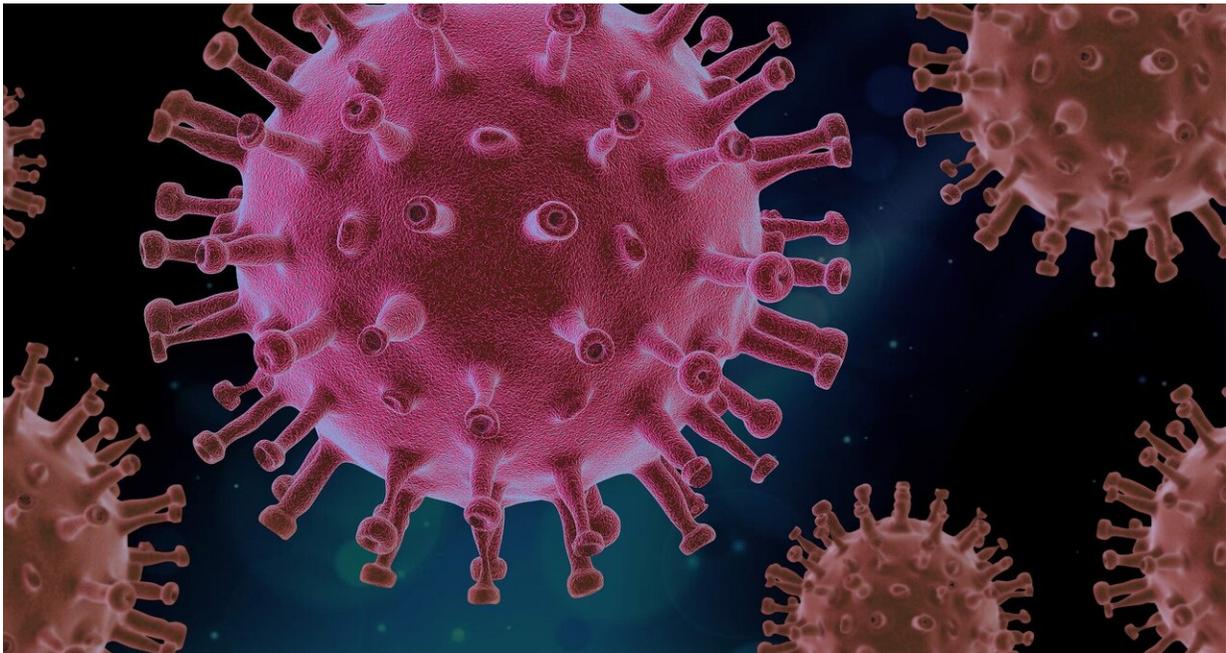


India's capital eases curfew as Omicron wave slows

January 27 2022



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India's capital announced the end of a weekend curfew and eased other stringent coronavirus restrictions on Thursday, with government data suggesting the country's recent Omicron variant outbreak had slowed.

Health authorities are still recording more than a quarter million cases across the country each day, but daily deaths have stayed a tiny fraction

of those seen last year.

Local officials in New Delhi decided to reopen restaurants, allow markets to operate at full capacity and lift an all-weekend curfew imposed at the start of January that kept nearly all residents confined to their homes.

"In view of the decline in positive cases, it was decided to gradually ease restrictions while ensuring adherence to COVID appropriate behaviour," Delhi lieutenant governor Anil Baijal said.

India recorded more than 285,000 new cases overnight—down substantially from the figures seen a week earlier—and just 573 deaths.

"In the last five to seven days there is an early indication of COVID cases plateauing... but we need to observe and take precautions," [health ministry](#) official Lav Agarwal told a Thursday press conference.

An overnight curfew will remain in effect for all the capital's residents except essential workers.

The country was battered by a devastating COVID outbreak last year that saw 200,000 people killed in a matter of weeks, overwhelming hospitals and crematoriums.

Since then India has administered more than 1.6 billion vaccine doses and expanded its inoculation drive to teenagers, while giving booster shots to [vulnerable people](#) and frontline workers.

Its current COVID wave comes just weeks before various sub-national elections including for Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state and home to 220 million people.

Election authorities have restricted public campaign rallies, normally teeming with huge crowds, over fears they could spread the virus.

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