

Flydubai to resume flights to Kabul

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Dubai: Low-cost carrier flydubai announced flights to Kabul, becoming the first international airline to resume services since US forces' chaotic withdrawal in 2021.

Twice-daily flights will begin on November 15, the Dubai-based airline said. Taliban authorities swiftly returned to power after the hasty US evacuation.

"flydubai... announced the resumption of flights to Kabul International Airport," said a statement on the carrier's website.

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An airlift of more than 120,000 people from the Kabul airport marked the end of a 20-year occupation by US forces following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

A suicide bombing on the airport's perimeter, targeting crowds who were desperate to flee the country, killed more than 170 people including 13 US troops.

The full operation of Kabul's airport — which was trashed during the mass evacuation of civilians — is seen as crucial to reviving Afghanistan's shattered economy.

Currently, Afghanistan's Kam Air and Ariana Afghan Airlines operate limited services from Kabul to destinations including Dubai, Moscow, Islamabad and Istanbul.

Last year, a United Arab Emirates company, GAAC, signed a contract to manage Afghanistan's air traffic, an agreement that was expected to bring back international airlines.

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GAAC, based in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi, also has contracts to provide ground handling services and security screening at Afghanistan's three airports.

Flydubai will be the first international carrier to operate Kabul flights in two years, the Afghan consulate in Dubai said on its Facebook page.

Its return "will be the beginning of the resumption of flights for other international airlines", the consulate added.

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