

PRESS RELEASE

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February 2020 / Traffic / Preliminary

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Asia Pacific Airlines Traffic Results - February 2020

Passenger traffic slumps, cargo demand holding up

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Preliminary traffic figures released today by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) showed that international air passenger demand plunged in February 2020, with deepening public anxiety about the COVID-19 pandemic and the abrupt imposition of travel restrictions across the world causing widespread disruptions to airline operations.

In aggregate, the region's airlines experienced a 43.9% year-on-year fall in the number of international passengers carried to a combined 17.0 million in February. As measured in revenue passenger kilometres (RPK), demand fell by 34.8%, alongside a 20.6% drop in available seat capacity. As a result, the average international passenger load factor tumbled by 14.4 percentage points to 66.6% for the month.

Meanwhile, air cargo demand held up remarkably well, despite the effects of extended factory closures and lockdowns in China crippling the supply and distribution of manufactured goods nationwide and related international trade flows. These declines were partly offset by higher demand for air shipments of intermediate goods, including pharmaceutical and food supplies, within the region.

Overall, Asia Pacific airlines registered a 3.0% year-on-year decline in international air cargo demand in freight tonne kilometres (FTK) terms in February. Comparatively, offered freight capacity fell by a sharp 13.5%, with belly-hold capacity declining in tandem with the progressive cuts in the number of passenger flights over the course of the month. As a result, the average international freight load factor increased by 6.5 percentage points to 60.3% for the month.

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Commenting on the results, Mr. Andrew Herdman, AAPA Director General said, “Asian airlines saw passenger demand for international air travel demand plunge in February as a result of the rapid spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. Overall, for the first two months of the year, the number of international passengers travelling on Asian airlines fell by 21% to 50 million passengers.”

“During the same period, international air cargo demand fell by a relatively modest 5%, under challenging business conditions resulting from disruptions to production and logistics supply from large exporting markets in the region.”

Mr. Herdman added, “Since February, we have seen a further sharp deterioration in the overall situation. As COVID-19 became a global pandemic, severe travel restrictions and falling demand have forced steep capacity cuts across the majority of airline route networks, with some airlines virtually halting all international flights, whilst others are planning to maintain minimal levels of connectivity by operating a small number of passenger services in the coming months. Asian airlines are also working closely with governments and related stakeholders to mount a number of humanitarian and evacuation flights to bring home stranded nationals.”

Mr. Herdman added, “Meanwhile, demand for air cargo remains relatively unaffected, and every effort is being made to ensure that shipments of critical relief supplies including medical equipment, and food products can continue to be transported safely and efficiently around the world. Asian airlines account for over one third of global air cargo flows, and operate large numbers of dedicated freighter aircraft. The sharp fall in passenger services has removed significant belly-cargo capacity from the market place. A number of airlines are now operating supplementary cargo services using passenger aircraft to meet the demand.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges, both operational and financial, to the airline industry and the wider travel and tourism sector worldwide. Whilst some governments have moved quickly to provide measures of financial support, much more needs to be done to reduce the risks of permanent damage to critical sectors of the economy.”

TRAFFIC UPDATE – PRELIMINARY

International Scheduled Services of Asia Pacific Airlines

International	Feb-20	Feb-19	% Change	Jan-Feb 2020	Jan-Feb 2019	% Change
Passengers (Thousand)	17,002	30,291	- 43.9%	50,131	63,249	- 20.7%
RPK (Million)	70,854	108,620	- 34.8%	194,802	231,000	- 15.7%
ASK (Million)	106,427	134,093	- 20.6%	259,157	282,581	- 8.3%
Passenger Load Factor	66.6%	81.0%	- 14.4 pp	75.2%	81.7%	- 6.5 pp
FTK (Million)	4,475	4,615	- 3.0%	9,802	10,320	- 5.0%
FATK (Million)	7,427	8,583	- 13.5%	17,320	18,642	- 7.1%
Freight Load Factor	60.3%	53.8%	+ 6.5 pp	56.6%	55.4%	+ 1.2 pp

Effective January 2020, the dataset comprises aggregated traffic data from the following 40 Asia Pacific based carriers: 3K, 5J, 6E, 7C, 9C, 9W, AI, AK, BI, BR, CA, CI, CK, CX, CZ, D7, GA, HO, HU, IX, JL, JQ, KA, KC, KE, KZ, MH, MU, NH, NZ, OZ, PG, PR, QF, SG, SQ, TG, TR, VA and VN.

- Previous year data adjusted for comparison purposes
- RPK = revenue passenger kilometres
- ASK = available seat kilometres
- FTK = freight tonne kilometres
- FATK = available freight tonne kilometres
- All figures, including estimates for missing data, are provisional

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Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA)

The AAPA is the trade association for scheduled international airlines based in the Asia-Pacific region. The AAPA permanent secretariat is headquartered in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia with international representation in Brussels and Washington, D.C. Collectively, the region's airlines carry 1,623 million passengers and 23 million tonnes of cargo, representing over one-third of global passenger and air cargo traffic, and thus play a leading role in the ongoing development of global aviation.

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