

## More air routes link places along Belt, Road

More new international air routes linking China with economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative will be opened in the winter and spring aviation season, an official at the Civil Aviation Administration of China said on Monday.

Some 127 new international routes have opened during the 2017-18 season, which runs from Oct 29 to March 24.

Fourteen of the routes are for freight; 113 are for passengers. "The rapid increase of new international routes linking China with countries and regions involved in the initiative will continue in the new season," Yu Biao, deputy director of the administration's transport department, said at a news conference.

Domestic airlines have already opened 108 new international routes, mostly in Western Europe, Australia, Russia and Southeast Asia. Of those, 95 link with regions involved in the Belt and Road Initiative – mostly in Central Europe, Central Asia, South Asia and the South Pacific.

Meanwhile, international airlines have opened 19 new international routes, mostly in Southeast Asia. Eighteen of those link economies involved in the initiative.

In the new season, 18,338 international flights will be conducted weekly by 31 domestic airlines and 134 international ones. The domestic carriers will link China with 155 cities in 58 countries and regions. International carriers will link China with 135 cities abroad.

In the previous aviation season, more than 100 new international routes opened to economies involved in the initiative. As of May, there were direct flights linking China with 43 of those economies, with about 4,200 flights weekly.

The punctuality of flights in October was the best since May, 2009, with 83 percent on time.

Weather is the main reason for timetable disruptions, accounting for 48 percent of delays, said Tian Zhencai, deputy director of the administration's operations and monitoring center.