
FIRST TAJIKISTAN-UZBEKISTAN FLIGHT IN 25 YEARS CANCELLED

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What would have been the first regular passenger flight from Tajikistan to Uzbekistan in a quarter of a century was cancelled abruptly on Monday, leaving the ex-Soviet Central Asian nations rapprochement in doubt. Tajikistan's Somon Air said Tashkent airport had notified it on Monday that the airline was not allowed to make the flight, without giving a reason. Uzbek carrier Uzbekistan Airways, which operates the airport and is due to start its own flights to Tajikistan in April, had no immediate comment. Tajikistan and Uzbekistan agreed to resume flights, stopped in 1992, last month after the new Tashkent government sought to improve ties with its neighbours. Uzbek President Islam Karimov, who had strained relations with most Central Asian leaders, died in September, aged 78, after 27 years in power. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, prime minister under Karimov, was elected president in December and pledged to improve ties with neighbours and reform an economy still run largely along Soviet command model lines. But the introduction of visa-free entry for citizens of 15 industrially developed nations was put off until 2021 shortly after being announced.

Kaynak/Source: