

Maldives tightens tourist virus rules after spike in cases

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The Maldives has tightened entry requirements for tourists after a spike in coronavirus infections at more than a dozen resorts, the foreign ministry said Wednesday.

The Indian Ocean archipelago re-opened its luxury resort islets in mid-

July after a months-long lockdown, and did not require visitors to be tested or carry virus-free certificates when entering the country.

Since then, 29 local staff and 16 foreigners have tested positive at the resorts, officials said, where they were also being isolated.

Under the [new guidelines](#), all tourists will be required to present a negative COVID-19 test result on arrival.

Tourism is the major economic driver for the Maldives, a tropical island paradise popular with honeymooners and celebrities.

Authorities had hoped tourists would flock back to the archipelago of 1,190 tiny coral islets after [international flights](#) restarted.

But only 5,200 tourists visited the country in the month since July 15—a fraction of the pre-pandemic 141,000 monthly average.

Meanwhile, the Maldives recorded more than 1,000 new infections in just the past week to take the total number of cases to 8,003.

Most of the infections since the start of the pandemic have been among poor migrant labourers and locals in the densely populated capital Male.

The government had imposed a night curfew in Male and neighbouring inhabited islands from early August to contain the sharp rise in cases there.

Some 29 people have so far died from COVID-19 in the nation of 340,000 people.

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