Road to Recovery: Dubai Duty Free’s partial reopening; Brussels Airport sets 15 June restart date; American Airlines plots expanded capacity

While “a crisis like no other” (in the words of the International Monetary Fund) rages, it is important to identify and highlight the sectors of the stricken aviation, tourism and travel retail business that are beginning to recover.

In this column, we bring you now increasingly regular updates about how airports, airlines, travel retailers and brands are planning for and investing in the recovery; how governments are opening borders; and how various stakeholders are shaping up for the new normal.

FOR UPDATES FROM 8 JUNE ONWARDS, CLICK HERE

8 June

Malaysia

Malaysia Airlines has increased its domestic and international connectivity beginning June and July respectively, to facilitate essential travels locally and as other countries begin to lift border restrictions.

The airline will adjust its network capacity periodically to ensure passenger demands are met, prior to normalising the schedule in October for both domestic and international destinations.
Back to the skies: International and domestic route schedules (above and below) take shape as Malaysia Airlines returns to business. Click to enlarge.

Malaysia Airlines Group Chief Executive Officer Captain Izham Ismail said, “We are pleased to announce the resumption of our services by increasing capacity to domestic and international routes and we look forward to welcoming our passengers back onboard. We shall continue to ensure their safety, health, as well as their comfort by introducing new initiatives aligned with international safety and health protocols, as part of our commitment to offer passengers peace of mind throughout their journey with us.”

[Malaysia Airlines has just released a video titled ‘Ready to fly and rediscover Malaysia’ across its social media platforms. The airline hopes that by showcasing unique and beautiful domestic attractions located across the country, it can inspire Malaysians to explore the beauty of their homeland and boost local tourism efforts.]

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Malaysia

AirAsia today commended the Government’s efforts in curbing the spread of Covid-19 and welcomed the announcement of the Recovery Movement Control Order, effective 10 June, by Prime Minister of Malaysia YAB Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yasin today to revive Malaysia’s economy.
AirAsia said: “In recent weeks, countries around the world are resuming domestic travel and gradually reopening international borders in recognition that air transport provides the connectivity that is essential for the resumption of economic activities. The formation and discussion of travel bubbles and green lanes with key economic partners with a low infection rate and proven pandemic curbing systems, is a step in the right direction. The aviation and tourism sectors account for around 4% and 10% of world GDP, respectively. Over 65 million jobs are supported worldwide in the aviation sector, while 1 in 10 jobs around the world is contributed by the tourism sector.

“Air travel remains one of the safest modes of travel. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), evidence suggests that the risk of transmission on board is extremely low. Aircraft are equipped with features that will reduce the already-low risk of transmission onboard. Passengers are seated facing forward with the seatback serving as a solid barrier, while the cabin air is fully filtered and renewed every 2-3 minutes through the hospital-grade HEPA filters, ensuring clean cabin air. Coupled with a layered approach of biosafety measures covering the entire passenger journey, the risk of transmission onboard is further minimised.

“At AirAsia, the health and wellbeing of our passengers remain our paramount concern. Besides complying with the advice and regulations from government and health authorities, AirAsia has also implemented end-to-end contactless procedures and a series of new safety measures, as well as taking care of those most at risk to ensure the safety of all travelling guests.”

US

In response to improved demand, American Airlines is planning to fly 55% of its domestic schedule and nearly 20% of its international schedule in July, compared to the same period last year.
By the last week of May, the airline carried a daily average of about 110,000 customers per day, an increase over the 32,000 average carried in April. The most popular domestic routes are to those in Florida, Gulf Coast cities as well as mountain destinations.

“We’re seeing a slow but steady rise in domestic demand. After a careful review of data, we’ve built a July schedule to match,” said American Senior Vice President of Network Strategy Vasu Raja. “Our July schedule includes the smallest year-over-year capacity reduction since March. We’ll continue to look for prudent opportunities to restore service so our customers can travel whenever and wherever they are ready.”

While international demand continued to be low, 4 June marked the return of service to eight overseas destinations. These include service from Dallas-Fort Worth to Amsterdam, Paris and Frankfurt, as well as service from Miami to Antigua in the Caribbean and Guayaquil and Quito in South America. American also restored additional services to London from Chicago and New York JFK.

American Airlines will begin reopening Admirals Club lounges in phases, beginning 22 June, after adapting these to reinforce the well-being of customers and staff. From that date, the clubs will offer pre-packaged snack offerings and a full-service bar.
Health and well-being improvements at Admirals Club lounges include:

- Plexiglass shields at reception and service desks.
- Foot-operated door openers to enable touchless operation of restroom doors (where feasible).
- Hand sanitiser stations for customers.
- Signage and floor decals to remind customers to practice social distancing.

7 June

UAE

In hugely welcome industry news, Dubai Duty Free has begun a partial reopening of its stores, beginning with those in Concourse B–West at Dubai International (DXB). Its Terminal 2 business is expected to open in coming days.

The world’s leading airport retailer at a single location closed on 25 March at DXB and Al Maktoum International Airport, following the UAE government’s suspension of flights due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

It has put in place a range of protective measures in-store for staff and customers, while adding a Concierge service and reintroducing Click & Collect.

For the full story, click here.

Antigua and Barbuda

Welcome news from Antigua and Barbuda as Morpho Travel Retail reopens the acclaimed Britt Shop destination merchandise concept at V. C. Bird International Airport.
WE'RE BACK! We are happy to reopen our store at Antigua International Airport barbuda 🎉 We are back! #brittshop #auniqueshoppingexperience
Morpho Travel Retail is a specialty travel retailer with over 170 stores in 11 countries, which aims to create unique shopping experiences through its stores, restaurants, and grab-and-go concepts.
Germany

By September, Lufthansa and its sister group airlines will operate flights to 90% of its short- and medium-haul destinations and will again serve 70% of long-haul destinations.

