

6,000 SIA staff take no-pay leave to help group survive COVID-19 crisis

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Dhaka: Over 6,000 of the 27,000 staff of Singapore Airlines have taken no-pay leave of various lengths to help the group survive the coronavirus crisis which led to a collapse in air travel.

Also, over 1,700 employees, including ground staff, pilots and cabin crew, have signed up for volunteer positions and jobs in external organisations.

The SIA Group -- which comprises SIA, regional arm SilkAir and budget carrier Scoot -- made the announcement on August 7.

A spokesman for the airline said it has been arranging temporary and secondary job placements for its staff.

"These include ambassador roles and opportunities at public transport stations, social service offices and hospitals, for example," said the spokesman.

Staff can apply for the external roles through SIA's employee support portal. They can also tap online financial, mental and physical wellness programmes if needed.

The move follows SIA' efforts to cut costs as the pandemic rages on.

According to reports, the SIA Group's pilots and cabin crew who are not flying still get their basic pay, but they do not get flight allowances which substantially increase their pay.

SIA helps to supplement the salaries of those earning less than their basic pay, which can be around USD 1,500 for a cabin crew member.

The SIA Group, unlike several other airlines, has thus far managed to stave off job cuts, with the help of funding from Temasek and the Government's Jobs Support Scheme.

But it is currently operating at just 7 per cent of its scheduled capacity as compared with before the pandemic. Some cabin crew have yet to take to the air in months.

SIA said its passenger capacity will increase to about 8 per cent of pre-Covid-19 levels by end-October.

Last month, it reported a USD 1.12 billion net loss in the quarter ended June 30, its largest quarterly loss on record.