

Global airlines set ambitious growth, sustainability targets for 2026: IATA

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Dhaka: The global airline industry is entering 2026 with a renewed commitment to connectivity, economic growth, and environmental responsibility, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

In a New Year message, IATA highlighted ambitious industry-wide targets that reflect both the scale of global aviation and its evolving sustainability agenda.

Airlines aim to carry 5.2 billion passengers in 2026, underscoring the sector's critical role in connecting people, markets, and cultures worldwide.

Cargo operations are also expected to remain strong, with airlines targeting the transport of 71.6 million tons of goods, supporting global

trade and supply chains.

Operational efficiency remains a priority, with the industry striving to achieve an average seat occupancy rate of 83.8 percent, signaling continued recovery and optimization following years of disruption.

Sustainability featured prominently in IATA's outlook for the year ahead. Airlines are expected to generate USD 1.7 billion in climate financing through the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA), reinforcing global efforts to mitigate aviation-related emissions.

In parallel, the industry plans to invest USD 4.5 billion in sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), a key pillar in aviation's long-term decarbonization strategy.

IATA emphasized that progress in 2026 will be measured not only by growth, but by purpose.

The organization reaffirmed the industry's commitment to balancing rising demand for air travel with responsible environmental stewardship.

"As airlines look to the year ahead, the journey is about progress and purpose," the association said, closing its message with a celebratory note: "Cheers to a New Year in the skies."

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