



# COVID-19 Media Coverage 22 - 23 March 2020

## Contents

Airlines grounded by coronavirus spur boom for aircraft storage .....	2
Airline CEOs promise no furloughs if aid flows quickly .....	2
Air France, Airbus line up for government-backed bailouts .....	2
Aviation Isn't Just Airlines. Coronavirus Doesn't Discriminate, Neither Should Regulators .....	3
Beijing-bound flights to stop for health checks at other airports first .....	3
Coronavirus: UAE suspends all passenger and transit flights .....	3
Coronavirus: American Airlines' first cargo-only flight in 35+ years carries medical gear .....	3
Coronavirus grounds once-highflying pilot jobs in China .....	4
Coronavirus prompts overnight closures of New York air traffic control sites .....	4
COVID-19: Singapore Airlines slashes 96% of capacity, grounds most planes .....	4
Domestic travel, airline hubs the latest hit as coronavirus curbs tighten .....	4
Delta warns Q2 revenue to fall \$10b because of coronavirus .....	5
Emirates Group suspending most passenger flights and cutting staff salaries .....	5
Ethiopian Airlines losses from coronavirus reach \$190m.....	5
Embraer puts Brazil-based workers on furlough to protect them from coronavirus.....	5
European flight activity halves under coronavirus onslaught .....	6
'Existential crisis': airline workers fear layoffs amid coronavirus pandemic .....	6
If We Bail Out Airlines, It Better Come with Climate Rules .....	6
Japanese airline ANA to seek short-term loans amid coronavirus - Jiji .....	6
JetBlue cuts schedule to essential flights as coronavirus spreads.....	7
Oman Air to cut staff after virus hits airline as 'never before' .....	7
Pakistan suspends international flights for two weeks .....	7
Spain's Volotea grounds fleet until 8 April .....	7
S&P cuts European airlines' credit ratings .....	7
Southwest cuts most flights in and out of Midway .....	8
Taiwan to suspend airline passenger transit in virus fight .....	8
Thailand: Carriers halt international flights .....	8
The Woeful State of Air Travel In 4 Charts .....	8
Trump suggests airline aid package could restrict stock buybacks .....	9
Turkish Airlines to buy back shares after approval: Chairman.....	9
US airlines warn of 'draconian' steps if Congress fails to help .....	9
United poised to slash payroll costs without quick bailout .....	9
US: Hundreds of cities could be without air travel if small airlines go under .....	10
UK: 'Time is running out': airline industry warns government .....	10
What You Need to Know About Canadian Airline Coronavirus Change and Cancellation Policies .....	10



## [Airlines grounded by coronavirus spur boom for aircraft storage](#)

Financial Times, 23 March 2020

The grounding of up to 80,000 aircraft due to coronavirus has created a business opportunity for remote desert aircraft storage facilities, which are scrambling to meet a surge in demand. This week Delta began parking planes at Pinal Airpark in Arizona and American Airlines is diverting its fleet to several locations, including the Roswell International Air Center in New Mexico — a former US military base that is now one of the world's largest aircraft boneyards and storage facilities. In the Asia-Pacific region, Alliance Airlines, a Brisbane-based carrier, will this week begin parking planes at Alice Springs airport in the heart of central Australia. "My phone hasn't stopped ringing. Demand has exploded," said Tom Vincent, founder of Asia Pacific Aircraft Storage, which has secured funding to expand its 110-hectare site next to Alice Springs airport. "We are moving things around a bit on site so we can take at least 30 aircraft but we have the go ahead to start an expansion before the end of the month so we can accommodate 70-80 planes." Alliance will store six planes at the site, which at present hosts 10 planes, including several Boeing 737 Max aircraft that were grounded in March 2019. Airlines park planes in the desert when they think they will not be brought back into operation for at least three months. A lack of humidity, condensation and salt in the atmosphere reduces the risk of corrosion. "The dry air is kind to the stored aircraft. Also, it's cheaper than most airports," said Peter Harbison, chairman of Centre for Aviation, an industry group. He added the coronavirus could ground 80 per cent of the world's fleet, or about 60,000 jet aircraft.

