

Business

Domestic Air Travel Bounces Back

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Domestic air passenger numbers bounced back to over 100,000 last weekend for the first time in 10 weeks amid signs that the coronavirus epidemic is easing.

Many Koreans chose the long weekend to travel to Jeju and other destinations in the south.

According to the Korea Civil Aviation Association on Wednesday, a total of 131,929 people traveled by domestic flights on May 2-3, the most since the explosive spike in coronavirus infections in the country in February.

Most traveled to and from Jeju. An industry insider said the average booking rate for the Gimpo-Jeju route was 90 percent over the break.



Jeju International Airport is packed with travelers on April 30. /Newsis

Some 193,000 tourists visited Jeju over the long weekend from April 30 to Tuesday, according to the Jeju Tourism Association.

Domestic air travel has been increasing since hitting rock bottom during the fourth weekend of March with 63,548 passengers. Numbers rose by nearly 50 percent to the fourth weekend of April.

Passenger numbers have now reached some 76 percent of the 172,709 who traveled within the country during the third weekend of January, before the coronavirus

"The crisis of the aviation industry will continue until after the end of the coronavirus epidemic because international business accounts for more than 90 percent of and is still in paralysis," an airline executive said.