

# AAPA reports 'severe weakness' in international passenger demand

Preliminary September 2021 traffic figures released by the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) have revealed another month of severe weakness in international air passenger demand.

For the month, the region's airlines carried a combined total of 1.2 million international passengers, representing 4.1% of the 30 million recorded in the same month of 2019. The international passenger load factor averaged 33%, while available seat capacity was 13.9% of pre-pandemic levels.

Meanwhile, amid ongoing recovery in the global economy, strong consumer and business sentiment continued to boost trade, benefiting air cargo markets. Prolonged congestion at major shipping ports and associated global supply chain disruptions have also led to businesses turning to air cargo to speed up deliveries.

Commenting on the results, AAPA Director General Subhas Menon said: "The severe weakness in international passenger numbers seen since the onset of the pandemic reflect the border restrictions enforced by governments across the region.

"Nevertheless, as vaccination rates increase, more governments are moving away from zero-Covid approaches towards a risk-managed approach in favor of relaxation of border restrictions for vaccinated travelers. This is a welcome step towards the recovery of air travel. The encouraging increase in ticket bookings in markets where barriers to travel have been lowered also reflect strong travel confidence."

Menon concluded: "However, for air passenger recovery to gain more substantial momentum, inconsistent health and border measures need to be replaced with harmonized or mutually-recognized protocols that will remove much complexity and confusion for the traveling public. We urge more governments to collaborate across borders in adopting an objective risk-based approach in line with WHO and ICAO guidelines to restore global air travel mobility."