## [Airline CEOs promise no furloughs if aid flows quickly](#)

Flight Global, March 22 2020

US airline chief executives have told Congress that government aid must flow quickly to avoid mass layoffs and furloughs as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, while promising to limit executive pay and stop share buyback programs.

A 21 March letter signed by CEOs of industry lobby group Airlines for America (A4A) and ten large passenger and cargo carriers appeals for at least \$58 billion in order to protect an industry that supports 750,000 jobs. The letter again requests that the \$58 billion include \$29 billion in grants and \$29 billion in loans or loan guarantees.

If granted, the airlines promise not to furlough workers or cut employees through 31 August 2020.

## [Air France, Airbus line up for government-backed bailouts](#)

Bloomberg, 20 March 2020

Air France-KLM and Airbus are poised to tap French government-backed loans as the coronavirus outbreak drains corporate cash reserves, according to people familiar with the matter. With the aviation industry among sectors most under pressure from the pandemic, the airline and planemaker, based in Paris and Toulouse respectively, will be among the first firms to receive French support, according to the people. Airbus has also signalled to the German government that it might need to tap a state loan facility, a government official there said. Airbus said it's having regular dialogue with home-nation governments that are non-public in nature. Spokespeople for Air France-KLM and the French Finance Ministry declined to comment. Like other carriers, Air France-KLM has seen demand all but wiped out as people stop traveling and nations close borders, with the company saying it may cancel 90% of flights. The situation has been exacerbated by political clashes over French and Dutch state holdings in the airline group, with France saying Wednesday it will consult the Netherlands before stepping in.



## [Aviation Isn't Just Airlines. Coronavirus Doesn't Discriminate, Neither Should Regulators](#)

Forbes, March 22 2020

Since the Wright brothers, we have used the words 'airlines' and 'aviation' interchangeably. But there is much more to aviation than airlines. The big rhinos of aviation sometimes forget about the smaller animals vital to their survival. Airports, air navigation service providers, airframe manufacturers, caterers and many others are critical to the aviation industry.

## [Beijing-bound flights to stop for health checks at other airports first](#)

Straits Times, 23 March 2020

The Civil Aviation Administration of China Sunday announced that all flights to Beijing will first have to stop at one of 12 designated airports for health checks before being allowed into the capital as the country steps up efforts to keep out imported coronavirus cases. Beginning today, all international flights bound for Beijing will first land at another airport where passengers will undergo health screenings, said several government agencies at a press conference announcing the changes, an expansion of current measures. Airports include nearby Tianjin and Dalian, but also range as far as Shanghai and Qingdao. Singapore Airlines flights to Beijing will have to stop at Nanjing airport. Passengers will be made to disembark for health checks and those who pass will be allowed to reboard the plane, which will then fly to Beijing. Strict rules are already in place for all international travellers entering the capital city, including a two-week mandatory quarantine at a designated location.

## [Coronavirus: UAE suspends all passenger and transit flights](#)

WAM, 23 March 2020

The National Emergency and Crisis and Disasters Management and the Civil Aviation Authority have decided to suspend all inbound and outbound passenger flights and the transit of airline passengers in the UAE for two weeks to curb the spread of COVID-19. The decision, which is subject to re-assessment, will take effect in 48 hours. The CAA said cargo and emergency evacuation flights would be exempt, taking into consideration all the precautionary measures adopted as per the recommendations of the Ministry of Health and Prevention. "Additional examination and isolation arrangements will be taken later should flights resume in order to ensure the safety of passengers, air crews, and airport personnel and their protection from infection risks," it added.

