

Mumbai packs bags, MTDC resorts full for long weekend

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Mumbai: After attending a family function in Amravati, Borivli resident Rajesh Nakhwa and his wife reached Chandrapur to spot tigers at Tadoba. But they had to return home disappointed as all hotels, resorts and homestays were fully booked.

With jungles, beaches and hill stations on their mind, almost every Mumbai-kar seems to be making the most of the extended weekend, starting with Mahavir Jayanti on Thursday and Good Friday. This is probably the first long weekend after the state government removed all Covid curbs.

The state tourism resorts at Tadoba and Melghat jungles in Vidarbha, Tarkali and Ganpatiphule beaches in Konkan and Mahabaleshwar hill station in Satara are

among the top picks for a quick getaway, said officials. They added that their resorts are completely sold out, but booking enquiries continue to flood. Field director of Pench tiger reserve Srilaxmi A said all designated safaris have been fully booked. Vidarbha has seven tiger reserves with each reserve having an average three to four gates and each of them having an average 30 safaris in a day.

MTDC managing director Jayashree Bhoj said engagements, like birdwatching, nature trails, hiking, indoor and outdoor games, were attracting holidayers. "Tarkarli, Ganpatiphule, Kunkeshwar, Velaneshwar, Harihareshwar, Mahabaleshwar, Shirdi, Bhandardara, GrapePark in Nashik, Tadoba and Karla are 100% booked," said MTDC general manager Chandrashekar Jaiswal, adding that their re-

sorts at Lonar crater, Ajanta and Malshej Ghat were a little over 50% full.

Many private resorts and hotels at these tourist places are also almost full. "Till Wednesday, most hotels had 80% bookings. After a two-year lull due to the pandemic, events like exhibitions, meetings and conferences have come in full mode, resulting in heavy bookings...even the rates have restored to the pre-Covid levels," Hotel and Restaurant Association (Western India) senior vice-president Pradeep Shetty said.

Tourism has revived, said Vijay Shewakramani, owner of Bright Lamp Resorts and Spa at Mahabaleshwar. "My hotel is 100% booked and so are hotels all over Mahabaleshwar." Rakesh Guleria, general manager of Dukes Retreat, said the Lonvala resort is filled with holidayers, mostly from Mumbai.