

PRESS RELEASE

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Asia Pacific Airlines Traffic Results - February 2021

Passenger demand stays suppressed, cargo demand keeps growing

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Preliminary traffic figures released today by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) showed international air traffic demand remaining at depressed levels as a result of continued border restrictions. Meanwhile, robust export activity amid improving global business confidence boosted demand for air cargo.

Overall, international passenger demand worsened in February, as fears over the spread of COVID-19 variants prompted the imposition of additional layers of border control measures. In aggregate, the region's airlines carried only 1.2 million international passengers, representing just 6.3% of the 18.3 million passengers recorded in the same month last year, when air travel demand was already slowing due to the intensifying spread of COVID-19 across the world. Available seat capacity was 14.9% of levels registered last year, whilst the average international passenger load factor of 24.8% for the month underscored the extremely weak demand conditions.

For the region's carriers, international air cargo demand, as measured in freight tonne kilometres (FTK), climbed 7.6% higher compared to the same month last year, on the back of an acceleration in trade activity.

Meanwhile, the grounding of many passenger aircraft fleets as well as disruptions to container shipping led to additional pressure on limited air freight capacity. In February, offered freight capacity declined by 9.2% year-on-year, despite increased utilisation of dedicated freighter aircraft supplemented by additional cargo-only passenger flights. As a result, the international freight load factor recorded an 11.1 percentage point increase to average 71.7% for the month.

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Commenting on the results, Mr. Subhas Menon, AAPA Director General said, “During the first two months of the year, Asian airlines carried just 4% of the number of international passengers that flew in the corresponding months of 2019, before the pandemic decimated travel.”

Mr Menon added, “Air cargo remains the single bright spot for the Asian carriers. International air cargo demand for the first two months of the year was 2.2% higher than in 2019. Nevertheless, cargo revenue could not offset the collapse in passenger revenue. With travel markets shuttered by border closures, airlines will require further government support to weather the crisis.”

Mr. Menon continued, “The rebound in economic activity is progressing globally, whilst the travel and tourism sectors continue to be severely curtailed by differing travel requirements and restrictions, with the unpredictability of further changes.”

“The region’s airlines are focusing efforts in digitalising the travel process, including utilising technologies that aid governments and travellers in managing health credentials securely and efficiently. The latest updates to the ICAO CART guidelines are a further positive step towards the safe resumption of international air travel. We call on governments to fully embrace the guidelines and collaborate with one another to ensure that travel requirements are harmonized for the convenience of the travelling public.”

TRAFFIC UPDATE – PRELIMINARY

International Scheduled Services of Asia Pacific Airlines

International	Feb-21	Feb-20	% Change	Jan-Feb 2021	Jan-Feb 2020	% Change
Passengers (Thousand)	1,156	18,273	- 93.7%	2,537	51,740	- 95.1%
RPK (Million)	3,964	72,313	- 94.5%	9,059	196,684	- 95.4%
ASK (Million)	15,985	107,292	- 85.1%	34,573	260,495	- 86.7%
Passenger Load Factor	24.8%	67.4%	- 42.6 pp	26.2%	75.5%	- 49.3 pp
FTK (Million)	5,037	4,682	+ 7.6%	10,533	10,029	+ 5.0%
FATK (Million)	7,021	7,731	- 9.2%	14,764	17,717	- 16.7%
Freight Load Factor	71.7%	60.6%	+ 11.1 pp	71.3%	56.6%	+ 14.7 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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