

PRESS RELEASE

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Asia Pacific Airlines Traffic Results - August 2021

Air cargo demand solid but international air travel demand remains depressed

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Preliminary August 2021 traffic figures released today by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) showed that international air cargo markets remained resilient, propelled by ongoing expansion in e-commerce and demand for intermediate goods. On the other hand, severe weakness in international air travel persisted, as governments maintained strict border control measures amid the escalation in COVID-19 cases across the region.

For the month of August, the 1.4 million international passengers carried by the region's airlines was just 4.0% of the 34 million registered in August 2019, underscoring the continued absence of a revival in demand, in stark contrast to the summer months prior to the onset of this global health crisis. With available seat capacity averaging 13.7% of pre-pandemic levels, the international passenger load factor remained under pressure, averaging just 34.7% in August.

Supply congestion in major exporting ports such as in China increased demand for the transportation of merchandise by air, contributing to the 26.0% year-on-year growth in international air cargo demand as measured in freight tonne kilometres (FTK) in August. Despite the supportive demand conditions, limited bellyhold space resulting from the low number of flights continued to constrain freight capacity, which saw a comparatively slower 17.8% year-on-year increase. As a result, the average international freight load factor of 76.0% for the month was close to the historical high achieved in July.

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Commenting on the results, Mr. Subhas Menon, AAPA Director General said, “International travel markets in Asia have been in stasis, whilst gradual recovery has resumed in other regions. Meanwhile, air freight demand continues to drive the region’s airline operations.”

Mr. Menon added, “Whilst the spread of the highly contagious Delta variant indicates there is no immediate end in sight to the global pandemic, the acceleration in domestic vaccination roll-outs in a number of Asian economies is a positive step towards the resumption of air travel, as seen in the progressive relaxation of border controls in some countries. Indeed, some governments in the region have begun to pave the way with the recent reopening of selected destinations to domestic and international arrivals.”

Mr. Menon continued, “Nevertheless, vaccination inequity remains a major stumbling block to the reopening of borders in the region, especially in places that have little to no access to vaccines. With travel and tourism as key contributors to many of the region’s economies, the lack of progress on this front will continue to impact the many livelihoods that depend on these sectors.”

Mr. Menon concluded, “In addition to accelerating access to vaccines, we also call on governments to refrain from unilateral border measures that will only serve to hinder the much needed recovery of air travel and the wider economy. AAPA continues to advocate for an objective risk-based basis for the easing of border restrictions for quarantine-free travel, in line with WHO and ICAO guidelines.”

TRAFFIC UPDATE – PRELIMINARY

International Scheduled Services of Asia Pacific Airlines

International	Aug-21	Aug-20	% Change	Jan-Aug 2021	Jan-Aug 2020	% Change
Passengers (Thousand)	1,351	860	+ 57.1%	9,956	65,890	- 84.9%
RPK (Million)	7,143	4,766	+ 49.9%	43,524	252,196	- 82.7%
ASK (Million)	20,583	13,713	+ 50.1%	147,601	379,681	- 61.1%
Passenger Load Factor	34.7%	34.8%	- 0.1 pp	29.5%	66.4%	- 36.9 pp
FTK (Million)	5,980	4,746	+ 26.0%	46,298	38,371	+ 20.7%
FATK (Million)	7,870	6,683	+ 17.8%	62,327	59,506	+ 4.7%
Freight Load Factor	76.0%	71.0%	+ 5.0 pp	74.3%	64.5%	+ 9.8 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 represent 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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