CHILE'S AIRPORTS RESUME OPERATIONS AS STRIKE ENDS

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The Chile government and workers tied to the civil aviation authority reached an agreement on Sunday, ending a four day strike that forced airlines to cancel hundreds of flights and left thousands of passengers stranded.

"We want say to all the Chileans who were affected (by the strike) that we deeply regret this situation, that we will go the extra mile together with the airlines, with all of our staff and also with workers from the civil aviation authority to reverse this situation," said government minister Jose Antonio Gomez.

LAN, part of LATAM Airlines, had said earlier Sunday that domestically, it was only flying from Chile's capital Santiago to Punta Arenas, Temuco and Calama, affecting 80 percent of its flights.

"Due to the end of the strike, LAN will resume operation of all its flights within Chile in the coming

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hours," the carrier said.

LAN said that as part of its contingency plan it will add 16 domestic flights to its normal itinerary between December 20-22, but warned that considering the high occupancy rates in the run-up to the Christmas holiday, relocating passengers affected by the strike could take several days.

The regional carrier's chief executive, Enrique Cueto, told local newspaper La Tercera, that the strike was likely to cost LAN between USD$10 million and USD$15 million.

The work stoppage was initially set to only last 48 hours.

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