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MONDAY, AUGUST 18, 2025

Union representing flight attendants defies federal government's back-to-work order
Air Canada cancels flights as workers stay on strike

SARAH RITCHIE

AIR Canada cancelled hundreds of additional flights on Sunday after the union representing its flight attendants announced the workers would remain on strike in defiance of a back-to-work order.

The Canadian Union of Public Employees said it filed a challenge in Federal Court on Sunday to an order by the Canada Industrial Relations Board that said its members must return to work by 2 p.m. ET.

"Our members are not going back to

work," CUPE national president Mark Hancock said outside Toronto's Pearson Airport. "We are saying no."

Hancock ripped up a copy of the back-to-work order outside the airport's departures terminal, where union members continued picketing on Sunday morning as a way to signal to Air Canada that "we're ready for a big fight."

The federal government intervened in the labour dispute on Saturday, less than 12 hours after flight attendants initiated their strike.

Federal Jobs Minister Patty Hajdu

said she was invoking Section 107 of the Labour Code to ask the Canada Industrial Relations Board to send the two sides to binding arbitration and order the airline and its flight attendants back to work in the meantime.

Hajdu told reporters the "potential for immediate negative impact on Canadians and our economy is simply too great."

The Liberal government has used this mechanism to intervene in a number of labour disputes, including a lockout and strike at the country's largest railyards in August last year.

On Sunday afternoon, Hajdu's office said she was still monitoring the flight attendants' situation.

The airline said in a separate Sunday statement that CUPE has "illegally directed its flight attendant members to defy a direction" from the industrial relations board by calling for a "day of action" on Sunday.

CUPE held demonstrations outside of the Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary airports.

CUPE has accused Hajdu of caving to Air Canada's demands.

Air Canada said Sunday it would

push back its plan to resume flights until this evening, though the union said it will remain on strike until it has a "fair, negotiated collective agreement."

The airline did not immediately respond to questions about why it believed operations could resume by today.

Air Canada reported roughly 940 cancelled Air Canada and Air Canada Rouge flights during the work stoppage as of Sunday.

● STRIKE, CONTINUED ON A2



ALL NET

Jonah Rampersad and his cousin Rohnin Husack (background) shoot some hoops at a new basketball court and playground at Northwood Community Centre on Burrows Avenue Sunday.

JOHN WOODS / FREE PRESS

European leaders to join Zelenskyy for Trump meeting

SAMYA KULLAB AND JOHN LEICESTER

KYIV, Ukraine — European and NATO leaders announced Sunday they will join President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Washington to present a united front in talks with President Donald Trump on ending Russia's war in Ukraine and firming up U.S. security guarantees now on the negotiating table.

Leaders from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Finland are rallying around the Ukrainian president after his exclusion from Trump's summit on Friday with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Their pledge to be at Zelenskyy's side at the White House today is an apparent effort to ensure the meeting goes better than the last one in February, when Trump berated Zelenskyy in a heated Oval Office encounter.

"The Europeans are very afraid of the Oval Office scene being repeated

and so they want to support Mr. Zelenskyy to the hilt," said retired French Gen. Dominique Trinquand, a former head of France's military mission at the United Nations.

"It's a power struggle and a position of strength that might work with Trump," he said.

Putin agreed at his summit in Alaska with Trump that the U.S. and its European allies could offer Ukraine a security guarantee resembling NATO's collective defence mandate as part of an eventual deal to end the 3 1/2-year war, special U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff said in an interview Sunday on CNN's *State of the Union*.

It "was the first time we had ever heard the Russians agree to that," said Witkoff, who called it "game-changing."



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen talk to media at EU headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, Sunday.

● ZELENSKYY, CONTINUED ON A2

CancerCare Manitoba hires new CEO

TYLER SEARLE

CANCERCARE Manitoba will soon be under new leadership, the provincial agency's staff members learned Friday.

Dr. Kent Stobart has been hired to replace former president and CEO Dr. Sri Navaratnam, who left the role well before the end of her contract. Stobart worked at the facility from 1999 to 2002.

"We are excited to welcome Dr. Stobart back to CancerCare Manitoba," a spokesperson told the *Free Press* Friday evening.

"A pediatric oncologist and accomplished academic leader, he brings a wealth of experience, deep knowledge of cancer care and a proven commitment to patients. These qualities will be instrumental in shaping CCMB's future. Given the rigorous and extensive search undertaken for this position, CancerCare Manitoba's board is confident that Dr. Stobart is the right leader to guide CCMB into its next era."

The facility's staff learned of the hiring earlier Friday in a letter from board chair Geoffrey Chipman.

"Our goal was to find a leader who not only brings exceptional experience but also aligns with the values that define our organization: collaboration, innovation, integrity and a deep commitment to patient care," he wrote.

"We are confident Dr. Stobart has this experience, embodies these values and will help guide the strategic leadership of (CancerCare Manitoba)."

Stobart has been a doctor since 1984 and has held clinical and academic roles in all four western Canadian provinces. Most recently, he served as the vice-dean of education in the University of Saskatchewan's College of Medicine, Chipman's letter said.

Stobart will take the helm in November, "once he has had the opportunity to orient himself in his new role," it said.

Dr. Donna Turner will remain in place as the agency's interim leader during the transition. Turner was appointed to the role in April after Navaratnam announced she was leaving before her contract was set to expire in December.

Navaratnam had previously announced her intention not to renew her contract, leaving behind a leadership role she had held since 2014.

● NEW CEO, CONTINUED ON A2



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