

2023 traffic edged closer to pre-pandemic demand in December : IATA

- A Monitor Report

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Geneva : The International Air Transport Association (IATA) announced that the recovery in air travel continued in December 2023 and total 2023 traffic edged even closer to matching pre-pandemic demand.

Total traffic in 2023 (measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) rose 36.9 per cent compared to 2022. Globally, full year 2023 traffic was at 94.1 per cent of pre-pandemic (2019) levels. December 2023 total traffic rose 25.3 per cent compared to December 2022 and reached 97.5 per cent of the December 2019 level. Fourth quarter traffic was at 98.2 per cent of 2019, reflecting the strong recovery towards the end of the year.

International traffic in 2023 climbed 41.6 per cent versus 2022 and reached 88.6 per cent of 2019 levels. December 2023 international traffic climbed 24.2 per cent over December 2022, reaching 94.7 per

cent of the level in December 2019. Fourth quarter traffic was at 94.5 per cent of 2019.

Domestic traffic for 2023 rose 30.4 per cent compared to the prior year. 2023 domestic traffic was 3.9 per cent above the full year 2019 level. December 2023 domestic traffic was up 27.0 per cent over the year earlier period and was at 2.3 per cent above December 2019 traffic. Fourth quarter traffic was 4.4 per cent higher than the same quarter in 2019.

"The strong post-pandemic rebound continued in 2023. December traffic stood just 2.5 per cent below 2019 levels, with a strong performance in quarter 4, teeing-up airlines for a return to normal growth patterns in 2024. The recovery in travel is good news. The restoration of connectivity is powering the global economy as people travel to do business, further their educations, take hard-earned vacations and much more," said Willie Walsh, Director General, IATA.

"However, to maximise the benefits of air travel in the post-pandemic world, governments need to take a strategic approach. That means providing cost-efficient infrastructure to meet demand, incentivising Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) production to meet our net zero carbon emission goal by 2050, and adopting regulations that deliver a clear cost-benefit. Completing the recovery must not be an excuse for governments to forget the critical role of aviation to increasing the prosperity and well-being of people and businesses the world over," he added.

Asia-Pacific airlines posted a 126.1 per cent rise in full year international 2023 traffic compared to 2022, maintaining the strongest year-over-year rate among the regions. Capacity rose 101.8 per cent and the load factor climbed 9.0 percentage points to 83.1 per cent. December 2023 traffic rose 56.9 per cent compared to December 2022.