

## Air Canada averts pilots strike

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Montreal: Air Canada reached a last-minute pact with the pilots' union, averting a strike that would have grounded more than 1,000 daily flights worldwide.

Air Canada and the Air Line Pilots Association, representing the company's more than 5,000 pilots, arrived at a tentative agreement for a new four-year contract, according to a statement. The terms of the agreement remain confidential pending a ratification vote, the airline said.

Negotiations were ongoing for more than a year. ALPA sought to close a pay gap with US counterparts, especially in entry-level wages for pilots. The airline had offered to increase the aviators' pay by about 30pc within the next three years, including an upfront 20pc pay boost.

The Montreal-based airline says it carries over 110,000 passengers a

day and 30pc of Canada's air freight. Goods such as refrigerated pharmaceutical products, perishable food, car parts, chips for computers and live animals are shipped through its cargo services. Air Canada is also the largest foreign carrier in the US with as many as 400 daily trans-border flights.

Air Canada had asked the federal government to request arbitration as soon as this weekend if there was no breakthrough in negotiations.

Canadian and US business lobbies had also called on the government to intervene, saying that Canada's supply chains and international reputation have already been damaged by recent labor disruptions at railways and ports.

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