CORONAVIRUS HAS CHANGED THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY

The global coronavirus pandemic has been particularly devastating for the aviation sector. With many airports shut and flights cancelled, the airline industry is in deep financial loss.

According to the International Air Transport Association, this year's revenue loss has caused the airline industry more than $300bn.

Qatar Airways, one of the world's biggest carriers, is also affected by the pandemic and is putting measures in place to cope with new realities.

According to Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar al-Baker, the airline is complying with every measure outlined by the W.H.O. and the ministry of public health in Qatar. These measures include social distancing, use of gloves and face masks, hand sanitizers, and temperature checks. They also have robots that sanitize the entire airport building.

Travelers entering Qatar will be tested at the airport, quarantine for 14 days and await their results before entering into the country. Al-Baker says travelers have to quarantine for 14 days even if they get negative results because the virus might not be active yet in some travelers when they take the first test.

Regarding social distancing during flights, the C.E.O. says social distancing is not possible for economic class flights as it will largely affect operational costs, which would mean higher ticket prices.

Rather than leaving seats empty as distancing measures, passengers will be given masks, gloves, sanitizers, and face shields. Each plane will also have filters that circulate the cabinet to filter out viruses and bacteria.

Al-Baker believes that with travelers adapting to teleconferencing and online meetings, the number of travelers will drop, which means the aviation industry will earn less than they used to.

He also projects that travelers will pay more for flights, but ticket prices will depend on how fast the industry recovers, how many passengers return to flying, as well as how passenger numbers on a flight are regulated owing to social distancing measures.

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