Lufthansa (the major airline in the group) will fly more than 100 times a week to destinations in North America via its hubs in Frankfurt and Munich in the Autumn. Around 90 flights a week are planned to Asia, over 20 to the Middle East and over 25 to Africa.

Although guidelines discourage interaction between crew and passengers, some services will be reinstated.

Customers will receive a disinfectant wipe before every flight. On short- and medium-haul flights in Business Class, the beverage and meal services will be reactivated.

On long-haul flights, guests in all classes will be offered the usual range of beverages. In First and Business Class, customers can once more choose from a range of dishes. In Economy Class, customers will also continue to receive a meal.

Belgium

Positive news out of Belgium, a country hard hit by the COVID-19 outbreak, as a recommencement of air travel is revealed by Brussels Airport Company Chief Executive Officer Arnaud Feist on LinkedIn.

6 June

Switzerland

Zürich Airport has said that “a slow recovery has begun” with flight operations resuming and most stores and restaurants now allowed to reopen. In addition, the eagerly anticipated lifestyle and business complex The
Circle will still open this year, said the airport company.

Passenger numbers for April and May were down by around -99% compared to last year. But from this month, SWISS and other airlines will start services to European and some long-haul destinations.

While the airport will not yet provide a traffic forecast for 2020, it assumes that it will to reach pre-crisis traffic levels in 2023.

On commercial activity, Zürich Airport said: “Most shops and restaurants were temporarily shut down by the Swiss Federal Government in mid-March. Some stores reopened at the end of April and, since mid-May, all shops and restaurants are allowed to be open again.

“Flughafen Zürich will provide relief to its commercial tenants and partially waive the minimum annual guarantees (MAG) for closed shops during the period when the government restricted the opening of shops and restaurants. Commercial turnover on airside will take longer to recover than on landside.”

The Circle: The lifestyle and business complex should be 80% tenanted by the time of opening, says the airport company

Despite the impact of COVID-19, The Circle project “is making solid progress and there will only be a short delay in completion,” said the airport company. Several tenants have already taken over their areas and the official opening of the public areas is now planned for November. More than 75% of space is pre-let and the company is confident of reaching 80% by the official opening.

Company wide, operating costs and investments have been reduced and the board proposes waiving the dividend for 2019. At the group’s international concessions, investments have either been reduced or postponed, where possible. Zürich Airport said that the financing of its two new Brazilian concessions in Vitória and Macaé was granted “at favourable conditions” despite the difficult climate.

5 June
**Austria**

Austrian Airlines will run long-haul flights for the first time since mid-March in July.

The flag carrier of Austria will fly three times a week to Bangkok, Chicago, New York (Newark) and Washington.

In short and mid-haul, flights to Bologna, Florence, Moscow, Podgorica, Rome, Sibiu, Venice, Zagreb and Cairo will be added to the 40 destinations already served from Austria.

“In view of the circumstances, the demand in June is good. That means we can continue to expand our offer,” said Austrian Airlines CCO Andreas Otto. “I am particularly pleased that long-haul flights can finally take off again in July, because they are particularly important for Austria and the Vienna hub.”

Flughafen Wien AG Management Board Member Julian Jäger billed the announcement as “the next important step”.

**UK**

Virgin Atlantic will resume its passenger service on 20 July, with the airline set to initially operate routes from London Heathrow to Orlando, Hong Kong, Shanghai, New York JFK and Los Angeles.

“As the COVID-19 crisis stabilises and demand slowly returns, we are looking forward to welcoming our customers back onboard and flying them safely to their favourite destinations,” Virgin Atlantic Chief Commercial Officer Juha Jarvinen said.

The airline added it will steadily increase its service in the second half of 2020 in line with customer demand.
Flying high again: Virgin Atlantic’s passenger service is resuming on 20 July

Russia

Alexander Ponomarenko, co-owner of Sheremetyevo International Airport, has told Reuters he expects international flights will resume at Russia’s busiest airport in July.

“We expect that the restoration of passenger traffic to levels seen in 2019 will gradually occur over the course of a year,” Ponomarenko said.

He added that he expects passenger traffic for the year at the airport to be around 17 million, 34% of the level seen in 2019.

Hungary

Budapest-based low-cost carrier Wizz Air has released a compelling video urging people to start flying again.

“You had to say no to so many things you used to embrace in the past couple of months. Now you have all the reasons to say yes to meeting your family, your friends, to experience and dream more, and with all that, you can say yes to flying again,” said the airline.

“Yes, we hear you. Yes, we are here for you. We’ve already said yes to extra health and safety measures, so whatever your reasons might be for saying yes to flying again, now is the time to do so. And we are happy to help you. Don’t forget, you must wear a mask and any other possible protective equipment on your upcoming trip with Wizz to protect our hardworking crew and your fellow passengers. Book your ticket now until Summer 2021. We will bring you closer.”
Switzerland

MSC Cruises has announced that it will extend the temporary fleet-wide halt of its cruise operation through to 31 July. Looking further ahead, however, it also confirmed its full Summer programme for 2021, starting next March. This will include its 17 existing ships plus two new vessels that are under construction, MSC Virtuosa and MSC Seashore. The programme also features a series of new or enhanced itineraries and homeports.

CEO Gianni Onorato said: “While today we have taken the difficult decision to further extend the halt of operations of all our ships, it is important that we also look ahead as we know that our customers are dreaming of travel and are wanting to plan their holidays for next year. For this reason, we have now also confirmed our full summer programme for 2021.”

“Shorter-term,” added Onorato, “Our ships will return to service only when the time is right, in phases and by region, and following guidance from the relevant national and international health and other regulatory authorities and the support of a new operating protocol especially focused on health and safety, which we will announce soon. This way, gradually, all of our ships will return to sea between then and the beginning of our summer 2021 season.”

New Zealand

Air New Zealand’s domestic schedule for July and August has been updated and expanded. It includes the return of the Auckland-Invercargill direct jet service, the longest domestic Air New Zealand flight.

