

Majorca Daily Bulletin

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NO MORE FREE PARKING IN PALMA

● ORA attendants were back at work in Palma for the first time yesterday since service was suspended when the coronavirus State of Emergency began on March 16.

The ORA hours are from 0900 to 1430 and 1630 until 2000.

Employees spent the last couple of days setting up and programming around 433 ticket



vending machines in eight Palma neighbourhoods and have been supplied with masks, gloves and hand gel to protect them whilst they work.

ORA machines will be disinfected once a day and it will be possible to pay with cash but users are advised to use the mobiAParc App to make payments when possible.

EU seeks to unlock borders, Spain to keep them closed

Brussels/Madrid.—The European Union yesterday pushed for a safe reopening of borders, while insisting on protective measures such as masks on planes, to try and salvage the ravaged tourism sector for the lucrative summer season as coronavirus infections recede.

Though wary of new waves of COVID-19, the EU executive wants to revive what it can of travel for the June-August season normally worth 150 billion euros.

But, Spanish authorities are planning to keep borders closed to most travellers from abroad until July, two foreign ministry sources said in a move to try and avoid a second wave of contagion from the coronavirus.

Land borders with France and Portugal have been

closed since a state of emergency was declared in mid-March to fight the pandemic, pushing the economy to a near stand-still and hitting its tourism sector hard.

Spain has started easing the lockdown for its residents as the pandemic gets under control. But it also imposed a two-week quarantine for foreign travellers and practically shut the border to air and maritime travel to avoid importing new cases from other countries.

The quarantine measure is due to expire on May 24 when the state of emergency lapses, but both can be extended. In any case, restrictions on travel are likely to remain in place for much longer than May 24, no matter how crucial tourism is for the Spanish economy, the sources said.



“When we reach the new normal we can start opening borders with Schengen countries, we are talking about opening to these countries in early July,” one of the sources said.

The second source con-

firmed the government did not expect to open borders before July.

To prevent triggering a new wave of infections being imported by travellers from abroad, the government is studying ways of

controlling who can enter the country. “The two models proposed are either sanitary corridors or medical-testing requirements,” the first source said.

“This is the debate we are holding with other European countries.”

Part of the holiday season could still be saved by tourists from Schengen countries, the source added.

Spain’s tourism industry draws some 80 million annual visitors and accounts for around 12% of gross domestic product in the world’s second most visited country.

Hoteliers in places such as the Balearics have been lobbying the government to set up special travel corridors for tourists from Germany or other countries where many of their visitors come from.

SEE INSIDE

TUI to cut jobs as it prepares for July holiday restart

● Travel group TUI will cut 8,000 jobs and look to shed 30% of its costs as it gears up for a July restart to European tourism, the German company said yesterday.

Holiday plans have been put on hold in the face of travel restrictions aimed at halting the spread of the coronavirus, with British government ministers warning that summer trips to overseas tourist destinations are unlikely to happen this year.

However, the world’s biggest tourism group yesterday said that it had adopted new safety measures and that holidays would be possible.

“We believe that, (by the) latest, in July we will be open to resume,” TUI Chief Executive Fritz Joussen told reporters, chiming with comments from the bosses of airlines Ryanair and IAG in recent days.

With no revenue coming in and coronavirus-related debts to pay while having to provide customer refunds, TUI is under severe financial pressure as it burns through 250 million euros of cash a month despite having reduced overheads. To cope with the downturn TUI said it would aim to cut its fixed cost base by 30%, which could result in the loss of 8,000 jobs.