

Air cargo bright side for Asian airlines in 2021

A Monitor Report

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AAPA

ASSOCIATION OF ASIA PACIFIC AIRLINES

Singapore : Air cargo was the bright side for Asian airlines in 2021 as demand surged ahead of pre-pandemic levels while passenger traffic was still down.

The latest figures from the Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA) show, in 2021, airlines from the region saw their international cargo traffic increase by 20.1 per cent year on year to 72.3bn freight tonne kms. This compares with a 15.4 per cent year-on-year decline in 2020.

Freight load factors for the year improved by 7.4 percentage points to 74.3 per cent, with freight capacity up by 8.1 per cent to 97.3bn available freight tonne kms.

On the other hand, passenger traffic for the year improved by more than 100 per cent but remains at just 4.4 per cent of pre-pandemic levels.

On this note, Subhas Menon, Director General, AAPA, said, "For a second year running international passenger travel remained severely suppressed, as a result of strict border measures imposed throughout the region and elsewhere. It is the worst crisis the region's airlines have ever faced in terms of duration and depth."

He added, "The air cargo business segment has been a silver lining for the aviation industry, with strong demand helping to partially mitigate the loss in passenger revenue. In FTK terms, international air cargo demand for the year 2021 has recovered to just above pre-crisis levels."

"Overall, whilst 2021 will be remembered as one of the most challenging years for the region's airlines, it has also demonstrated the industry's extraordinary

resilience as airlines continue to play a vital role in connecting people and transporting essential goods across the world."

2021's December figures show, cargo volumes improved by 15.1 per cent on last year to 6.7bn freight tonne kms and load factors were up 0.7 percentage points to 73.5 per cent.