

## Puducherry extends Covid induced curfew till 2 Jan amid Omicron threat

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The Covid-induced lockdown restrictions in the union territory of Puducherry have been extended till 2 January 2022, reported PTI

Quoting an order by the state executive committee (SEC) of the Disaster Management Committee, the news agency stated that night curfew will also continue in Puducherry from 11 pm to 5 am every day.

According to the report, the SEC stated that although the number of new Covid-19 cases were coming down in the UT, there was still a need to keep vigil to contain transmission of the virus.

However, authorities have decided to relax the night curfew restrictions completely on the eve of Christmas (24 December) and on Christmas day (25 December).

The night curfew will also be relaxed on 30 and 31 December, and on 1 January up to 2 am in view of the new year. Curbs would be in force on these days from 2 am to 5 am.

While social entertainment-related gatherings are prohibited on the other days, they would be permitted on 24, 30 and 31 December and on New Year day (1 January) subject to adherence to Covid appropriate behaviour.

Restaurants, hotels, bars and liquor shops and hospitality sector establishments would be permitted to operate in compliance with all Covid protocols.

With the prior approval of licensing authority restaurants and hotels can function beyond normal hours on the eve of New Year, the release said.

Religious places and other places of worship would be permitted to remain open for the public to offer prayers and darshan and to perform 'archana' up to 10 pm every day.

Churches will however be permitted to remain open for the public for prayers after 10 pm on the eve of Christmas (24 December) and on Christmas day after 10 pm.

All places of worship would be permitted to remain open for prayers after 10 pm on the eve of New Year (31 December), the release said.

Wedding celebration would be permitted in religious institutions with a maximum of 25 invitees at any point of time, it was stated.

The release said that gatherings at marriages would be permitted subject to the condition that the number of guests do not exceed 100 at any point of time. The number persons turning up at funerals to pay last respects should also not exceed 20.

The Health Department should maintain close watch and surveillance on those coming from foreign countries in view of the threat posed by the new variant of Covid- Omicron.

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There would be no restriction on the working time of the petrol bunks, banks, ATM centres, internet services, telecommunication and other essential services. Shooting of films or TV serials would be permitted subject to condition that there should be a maximum of 100 people.

All cinemas, theatres and multiplexes would be permitted to function with full capacity up to 12.30 am with adherence to Covid norms.