

## SIA Group becomes first to operate flights with vaccinated crew

A Monitor Report

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**Singapore:** All three passenger airlines of the SIA Group - Singapore Airlines, SilkAir, and Scoot - became the first carriers in the world on February 11 to operate flights with a full complement of vaccinated pilots and cabin crew.

The first services with a full set of vaccinated crew are SIA flight SQ956, which departed Singapore for Jakarta, Indonesia on February 11, 2021, at 0930hrs local time (GMT+8), Scoot's TR606 which departed for Bangkok, Thailand at 0930hrs, and SilkAir's MI608 which departed for Phnom Penh, Cambodia at 1630hrs.

The Singapore government has prioritised the aviation sector in the country's vaccination exercise. This reflects the sector's importance, as well as the SIA Group's crucial role in Singapore's economic recovery and the fight against Covid-19.

Operating crew within the SIA Group have responded very positively to the exercise, with over 90 percent of cabin crew and pilots signing up for the vaccine to date.

Goh Choon Phong, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Airlines, said, "We are very encouraged by the strong take-up rate for the vaccine from our colleagues. Vaccinations will be key to the reopening of borders and to enhancing travel confidence, in tandem with robust testing regimes and the wide-ranging safe

management measures that are in place on the ground and in the air. They offer greater protection for our people and provide an added layer of assurance to our customers."

Reports USD 106m loss for Q3 2020

Singapore Airlines on February 4 reported a USD 106 million loss for the quarter ending December 31. In the 12 months to December 31, Singapore Airlines has racked up an operating loss of USD 2.1 billion. In contrast, the airline posted an operating profit of USD 734 million in the 12 months to December 31, 2019.

The airline reported strong cargo performance as loads and yields benefitted from a global airfreight capacity crunch and healthy demand. In addition, a solid liquidity position puts Singapore Airlines in good stead to withstand future challenges.

When announcing the quarterly results, the airline said in a statement, "(Singapore Airlines) is well-positioned to navigate the current uncertainties, cement our leading position in the airline industry in the new normal, will remain nimble and flexible as we look to seize all opportunities, and act swiftly and decisively in a fast-changing aviation environment."

In the 12 months to December 31, 2020, airlines across the Singapore Airlines Group carried 4,141,000 passengers. Across the previous 12 months, the Group flew almost 22.2 million passengers. In contrast to the more than 130 million available seat kilometers in 2019, there were less than 39 million available seat kilometers in 2020.

The average passenger load in 2020 was 21.7 per cent. A 71.4 per cent load factor in the first quarter of 2020 boosted this before the worse of the travel downturn impacted. Across the last three quarters of 2020, average passenger loads on Singapore Airlines aircraft fell to just 15.2 per cent. That contrasts with an average load factor of 83.3 per cent across 2019.

While none of this is good news for Singapore Airlines, they are buckling down to deal with whatever gets thrown at it. The airline has increased its liquidity by approximately USD 9.5 billion since March.