

Night curfew imposed in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu till 31 Dec amid Omicron threat

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The central government on Thursday imposed a night curfew in the union territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu to curb the spread of Covid-19 amid rising concerns over the new coronavirus variant Omicron.

Starting Thursday, the night curfew will be in force between 11 pm and 6 am till 31 December, as per an order issued by the health and family welfare department of the UT.

The order also cited the Union health ministry's recent advisory to all the states and UTs "for rigorous screening and testing of all international arrivals" in view of the "emergence of highly mutant Covid-19 variant B.1.1529".

It further said that the "administration shall take intensive surveillance measures in accordance with the advisory and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare".

Moreover, the previous guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Centre and the UT administration will also remain in effect till 31 December or till further orders.

The UT was under a night curfew earlier in April following a sudden rise in the new coronavirus infections. However, the restrictions on the movement were lifted gradually after the situation came under control a few months back.

At present, there are no active cases of Covid-19 in the entire union territory. Of the total 10,655 persons infected so far, 10,651 have recovered, while four deaths were reported.

Omicron in India

India has detected two cases of Omicron variant of the coronavirus until now, said Lav Agarwal, the joint secretary of Union health ministry, on Thursday during a press briefing.

Both the cases have been reported in Karnataka with the patients being two men aged 66 and 46. "All primary, secondary contacts of both of them have been traced and are being tested," said the government.

"The patients are experiencing mild symptoms. In all such cases in the country and across the world so far, no severe symptom has been noted. WHO has said that its emerging evidence is being studied," it added.

The new potentially more contagious B.1.1529 variant was first reported to the World Health Organisation (WHO) from South Africa on 24 November and has been designated as a "Variant of Concern" by the global body.

A "variant of concern" is the WHO's top category of worrying Covid-19 variants.

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