



MALAYSIA AIRLINES TO TRIM PILOTS BY SECONDING THEM TO OTHER AIRLINES

News / Airlines



Malaysia Airlines Berhad (MAB) is gearing up to trim its number of pilots by embarking on a secondment exercise.

Aviation International News (AIN) Online, an aviation industry news portal, reported that the airline was planning to offer 100 to 200 Boeing 737-800 pilots from its narrow-body fleet for secondment next year to interested airlines.

If that plan fails to materialise, the airline would then offer its pilots either a two-year leave without pay or a 15-day work month at half salary, said the report.

Quoting an unnamed official at the MAB flight operations center in Sepang, the report said the excess crew resulted from a reduction of the 737-800 network as part of an exercise that began in late August.

"The airline plans further reductions in the coming months, where necessary."

"The airline will know exactly how many pilots it will need to offer for secondment by the end of the

year. Some have already served the required three months' notice to resign, and the precise number will depend on how many more follow suit," said the official.

However, the official had no knowledge if MAB had already identified any airlines for the secondment or whether any had expressed interest.

"[The airline is] facing stiff competition on domestic and regional routes from low-cost carriers such as Malindo Air, AirAsia and full-service carriers," he told AIN Online.

Meanwhile, the report said the Ringgit's depreciation had increased the carrier's operating costs.

It said MAB in August had arranged to send 50 to 70 Boeing 777 pilots to Korean Air on temporary assignment.

That plan met with opposition from Korean Air's pilots' union, despite a shortage of cockpit crew at that airline, said the report.

According to the report, this also marked the first time in the history of Malaysia Airlines that pilots on the 777-200ER and 737-800 fleets have felt the effects of five restructuring exercises since 2000.

Formerly known as Malaysia Airlines System (MAS), the carrier started operations in October 1974.

Following a revamp, administrators established a new company in August and renamed the carrier Malaysia Airlines Berhad on Sept. 1.

MAB currently operates 56 737-800s, 41 of which it leases. It has plans to eventually reduce the fleet to 35 aircraft by the end of 2016 as part of its operation cost-cutting measure.

The report noted that the airline had also canceled an option for 10 Boeing 737-800NGs.

MAB, when contacted for confirmation, told New Straits Times that it would comment on the issue tomorrow.

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