

Spain's Canary Islands to insure tourists who catch COVID-19

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Dhaka: Spain's Canary Islands has rolled out insurance facility for tourists to cover the medical cost if they get infected with the coronavirus, the archipelago's regional government said on August 5.

Under a deal struck with the Spanish branch of French insurer AXA, any tourist who tests positive for COVID-19 during their stay will be eligible for free medical care, repatriation and additional accommodation for quarantine measures, a statement said.

The islands off northwest Africa are "the first Spanish region where tourists, both Spanish and foreign, will be guaranteed" that their virus-related expenses will be covered, regional tourism chief Yaiza Castilla said.

The coverage, which is already effective, is free to visitors but it will only apply those with no prior knowledge that they were infected with the virus.

It will only be activated if a tourist does not have personal insurance to cover the costs.

Tourism accounts for about 35 per cent of the Canary's economic output, with tourists from Britain accounting for about a third of all visitors.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit Spain harder than most countries, with 28,499 deaths so far and a three-month lockdown which crippled the tourism sector.

Despite having a much lower infection rate than that of mainland Spain, the tourism sector on the islands has taken a hit from the UK's decision last month to require all people returning from Spain, no matter what region, to undergo quarantine.