AAPA
ASSOCIATION OF ASIA PACIFIC AIRLINES

PRESS RELEASE

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Outlook

Asia Pacific Airline Leaders Convene in Kuala Lumpur to Discuss the Future of Aviation

Focus on Growth, Resilience and Innovation as Airlines Build on Record Load Factors

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - Chief executives and senior leaders of the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) are gathering in Kuala Lumpur on 12–13 November 2026 for the Association's 70th Assembly of Presidents, hosted by Malaysia Airlines.

Themed "Redefining Aviation: Growth, Resilience and Innovation," the Assembly brings together more than 170 delegates from across the Asia Pacific aviation sector. They will review industry developments, exchange perspectives and discuss the opportunities and challenges shaping the future of aviation.

Asia Pacific airlines have shown remarkable resilience in 2026, despite a demanding operating environment. In the first nine months of the year, passenger demand grew by 1.9%. Average passenger load factors reached a record 83%, reflecting sustained travel demand and the ability of airlines to adapt their networks and operations to changing market conditions.

However, challenges remain. Persistent aircraft delivery delays, maintenance bottlenecks and labour shortages continue to constrain operational efficiency and fleet modernisation plans.

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“The Assembly comes at a time when the industry is facing an unprecedented series of challenges, with the past nine months marked by global geopolitical and trade tensions, oil flow disruptions, and developments that have reshaped airspace access, traffic flows, fuel markets and even the economics of entire airline networks,” said Mr. Wong Hong, Director General of AAPA.

“Bringing together leaders from across Asia Pacific, the AAPA Assembly serves as an important platform for meaningful dialogue on the opportunities and challenges ahead. The conversations and partnerships forged here will help shape the next phase of growth for our industry and reinforce aviation's role in connecting people, economies and communities,” said Captain Nasaruddin A. Bakar, President and Group Chief Executive Officer of Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG).

Sustainability will be another major focus. While Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is central to aviation's decarbonisation ambitions, limited production capacity, availability constraints and high costs continue to present significant obstacles.

Notwithstanding near-term uncertainties, the long-term outlook for Asia Pacific aviation remains positive. Expanding middle-class populations, rising disposable incomes, urbanisation and growing demand for international travel support the region’s position as the world’s largest aviation market and a key driver of future industry growth.

“The geopolitical landscape may evolve, but the underlying demand for connectivity across our region remains strong. While we are realistic about the risks of today, Asia Pacific airlines remain optimistic about the opportunities of tomorrow,” added Mr Wong.

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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