

APAC air cargo demand up 10.5pc in February : IATA

A Monitor Report

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Kuala Lumpur : Asia-Pacific airlines saw demand for international air cargo rise 10.5 per cent in February this year compared to the same month in 2019 in line with global air cargo performance.

As the main global manufacturing hub, the region has benefited from the pickup in economic activity, according to International Air Transport Association (IATA).

In a statement on April 7, it said demand in the majority of the region's key international trade lanes has returned to pre-Covid-19 levels.

International capacity remained constrained in the region, down 23.6 per cent versus February 2019, while the region's airlines load factor stood at 77.4 per cent.

According to the association, global air cargo markets showed that demand continued to outperform pre-Covid levels rising nine per cent over February 2019.

"February demand showed strong month-on-month growth over January 2021 levels. Volumes have now returned to 2018 levels seen prior to the US-China trade war," it said.

On passenger traffic, IATA said total demand for air travel in February 2021 was down 74.7 per cent compared to February 2019, worse than the 72.2 per cent decline recorded in January 2021 versus two years ago.

On this note, Willie Walsh, Director General, IATA, said, "Air cargo demand is not just recovering from the COVID-19 crisis, it is growing. With global demand at 9 per cent above pre-crisis levels (Feb 2019), one of the main challenges for air cargo is

finding sufficient capacity."

He added, "This makes cargo yields a bright spot in an otherwise bleak industry situation. It also highlights the need for clarity on government plans for a safe industry restart. Understanding how passenger demand could recover will indicate how much belly capacity will be available for air cargo. Being able to efficiently plan that into air cargo operations will be a key element for overall recovery."

Consisting in 2016 of 290 airlines, primarily major carriers, representing 117 countries, the IATA's member airlines account for carrying approximately 82 per cent of total available seat miles air traffic.