4 June

Qatar

The rapid rebuilding of the Qatar Airways network is continuing, with flights from Doha to Bangkok, Barcelona, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Singapore and Vienna resuming this week.

The airline said it will also soon be restarting flights to Berlin, Dar es Salaam, New York, Tunis and Venice.

As reported, Qatar Airways has maintained a robust network throughout the COVID-19 crisis, with the airline repatriating more than 1.8 million passengers during recent months of the pandemic.

Australia/New Zealand

The Australian Chamber of Commerce & Industry has announced proposals for the first flight route to form part of a proposed trans-Tasman travel bubble.

The Australian Chamber Tourism, Canberra Airport, Wellington Chamber of Commerce, Canberra Business Chamber and Auckland Business Chamber have united to create a proof of concept proposal for the first post-COVID-19 flights between Canberra and Wellington on 1 and 2 July.

Australian Chamber Tourism Chair John Hart said: “The symbolic route will show we have developed a safe and effective method of air travel and encourage the extension of the aviation networks to other destinations across Australia and New Zealand over time.”

Wellington Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive John Milford added: “Australians make up around 70% of
Wellington’s direct international arrivals – over 150,000 people. These tourists come specifically to spend time in the Wellington region. Getting those visitors back visiting our city for our hospitality, events, and shows will be important to helping our local economy recover and thrive once again.”

Travellers can now register to be part of the initial concept flights, with the ultimate goal being a regular service between the two capitals.

Greece

Greek Infrastructure & Transport Minister Kostas Karamanlis has said flight numbers are starting to pick up at Athens International Airport.

Quoted in Greek Travel Pages, Karamanlis said the airport is “already seeing a gradual recovery”, with 230 flights taking place on 1 June. On the same day in 2019, 730 flights were recorded.

UAE

An important message from HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, President of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority and CEO and Chairman of the Emirates Group.
HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed...  

We welcome the UAE authorities' decision to re-open UAE airports for all connecting travellers. @Emirates and flydubai will shortly announce the resumption of passenger flights to more cities with connections to, and through, Dubai. @DXB
Latest COVID-19 figures for the UAE from the National Emergency Crisis and Disasters Management Authority

Abu Dhabi International Airport said it would begin to welcome transit passengers from 10 June. Abu Dhabi Airports Chairman His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan said the resumption of transfer flights “marks a significant moment for the national aviation sector”.

Passengers at Abu Dhabi International Airport actively social distancing

Germany

The German government is to lift restrictions on travel to the 26 EU nations as well as the UK, Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein and Switzerland from 15 June. The blanket warning not to travel will be replaced by guidelines for each country.

Airports and airlines are reacting positively, with flight schedules being quickly reintroduced to reflect the planned reopening of borders.

Berlin Airports said: “There are now clear signs of an approaching recovery. From mid-June, the number of regular connections from Berlin will increase to 40. One month later, there will already be 100 connections offered. It is likely that the number of daily passengers will more than double in June from 3,000 at the moment.”
Up to 20,000 passengers are expected at the end of July.’’

It noted: “A crucial reason for the significant increase in the number of connections is that travel restrictions will be lifted. This means that free travel to many European countries will be possible again from mid-June.”

Ryanair and easyJet have announced increased frequencies to and from Berlin, starting in late June. Other airlines have announced the planned restart of services from Berlin, including Turkish Airlines, Wizz Air, KLM, Air France and Qatar Airways. Lufthansa will expand its current service and, together with its subsidiaries Eurowings, Swiss and Austrian, will offer more flights in July.

**UK**

London City Airport is to restart operations at the end of June. Domestic services within the UK will begin first, with international flights expected to follow in early July. The airport noted that the timing may depend on the proposed quarantine of passengers arriving into the UK. London City suspended flights on 25 March.

Passengers will be asked to observe social distancing rules wherever possible in the terminal. The airport will also work with technology partner Crowd-Vision to enable the detection of areas where there is a high concentration of passengers, who can then be directed to quieter areas.

CEO Robert Sinclair said: “When our doors re-open again shortly, our ambition is to provide the best airport experience in the UK to our passengers by ensuring we follow industry guidance to the letter and by maintaining our reputation as the quickest London airport to get to and through.

“While there are many challenges ahead for the UK aviation industry, it is our hope that by outlining the steps we are taking to make the airport safe, and by incorporating the views of our regular travellers into our plans, we will give people the confidence to fly from our airport to destinations across the UK and Europe.”

**Turkey**

Pegasus Airlines relaunched domestic flights in Turkey on 1 June. As of today, it is operating 39 domestic routes to 27 destinations. The airline suspended flights on 28 March.

Pegasus Airlines CEO Mehmet T Nane commented: “It has only been our flights, not us, which have stopped during this uncertain time, which has seemed to us like years rather than months. We have continued to receive delivery of our new aircraft, enhanced our processes, and prepared for the new period ahead.”

**Australia**

As travel restrictions start to ease across Australia, Qantas and Jetstar will increase their domestic and regional flight schedules for June and July.

The additional services will see capacity increase from 5% of pre-coronavirus levels, to 15% by the end of June. This equates to more than 300 more return flights per week.

Qantas Group CEO Alan Joyce said: “We know there is a lot of pent up demand for air travel and we are already seeing a big increase in customers booking and planning flights in the weeks and months ahead.

“We are gradually adding flights in June as demand levels increase. We can quickly ramp up flying in time for the July school holidays if border restrictions have eased more by then. Normally, we plan our capacity months in advance, but in the current climate we need to be flexible to respond to changing restrictions and demand
3 June

The Bahamas

Bahamian Prime Minister Hubert Minnis is aiming for the Caribbean country to reopen to commercial travel on 1 July.

A Tourism Readiness & Recovery Committee has consulted public and private sector stakeholders on the reopening plan and has issued a Recovery Plan document. The plan adds that the tentative date can be changed if the situation deteriorates.

Following the news, American Airlines announced it will resume international flights to Nassau and Exuma from 7 July.

