

Spain reopens borders to all vaccinated travelers

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 13 June, 2021



Dhaka: Spain has reopened its borders to vaccinated travellers from all across the world on June 7, with the hope of getting an influx of visitors which will revive its important tourism sector battered by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Spain is a safe destination," Health Minister Carolina Darias insisted, adding that the country was "in the process of reclaiming its global leadership in tourism."

Non-vaccinated Europeans – who used to enter Spain with a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours – can now take a cheaper antigen test instead.

But in a setback, the United Kingdom, a huge tourism market for the country, has not yet removed Spain from its list of at-risk countries, meaning British travellers will have to quarantine on their return home as well as pay for expensive Covid-19 tests.

The British normally make up the largest contingent of tourists to Spain – in 2019 over one-fifth of Spain's 83.5 million arrivals were from the United Kingdom.

Regardless, those in the tourism sector are still hoping for a summer surge of visitors.

Jose Luis Prieto, President of Spain's travel agents' union (Unav) is hoping for a "spectacular

recovery" from June 7.

According to him, over the last few weeks tour operators in Britain, France and Germany – Spain's three main markets – have been receiving a large number of enquiries.

Across the country, from the Costa del Sol to the Canary Islands, hotels and restaurants are reopening after months of closure, and airlines have restarted routes dropped during the height of the pandemic.

[Malaga airport](#) was expecting around 20 different flights on June 7 morning alone, from places around Europe such as Berlin, Lille, Frankfurt and London.

Spain has also begun allowing cruise boats into its ports again from June 7.

Heavily dependent on its tourism industry, Spain was one of the Western economies worst hit by the pandemic, seeing a 10.8 per cent fall in its GDP in 2020.

The Spanish government has set an objective of drawing 45 million travellers by the end of the year. But by the end of April, the country had only seen 1.8 million visitors, according to official statistics.

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