

Virus-hit airline Virgin Atlantic lands extra finance

March 15 2021



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Virgin Atlantic, one of many airlines hit hard by coronavirus fallout, has won a further financial boost from shareholders as it prepares to resume

passenger flights.

Shareholders, including parent Richard Branson-owned Virgin Group, have handed the airline £160 million (\$223 million, 187 million euros) in fresh loans and deferrals, according to a statement.

"We continue to bolster our balance sheet in anticipation of the lifting of international travel restrictions during the second quarter of 2021," it said.

The British government has targeted May 17 as the date from when passenger air travel to and from the UK can resume after it imposed a lockdown to contain the spread of Covid.

Virgin's fresh support package follows the raising of \$230 million in January from the sale of two Boeing 787 planes that allowed the airline to cut debt and strengthen its cash position.

That came after the airline last year secured its future thanks to a recapitalisation worth £1.2 billion.

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While the UK government last year refused to bail out Virgin Atlantic, the carrier secured a privately-funded rescue with the help of Delta Air Lines, which owns 49 percent of the airline.

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Citation: Virus-hit airline Virgin Atlantic lands extra finance (2021, March 15) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2021-03-virus-hit-airline-virgin-atlantic-extra.html>

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