## [Coronavirus: American Airlines' first cargo-only flight in 35+ years carries medical gear](#)

USA Today, 21 March 2020

American Airlines has cut thousands of passenger flights in the face of coronavirus but now it is finding a purpose for some of its idle planes, flying its first cargo-only flight since 1984, when the airline retired its Boeing 747 freighters. The airline said Thursday that it would be using currently grounded widebody passenger aircrafts to move cargo between the US and Europe. The first cargo flight departed from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport on Friday and was scheduled to land Saturday in Frankfurt, Germany. The airline will fly four cargo flights this weekend, carrying medical supplies, mail for members of the US military, packages and telecommunications equipment. American also transported COVID-19 testing kits from Raleigh-Durham International Airport to Chicago O'Hare Airport this week on one of its domestic narrowbody planes. "[The flights] represent much needed aid for the world and hope for our team," said Ken Jarrell, a fleet service clerk in cargo services based at Dallas Fort Worth. "Our team members across the airline are ready and willing to do what it takes to make sure people have the things they need during these unprecedented times."



## [Coronavirus grounds once-highflying pilot jobs in China](#)

Wall Street Journal, 21 March 2020

Airline pilots flocked to China, enticed by some of the highest salaries in the business. Now, the dream looks over for hundreds of foreign pilots as airlines in China and beyond reel from the massive disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. While flight disruptions around the world are hitting pilots globally, the problems are especially acute for foreign pilots in China, many of whom are contractors without union protection, common for pilots in major markets including the US. "Our glory days are done," said one American pilot who has been furloughed by his Chinese airline since the start of February and is now back in the US. "We used to have amazing deals; the airline really bent over backwards for us. Now it's become a horrible experience." Many pilots say they have been placed on indefinite unpaid leave, and some have been stranded thousands of miles from China because of travel bans. The expectation, some say, is that they will be cut permanently as a cost-saving measure—or, if they are lucky, rehired with lower pay and fewer benefits.

## [Coronavirus prompts overnight closures of New York air traffic control sites](#)

FlightGlobal, 23 March 2020

The coronavirus pandemic continues disrupting US air traffic control (ATC), with the FAA now temporarily shutting the New York Air Route Traffic Control Center and New York LaGuardia airport's control tower. Already this week coronavirus infections disrupted ATC facilities at Las Vegas, Chicago, Indianapolis and New York John F Kennedy International airport. The latest New York closures are due to the need for "sanitation" and to "protect the health and safety of employees", the FAA says. "The Federal Aviation Administration is experiencing an increase in COVID-19 cases at air traffic facilities and other offices across the nation," the agency says. "We are experiencing this at the handful of facilities already affected by COVID-19. This is frustrating and inconvenient, but is necessary in the interest of safety."

## [COVID-19: Singapore Airlines slashes 96% of capacity, grounds most planes](#)

CNA, 23 March 2020

SIA will cut 96% of its capacity that had been scheduled up to the end of April, said the airline on Monday. The decision was made after the further tightening of border controls around the world over the last week to stem the COVID-19 outbreak, SIA said. About 138 SIA and SilkAir planes, out of a total fleet of 147, will be grounded as a result. Scoot, the company's low-cost unit, will suspend "most of its network" and will ground all but two of its 49 planes. This comes amid the "greatest challenge that the SIA Group has faced in its existence", the company said. "It is unclear when the SIA Group can begin to resume normal services, given the uncertainty as to when the stringent border controls will be lifted," it said. "The resultant collapse in the demand for air travel has led to a significant decline in SIA's passenger revenues." Over the last few days, the SIA Group has drawn on its lines of credits to meet its immediate cash flow requirements, it said, adding that it is in discussions with several financial institutions on its future funding requirements.

## [Domestic travel, airline hubs the latest hit as coronavirus curbs tighten](#)

Reuters, 23 March 2020

Airlines cancelled more flights Monday as Australia and NZ warned against non-essential domestic travel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) halted flights for two weeks and Singapore and Taiwan banned foreign transit passengers, in the coronavirus battle. As demand evaporates, the number of scheduled flights last week was down more than 12% globally from the year earlier, flight data provider OAG said, with many airlines having announced further cuts to come. "It is a war against a virus," said Andrew Herdman, DG of the Association of



Asia Pacific Airlines. "What we have to do is take care of the institutions and people's livelihoods, the soft capital, so that we can restart effectively in a timely way when the time comes." Story has full global wrap.

