

Delta to begin first nonstop flight to Riyadh

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Dhaka: Delta Air Lines Inc. plans to start a direct flight from its Atlanta hub to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in late 2026, the airline said.

The announcement was made by Delta Chief Executive Officer Ed Bastian during the State of the Region breakfast hosted by the Atlanta Regional Commission last week, according to media.

In a follow-up news release, Delta said the route will be the first direct service from the United States to Saudi Arabia, a nation of roughly 36 million people that has emerged as a hub for technology, smart cities, and increasingly, artificial intelligence.

The country is pursuing the Vision 2030 plan, which aims to drive growth through technology, diversifying the economy away from energy. Fintech, a key sector for Atlanta, is a centerpiece of the plan.

Still, Delta's news release focused more on the tourism opportunities

Saudi Arabia presents, whether one is interested dune-bashing in the desert, going luxury shopping or meandering through historic souks.

Delta had already teased such a route when it announced last July a partnership with Riyadh Air, an airline that has yet to take off. A codeshare with Saudia launched in October 2024.

In a news release, Saudi Arabia's tourism minister noted that the new route will "open new doors for tourism and cultural exchange," while Mr. Bastian pointed to the airline's desire to enable "meaningful opportunities and experiences."

"Launching service to Riyadh marks a key step in Delta's global growth as we start our second century of flight," the CEO said. "Our new flights will connect customers to this dynamic, fast-growing region while delivering the care, comfort and reliability they expect."

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