

PRESS RELEASE

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Asia Pacific Airlines Travel Recovery

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Asia Pacific Airlines Preparing for Take-Off

Focus on a Safe, Smart and Sustainable Restart Once Borders Reopen

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Asia-Pacific airlines are preparing for a smooth, successful and widespread resumption of air travel as soon as governments relax border controls. The restart of international air travel has been delayed following the recent surge in COVID-19 infections, while the global roll-out of vaccination programmes will take time, effectively extinguishing hopes for an early recovery in air travel.

Air travel has declined further since November 2020 and the resulting cash crunch for airlines has been severe as the pandemic wears on. At the same time, airlines have been playing a frontline role in the fight against COVID by repatriating citizens and residents, transporting medical resources, humanitarian aid and now vaccines, which are critical to saving lives and global recovery.

Together with critical safety considerations, the industry recognizes that technological solutions including “smart” apps for contactless travel, as well as its environmental impact are top of mind for today’s traveller. Asia Pacific airlines have accordingly devoted time and resources to address these important issues during the pandemic.

Combining established safety-focused remote training, inspection, audit and certification applications, airlines are keeping their airplane and crew resources, current and ready for restarting operations as well as for meeting stringent regulatory requirements. These abilities and attitudes are continuously honed through cross industry collaboration and commitment.

To make air travel convenient, safe and predictable for its passengers, the industry is actively seeking consumer-friendly technological solutions in the form of a digital travel pass combining various essential elements, including traveller identification, health certification, border control authorization and public health information. The digitalised application allows contactless and seamless travel, while addressing privacy and security concerns with the relevant secure data management protocols. Touchless, self-service capabilities are also recognised to be a high priority amongst travellers.

The aviation industry remains firmly committed to its sustainability goals. Meeting the target of halving emissions by 2050 will be achieved with a combination of market-based measures, new technologies, improvement in operations and infrastructure as well as utilising sustainable alternative fuels.

At a Media Roundtable today, Subhas Menon, the Director General of AAPA said that, “Pent-up demand is evident from the surge in bookings whenever the easing of travel restrictions is initiated, even fleetingly, as in the case of the aborted Singapore-Hong Kong travel bubble. But the inconsistent and oftentimes complicated nature of border restrictions will be a serious impediment to recovery unless we can offer a solution for travellers to navigate and fulfil these requirements conveniently. The industry is working with various stakeholders to make seamless air travel a reality again.”

Mr. Menon added, “Safety and Sustainability are the cornerstones of aviation. The well-being of the industry, our customers and the future of aviation rests on these core values, which put the industry in good stead, as we prepare for a new travel reality beyond COVID-19.”

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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