

Air Canada to cut flights amid strike threat

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Air Canada will start suspending flights on Thursday (August 14) after the union representing its 10,000 flight attendants announced a 72-hour strike set to begin Saturday.

In response, the airline issued its own lockout notice and said operations for both Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge could come to a complete halt over the weekend.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees says nearly all members voted for strike action over wages and unpaid work, while Air Canada accuses the union of demanding “exorbitant increases” and rejecting arbitration.

The standoff threatens to disrupt travel for about 130,000 passengers a day at the height of the summer season.

Air Canada informed that it will gradually suspend flight operations on

Thursday which could see more cancellations on Friday, and a complete cessation of flying by Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge over the weekend, meaning an orderly shutdown by the company.

A strike notice was issued earlier on Wednesday by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), which represents about 10,000 flight attendants of Air Canada, after a deadlock remained over contract talks. Nearly 99.7pc of the membership voted to strike, the union said.

According to Wesley Lesosky, president of the Air Canada Component of CUPE, "For the past nine months, we have put forward solid, data-driven proposals on wages and unpaid work, all rooted in fairness and industry standards,"

The airline responded with a 72-hour lockout notice and said that it had received a notice by CUPE which sought "exorbitant increases" and that the union rejected an offer to enter third-party arbitration. The strike is set to start at 1am EST (5am GMT) on Saturday.

Air Canada, which operated with 259 aircrafts in 64 countries, said that the strike by flight attendants is "a major risk" to the company and its employees. A BBC report stated that 130,000 daily customers, including 25,000 Canadians are set to be affected due to travel disruptions amid peak summer travel period.

In a post on X, Air Canada said "To address ongoing labour uncertainty following strike notice by CUPE, Air Canada's flight attendant union, a lock out notice was issued to CUPE today, effective Aug. 16. We will begin implementing our contingency plan to gradually begin an orderly wind down of operations."

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