

PRESS RELEASE

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Asia Pacific Airlines Traffic Results - March 2021

Cargo demand remains high, while passenger traffic is still dismal

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Preliminary traffic figures released today by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) showed that international passenger markets remained weak with unabating border restrictions particularly in the Asia Pacific region. This has been exacerbated by the uneven progress in vaccination rollouts and rapid resurgence in COVID-19 transmissions in some countries, particularly India.

Reflecting the dire operating conditions, only 1.1 million international passengers flew on the region's carriers in March, equivalent to 13.2% of passenger volumes in the same month last year when travel was already in sharp decline. Available seat capacity averaged 27% of the previous year's volumes, as the majority of the region's commercial passenger fleets remained grounded. The international passenger load factor fell by 29.4 percentage points to average 23.8% for the month.

In contrast to the travel and tourism sectors, overall rising business confidence and e-commerce growth fuelled air cargo demand, with congestion at shipping ports spurring a shift to the speedier transportation of goods by air.

As a result, international air cargo demand, as measured in freight tonne kilometres (FTK), grew by 16.1% year-on-year in the month of March, which has been the best performing month since December 2019. Offered freight capacity rose by a comparatively slower 12.7% year-on-year, leading to a 2.2 percentage point increase in the average international freight load factor to 74.3% for the month.

Commenting on the results, Mr. Subhas Menon, AAPA Director General said, “March marks a full year since the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Asian airlines have been faced with major challenges over the past twelve months and have evolved their strategies to stay afloat, by adapting to changing demand patterns and diversifying their revenue base, whilst undertaking significant cost cutting measures. Much needed government support has also helped the industry survive.”

Mr. Menon added, “The recent commencement of travel between Australia and New Zealand is certainly a welcome step. In addition, quarantine-free travel between Singapore and Hong Kong, announced for end May, with talks of more travel bubbles in the pipeline, provide hope for a gradual restart of international air travel this year.”

“It is apparent that we will need to learn to live with COVID-19. As such, it is imperative that governments across the world embrace harmonised risk-based measures that safely reopen air travel. This includes digitalisation of travel health certificates, as well as the implementation of contactless and seamless travel measures in accordance with ICAO and WHO guidelines, to support travel recovery. The Association remains committed in working closely with governments to aid the resumption of air travel in a smart, safe and sustainable way.”

TRAFFIC UPDATE – PRELIMINARY

International Scheduled Services of Asia Pacific Airlines

International	Mar-21	Mar-20	% Change	Jan-Mar 2021	Jan-Mar 2020	% Change
Passengers (Thousand)	1,057	8,029	- 86.8%	3,704	59,699	- 93.8%
RPK (Million)	4,196	34,799	- 87.9%	13,676	231,615	- 94.1%
ASK (Million)	17,654	65,391	- 73.0%	52,545	325,844	- 83.9%
Passenger Load Factor	23.8%	53.2%	- 29.4 pp	26.0%	71.1%	- 45.1 pp
FTK (Million)	6,109	5,261	+ 16.1%	16,613	15,304	+ 8.6%
FATK (Million)	8,222	7,298	+ 12.7%	22,992	25,087	- 8.4%
Freight Load Factor	74.3%	72.1%	+ 2.2 pp	72.3%	61.0%	+ 11.3 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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