

UK airports at risk of total shutdown as travel grinds to a halt



British airports are eerily quiet during the third lockdown

London, January 16 (RHC)-- As the UK's third lockdown grinds on, the country's travel industry is warning of a "near-complete shutdown" of airports in the absence of urgent financial support. The plea for help comes ahead of the introduction of more stringent COVID-19 controls at British airports.

All travelers entering the UK from Monday (January 18) will either have to self-isolate for 10 days or alternatively receive a negative coronavirus test result at least five days after arrival in the country.

These new rules effectively spell the end of the travel corridor system which enabled quarantine-free travel to and from low risk destinations. Meanwhile, the chief executive of the Airport Operators Association has claimed airports are "running on empty" as they struggle to carry out "critical tasks."

Karen Dee says that while the closure of travel corridors is understandable from a "public health perspective," but the associated "near-complete shutdown" of UK airports risks torpedoing "post-pandemic prosperity."

"Airports are currently keeping their infrastructure open to support vital and critical services, such as post, freight, emergency services, military and Coastguard flights, as well as to help keep the lights in the UK on through supporting flights to offshore oil, gas and wind operations," Dee added.

Dee warned that on current trajectory airports may have to close "temporarily" to "preserve their business for the future." It is not clear if she was talking about specific airports or the UK's entire airport network.

To make matters even worse for the travel industry, all flights from South America, Portugal and Cape Verde have been banned for fear of the spread of new Covid-19 variants.

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