## [Delta warns Q2 revenue to fall \\$10b because of coronavirus](#)

CNBC, 20 March 2020

Delta's CEO Ed Bastian warned Friday that the airline's Q2 revenue will be down 80% — or \$10b — from the same quarter a year ago because of coronavirus, the latest grim message from airline executives who are anxiously awaiting government aid. Executives say demand has collapsed because of the illness, forcing them to encourage workers to take unpaid leave. Delta on Friday said it secured a \$2.6b-term loan this week and has drawn down \$2.3b of it. The airline also borrowed about \$3b from a 2018 revolving loan. "To put this in context, despite all the self-help measures we are taking, we are currently burning roughly \$50m in cash each day," Bastian said in a message to Delta employees. Delta's CEO said some 13,000 of the company's roughly 91,000 employees have volunteered to take unpaid leave but that more volunteers are needed. "It's also clear, given the underlying damage the virus has created to the overall economy, that demand recovery will take an extended period once the virus is contained," he said.

## [Emirates Group suspending most passenger flights and cutting staff salaries](#)

CNN Business, 22 March 2020

Emirates Group is suspending most passenger flights — maintaining just its cargo operations — because of coronavirus. The airline plans to halt most passenger services as of March 25, it said Sunday. After initially saying it would suspend all passenger flights, the company amended its statement later Sunday to say it will continue operating passenger flights to 13 destinations in response to "requests from governments." Emirates is also taking a number of other cost-cutting measures, including reducing operations at its air services division, Dnata, and a temporary cut to most employees' basic salaries. "The world has literally gone into quarantine due to the COVID-19 outbreak," Emirates Group chairman and CEO HH Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum said. "As a global network airline, we find ourselves in a situation where we cannot viably operate passenger services until countries re-open their borders, and travel confidence returns. By Wednesday 25 March, although we will still operate cargo flights which remain busy, Emirates will have temporarily suspended most of its passenger operations," he said. Emirates will continue to operate its international air cargo network to transport "essential goods including medical supplies" around the world. Emirates also plans to cut most employees' basic salaries by 25% to 50% for three months, in what the company said is a move to avoid having to lay off staff. Employees will still receive "other allowances" during this time, and junior level employees will be exempt from the salary reduction.

## [Ethiopian Airlines losses from coronavirus reach \\$190m](#)

Bloomberg, 22 March 2020

Ethiopian Airlines Group has lost over \$190m as the impact of the coronavirus on global travel hurts Africa's only consistently profitable airline. "Under the current situation, it is facing huge challenges," Ethiopian PP Abiy Ahmed said Saturday. The carrier has suspended flights to 30 destinations as demand collapses and some countries impose travel bans to try and contain the deadly pandemic. In Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous country, the coronavirus will be a "huge burden" on the economy, Abiy said, adding that the government will impose economic measures to help the most vulnerable.

## [Embraer puts Brazil-based workers on furlough to protect them from coronavirus](#)

Reuters, 23 March 2020



Brazilian planemaker Embraer is putting all its Brazil-based employees who cannot work remotely on paid leave until Mar 31, the company said Sunday, adding that only "a few essential operations" will be maintained. The measures are being taken to protect staff from coronavirus, and cover all units in Brazil, Embraer said. The planemaker also said it will make a decision shortly on whether to implement similar measures in other countries it operates in. The company will work with local government and trade unions in the coming days to decide on the next best steps to "protect employees ... and, at the same time, protect our business in a way that everyone suffers the least impact possible," it said.

