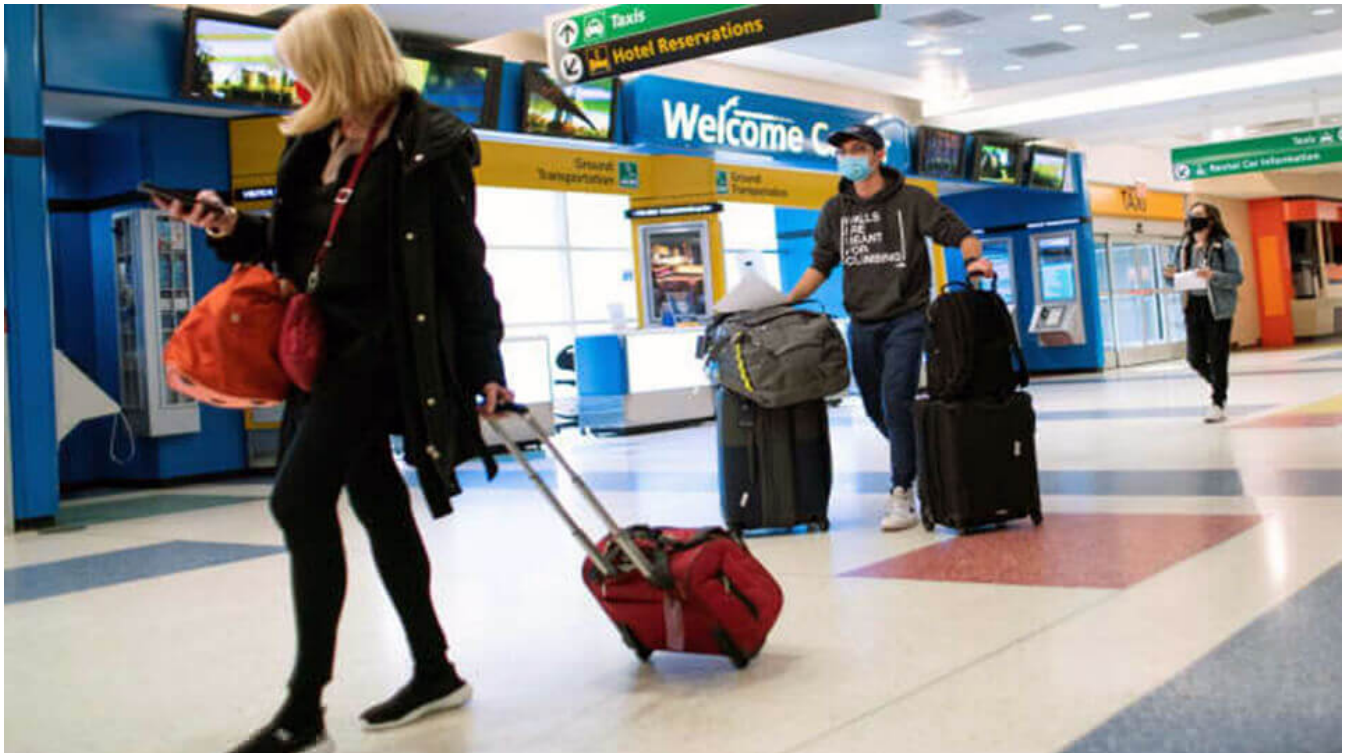


US airlines push govt against requiring Covid test for domestic flights

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Chiefs of many major US carriers met White House officials online on February 12 to urge them against requiring coronavirus tests for passengers on domestic flights. It would hamper the already fragile industry, was the defense of the airline executives.

According to an airline spokesperson, the Biden administration is not eyeing imposing a coronavirus test requirement for passengers on domestic flights. During a press briefing on February 12, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki confirmed the matter, saying, “reports that there is an intention to put in place new (travel) requirements such as testing are not accurate.”

The airline chiefs spoke to White House coronavirus-response coordinator Jeff Zients, according to reports. The Chief Executive Officers of American, United, Southwest, Alaska, and JetBlue all took part in the meeting which was arranged after Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and officials of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said that such a testing requirement was under consideration.

“We had a very positive, constructive conversation focused on our shared commitment to science-based policies as we work together to end the pandemic, restore air travel and lead our nation toward recovery,” said Nick Calio, Head of the trade group Airlines for America, in a statement.

Airlines are worrying that the additional cost of corona tests would further discourage passengers

from flying and hamper the already weak aviation industry since it is yet to even return to half of its pre-pandemic level.

Furthermore, the airlines claim there is not enough testing capacity to test every passenger. Figures from the [Transportation Security Administration state](#), over a million people, went through checkpoints at US airports on February 11.

On the other hand, the aviation industry officials claim the move of mandating corona tests for passengers might further push people to consider driving instead of flying – causing a shift in the risk of corona spread to cars from planes.

Not only airline officials but also unions have now joined this push against testing domestic passengers in the United States.

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