

PRESS RELEASE

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Asia Pacific Airlines January 2026 Traffic Results *Firm passenger and cargo demand at the start of the year*

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Preliminary January 2026 traffic figures released today by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) showed continued growth in both international air passenger and air cargo markets, supported by the steady expansion in global economic activity.

The region's airlines carried a total of 35.5 million international passengers in January, representing a 3.6% increase compared with the same month last year, when volumes were boosted by the Lunar New Year festive period, which fell in late January 2025. In revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) terms, demand rose by 3.3%, while available seat capacity grew by 4.6% year-on-year, resulting in a 1.1 percentage point decline in the average international passenger load factor to 82.8%.

Meanwhile, global manufacturing activity strengthened at the start of 2026. Firm demand for consumer and intermediate goods supported air cargo volumes, alongside front-loading activity ahead of factory closures during the festive period. Against this backdrop, international air cargo demand, measured in freight tonne kilometres (FTK), rose by 5.9% year-on-year in January. With offered freight capacity expanding by 4.9%, the average international freight load factor edged 0.5 percentage points higher to 56.1%.

Commenting on the results, Mr. Subhas Menon, AAPA Director General, said, "The year began on a positive footing for Asian carriers, with international passenger and cargo markets maintaining growth momentum into 2026, building on gains achieved last year."

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Mr. Menon added, “Expanded network connectivity has provided travellers with greater choice during the festive period, while the strengthening of selected Asian currencies has also supported outbound travel. Continued global demand for goods produced in Asia, partly reflecting shifts in global supply chains, has likewise supported air cargo activity.”

Looking ahead, Mr. Menon concluded, “The overall picture for the year ahead looks broadly positive, with underlying global economic conditions relatively firm. Nevertheless, geopolitical and trade developments continue to pose uncertainty. At the same time, airlines face intensifying competition and persistently high costs, and are carefully managing expenses to preserve profitability.”

TRAFFIC UPDATE – PRELIMINARY

International Scheduled Services of Asia Pacific Airlines

International	Jan-26	Jan-25	% Change
Passengers (Thousand)	35,507	34,270	+ 3.6%
RPK (Million)	128,360	124,233	+ 3.3%
ASK (Million)	154,948	148,130	+ 4.6%
Passenger Load Factor	82.8%	83.9%	- 1.1 pp
FTK (Million)	6,337	5,984	+ 5.9%
FATK (Million)	11,287	10,756	+ 4.9%
Freight Load Factor	56.1%	55.6%	+ 0.5 pp

Effective September 2025, the dataset comprises aggregated traffic data from the following 36 Asia Pacific based carriers: 5J, 6E, 7C, 9C, AI, AK, BI, BR, CA, CI, CK, CX, CZ, D7, GA, HO, HU, IX, JL, JQ, KC, KE, KZ, MH, MU, NH, NZ, 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

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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