

## Israel reopens to vaccinated travellers from medium-risk countries

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Dhaka: Israel announced on January 3 that it will welcome foreigners with presumed Covid-19 immunity from countries deemed medium-risk from January 9, partially relaxing a ban imposed in late November following the spread of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus.

This means Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's government is seeing waning value in sweeping travel curbs which wrecked winter tourism amid surge in domestic coronavirus cases.

The Health Ministry of the country said that, as of January 9, foreign travellers from 199 "orange" countries will be admitted if they can prove they are vaccinated or have recovered from Covid-19.

Orange-listed countries include Australia, Italy and Ireland. The ministry recommended that South Africa, Nigeria, Spain, Portugal, France and Canada, currently among 16 countries listed as "red" or high Covid-19 risk, be changed to "orange".

The United States, Britain, United Arab Emirates, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Mexico, Switzerland and Turkey remain on Israel's red list, the health ministry said. Visitors from those countries require advance special permission from an Israeli committee to enter.

Israel has also scaled down precautionary self-isolation periods for people who have been exposed to Covid-19 carriers, over concerns that mass quarantining could harm the economy.