

## Maharashtra allows hotels, restaurants to sell alcohol for off-premises consumption

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NEW DELHI: The [Maharashtra government](#) has allowed hotels and restaurants, holders of the FL-III license to sell their stock of alcohol for off premises consumption. ET has seen a copy of the order dated May 19. But, the exemption does not apply to Mumbai where BMC has prohibited the sale of alcohol and other areas in the state where local authorities have restricted liquor sales.

ET was the first to report about the hospitality industry's demand for being allowed to sell their stock of alcohol in its edition dated May 6.

Industry executives who had been lobbying for the move have nevertheless welcomed it.

"In other places in the state where alcohol consumption is allowed by local authorities, it will provide the much needed cash in hand to our restaurant members," said National [Restaurant Association of India](#) (NRAI) president Anurag Katriar.

The order by the home department signed by Valsa Nair Singh, principal secretary (Excise) of the Maharashtra government states: "In exercise of the powers conferred by clause (c) of the sub section (1) of section 139 of the Maharashtra Prohibition Act and of all other powers enabling it in this behalf, the government of Maharashtra hereby exempts the person holding license in form FL-III as appended to the [Bombay Foreign Liquor Rules](#) 1953 from the provisions of the said rules, so far as it relates to the provisions of the license of sale for consumption to residents or boarders under the said rules subject to conditions."

The order further states closing stock of foreign liquor as on March 24 with the FL-III license holder may be sold to valid permit holders in sealed bottles for off premises consumption. On consent from the license in form FL/BR-II, the FL-III license holder may sell his remainder of beer stock as a one time measure to the relevant FL/BR-II license holder on a special transport pass.

The order also goes on to specify there shall be no sale of alcohol at the FL-III license premises and the FL-III license holders, besides taking due precautions for the sale of pre existing stock shall not procure fresh liquor till the lockdown lasts. The exemption shall be in force till the lockdown period or till liquor stocks last, and the government may at any time at its discretion can also modify or rescind the order.

A separate order dated May 19 from the excise department stated the FL-III license holders have to sell the stock at MRP rates from 11 am in the morning till 6 pm. The order will be in effect till the lockdown ends. The order is not applicable for containment zones.

Failing to get anything in the Rs 20 lakh crore package hospitality industry bodies and leaders have also sought assistance from Aditya Thackeray cabinet minister of tourism and environment for the Maharashtra government. Seeking some relief on statutory liabilities like electricity tariffs and property tax, industry leaders conveyed to the minister via a webinar they had not received any assistance from the central government under the Rs 20 lakh crore Atmanirbhar package. The minister said he will write to the central government on the matter.

Thackeray said he is really keen that Maharashtra will be the first to declare and deliver something for the hotel industry during the webinar organised by industry body FHRAI and [moderated by Jimmy Mistry, CMD, Della Adventure & Resorts](#). Other industry participants included Vivek Nair of Leela Palaces Hotels & Resorts, Sanjay Sethi, MD, Chalet Hotels, and Param Kannampilly, chairman and managing director, Concept Hospitality.

"Safe travel will be important, we need to be transparent in our numbers the way we have been so far. The way 9/11 changed travel, COVID-19 will do the same. We will have to adjust...spaces are small in Mumbai and Maharashtra, so how do we move ahead? Let's put together a group and move ahead unitedly as a team," Thackeray said



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