Emirates suspends all passenger flights due to COVID-19 pandemic

Dubai, March 23 (RHC)-- One of the world's largest international airlines, Emirates, has announced that it will suspend all of its passenger flights from March 25 and cut wages in half as the world continues to reel from COVID-19. The company said it will "temporarily suspend passenger operations by 25 March," warning that earlier flights could also be subject to "change at short notice."

The state-owned UAE carrier had already said it was about to suspend some 70 percent of its network and asked staff to go on unpaid leave as the airlines industry suffers one of the worst hits because of the novel coronavirus pandemic that has infected more than 300,000 around the world.

"As a global network airline, we find ourselves in a situation where we cannot viably operate passenger services until countries reopen their borders and travel confidence returns," Emirates Chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed al-Maktoum said in a statement cited by Reuters.

The company also plans temporary basic salary cuts amounting to between 25 and 50 percent of normal pay. "We want to avoid cutting jobs," Sheikh Ahmed said. "When demand picks up again, we also want to be able to quickly ramp up and resume services for our customers."

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