

British Airways 'welcomes' breakthrough in pilot pay dispute

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The airline has agreed to an inflation-proof pay rise of 11.5 percent over three years, according to the report; In this file photo taken on September 13, 2019, a British Airways jet is pictured in London

Flagship carrier British Airways on Friday welcomed as a "positive step"

a media report that it had reached a pay agreement with its pilots' union following damaging strikes.

The airline has agreed to an inflation-proof pay rise of 11.5 percent over three years, according to the report in the FT newspaper.

The BALPA union, which represents most of the airline's pilots, said in an email seen by the paper that its members would soon hold a ballot on the offer, with the union urging them to accept it.

The airline was forced to ground its entire UK fleet for two days in September when pilots went on strike in the bitter and long-running pay dispute, and the breakthrough looks to have staved off the threat of a Christmas walkout.

"We welcome this positive step," a BA spokesperson told AFP in a statement.

Airline giant IAG admitted last month that recent historic strikes by British Airways pilots had hurt its performance in the third quarter.

Net profit sank nine percent to 1.0 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) in the three months to the end of September from a year earlier, said IAG, which also owns Spanish carrier Iberia and Ireland's Aer Lingus.

The London-listed company added in a results statement that it took a 155-million-euro charge from the cost of major disruption including industrial action by BA pilots in September.

The two-day strike, on September 9 and 10, was the first time in its 100-year history that pilots employed by the airline had walked out.

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