

British Airways flies back to Pakistan after a decade

The British carrier halted services in 2008 after the deadly Marriott Hotel bombing in Islamabad

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AFP | Islamabad, Pakistan

British Airways will resume flights to Pakistan next summer, the carrier announced yesterday, in a major vote of confidence from a Western airline a decade after suspending operations due to security fears.

The British carrier, which halted services in 2008 after the deadly Marriott Hotel bombing in Islamabad, will return in June 2019 with three weekly flights from London's Heathrow airport to the Pakistani capital, airline officials said.

BA had six weekly flights to the Pakistani capital before the Marriott attack, which killed more than 50 people and triggered a major drawdown by embassies and international agencies over safety concerns.

The carrier's announcement was "a reflection of the great improvements in the security situation in Pakistan" in the years since, said British High Commissioner to Pakistan Thomas Drew in a statement.

"We only fly somewhere when



(L to R) Special Assistant to Pakistani Prime Minister for Overseas Zulfi Bukhari, Robert Williams, British Airways head of Sales for Asia Pacific and the Middle East, acting British High Commissioner Richard Crowder and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's advisor on commerce Abdul Razak Dawood pose for a photograph after a press conference in Islamabad

we know it's safe to do so," Robert Williams, BA's head of sales for Asia, told a press conference in Islamabad. Tickets starting at \$630 were due to go on sale from Tuesday.

BA said the route -- which will be serviced by the Boeing 787 Dreamliner -- is among four direct long-haul flights being introduced in 2019, along with Pittsburgh and Charleston in the US, and Osaka in Japan.

The announcement caused a stir on Twitter, where it was greeted with jubilation by many

Pakistanis.

Dramatic shift

Britain is home to more than a million residents of Pakistani origin, making it the largest Pakistani diaspora community in Europe.

The struggling Pakistan International Airlines is currently the only carrier with direct flights between the two countries.

Since the Marriott attack the country has been largely dependent on Middle Eastern airlines such as Emirates and

The army tweeted its gratitude to the airline using the hashtag #PeacefulPakistan, while the government's official account proclaimed the country a "new investment destination of Asia"

Etihad, with most international flights routed through the Gulf, making travel expensive and cumbersome for many passen-

gers. Hong Kong-based Cathay Pacific was one of the last major international carriers to cease operations in Pakistan after dozens were killed during a 2014 siege at Karachi airport by Taliban militants.

Many Western countries have travel advisories in place to warn their citizens of the potential for kidnapping and bomb attacks, especially in areas near the Afghan border.

The announcement came after Prime Minister Imran Khan vowed to revitalise Pakistan's

struggling tourism industry in effort to bring in much-needed revenue to its fragile economy.

Pakistan has a rich cultural and archaeological heritage, along with serene alpine valleys, pristine beaches and vast deserts peppered with vibrant Islamic shrines.

The country is also home to some of the world's tallest peaks including K-2 -- the second highest summit after Everest, which sits atop a region of 120 other mountains rising above 7,000 metres (23,000 feet).



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CrediMax and Travelex Bahrain officials during a signing ceremony to provide MaxWallet payment solution. The signing ceremony took place at CrediMax HQ in the presence of Yousif Ali Mirza, CrediMax CE and Tom Fane, Travelex Commercial Director as well as Travelex General Manager Jacqueline Nosworthy and CrediMax official Mohammed Mutaleb.

Goldman says former Malaysia govt lied, after charges filed

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

\$6.5 billion through a series of bond issues.

Goldman Sachs yesterday accused the former Malaysian government and state fund 1MDB of lying to the bank, after Kuala Lumpur charged the Wall Street titan over a massive financial scandal.

Malaysia's attorney-general Monday filed criminal charges against the US bank and two of its ex-employees over the alleged looting of 1MDB.

Goldman has faced mounting questions about its role as the bank helped 1MDB raise

Monday's charges allege the bank's subsidiaries and the two ex-bankers, working with a shadowy Malaysian financier, misappropriated \$2.7 billion, bribed officials and gave false statements as they helped 1MDB to raise the cash.

But Goldman said that "certain members of the former Malaysian government and 1MDB lied to Goldman Sachs, outside counsel and others about the use of proceeds from these transactions."



Khaleeji Commercial Bank (KHCB) officials and employees, during a ceremony on the occasion of the National Day of Bahrain and the 19th Anniversary of His Majesty the King's Accession to the Throne, at the bank's headquarters in Bahrain Financial Harbour. The ceremony was attended by KHCB CEO Sattam Sulaiman Algosaiabi. On the sidelines of the celebration, a ceremony was held for KHCB employees. The bank also joined its clients in celebrating the National Day by presenting them with special gifts in all of its branches located around the Kingdom.