

PRESS RELEASE

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2022 a Year of Recovery in International Passenger Markets

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Preliminary traffic results for the full calendar year 2022 released today by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) showed robust recovery in international passenger markets after more than two years of prolonged lockdowns and strict border control measures that severely crippled demand.

In 2022, Asia Pacific airlines carried a combined total of 105.4 million international passengers, compared to the 17.4 million passengers recorded in 2021. By December, international passengers carried climbed to 47.5% of pre-pandemic levels, a significant improvement from the 7.0% recorded in January.

Measured in revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) terms, international passenger demand rose by a strong 439.0% for the year. After accounting for a 144.0% expansion in available seat capacity, the average international passenger load factor jumped 39.9 percentage points higher to average 72.8% in 2022.

In contrast to the recovery in passenger markets, international air cargo demand weakened in 2022 and continued to face multiple challenges. A steep increase in inflation, a strong US dollar and the tightening of monetary policy across economies led to a slowdown in global economic activity. Pandemic-related lockdowns in China and the Russia-Ukraine war also aggravated prevailing supply chain disruptions.

Against this background, international air cargo demand recorded an 8.2% decline in 2022, following from a robust 20.3% annual increase in 2021. Offered freight capacity expanded by 2.2%, as robust recovery in commercial passenger operations led to a gradual increase

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in available bellyhold space. As a result, the international freight load factor declined by 7.5 percentage points to average 66.6% for the year.

Commenting on the results, Mr. Subhas Menon, AAPA Director General said, “2022 marked the start of a long-awaited recovery in international travel markets as governments across the region eased travel restrictions over the course of the year in a bid to welcome back visitors. The release of pent-up travel demand drove a 507% annual increase in the number of passengers carried for the year. However, demand in 2022 averaged just 27% of pre-pandemic 2019 levels, underscoring the significant progress still required towards full recovery.”

“Reflecting falling export orders alongside worsening business and consumer sentiment, international air cargo markets weakened after a relatively steady start to the year. Demand fell by a steep 20.7% year-on-year in December, bringing the decline for the full year 2022 to 8.2%.”

Looking ahead, Mr. Menon said, “The outlook for 2023 is broadly positive, notably for passenger travel. The recovery of passenger demand is expected to progress further in the coming months, driven by strong appetite for travel. In particular, the recent easing of travel restrictions in China will further fuel demand, although the re-imposition of testing requirements for inbound travellers by some governments may somewhat slow down recovery in the shorter term. Asian airlines continue to work closely with regulators, airports and other stakeholders to serve the travelling public and deliver a seamless, safe and sustainable experience.”

TRAFFIC UPDATE – PRELIMINARY

International Scheduled Services of Asia Pacific Airlines

International	Dec-22	Dec-21	% Change	Jan-Dec 2022	Jan-Dec 2021	% Change
Passengers (Thousand)	16,141	2,603	+ 520.1%	105,434	17,370	+ 507.0%
RPK (Million)	64,111	13,248	+ 383.9%	437,270	81,121	+ 439.0%
ASK (Million)	79,629	28,437	+ 180.0%	600,885	246,308	+ 144.0%
Passenger Load Factor	80.5%	46.6%	+ 33.9 pp	72.8%	32.9%	+ 39.9 pp
FTK (Million)	5,280	6,655	- 20.7%	66,325	72,220	- 8.2%
FATK (Million)	8,381	9,078	- 7.7%	99,532	97,417	+ 2.2%
Freight Load Factor	63.0%	73.3%	- 10.3 pp	66.6%	74.1%	- 7.5 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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