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**By Nepal Digest** - September 17, 2026 - Nepal

**A planned daily air link could make western Nepal easier to reach from the Gulf. Its lasting value will depend on fares, reliable operations and what happens after passengers leave the airport.**

For a Nepali returning home on a short holiday, the journey does not end when the international aircraft lands. There may still be another ticket to buy, luggage to move, a hotel to arrange or a road journey to complete. For someone whose family lives around Pokhara, reducing that final stretch can mean something more valuable than a convenient connection: another evening at home.

That is the human promise behind the proposed Pokhara–Dubai connection. The commercial promise is wider. A more direct journey could help hotels sell shorter stays, give tourism businesses a new audience and make it easier for people working abroad to maintain relationships with western Nepal. None of those outcomes is automatic. An airline can open a route; building a dependable travel market requires many other businesses and public services to work together.

## What has actually been announced?

In its 11 June announcement, flydubai said daily flights between Dubai International and Pokhara International Airport would begin on **23 September 2026**, using Dubai's Terminal 3. The service is being offered through its codeshare partnership with Emirates. At the time of writing, the launch date is still ahead: this is an analysis of a scheduled service, not a report of flights already operating.

| Direction | Flight | Published departure | Published arrival |
|---|---|---|---|
| Dubai to Pokhara | FZ 1165 | 12:00 | 18:15 |
| Pokhara to Dubai | FZ 1166 | 19:15 | 22:00 |

*All times are local, from the airline’s launch announcement. Travellers should confirm their specific date, terminal and operating schedule before paying.*

## The household calculation goes beyond the airfare

Consider an illustrative traveller working in Dubai whose family lives in Pokhara. The relevant comparison is the complete cost of reaching home through either airport. A cheaper international ticket through Kathmandu may still be attractive. But its advantage can shrink once onward transport, meals, an overnight stay and the time spent transferring are included.

Suppose, purely as a budgeting example, that the direct itinerary costs AED 250 more, while the alternative requires AED 180 in additional transport and accommodation. The remaining premium is AED 70. A traveller with limited leave might happily pay that difference. Another travelling with several family members might decide otherwise because the airfare premium multiplies across every ticket. These are hypothetical amounts, not observed fares or promised savings.

Luggage can change the answer again. Flydubai’s published fare comparison lists checked baggage as an extra charge on Economy Lite, with allowances included in Value and Flex, subject to route conditions. A returning worker carrying gifts should compare

equivalent baggage allowances, not simply the first price on a search screen. Change and cancellation conditions also matter when leave dates remain uncertain.

The practical lesson is straightforward: compare two complete itineraries on the same dates, including the final journey home. There is no single airport that will be best for every household in western Nepal.

## Pokhara could sell a different kind of holiday

The Nepal Tourism Board’s Pokhara guide presents a destination combining Phewa, Begnas and Rupa lakes with access to the Annapurna region, boating and other outdoor activities. That variety matters commercially. A visitor does not need to undertake a long trek to have a reason to come.

One possible product is a short, comfortable stay for a UAE resident with limited annual leave: an airport pickup, time beside Phewa Lake, a local food experience and a mountain-view excursion when conditions allow. Another is a family visit combined with a few hotel nights. These are proposed business opportunities, not evidence that either market has already expanded.

There are real attractions around which businesses could build such offers. Annapurna Cable Car, for example, promotes access

to Sarangkot and its mountain and city views. A hotel could coordinate an excursion with a licensed local operator while keeping weather alternatives clear. The opportunity lies in making an existing experience easier to book, understand and enjoy.

A short-break package needs disciplined planning. If guests spend too much of a three-night stay waiting for pickups or resolving booking confusion, an easier flight will not rescue the holiday. Clear arrival instructions, a realistic itinerary and a transparent total price may matter more than another dramatic promotional video.

## A connection to Dubai is also a distribution opportunity

The significance of the route extends beyond passengers who live in the UAE. The airline’s announced Emirates arrangement offers a way to sell connecting journeys through Dubai. Whether a particular connection is convenient, protected on one ticket and available at an acceptable price must still be checked for each booking.

