

Thailand scraps pre-departure Covid test requirement for arrivals

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 20 March, 2022



Dhaka: Travellers to Thailand will no longer need to take a Covid-19 test before boarding the plane, under plans announced on March 18 as part of the country's efforts to reboot its pandemic-battered tourism sector.

From April 1, the requirement to take a negative test within 72 hours of travel will be scrapped. Instead, visitors will be tested on arrival in Thailand, said Taweessin Visanuyothin, spokesman for the country's Covid-19 task force.

Strict travel curbs helped Thailand limit Covid-19 case numbers and deaths in the early stages of the pandemic, but harmed its crucial tourism industry, which accounts for about a fifth of the country's economy.

Thailand is currently recording around 25,000 new cases of Covid a day as the Omicron variant spreads around the country, but officials hope this will tail off in time for them to move to a "post-pandemic" phase from July.

Seeking to bounce back from its worst economic performance since the 1997 Asian financial crisis, Thailand has gradually eased travel restrictions over the past nine months.

However, hotels, restaurants and other tourist-dependent businesses have urged the government to go further and faster to entice visitors back to the kingdom's beaches and resorts.

The tourism industry estimates that around five million foreign visitors will travel to Thailand in 2022, down from nearly 40 million in the year before the pandemic.

- T