

# Strong Start to 2012 for Hong Kong International Airport in Passenger and Aircraft Movements

Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) began 2012 on a high note, recording notable increases in both passenger numbers and aircraft movements in January. Boosted by heavy Chinese New Year (CNY) traffic, the airport saw a 12.5% year-on-year rise in passenger volume, reaching 4.9 million, while aircraft movements grew by 5.8% to 29,000.

On 28 January—the sixth day of CNY celebrations—HKIA also set a new single-day passenger record, handling approximately 187,000 travelers.

The surge in passenger traffic was largely driven by a 36% year-on-year increase in travel by Hong Kong residents during the CNY peak season. Routes to and from Mainland China and Southeast Asia showed particularly strong performance.

In contrast, cargo throughput dropped by 17.5% compared to January 2011, totaling 275,000 tonnes. This decline was attributed to weaker seasonal demand during CNY. Exports fell 20% year-on-year, while imports and transshipments decreased by 18% and 11% respectively.

Stanley Hui Hon-chung, Chief Executive Officer of Airport Authority Hong Kong, emphasized the influence of timing in these figures. “The shift of Chinese New Year from February in 2011 to January in 2012 has skewed year-on-year comparisons,” he said. “A more balanced view would emerge by averaging January and February data.”

Despite the cargo dip, Hui expressed optimism: “The solid growth in passenger and aircraft movements is encouraging. While cargo volumes may continue to face headwinds, the pace of decline has eased since late 2011. We remain confident in the long-term strength of the aviation industry.”

Over the past 12 months, HKIA handled 54.5 million passengers (up 6.1%) and 335,350 aircraft movements (up 8.0%) compared to the previous year. However, total cargo throughput dropped 6.7% year-on-year to 3.9 million tonnes.

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