## [European flight activity halves under coronavirus onslaught](#)

FlightGlobal, 21 March 2020

Flight activity in European airspace has deteriorated by more than 50% compared with the same point last year, the latest data from air navigation organisation Eurocontrol reveals. The average daily number of flights for March 2019 reached 27,362. But the daily figure sank below the halfway point on 18 March – when Eurocontrol recorded 13,769 flights – and the situation worsened further on 19 March when the reduction deepened to 12,670, an overall fall of 56%. Countries being particularly hard-hit by the fall in flights, and therefore facing the impact of lost air navigation revenues, include Italy, Latvia and Moldova – all of which experienced a 87-90% traffic reduction on 19 March, the Eurocontrol data shows. The declines for France and Spain on the same date were around 63%, while the figures for Germany and the UK were 56% and 42% respectively. Ireland was the least affected, with a fall of less than 25%. Lufthansa's services were down 77% on 19 March while Austrian's were almost completely eliminated.

## ['Existential crisis': airline workers fear layoffs amid coronavirus pandemic](#)

The Guardian, March 23 2020

A decade of bumper profits hasn't cushioned the US airline industry from the coronavirus pandemic. Analysts are predicting many face bankruptcy in the coming months unless the government steps in.

Right now, it's their workers who are feeling the full force of the industry's crisis – and they are terrified.

"We don't know how we are going to provide for our families," said a flight attendant with United Airlines in Kentucky, who wished to remain anonymous. "Working in the industry right now is very scary. There are a lot of unknowns. News about the coronavirus is changing so rapidly the information we are receiving is outdated by the time it is disseminated."

## [If We Bail Out Airlines, It Better Come with Climate Rules](#)

Huffpost, March 20 2020

Even before air travel took a serious hit from the novel coronavirus pandemic, the airline industry was in trouble.

Profit forecasts in 2019 plunged to the lowest in five years as fuel costs rose and the trade war between the United States and China tanked the cargo business. Airline bankruptcies increased at their fastest ever rate last year, with at least 18 companies going under, and Boeing, the top U.S. plane manufacturer, grounded its new 737 Max jetliner after two deadly crashes. Meanwhile, airlines had to apologize over and over and over and over again for mistreating customers in bizarre, humiliating or discriminatory ways.

## [Japanese airline ANA to seek short-term loans amid coronavirus - Jiji](#)

Reuters, 23 March 2020

ANA Holdings will seek short-term loans as part of measures against the spreading coronavirus pandemic, Jiji reported on Monday. A spokesperson for ANA was not immediately available for comment. The airline said earlier on Monday that it would furlough 5,000 cabin crew from next month for as long as a year.



## [JetBlue cuts schedule to essential flights as coronavirus spreads](#)

CNBC, 22 March 2020

JetBlue Airways told employees Sunday that it plans to cancel hundreds of flights and operate less than half of its normal schedule this week, as it shrinks its operation to match diminished demand: passengers who “are flying because they must.” The new reductions in JetBlue’s schedule come less than a week after it announced it would cut its flying by at least 40% in April and May as cancellations outpace bookings. The clip of cancellations and weak demand is forcing New York-based JetBlue to cancel nonessential flights on a rolling basis, president and COO Joanna Geraghty told employees Sunday in a note.

## [Oman Air to cut staff after virus hits airline as ‘never before’](#)

Bloomberg, 21 March 2020

Oman Air plans to cut jobs as the coronavirus pandemic took its toll on the Gulf carrier’s flight schedule, according to an internal memo. The state-owned carrier had to reduce flights, suspend routes and park planes “in a way we’ve never had before,” CEO Abdulaziz Al Raisi said in an email sent to employees, adding that the airline can no longer sustain the current level of employment. Oman Air joins airlines around the globe in reducing headcount after the outbreak prompted countries to shut borders and halt commercial flights. “Those holding positions that are no longer required will be let go, but will be welcomed back as the airline resumes operations,” Al Raisi said.

