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EVA Air postpones new routes to Milan, Phuket due to epidemic

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Taipei, Feb. 6 (CNA) EVA Airways announced Thursday that it will postpone newly planned direct flight services to Milan in Italy and Phuket in Thailand amid disruption of the aviation market due to a deadly new coronavirus that originated in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

The airline said its launch of flights to Milan and Phuket, slated for Feb. 18 and April 2, respectively, will have to be delayed, with their resumptions depending on how the epidemic unfolds.

The postponement of flights to Milan is a result of the Italian government's announcement on Jan. 31 banning all flights from Taiwan as the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) spreads around the world, according to the carrier.

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Although EVA Air continues to negotiate with the Italian authorities, there has been no positive feedback, forcing it to put the flights on hold, the airline said.

EVA Air said it also decided to postpone its upcoming service to Phuket as the coronavirus outbreak has hurt market demand.

Tigerair Taiwan, a subsidiary of Taiwan's China Airlines (CAL), also said Thursday it will cancel all Taiwan-Macau flights through the end of March.

On Jan. 31, the carrier had said it was canceling a total of 52 round-trip flights to the former Portuguese territory from Feb. 4 to Feb. 26, including halving the current four flights a day departing from Taoyuan.

However, after Taiwan's Tourism Bureau announced Thursday a ban on tour groups visiting Hong Kong and Macau effective immediately, the carrier said it decided to cancel all flights to Macau.

(By Lee Hsin-Yin)
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