For a Pokhara business, access to a wider audience creates a practical question: can that audience buy its services? A hotel that answers enquiries slowly, provides unclear cancellation terms or cannot confirm a transfer may lose customers even when the flight is convenient. International access raises expectations as well as

possibilities.

Small operators do not need an elaborate technology project to respond. They can begin with accurate room information, clear photographs, reliable contact details, a simple confirmation process and written terms. A trekking company can explain what happens when an arrival is delayed. A transport business can identify the driver and pickup point before the passenger lands. These ordinary details turn a destination into a service people can trust.

## More passengers do not necessarily mean more local income

A busy arrival hall would be an encouraging sign, but passenger numbers alone cannot measure the route’s economic contribution. Some travellers may simply switch from another airport. Others may visit relatives and spend little on commercial accommodation. Some holiday spending may be captured by intermediaries outside the region.

For local businesses, the useful questions are more specific. Are visitors staying additional nights? Are they booking local guides? Are restaurants buying more from nearby suppliers? Are small enterprises receiving repeat customers? Those measures would show whether improved access is creating fresh activity or mainly rearranging existing journeys.

Imagine a small hotel responding to stronger enquiries. It could immediately borrow to add rooms, or first test packages using its current capacity. The second approach would reveal who actually books, what they spend and whether demand persists beyond the initial excitement. That is a business-planning example, not an investment recommendation or a forecast of occupancy.

Similar caution applies to land prices and speculative development. An announced flight does not establish the future income of a property. The benefits of aviation are most credible when they can be traced to actual customers, delivered services and repeat purchases.

## The airport is only one part of the journey

An international arrival creates a chain of small obligations. Passengers need to collect their bags, understand onward transport, contact relatives or accommodation providers and obtain help when something goes wrong. A poor experience at any point can undo much of the convenience gained in the air.

The published evening arrival makes coordination especially useful. Accommodation providers could confirm late check-in arrangements and transfer contacts in advance. Travellers continuing beyond the city should assess whether to stay overnight rather than build an ambitious onward plan around an arrival time that may change.

Accessibility deserves attention too. Older passengers, families with children and people who need assistance can experience the same itinerary very differently. Clear signs, understandable information and dependable support are part of the economic infrastructure of a route, even if they attract less publicity than an aircraft arriving.

Local authorities and businesses should also consider the places visitors have come to enjoy. More activity creates demands on transport, waste collection and public space. Protecting the lakeside experience and managing traffic are commercially sensible priorities as well as public responsibilities.

Coordination need not begin with a large campaign. Hotels, transport operators and guides could agree on shared contact procedures, clear pickup instructions and a practical response when a flight is late. A family waiting outside the terminal should know whom to call. A guest arriving after dinner should know whether food is available. These arrangements are inexpensive to describe but require someone to take responsibility for delivering them. They also provide a useful test of readiness: if businesses cannot reliably manage one arriving group, attracting several more will magnify the weakness rather than solve it.

## How to judge the first months

The strongest test will come after the launch publicity. A useful assessment would track operated flights, cancellations, the range of fares available, passenger feedback and the ease of onward journeys. Tourism businesses could compare bookings and average stays with the same season previously, while recognising that other events also influence demand.

Travellers can make a simpler assessment. Before booking, check the operating date, the complete baggage allowance, change conditions, airport transfer and arrangements if the journey is disrupted. Use the airline’s current route booking page for availability rather than treating an advertised starting fare as a quotation for every date.

The route’s promise is substantial because the problem it addresses is ordinary: getting people closer to where they actually want to be. A worker wants time with family. A visitor wants more holiday and less transfer. A business wants customers who can arrive without an exhausting sequence of arrangements.

If the scheduled service operates reliably and the region makes those journeys straightforward, Pokhara could gain more than another destination on an airline map. It could become easier to choose, easier to revisit and easier to do business with. The decisive work will continue long after the first aircraft lands.

*Editorial note: This article combines the airline’s published plans with Nepal Digest analysis. The cost comparison and business scenarios are illustrative; they are not interviews, measured outcomes or forecasts. Sources were checked on 16 September 2026.*

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