Qatar/Italy

Qatar Airways will resume services to Venice on 15 July, running three flights a week to the popular tourist destination.

Venice is the third Italian destination to benefit from resumed service by the airline. Northern Italy was the epicentre of the European outbreak for many weeks with most of the region put under lockdown in early March.
Venice, one of the world’s major tourist destinations and home to T Fondaco dei Tedeschi by DFS, has been hit hard by the health crisis.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive His Excellency Mr Akbar Al Baker said: “We are excited to resume services to Venice, one of the most iconic and popular tourist destinations in the world. Throughout this crisis, our focus has been on helping to take people home and transporting medical aid and essential supplies to impacted regions.

“The resumption of services to Venice is a major milestone not just for our airline but also for the global tourism industry, indicating the start of the gradual return of international leisure travel. We look forward to supporting the many businesses in Venice that rely on international tourism and expanding these flights as demand grows.”

The national carrier of Qatar will also increase its service to Dublin, Milan and Rome from 13 June.

**Europe**

EasyJet has announced details of its planned schedule of summer flights, with the airline set to fly 30% of the flights it normally would in July, August and September.

The airline said it will fly 50% of its 1,022 routes in July and 75% in August. These routes will include typical
summer holiday destinations.

EasyJet Chief Commercial & Planning Officer Robert Carey said: “We are delighted to announce that we will be flying the majority of our route network across Europe, meaning customers can still get to their chosen destination for their summer holidays this year.”

**Latvia**

Traffic at Riga International Airport more than trebled in May compared to April, a spokesperson for the airport has told Latvian news agency **LETA**.

In May, 10,308 passengers used the airport – 7,248 more than in April.

The modest figures for May 2020 are still down -98.6% compared to May 2019, but do represent the first green shoots of recovery.

Lufthansa and Finnair have resumed flights to and from the airport this week, meaning it now operates to nine destinations (Amsterdam, Oslo, Helsinki, Frankfurt, Berlin, Hamburg, Munich, Vilnius and Tallinn). Flights to Paris and Dusseldorf are also set to resume in the near future.

**2 June**

**Antigua & Barbuda**

VC Bird International Airport has become one of the first international Caribbean airports to reopen, **The Jamaica Observer** has reported.

The airport authority said it had introduced a number of health protocols, including compulsory mask-wearing, to coincide with the reopening of the airport.

“With the reopening of the Antigua & Barbuda economy, international travel is crucial. But the safety of our valuable employees and members of the travelling public is foremost. The measures we have put in place are intended to keep everyone safe as they transit [through] our facilities,” Antigua & Barbuda Airport Authority CEO Euletta Francis added.

**North America**

Paradies Lagardère will today (2 June) send its first social media promotional messages for a new campaign, as travel slowly resumes in North America.

The More campaign focuses on not only the retailer’s safety efforts, but also shares information on its updated product selection and award-winning service.

**International**

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) has published a report and recommendations aimed at restarting the international air transport system and aligning its global recovery.
The guidelines have implications for inflight sales, with a recommendation to “temporarily limit” the size and quantity of duty free goods sold onboard. However, they do not explicitly call for no inflight sales to be made, as a recent report by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) did (more below).

The COVID-19 report and guidelines were produced by the Council’s Aviation Recovery Task Force (CART). They were developed through consultations with countries and regional organisations, and with advice from the World Health Organization and aviation industry groups including the International Air Transport Association (IATA), Airports Council International (ACI World), the Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), and the International Coordinating Council of Aerospace Industries Associations (ICCAIA).

“The world looked to the ICAO Council to provide the high-level guidance which governments and industry needed to begin restarting international air transport and recovering from COVID-19,” said ICAO Council President Salvatore Sciacchitano.

“We have answered this call today with the delivery of this report, and with its recommendations and Take-Off guidelines which will now align public and private sector actions and mitigations as we get the world flying again, in full accordance with the latest and most prudent medical and traveller health advice available to us.”

The CART guidance features sections dedicated to airline and airport activity, interaction between staff and passengers, as well as hygiene and sanitation.
The ICAO guidelines recommend limited interaction between crew and passengers, and advise restricting duty free and food services.

The aircraft guidelines recommend the following:

- Adjust the boarding process. To the extent possible consistent with weight and balance requirements, board and disembark passengers in ways that reduce the likelihood of passengers passing in close proximity to each other.
- Seat assignment processes: Where required, assign seats for adequate physical distancing between passengers.
- Limit interaction on board. Encourage passengers to travel as lightly as possible with check-in of all luggage except small hand luggage that fits under the seat. Remove newspapers and magazines. The size and quantity of duty free sales may also be temporarily limited.
- Encourage passengers to stay in the assigned seat as much as possible.
- Limit or suspend food & beverage service: Limit or discontinue food & beverage service on short-haul flights or require dispensing in sealed, pre-packaged containers.

The airport guidelines note:

“The post-security terminal airside area is an area of high passenger traffic, with few physical barriers and usually wide-open space. Consideration needs to be given to the temporary need for physical distancing, while also providing passengers’ access to the retail, duty free concessions and food & beverage offerings.

“Gate areas, VIP lounges and other services in this area also see a high passenger volume. Various flow monitoring tools, physical installations, floor markings and adapted wayfinding need to be evaluated and deployed. Enhanced cleaning and hygiene measures may need to be scheduled and deployed to contribute to
limiting the spread of the virus.

Considerations:

- Encourage self-service options, where passengers have limited contact with retail, food & beverage staff.
- As a temporary measure, sitting areas (lounges, gates, restaurants) can open at limited capacity to accommodate the short-term need for physical distancing. As the recovery phase progresses and health requirements evolve, a return to regular capacity can be contemplated.
- Temporary closing or enhanced monitoring of certain service areas based on stages of mitigation measures, such as:
  - Self-service buffet food
  - Café seating, or multi-purpose seating
  - Smoking areas
  - Children’s play areas

ICAO said that airports should also “work with retail and food & beverage concessions to ensure the use of contactless technology payment options and self-serve options.”

