

IIAC uses 'all resources' to restore Incheon traffic

Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC) says it is mustering all resources to restore air traffic demand, which has been impacted following the MERS Outbreak in May; slashing landing fees in the process.



On Monday, Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC) said it would exempt 100% of landing fees in August, for flights on new routes or those that have increased in frequency since July.

As previously reported, all but one of the top five airports in South Korea experienced a collapse in traffic in June – largely the result of the MERS virus impact on travel decisions to the country.



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Duty free sales in South Korea's downtown and airport shops also **fell by an overall 20% to 30% in June**, due to the drop in foreign visitor arrivals following the MERS outbreak, according to Lotte Duty Free, South Korea's leading duty free operator.

Total passengers who used Incheon Airport this year highly increased 17.2% year on year until May before MERS outbreak but started to decrease in June (-9.4%) and July (-12.5%), says IIAC.

To reassure foreign visitors that travelling through the airport was safe, IIAC invited Chinese and Japanese tour groups to visit the airport, organised by 'Fam Tours'.

IIAC believes that its measures or remission of usage fees will be effective in replenishing traffic at the airport: "The remission is more beneficial as flights increase, therefore the restoration effect will be more dramatic than that of 2003 (SARS) and 2008 (economic crisis), when there was [just] a 10% discount on

IIAC uses 'all resources' to restore Incheon traffic landing fees."



Incheon International Airport Corporation (IIAC) invited Japanese tourism industry and media representatives to Incheon Airport on 21 July.

According to IIAC, in 2003, the passenger number at Incheon recovered just one month after the company implemented the discount, and actually exceeded the previous year's traffic after just three months.

Park Wan-su (the CEO of IIAC) said: "Incheon Airport hopes that this remission attracts foreign demand for visiting Korea as part of government's tourism recovery strategy there is a Grand Korea Sale in August."

He added: "We expect to see the recovery and growth rate of air travel demands similar to that before the MERS outbreak, thanks to the remission policy."

On 13 and 16 July, IIAC organised press briefings to publicise how safe it was to travel to Korea, inviting 200 people from the Chinese tourism industry and media to the Westin Chosun Seoul.

At the briefings Kwang-Soo Lee, the Vice President of Marketing Division, emphasised that Korea and Incheon Airport were safe from the MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak, presenting detailed statistics highlighting that the disease is 'under control'.