

South Korea says only those with COVID vaccine passport can return to normal lives



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Seoul, April 1 (RHC)-- Seoul has announced it will issue digital certificates verifying a person's COVID-19 vaccination status, becoming the latest nation to adopt the controversial measure as a means to reopen

cross-border travel.

South Korea will roll out a smartphone application this month that will be able to show whether someone has been administered the jab, Prime Minister Chung Sye-kyun said on Thursday. The system will use blockchain technology to guard against potential identity theft.

“The introduction of a vaccine passport or ‘Green Pass’ will only allow those who have been vaccinated to experience the recovery to their daily lives,” the prime minister noted while unveiling the new identification. He added that South Korea was following the lead of other nations that claim to have developed systems capable of verifying vaccination status without storing other private information.

Since beginning its nationwide vaccination drive in February, South Korea has administered Covid-19 shots to more than 850,000 people. It aims to vaccinate 12 million citizens by June. As of Wednesday, it has reported 103,639 positive Covid-19 tests and 1,735 deaths linked to the virus.

Countries around the world have implemented similar systems both for domestic use and to facilitate international travel. China and the European Union have begun to implement digital vaccine passports to be used when crossing borders. In other countries such as Israel, a vaccine certificate is also needed to gain entry to certain venues and carry out specific activities.

There have been calls for the creation of a standard vaccine passport system that could be used worldwide. Members of the G7, an intergovernmental group consisting of the world’s major industrialized countries, are reportedly considering a universal health ID.

However, there is still plenty of opposition to the idea, which has been heavily criticized as discriminatory and an invasion of privacy. In the United States, for example, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis has vowed to issue an executive order banning vaccine passports, dismissing the concept as unnecessary government overreach.

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