## [Pakistan suspends international flights for two weeks](#)

Reuters, 21 March 2020

Pakistan has suspended all international flights for two weeks to limit the spread of coronavirus, as governments across densely populated south Asian countries ramp up their efforts to contain the virus. Pakistani officials also asked people to self-quarantine for at least another 45 days, as the country reported its third coronavirus death, with confirmed cases rising to 534. “[The] government of Pakistan has decided to suspend operation of all international passenger, chartered and private flights to Pakistan, effective from March 21 till April 4,” the civil aviation ministry said. Authorities in Bangladesh tightened border controls, while Sri Lankan police arrested more than two dozen people for violating a nationwide curfew.

## [Spain’s Volotea grounds fleet until 8 April](#)

Cirium, 20 March 2020

Volotea has announced the temporary grounding of its entire fleet until at least 8 April, sending home 1,100 of its employees in Spain, France and Italy over this period. The Spanish airline says the grounding of its fleet of 19 Airbus A319s and 14 Boeing 717s jets is a consequence of both the collapse of demand for air transport amid the coronavirus outbreak and the national curfews and regulations limiting air traffic, such as the virtual prohibition of passenger flights to the Balearic Islands, except for tourist repatriation flights. Asturias-based Volotea, Spain’s fourth-largest airline, is offering customers booked on the cancelled flights the option to choose between a refund or a voucher worth 120% of the ticket price paid. Volotea, which recently relocated its headquarters from Barcelona to Oviedo, specialises on point-to-point routes between southern European mid-sized cities often not served by other airlines.

## [S&P cuts European airlines’ credit ratings](#)

Cirium, 23 March 2020

S&P Global has lowered its ratings for EasyJet, Ryanair, Lufthansa, IAG, British Airways, Air Baltic, Turkish Airlines and SAS, and placed them on alert for further downgrades as the coronavirus hurts their liquidity positions. “The pandemic materially threatens the credit quality of European airlines and poses serious



challenges for the global airline industry as a whole," states the ratings agency. It warns that "lower revenues and cash flows will result in significantly weaker credit metrics in 2020 than our previous expectations". Given the collapsing passenger demand and the significant travel restrictions being enacted in Europe and worldwide, S&P believes earnings could fall by 50-70% depending on carriers' abilities to slash costs. The agency expects revenue to decline 30% on the back of softer average ticket prices as carriers lower their yields in order to fill seats. Capacity will only be reduced by half as much as passenger demand falls, S&P suggests, amid airlines' efforts to maintain viable flight schedules. A gradual recovery in passenger demand is forecast for Q3 and near-normal trading conditions for the fourth, but it will likely be hindered by a global recession.

## [Southwest cuts most flights in and out of Midway](#)

Associated Press, 21 March 2020

Southwest said Friday that it had significantly scaled back its flights in and out of Midway International Airport, its Chicago hub, days after federal authorities closed the airport's control tower after technicians tested positive for the coronavirus. A Southwest spokeswoman said the airline cancelled about 170 of its roughly 250 daily flights in and out of Midway due to the airspace restrictions that followed the control tower's closure. "We've had to pull that back by cancelling around 170 flights. We're averaging four to six flights per hour," she said. "There are only so many flights they're letting in and out of Chicago." She said that reports that Southwest Airlines had cancelled all flights in and out of Midway were not accurate.

## [Taiwan to suspend airline passenger transit in virus fight](#)

Reuters, 22 March 2020

Taiwan further tightened travel controls Sunday to help stop the spread of the coronavirus, suspending the transit of airline passengers through Taiwan from March 24 until April 7, as it announced 16 new cases bringing the total to 169. While Taiwan had in the early stages of the outbreak been successful at keeping the number of cases relatively low thanks to a good screening and contact tracing system, numbers have spiked due to an influx of infected people from abroad. Taiwan has already stopped all foreigners apart from residence permit holders from coming to the island and is quarantining for 14 days everyone arriving on the island. From midnight on Tuesday, airline passengers will no longer be allowed to transit via Taiwan, until April 7. The move is to "reduce the cross-border movement of people and lower the risk of disease transmission", the government said. The ban will mostly affect Taiwan's two main carriers, China Airlines and Eva Airways.

