

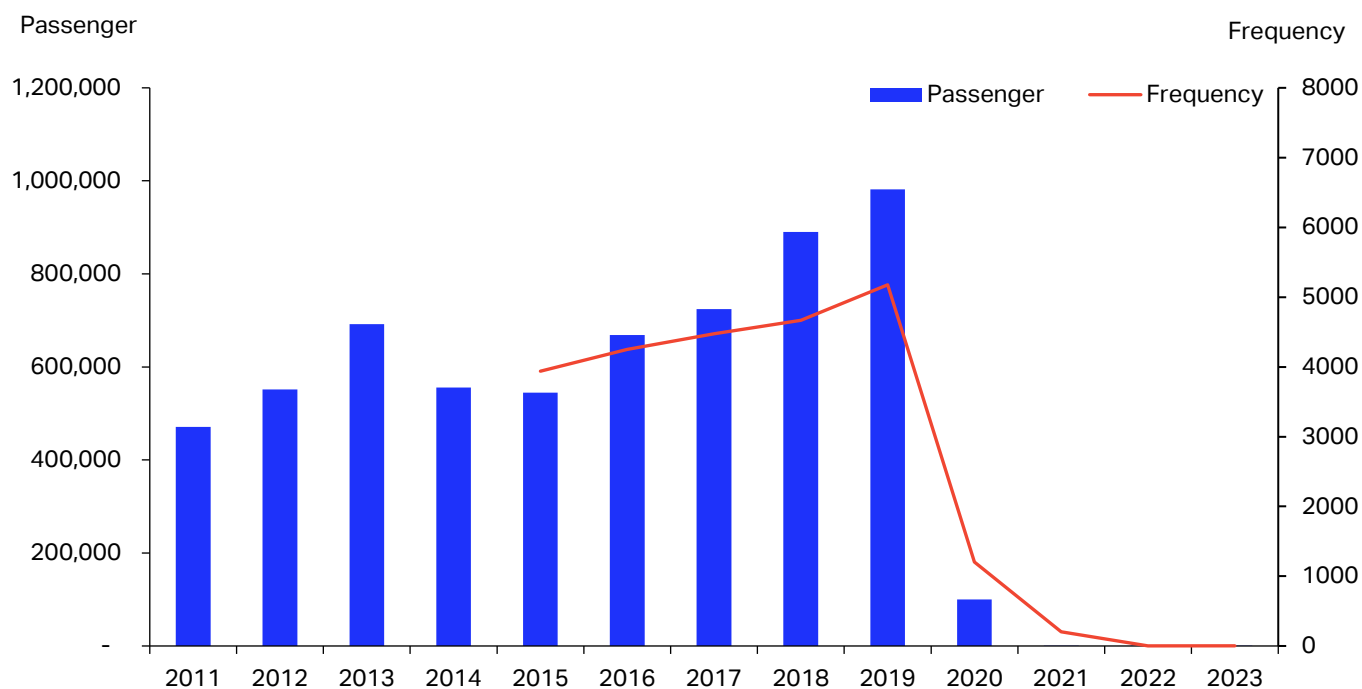


Chart of the Week

17 October 2025

The world's two most populous nations to resume direct flights

Bidirectional passenger and flight numbers between China and India, 2011-2023



Source: IATA Sustainability and Economics using data from DDS and OAG. Note: No data available for flight frequency before 2015.

- The India–China air corridor is reopening for passengers after a five-year suspension, marking a notable step toward renewed cooperation between the world's two most populous nations and two of Asia's largest economies. Direct flights are set to resume on 26 October 2025. Services were halted in early 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and remained suspended amid prolonged border tensions.
- Before the disruption, India–China passenger traffic was growing at double-digit rates and had doubled between 2011 and 2019, reaching nearly 1 million annual passengers. This translated into roughly a dozen daily flights. Yet, given the scale of both populations—each exceeding 1.4 billion—the volume of direct air travel remained modest. The contrast is stark: 330 bidirectional daily flights between China and Japan highlight the untapped potential of the India-China corridor.
- The first connections to resume will be a daily non-stop service Kolkata–Guangzhou and Delhi–Guangzhou routes, pending regulatory approvals. Chinese carriers are also expected to announce schedules shortly.
- For airlines, the reopening presents an opportunity to reclaim market share and rebuild Asia's intra-regional connectivity. Direct flights will reduce travel time and costs for business travelers, students, and tourists, supporting broader and deeper socioeconomic ties as well as accelerating economic activity on both sides. The restart will boost Asia's international traffic further, which has seen a robust recovery since travel restrictions began to be lifted in 2022.

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