

# Request Bohras to maintain calm during trial: HC to parties

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The Bombay high court on Wednesday requested the incumbent 53rd Dai Ul Mutlaq, Mufaddal Saifuddin, and his uncle Khuzaima Qutbuddin to issue a statement to their followers to avoid further polarisation of the community. This is likely to happen after the evidence is forwarded during the succession trial, which is likely to begin from April 27.

Justice Gautam Patel said: "There will be ups and downs during the trial; give a joint undertaking to the community to maintain calm."

On April 27, the court will record the cross examination of Qutbuddin. Due to security concerns raised by the police, only 25 people from each side will be allowed to remain present. The high court registry will issue them entry passes. The court directed the administration and IT department to install audio-visual devices and microphones inside the Centre Hall, courtroom, where the trial will be conducted.

Qutbuddin is the stepbrother of the deceased 52nd Dai, Mohammed Burhanuddin. Khuzaima, who was Mazoon (second in command after



## What's next?

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Syedna) in the million-strong Dawoodi Bohra community until the death of his brother, challenged the succession soon after Burhanuddin's death.

Saifuddin, the present Syedna, through his elder brother Dr Qaidjoher Ezzuddin who is appointed as the constituted attorney, opposed reliefs sought in the declaratory suit.

In an affidavit filed earlier in response to Qutbuddin's petition in the HC, Qaidjoher contented that "the suit is based on false and untenable cases. Bohras across the world have given misaq (oath of allegiance to Mufaddal). Professors and students and teachers of the 200-year-old Arabic teaching academy in Surat and its branches and various state heads have recognised Mufaddal as the successor. Only a handful are not accepting him."

In June 2011, Mufaddal Saifuddin was nominated successor according to the press statement from the community. Qutbuddin publicly challenged the succession for the first time after death of Burhanuddin on January 17 last year.

Qutbuddin claimed that he did not challenge the false claims made by Syedna Mufaddal until now because he (Qutbuddin) had been asked to maintain his appointment in confidence by Syedna Burhanuddin Saheb. He prayed and hoped that Syedna Burhanuddin Saheb would recover and set the position right in the manner Syedna deemed appropriate, he claimed.