## [Thailand: Carriers halt international flights](#)

Bangkok Post, 22 March 2020

Thai AirAsia (TAA) and Bangkok Airways have temporarily cancelled all international flights from Sunday but will continue to operate domestic routes, the airlines announced. TAA and Bangkok Airways are the second and third carriers in Thailand to introduce mass flight cancellations prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic. TAA said it hopes to resume international flights on April 25 while Bangkok Airways announced its suspension takes effect "until further notice". Thai Lion Air (TLA) was the first to suspend operations after it grounded all of its 17 aircraft on Wednesday. The airline expects to resume services on May 1, it said on Friday. Meanwhile, Suvarnabhumi Airport, the country's main aviation gateway, reported a 42% slump in passengers on Friday. According to Airports of Thailand (AoT), 44,697 passengers passed through the airport from 12 am to 11.59pm on Friday, down 42.2% from the same day last year. The figure included both inbound and outbound passengers who travelled on 621 flights, 397 of which were international flights carrying 25,261 passengers. Of them, 8,789 were arrivals.

## [The Woeful State of Air Travel In 4 Charts](#)

Forbes, March 22 2020



Acting Department of Homeland Security Secretary Chad Wolf told Fox News today that the U.S. has no immediate plans to ban domestic travel. But the reality is that it has become increasingly difficult to fly within the United States — or anywhere in the world for that matter — as airlines are chopping thousands of flights per day off their schedules.

In normal times, the number of flights that are delayed far outstrips the number of cancellations. Just a month ago, a cancelled flight was a relative rarity in the U.S. Yet in a few short weeks, the number of cancelled flights quickly reached into the thousands per day and it continues to rise, as demonstrated in this chart by FlightStats, the flight tracking website and app.

## [Trump suggests airline aid package could restrict stock buybacks](#)

Flight Global, March 22 2020

President Donald Trump supports imposing stock buyback restrictions on companies that receive financial aid as part of the federal government's coronavirus recovery package.

Airlines and Boeing, which have been criticised for spending billions of dollars repurchasing their own stock during recent boom years, are among US businesses seeking financial help.

"I would demand that there would be no stock buybacks," Trump says during a press conference on 20 March. "I don't want them taking hundreds of millions of dollars and buying back their own stock."

## [Turkish Airlines to buy back shares after approval: Chairman](#)

Bloomberg, 22 March 2020

Turkish Airlines will start a buyback program after it's approved at its shareholders' general assembly meeting scheduled on March 31, Chairman Ilker Ayci said on Sunday. Around 85% of the carrier's passenger planes are not being used at the moment, Ayci said, after Turkey suspended flights from more than 60 countries because of the coronavirus outbreak. The flagship carrier will halt most international flights from March 27 until April 17, CEO Bilal Eksi said. Service will continue to Hong Kong, Moscow, Addis Ababa, New York and Washington. The airline will continue cargo flights while reducing the frequency of domestic flights, he added. As part of its efforts to counter the economic impact of the outbreak, Turkey cut value-added tax on aviation to 1% from 18% until the end of June, according to a presidential decree published Sunday.

## [US airlines warn of 'draconian' steps if Congress fails to help](#)

AFP, 22 March 2020

The CEOs of the largest US airline companies asked Congress Saturday for urgent help avoiding widespread layoffs among the industry's 750,000 employees. "Unless worker payroll protection grants are passed immediately, many of us will be forced to take draconian measures such as furloughs," the CEOs said in a letter to leaders of both houses of Congress distributed by the Airlines for America trade group. "The breadth and immediacy of the need to act cannot be overstated," it said. "It is urgent and unprecedented." Airlines for America represents American Airlines, United, Delta and Southwest as well as shippers FedEx and UPS. "On behalf of 750,000 airline professionals and our nation's airlines, we respectfully request Congress to continue to move expeditiously to pass a bipartisan proposal that includes a combination of worker payroll protection grants, loans and loan guarantees and tax measures. Time is running out." The signatories appeared to be trying, in part, to counter recent negative publicity over reports that in recent years the airlines, while taking in billions in profits, used stock buybacks and other measures to reward shareholders rather than putting money into workers' salaries or a rainy-day fund.

