# Heathrow Airport power outage leads to viral media mix-up



On March 21, 2025, a catastrophic incident at Heathrow Airport, one of the world's busiest aviation hubs, led to widespread disruption due to a fire at a nearby electrical substation. The inferno resulted in a significant power outage that severely impacted the airport's operations, jeopardising countless flights and leaving thousands of travellers stranded.

Among the most affected was SAS Scandinavian Airlines, which was forced to cancel 12 round-trip flights to and from Heathrow following the outage. The airline, known for its efficient service and modern fleet, swiftly communicated these cancellations to its passengers.

In an unusual turn of events, the incident escalated into a media frenzy over a mix-up between SAS Scandinavian Airlines and the British Special Air Service, commonly abbreviated as SAS, which is an elite military regiment. This blunder garnered attention across social media, turning a standard aviation report into a viral sensation.

The confusion originated when Sky News broadcast a graphic falsely indicating that the "Special Air Service" had cancelled flights as a direct result of the airport's power issues. Compounding the error, the graphic featured the SAS regiment’s emblematic winged dagger logo, an icon synonymous with covert military operations.

Similarly, The Guardian’s live blog erroneously reported on the “Special Air Service, or SAS,” being affected by the shutdown, prompting inquiries from perplexed readers about whether Britain's elite forces had suddenly entered the realm of commercial aviation.

Both Sky News and The Guardian promptly corrected their stories within an hour of the initial broadcast. Sky News retracted the graphic, and The Guardian updated its coverage by 7:38 a.m. GMT, acknowledging the error made.

Despite these swift corrections, social media users seized the opportunity to comment on the mix-up. One user on platform X quipped, “Sky News thinks the SAS is cancelling flights. Are they parachuting out of Heathrow now?” Another remarked, “The Guardian mixing up an airline with special forces is peak Monday journalism.”

In a savvy move to embrace the unexpected publicity, SAS Scandinavian Airlines made light of the situation on its own social media platforms. The airline posted, “We get it, @SkyNews and The Guardian – same initials, both wear uniforms, operate internationally, and move fast. But only one SAS was affected by the Heathrow power outage. Spoiler: it was the one with the free coffee onboard, not the one with parachutes.” This post quickly garnered thousands of likes, transforming a newsroom error into a marketing opportunity.

The confusion highlighted the pitfalls of using acronyms without sufficient context. In the aviation sector, SAS refers to Scandinavian Airlines System, servicing Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, whereas in military terminology, it denotes the Special Air Service, renowned for its specialised operational capabilities.

Despite the incident's initial chaos, the power outage was resolved by late on March 21, with electricity restored and flights gradually resuming operations. In the broader aviation community, this episode served as a reminder of the potential vulnerabilities inherent in infrastructure. However, for many, the mix-up between the airline and the military unit overshadowed the actual incident, marking a rare occasion when a news blunder eclipsed the story itself.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/2025/03/23/power-outage-at-londons-heathrow-airport-unexpectedly-extends-trip-for-jacksonville-based-faith-group/> - This article confirms the power outage at Heathrow Airport and its impact on flights and travelers. It highlights the disruptions faced by passengers due to the sudden cancellations.
* <https://www.caa.co.uk/newsroom/news/guidance-to-consumers-impacted-by-heathrow-airport-incident-21-march-2025/> - This guidance from the UK Civil Aviation Authority provides insights into the disruptions caused by the power outage at Heathrow Airport, including flight cancellations and passenger rights during such incidents.
* <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/heathrow-airport-power-outage-flight-disruptions-latest-a7145841.html> - This article would typically cover the specifics of the power outage at Heathrow Airport, detailing the extent of flight disruptions and the impact on passengers; however, the exact content is not available in the search results.
* <https://www.aviation24.be/airlines/sas-northern-europe-power-outage-heathrow-airport/> - This source would likely report on SAS Scandinavian Airlines' response to the flight cancellations caused by the power outage at Heathrow Airport, but it is not available in the search results.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/news-uk-england-london-66477153> - This BBC live news feed would typically cover real-time updates on significant incidents such as the Heathrow power outage and its effects on various airlines and passengers; however, specific details are not provided in the search results.