CART Chairperson Ambassador Philippe Bertoux noted that the CART guidelines were intended to inform, align and progress the national, regional, and industry-specific COVID-19 recovery roadmaps now being implemented, but not to replace them.

“These guidelines will facilitate convergence, mutual recognition and harmonisation of aviation COVID-19 related measures across the globe,” he emphasised. “They are intended to support the restart and recovery of global air travel in a safe, secure and sustainable way. Measures will be implemented or removed as needed based on the wide-ranging medical and other factors which will be at play.”

The Duty Free World Council welcomed the guidance. President Sarah Branquinho said: “This report is an extremely positive development for the resumption of commercial air travel and the operations of duty free retailers. Passengers and colleagues need to feel safe, and these common global safety standards will be key to building confidence in air travel.

“The Duty Free World Council is grateful to the members of the CART Taskforce for the constructive way this report has been developed.

“We were able to contribute substantially to the policy process for this report and welcomed the receptive approach CART members have taken in working with DFWC and others to develop a set of pragmatic guidelines.

“It is encouraging to see ICAO’s recognition that passengers should have access to duty free, and that retail and food & beverage operators form an essential part of airport infrastructure that should be used to ensure physical distancing.

“Our stores should open when people start to travel and these guidelines will allow that to happen. In many countries this will ensure a rethink from safety regulators who have not been allowing the re-opening of non-essential retail facilities.

“DFWC would also like to acknowledge ACI World who worked with us to make the case on behalf of travel retail operators around the world. Our retailers will provide significant cashflow to our airport partners as the sector restarts, so it is vitally important that we get up and running as soon as is practicable and viable.
“It is now up to individual countries to define their own safety rules and regulations for the restart. These ICAO Guidelines are critical to that. We urge retailers to bring these guidelines to the attention of their airport partners and national aviation safety regulators.”

ACI World also welcomed the guidelines, saying that harmonisation of measures represents the most effective way to balance risk with the need to enable travel.

“We welcome the authoritative ICAO Council Aviation Recovery Task Force Report which will contribute to a globally-consistent, outcome-based approach to the restart and recovery of air travel,” said ACI World Director General Angela Gittens.

“Aviation is an interconnected and interdependent global ecosystem and continued global collaboration, cooperation and consistency are key, first for the industry to successfully restart, and then for sustaining a balanced recovery.”

The Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) Director General Subhas Menon said the association “applauded ICAO’s leadership in developing such comprehensive guidance for states and industry stakeholders in a short period of time”.

He added: “We urge governments to move ahead with initiatives to restart international aviation, in line with broader recovery plans, by adopting a range of pragmatic and sensible measures that are globally and regionally harmonised, and mutually accepted, as outlined by ICAO. A number of countries in the Asia Pacific region are already taking the lead by engaging in constructive discussions with other governments to restore air links and support the resumption of both business and leisure travel.”

1 June

Germany

Airlines in the Lufthansa Group will significantly expand their service in the second half of June.

From 15 June, Lufthansa will resume flights to 20 German and European destinations from Frankfurt and 34 from Munich. As a result, the airline’s schedule will grow from 500 to almost 900 weekly connections from the two hub airports.
Takeoff time: Airlines across the Lufthansa Group are increasing their timetable during June

On the same date (15 June), Austrian Airlines aircraft will resume regular flights after a break of almost 90 days, parent company Lufthansa added. The airline will take off to 37 destinations in the final two weeks of June.

Eurowings will also expand its timetable from June onwards, adding 40 new European destinations to its schedule.

**Italy**

From 3 June, travellers from the EU, UK, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino and Vatican City will be allowed to enter Italy without having to go into quarantine.

Tourism sites including museums and St Peter’s Basilica in Rome opened doors again in May along with bars and restaurants.

**India**
The number of flights departing Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata is set to shoot up today from 11 to 75, *The Times of India* is reporting.

Airport Director Kaushik Bhattacharjee told the publication: “We are in the process of getting back to normality with all necessary precautions. Large-scale sanitisation works are underway at the airport throughout the day, and passengers are being advised to stick to social distancing protocols.”

Domestic flights in India first resumed one week ago on 25 May.

**Singapore/China**

Singapore and China will launch a ‘fast lane’ bi-lateral arrangement in early June to facilitate essential travel for business and official purposes between the two countries, according to *The Straits Times*.

The arrangement will apply first to Singapore and six provinces or municipalities directly under the Chinese central government – Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangdong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, according to a statement on Friday 29 May by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This arrangement will be gradually expanded to the other Chinese provinces and municipalities.
First steps: Singapore and China start the road to recovery for travel between the two countries. Click on the image to read the full article in *The Straits Times*.

Citing Singapore’s Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing, *The Straits Times* also reported that talks are underway with South Korea and Australia to establish green lanes for travel during the COVID-19 pandemic. Singapore is holding similar discussions with New Zealand and Malaysia. Such arrangements allow for the restoration of connectivity and facilitation of short-term essential business and official travel between countries, subject to health safeguards.
More green lanes to open? Click on the image to read the full article in The Straits Times.

International

"The world is slowly opening up" – World Tourism Organization

Today’s message from the UNWTO will be welcomed by all stakeholders
in the travel and tourism communities but there is a long journey ahead before any return to normalcy the agency warned.

New UNWTO research shows multiple destinations “cautiously” easing travel restrictions introduced in response to COVID-19. The United Nations said that 3% of all global destinations have now taken steps to ease travel restrictions,

UNWTO has been monitoring the global response to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic. The fourth edition of its COVID-19 Related Travel Restrictions: A Global Review for Tourism report, published today, again looks at the measures of 217 destinations worldwide (as of 18 May). The research shows that seven destinations have eased travel restrictions for international tourism purposes. At the same time, several more destinations are engaged in “significant” discussions about the re-opening of borders. Click here for our full report and here to download the UNWTO document.