## [United poised to slash payroll costs without quick bailout](#)

CNN Business, 20 March 2020



The crisis in the US airline industry from the coronavirus continues to deepen, and soon airline employees could be paying the price. United says it could be forced to cut payroll costs by as much as 60% if an airline industry bailout isn't approved by Congress by the end of the month. And Delta now expects revenue to plunge 80% in the three months period that begins in April, according to a company filing. A letter sent to United's nearly 100,000 employees by CEO Oscar Munoz, President Scott Kirby and many of the airline's union leaders warns that the drop in travel demand because of the coronavirus outbreak will force it to cut its April schedule by 60%. "If Congress doesn't act on sufficient government support by the end of March, our company will begin to take the necessary steps to reduce our payroll in line with the 60% schedule reduction we announced for April. May's schedule is likely to be cut even further." The reduced cost could come through employee furloughs, pay cuts or a combination of the two. United spent \$12b on payroll and benefits in 2019. It announced on Sunday that it was cutting its schedule for April and May by 50%. Its revised reduction of 60% to its April schedule is due to additional travel restrictions and steps to battle the virus outbreak. Yet even at that reduced rate of flying, United expects to fill only 20% to 30% of seats.

## [US: Hundreds of cities could be without air travel if small airlines go under](#)

CNN Business, 20 March 2020

Two regional airlines that fly feeder flights for United, Delta and American airlines will halt operations in the next few weeks, marking the first US carriers to be grounded by the coronavirus outbreak. The group representing these carriers, the Regional Airline Association, says the closures are only the beginning. The airline bailout bill, as currently written, won't help small carriers, it said, and the sector could be wiped out by the crisis. That would leave hundreds of smaller cities served only by regional jets with very limited air service -- or perhaps none at all. "We could be on the cusp of fundamentally changing the air transportation system in the United States," said Faye Malarkey Black, the CEO of the Regional Airline Association. "History says once a city loses service, it doesn't come back. These are the first shutdowns, but if we don't get the help, and get it fast, this definitely won't be the last." The carriers shutting down are Compass Airlines, which will halt its Delta Connection operations on April 1 and its American Eagle flights on April 7. Trans States Airlines, which has common ownership with Compass, will shut its United Express operations on April 1. Before the current crisis, the two carriers had 2,700 employees and flew nearly 10 million passengers annually on more than 500 daily flights to about 100 cities.

## [UK: 'Time is running out': airline industry warns government](#)

The Guardian, 22 March 2020

Airlines and airports have warned that time is running out for the government to enact promised measures to help the aviation industry, with EasyJet and Ryanair set to stop flying after Monday and less than 5% of normal passenger numbers expected at major airports. Further talks are expected between ministers and the industry on Monday as the government wrestles with how to keep critical infrastructure functioning. Although work is understood to have continued over the weekend, there is frustration in the industry at the time elapsed without any concrete detail, even after the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, made a second major intervention in three days on Friday evening. Karen Dee, CE of the Airport Operators Association, said measures to support employers through the pandemic were welcome, but the industry had been holding off taking drastic steps pending promised special state support. She said: "While government has been receptive, it has not led to clear next steps and airports will now face making extremely difficult decisions."

## [What You Need to Know About Canadian Airline Coronavirus Change and Cancellation Policies](#)

Forbes, March 22 2020

As governments across the globe advise against non-essential travel or close country borders completely, many would-be vacationers are desperate to cancel or change travel plans. Airlines themselves are warning



customers about clogged call centers and terrible wait times and are asking customers to only contact them anywhere from a week to 72-hours before a scheduled flight. Other carriers are setting up special online portals so passengers can make their own flight changes.