regulatory structure designed to maintain public order, uphold religious and national sentiments, and ensure compliance across the hospitality and retail liquor sectors. Licensed establishments — including bars, restaurants, hotels, and retail liquor shops — are required to strictly follow the annual dry day calendar issued by the state.

In 2026, Maharashtra is expected to observe approximately 28 dry days. These include national holidays such as Republic Day (January 26), Independence Day (August 15), and Gandhi Jayanti (October 2), along with major religious occasions including Holi, Diwali, Mahashivratri, and Muharram. On these days, the sale of alcohol is prohibited statewide, although hotels and restaurants may continue regular food and accommodation services.

For the hospitality industry, such clarifications are critical. Festival periods typically coincide with heightened travel, social events, and banquet business. Hotels, restaurants, and event venues align their operational planning, inventory management, and promotional strategies with the official excise calendar. Any ambiguity around dry day regulations can disrupt planning and guest communication.

Industry stakeholders emphasise that clear and timely policy communication remains vital as India's hospitality and tourism sectors continue to expand. Transparent guidelines help businesses remain compliant while managing guest expectations effectively during peak travel and festive periods.