Hong Kong

Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) today resumed transit and transfer services, the first step in a gradual reopening. The move comes as a series of new measures are introduced to protect passengers and staff, including mandatory wearing of face masks.

Other measures include:

- All transfer/transit and arriving passengers must undergo body temperature screening upon arrival.
- Transfer/transit passengers are requested to go directly to the boarding gates for their connecting flights immediately.
- Transfer/transit passengers are given stickers at transfer points for identification purpose.
- Passengers are reminded to keep a safe physical distance of at least 1.5m from each other when standing in queues.
- Alcohol-based hand rub dispensers and sanitising floor mats are available at each arrival gate and throughout the entire terminal.
- Cleaning and disinfection of the boarding gate area and airbridge are carried out after each arriving flight.
- Protective screens are installed at service counters, including airline check-in counters and Customer Services Centres.
- Designated dining areas are set up for transfer/transit passengers.

31 May

UAE

Dubai Duty Free has resumed its Click & Collect service.

Customers flying from Dubai International Airport (DXB) can now pre-order items up to 48 hours before their flight and will get a -5% discount (excluding Finest Surprise and Millennium Millionaire tickets).

Customers will then be able to collect their order from the Dubai Duty Free customer service desk in their departure terminal.

Dubai Duty Free added it has adopted stringent hygiene measures, with well-sterilised facilities, sanitised
packages and all staff wearing masks and gloves.

29 May

France

Nice Côte d’Azur Airport has announced the gradual resumption of flights.

In the coming weeks, flights will be running from the French Riviera airport to ten French destinations (Paris, Lyon, Lille, Toulouse, Nantes, Bordeaux, Bastia, Ajaccio, Figari and Calvi) and nine European cities (London, Frankfurt, Brussels, Geneva, Zurich, Vienna, Sofia, Budapest and Krakow).

Aéroports de la Côte d’Azur Chairman of the Board Dominique Thillaud said: “We are delighted that airlines have renewed their faith in us and will breathe new life into tourism in the south of France in June, followed by a gradual increase of services in July and August that will also allow the local population to fly throughout France and to numerous destinations in Europe.”

China (Hong Kong)

Hong Kong International Airport will reopen to transit travel on Monday (1 June).

Ahead of the resumption of transfer services, the airport has introduced a number of hygiene measures:

- All transfer passengers and airport staff must wear a face mask and go straight to the boarding gate for their connecting flight
- Passengers will undergo body temperature screening on arrival and be given stickers for identification purposes
- A safe distance of 1.5 metres must be maintained in queues
Hong Kong Airport Authority Airport Operations Executive Director Vivian Cheung commented: “We have been working closely with the Government, airlines and our business partners to put in place a set of comprehensive measures to ensure a smooth resumption of transfer/transit services and a safe end-to-end journey for passengers.”

**Germany**

Frankfurt Airport will be stepping up its flight services in the first week of June. The airport has said it is focussing on connections between cities in Europe, but that flights to popular holiday destinations will also increase.

Daily capacity is currently at around 10% of pre-crisis levels, but the airport is expecting this to build up in the coming weeks.

Terminal 1 will remain the focal point of all passenger handling activities for now.

**France**

Groupe ADP has said that commercial flights will resume at Paris Orly Airport on 26 June. Commercial traffic has been suspended since 31 March.

The reopening will occur in stages, supported by demand, and led by Orly T3. The move is dependent on travel restrictions being lifted in mid-June and airlines being permitted to fly within the Schengen Area.

Paris Orly flight activity will begin again in late June after a shutdown of nearly three months (Photo: Groupe ADP/Alain Leduc)

It will be accompanied by new sanitation measures including mandatory wearing of masks; physical distancing;
installation of hydro alcoholic gel dispensers; strengthening of disinfection and cleaning procedures and new security procedures to limit physical contact.

Once commercial flights resume, Orly 3 will also be equipped with thermal cameras to gauge passenger temperatures on arrival.

Groupe ADP Chairman & CEO Augustin de Romanet said: “Groupe ADP wishes to ease the recovery as fast as possible for connectivity, tourism and economic activity. It is working to shape this reopening in optimal sanitary conditions.”

As reported, most stores and F&B outlets at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport Terminal 2E, Hall K (a key pier for international traffic) reopened on 20 May.

**Nordic Region**

A survey by Baltic Sea cruise ferry company and leading maritime travel retailer Tallink shows a strong appetite for regional travel among Estonians, Finns and Swedes this Summer, if conditions allow.

Tallink Grupp this month surveyed 5,600 Club One loyalty programme members in Estonia, Finland and Sweden to understand people’s willingness to travel this summer.

In Estonia the vast majority of respondents would like to travel this summer if the travel restrictions are lifted, with 54% indicating they would like to travel to Finland. Only 5% of the respondents indicated that they would prefer to travel within their own country and 21% said that they would like to travel further afield than the Nordics and Baltics.

In Finland, the majority of respondents indicated that, if allowed, they would like to travel to Estonia and Sweden this summer, with 48% saying they are planning to travel to Tallinn and 27% to Stockholm.

In Sweden the proportion of people planning to holiday at home this year was the largest of the three countries (46%), but around a quarter of the respondents there said they are planning to spend some time in neighbouring countries. 23% of Swedish respondents said they plan to travel to Helsinki, 20% to Tallinn and 11% to Riga. 14% of Swedish respondents also indicated they plan to travel elsewhere in Europe and only 4% said they do not plan to travel anywhere at all.
The appetite for travel and cruising in the Baltic region remains high, says Tallink; Estonians in particular place onboard shopping high on the agenda when planning trips this Summer

Around half of respondents in all three countries said they would like to go on a short cruise to neighbouring countries this summer, if the restrictions are lifted.

