

YOUR FULL FIVE-DAY WEATHER FORECAST: SEE INSIDE

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Bars and restaurants
to close by 4p.m.
from Tuesday:
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Inside Today

HOPE TO SEE YOU SOON!

● Britons rushed to book foreign holidays after the government **laid out plans to gradually relax coronavirus restrictions, giving battered airlines and tour operators hope that a bumper summer could come to their rescue.**

Bookings flooded in on Monday evening and yesterday following the government's announcement on Monday that travel could restart from mid-May, with **Spain and Greece the most popular destinations,**

London.—EasyJet said that bookings on its flights from Britain for this summer had jumped by more than 300% compared to a week ago and bookings for its summer holiday packages had increased by more than 600% compared to a week earlier.

Holiday company TUI UK said that its bookings had surged 500% compared to a week ago, while holiday and airline group Jet2 said its bookings had increased by more than 600%.

The companies did not give precise numbers of bookings, and industry sources said the increases were likely to be from very low levels last week. Uncer-

tainty over trips had stopped demand in what is usually a key winter booking period with cash flowing in.

This summer is make-or-break for many airlines and holiday companies which are struggling to survive with close to a year of almost no revenue due to pandemic restrictions. Without it many will need extra funds after burning through cash reserves.

There is still uncertainty over exactly how and when international routes can reopen, but the surge in bookings nevertheless helped travel stocks.

Shares in easyJet were up 8% in afternoon trading, hitting their highest level



since last March, while shares of BA-owner IAG were 3% higher, and Jet2 was up 1.5%.

While British tourists are some of the biggest spenders in Europe, the presence of a more infectious variant of coronavi-

London.—British travel companies said yesterday that most Britons were booking their holidays for August and September as they took a gamble on the easing of the Covid restrictions.

rus in the UK could still hinder holiday plans. France and Spain have shut their borders to most UK travellers due to variants.

UK holidaymakers will know more on April 12 when the government publishes a travel review. It has said that a lockdown ban on most international travel will stay until at least May 17.

That should give airlines time to plan their summer schedule, a process which takes months.

Travel site Skyscanner said flight bookings made on Monday were 69% higher than the previous day. Spain was the top destination.