

IRAN REOPENS ITS BORDERS TO VACCINATED TOURISTS



Iran, the country most affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in the Middle East, is reopening its borders to vaccinated tourists after almost twenty months of closure, authorities said last week: "At the request of the ministry, the National Committee for Combating Coronavirus has approved the opening of the country's borders to foreign tourists," said Iranian Deputy Minister of Tourism and Cultural Heritage, Vali Teymouri.

"Tourists who have received two doses of anti-Covid vaccine and have a negative PCR test certificate less than 96 hours old can obtain a visa," the Isna news agency said.

However, this decision does not include vaccinated tourists from countries considered "high risk by the World Health Organization. A form to be filled in beforehand as well as negative PCR tests are also required to enter the Iranian territory.

Iran had closed its borders in March 2020 to foreign nationals, except for rare exceptions, a few weeks after the official announcement of the first cases of the virus in the country. According to the Iranian Ministry of Tourism, the loss of revenue in the tourism sector has reached over the year 2020/2021 1.2 billion dollars.

The number of daily cases and deaths linked to the coronavirus is slightly decreasing in the country, which had recorded a record number of cases in August, struggling to stem the fifth wave of infections.

Iran has recorded more than 5.86 million cases, including more than 125,000 deaths since the beginning of the pandemic, according to the latest figures from the Ministry of Health. By the Iranian authorities' own admission, these statistics greatly underestimate the number of cases and deaths.

So far, in Iran, some 51.1 million people have received the first dose of vaccine and 30.1 million people have been fully vaccinated in this country of 83 million people.

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