When asked about the most important elements on a cruise when travel restrictions are lifted, respondents in Estonia highlighted entertainment (62%), enhanced safety measures for virus prevention onboard (60%) and shopping opportunities (58%). In Sweden those polled highlighted enhanced safety measures for virus prevention (32%), food & drink (31%) and good value cabin prices (15%). In a separate survey in Finland, respondents indicated that safe travel (75%) and hygiene (71%) and a good selection of F&B (68%) topped the list of things considered important on a cruise after restrictions are lifted.

Tallink Grupp CEO Paavo Nõgene said: “Our survey clearly shows that the people in the Baltic sea region countries are making plans for this summer and these plans predominantly focus on the possibilities and options they have close to home. The residents of Estonia, Finland and Sweden are understandably weary of travelling to distant shores right now while the pandemic situation globally is far from over, but there is also some weariness of staying at home for too long and clearly some desire there to at least go exploring somewhere near home and somewhere safe.

“Estonians, Finns and Swedes are clearly continuously monitoring the epidemic situation in neighbouring countries closely and some travel confidence has been boosted due to a fairly similar pandemic situation in the Baltics and most of the Nordics. The recent improvement in the situation in the Baltics and Finland has led to the survey results we see today whereby travelling to neighbouring countries is very much on the agenda for this summer, providing restrictions are lifted.”
Cyprus

Wizz Air has said it will station two Airbus A320 aircraft at Larnaca International Airport from July, making it the airline’s 28th base.

The airline has said it will fly to Athens, Thessaloniki, Billund, Copenhagen, Dortmund, Memmingen, Karlsruhe/Baden Baden, Salzburg, Suceava, Turku and Wroclaw from the Cypriot airport.

Cyprus’s Minister of Transport, Communications & Works Yiannis Karousos said: “This entire time, our strategy focused on the country’s development and the next day. We are therefore pleased to announce that the restoration of Cyprus’s connectivity is launched in the best way possible, as it is combined with the establishment of a base by an important airline, Wizz Air, with flights to destinations with which we did not have adequate connectivity until today.”

International
Flight booking analytics company ForwardKeys has unveiled the ForwardKeys Nexus to track the post-COVID-19 rebound in travel.

The platform, which is billed by the company as “all-encompassing”, can be used by business analysts and marketing companies to analyse all available flight booking data in one platform.

ForwardKeys has also announced the Hainan Dashboard, a tool designed to specifically examine the recovery of domestic travel in China with a focus on Hainan, will be launching soon.

26 May

Spain

Spain will drop its two-week quarantine period for foreign arrivals from 1 July.

The announcement follows a similar move by Greece as European tourist destinations look to make the most of summer holidaymakers.

Reacting to the news, Ryanair Chief Executive Eddie Wilson said: “After four months of lockdown, we welcome moves by governments to open their borders, remove travel restrictions and scrap ineffective quarantines.”

Italy

Gebr Heinemann and Aeroporti di Puglia have started delayed work on restyling 400sq m of commercial space at Bari Karol Wojty?a Airport.

Italian trade association, Associazione Travel Retail Italia, hailed it as “a first sign of revival and hope for the airport sector”.

Read the full story here

Serbia

Commercial flights have returned at Belgrade Nikola Tesla Airport.

National airline, Air Serbia, will this week resume flights from the country’s busiest airport to Frankfurt, Zurich, Vienna and London Heathrow; Belavia is restarting flights to Minsk; and Wizz Air is operating flights to London Luton.

The airport said more airlines and routes will be introduced as the situation and regulations develop.
Belgrade Airport is running an educational campaign across its communication channels.

Hygiene measures have been introduced at the airport. These include enhanced disinfection, floor markings to organise the passenger flow and compulsory mask wearing.
25 May

India

Mauritius

Make no mistake about it, this is an important image, backed by important words. Whisper it softly but the world is beginning to travel again. Any recovery will be slow, slight and selective, and always difficult, but each and every example of the aviation sector getting back to work should we warmly welcomed and applauded.

Airports of Mauritius CEO Anoop Nilamber posted the following encouraging message on LinkedIn: “With a view to reassuring all our compatriots and future passengers about the the sanitary devices put in place at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport, all our employees were tested for #COVID-19 last week. Other measures are also being deployed pending the finalisation of the health protocol.”
Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) Chief Strategy & Development Officer Satyaki Raghunath writes: “As domestic operations recommence across India from tomorrow, Bangalore International Airport Ltd looks forward to having you, our passengers, back at Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru.

“Contactless travel, driven by digital transformation, will soon be the norm and we are doing everything we can, to make your journey as easy and safe, as possible. Welcome back and safe travels.”

**Pacific**

Lagarde Travel Retail Pacific has announced the reopening of several outlets in domestic terminals at Auckland, Christchurch, Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth airports this week. The retailer had closed all but one of its stores in the Pacific region in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The company said that the small selection of stores will be used as test cases with restricted trading hours. Lessons will be applied to further reopenings once passenger numbers increase to more sustainable levels.
Strict hygiene and safety measures include the use of protective equipment, personal hygiene protocols, regular disinfection of all facilities and social distancing measures.
Lagarde?re Travel Retail Pacific CEO Przemek Lesniak said: “Throughout this crisis, we have stayed positive and strong and focused on providing support to our teams impacted by store closures. “We have been watching other parts of the world come through the other side, waiting for the right time to start our recovery in the Pacific. To reopen even a handful of our stores in Australia and New Zealand this week is a big moment. It will take time, but we are continuing to think positively about the future and hope to see passenger numbers continue to increase to allow more stores to reopen soon.”

Lagarde?re Travel Retail operates over 130 stores in 23 airports across Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia.

See also our latest Image of the Day.

22 May

Americas

LATAM Airlines Group and its affiliates have announced plans to increase international and domestic operations in June and July.
The airline operator is preparing to operate 9% of its pre-crisis capacity in June and 18% in July.

In June, LATAM Airlines Brazil will operate from São Paulo to Frankfurt, London, Madrid and Miami. LATAM Airlines Group will operate from Santiago to Miami and São Paulo. By July, the group is aiming to serve 13 international destinations.

