

# Changi scores in punctuality among Asia-Pacific airports

It is the second most punctual airport in region after Haneda, Tokyo: Survey

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TRAVELLERS at Changi Airport should not have too many gripes when it comes to planes arriving and departing on time.

A global ranking has named Changi as the Asia-Pacific's second most punctual in the large-airport category, with more than eight in 10 flights last year landing and taking off within 15 minutes of the scheduled times.

Tokyo's Haneda airport tops the list, with Sydney's airport in third place.

Worldwide, Changi is No. 4, said aviation industry consultancy OAG, which tracks the flight schedules of more than 4,000 airports and over 900 airlines worldwide. Globally, the top three in the large-airport category are Munich, Haneda and Seattle.

The findings of its first punctuality survey were released earlier this month.

Singapore carriers, though, did less well, with only Singapore Airlines (SIA) taking the last spot in the top 10 list for Asian carriers.

Japan Airlines, Thai AirAsia and Air New Zealand took gold, silver and bronze respectively.

Changi Airport Group spokesman Robin Goh said the punctuality of flights depends very much on the efficiency of ground activities, including passenger embarkation, cargo and baggage loading, and plane maintenance activities.

"This requires clockwork coordination by all partners to ensure

readiness of the aircraft for on-time departures. Another challenge is when a flight arrives behind schedule, and ground-handling staff are suddenly required to quicken their operations to ensure that the turnaround flight departs on time," he said.

Recognising the importance of close coordination, Changi is working on an initiative that will allow the various stakeholders to share flight operation information on a real-time basis, so that work is carried out seamlessly.

Further details will be made available later, Mr Goh said.

It is a step in the right direction, industry experts said.

OAG's Asia-Pacific business

development director, Mr Mark Clarkson, said: "There are many factors that can influence punctuality. From the time the plane arrives to the time it departs again, it goes through different checks and processes, from aircraft cleaning and the loading of bags and cargo, to catering services and refuelling."

Everything has to happen on time, he added. An efficient air traffic management system is also critical to ensure that planes land and take off on time, as are weather conditions.

To some extent, how well airlines perform is based on the efficiency of the airports that they operate at, other experts said.

Busy hub airports in major cities, for example, have a bigger challenge when it comes to ensuring punctuality, especially if they lack the necessary resources and infrastructure.

A spokesman for SIA said the airline takes punctuality "very seriously" and works closely with ground-handling agents, airports and the regulatory authorities to continually improve its standards.

For Changi, which handled a record number of 53.7 million passengers last year, maintaining high standards as air traffic continues to grow will be challenging, Mr Goh said. This is why it is vital to ensure adequate runway and terminal capacity, he added.

Work has already started on the expansion of Terminal 1 and construction of Terminal 4, which will take the airport's annual passenger-handling capacity to 85 million a year by 2018, up from 66 million now.

A third runway will also be operational around the early 2020s.

## Top Asian airlines

| Airline                   | Average on-time rate (%) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Japan Airlines            | 88.8                     |
| Thai AirAsia              | 88.7                     |
| Air New Zealand           | 88.3                     |
| All Nippon Airways        | 87.3                     |
| Bangkok Airways           | 86.0                     |
| Virgin Australia          | 85.5                     |
| Qantas Airways            | 85.4                     |
| Korean Air                | 84.2                     |
| IndiGo Air                | 84.1                     |
| <b>Singapore Airlines</b> | <b>83.7</b>              |

Source: OAG  
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