

her pandals played music on loudspeakers throughout the day. "That has definitely stopped. Noise levels during processions have also reduced. Earlier, mandals used to ferry 'walls of speakers' during immersion processions. This is not so now," said Bedekar.

Abdulali added that she did not see loudspeakers at most processions. "Even if only loudspeakers are removed from processions, there is a drop in noise levels," she said.

The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) will start recording noise levels from September 7.

JB Sangewar, regional officer of the MPCB, said that he too has observed that noise levels are low this Ganeshotsav. "Apart from the increased awareness about the health hazards of noise pollution, there is also better monitoring by police after the high court order," said Sangewar.

Before the festival, Awaaz Foundation had a meeting with civic officials and police officers in Thane, Navi Mumbai and Mumbai and told them that silence zone rules would be strictly enforced and equipment would be seized in case of violation.

Eco-Ganeshas continue to draw one and all

DNA Correspondent

Mumbaikars, including prominent state government officials, continue to make a beeline to the eight city malls to pray to the Ashtavinayak and support DNA's Eco-Ganesh initiative on the sixth day of the festival.

On Tuesday, minister of state for housing Sachin Ahir, state environment secretary Valsa Nair Singh and others visited several events organised under the eco-Ganesh initiative. The officials exhorted citizens, who bring Ganesh home, and sarvanjanik Ganpati mandals to follow eco-friendly practices.

Proceeds from the DNA initiative will go towards the ISKCON's project that enables feeding of one lakh underprivileged children every day.

The Ashtavinayak idols have been kept at eight malls - Sobo Central, Center One, Growell's 101, Korum, Nirmal



Prashant Jadhav DNA

Minister of state for housing Sachin Ahir and IAS officers pray to the Shri Mayureshwar idol set up at Sobo Central in Tardeo on Tuesday

Lifestyle, Oberoi Mall, R City and R Mall in Thane.

DNA also provides devotees, who cannot go on the pilgrimage, a chance to go on an Ashtavinayak yatra in less than 100km. The Ashtavinayak - all eight are located in Maharashtra - are popular because they are considered to be *swayambhus* (self-originated). Five are located in

Pune district, two in Raigad and one in Ahmednagar.

These 5-ft tall idols are made of *shadu mati*, a clay variety that dissolves easily in water and does not pollute it.

On Wednesday, when these idols will be immersed, DNA will ensure that eco-friendly practices are followed such as no use of *gula* or plastic bags.