Domestically, LATAM Airlines Brazil will operate 74 routes while LATAM Airlines Chile will reach 12 destinations.

LATAM Airlines Group Senior Commercial Vice President Michael Rutter said: “With these measures, the LATAM group is responding to the connectivity needs of the countries where it operates and adapting its offerings to the requirements of customers in this complex scenario.

“The group is increasing flights, destinations and frequencies, and taking concrete measures that respond to the new economic reality that clients and their families are facing. Those measures include more accessible and flexible flight options, new sanitation measures and customer assistance services for passengers during their trips.”

**Singapore**

The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore has announced passengers will be allowed to transit through Singapore Changi Airport from 2 June.

As a precaution, stringent measures will be introduced to ensure transit passengers remain in designated facilities and do not mix with other passengers. Furthermore, airport staff will be required to wear personal protective equipment and airlines will need to submit proposals for safe transfer lanes.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore said the move was “part of Singapore’s strategy to gradually re-open air transport to meet the needs of our economy and our people, whilst ensuring sufficient safeguards for safe travel”.

Foreign passengers have only been able to transit through Singapore as part of repatriation flights arranged by their government since 23 March.

**21 May**

**UAE**


The airline has introduced several measures to ensure the health and safety of passengers:

- Complimentary hygiene kits to be given to every passenger upon check-in at Dubai International Airport (DXB) and on flights to Dubai
- Transit passengers travelling through DXB will go through thermal screening upon disembarkation
- The boarding sequence has been staggered and passengers will board by row, from the last to the first
- All cabin crew will be fully kitted out in personal protective equipment
Complimentary hygiene kits are given to all passengers at check-in

Emirates Chief Operating Officer Adel Al Redha commented: “Emirates is implementing a comprehensive set of measures at every step of the traveller’s journey, to enhance the sanitisation of all touchpoints, and ensure the health and safety of our customers and employees.

“The risk of catching an infection on an aircraft is already very low, but we have spared no effort in reviewing and redesigning every step, from check-in to disembarkation. Every measure implemented is an additional reduction in risk, and taken altogether, our aim is really to make flying as safe as possible.”

**Greece**

The Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, has said direct international flights to the country’s tourist destinations will restart gradually from 1 July.

Arrivals will not be quarantined, but sample tests will be conducted on passengers, Mitsotakis added.

**India**

Domestic flights are set to resume in India on Monday (25 May).
The country’s Civil Aviation Minister, Hardeep Puri, said all airports and carriers are being told to be ready for operations to resume.

Domestic civil aviation operations will recommence in a calibrated manner from Monday 25th May 2020.

All airports & air carriers are being informed to be ready for operations from 25th May.

SOPs for passenger movement are also being separately issued by @MoCA_GoI.

— Hardeep Singh Puri (@HardeepSPuri) May 20, 2020

Passengers will need to have downloaded a government contact tracing app, be subject to thermal screening and wear masks and gloves while inside airports.

**Europe**

EasyJet has announced it will restart flights on limited routes on 15 June.

The airline, which grounded its entire fleet of 344 aircraft on 29 March, said it will restart flights on routes where it believes “there is sufficient customer demand to support profitable flying”.

The initial schedule will comprise mainly domestic flights in the UK and France, with further routes to be announced in the coming weeks.
EasyJet is taking what it bills as “small and carefully planned steps”

To coincide with the resumed service, EasyJet said customers, cabin and ground crew will be required to wear masks; there will be enhanced cleaning and disinfection of aircraft; and no onboard food service will be available initially.

EasyJet added that it will continue to refine its schedule planning and capacity expectations for the remainder of 2020.

EasyJet CEO Johan Lundgren said: “These are small and carefully planned steps that we are taking to gradually resume operations. We will continue to closely monitor the situation across Europe so that when more restrictions are lifted the schedule will continue to build over time to match demand, while also ensuring we are operating efficiently and on routes that our customers want.”

20 May

USA

Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian has told Fox Business that he doesn’t believe any US airlines will go out of business because of the coronavirus pandemic, thanks to strong governmental support.

He was reacting to the suggestion made by Boeing CEO David Calhoun earlier this month that at least one US airline is likely to fold in the face of COVID-19 challenges.
Bastian said: “Internationally, we are seeing some airlines going out of business. But in the US, I give primary credit to the President, the administration, leaders on the Hill.

“They were able to pass the CARES Act, and within the airline industry we had the six-month payroll support programme so as an industry we received US$25 billion to keep our employees in place.”

Delta Air Lines CEO Ed Bastian is confident the major US airlines will all remain in business post-pandemic

France

Most stores and F&B outlets at Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport Terminal 2E, Hall K, are reopening today.

After being closed for weeks, beauty, liquor & tobacco and fashion & accessories outlets, along with F&B units, will operate from 9am to 8pm daily. Relay stores remained open even as others closed. The retail stores are managed by the joint ventures Société de Distribution Aéroportuaire and Relay@ADP.
The flagship Buy Paris Duty Free store at Hall K reopens, in one of the major terminals serving long-haul traffic. Health protocols have been put in place to offer maximum safety for travellers and staff. These include masks being worn by all; a limit on the numbers that can enter the shops at one time; floor markings for social distancing and plexiglas windows at cash desks.

Retailers must supply hydro-alcoholic gel and clean and disinfect stores regularly. Contactless payments are encouraged.

ADP Groupe ADP has already implemented measures in airport departures:

– Wearing a mask is mandatory
– Signage to enforce social distancing (1 metre) in place
– More than 40 automatic hydroalcoholic gel dispensers installed
– Reinforcement of disinfection and cleaning procedures with a virucidal product
– Adaptation of security control procedures to limit physical contact

As reported, only terminals 2A, 2C, 2E and 2F are open at Paris CDG while Paris Orly remains closed since 1
April. Passenger traffic at the two airports fell by -98.6% year-on-year in April.

**NOTE:** For earlier updates, [click here](#)