

Dammam-Damascus flights to benefit 2.5m Syrians in Saudi

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Dhaka: More than 2.5 million Syrian residents in Saudi Arabia will benefit from direct flights between Dammam and Damascus, facilitating family reunions and improving transport links between the two countries.

Flights between the two cities resumed on March 19 after a 13-year suspension, with a Syrian Air plane departing from King Fahd International Airport in Dammam to Damascus.

The morning flight complements the direct service from the Kingdom's three major cities to Syria after Syrian Air resumed operations at Saudi airports last year.

Passenger flights between the two countries were halted in 2012 when Riyadh severed ties with Damascus over Bashar Assad's crackdown on anti-government protesters at the start of the country's civil war.

Services between Syria and the Kingdom resumed temporarily in May for pilgrims participating in the annual Hajj pilgrimage. The first group of 270 Syrian travelers arrived in Jeddah on May 28, just a few days after Saudi Arabia appointed Faisal bin Saud Al-Mujfel as its ambassador to Syria.

Commercial flights between Saudi Arabia and Syria resumed in July following a 12-year freeze amid improving relations. A Syrian Air plane carrying 170 passengers from Damascus landed in Riyadh, marking the return of regular services.

This was followed by the reinstatement of flights between Damascus and King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah in November.

Mohammed Ayman Soussan, Syria's ambassador to the Kingdom, who took office in Riyadh in January 2024, said the two countries had agreed to operate one round-trip flight per week between the two capitals.

After the diplomatic gap, Saudi Arabia and Syria agreed to resume consular services in April 2023 and restored full relations in May 2023.

Global flights resumed at Damascus International Airport in January for the first time since the ouster of President Bashar Assad last month.

Saudi Arabia has sent relief planes to Syria following the fall of the former president to assist with the ongoing crisis. These humanitarian efforts, organized by the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center, also known as KSrelief, have delivered essential supplies, including food, shelter, and medical aid, to help the Syrian people cope with their challenging circumstances.

Additional flights to Syrian destinations are expected soon, following the reopening of Aleppo International Airport — the country's second major airport — after nearly three months of closure.

The airport was closed in November during the offensive by rebel groups against the regime of Bashar Assad in early December.

