

Dubai to launch air taxis, self-driving taxis in 2026

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 18 January, 2026



Dhaka: Dubai will launch commercial air taxi services by the end of this year and roll out self-driving taxis in early 2026, as the city pushes ahead with ambitious plans to transform how people move, the head of the Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) said at the World Governments Summit.

Mattar Al Tayer, Director General and Chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of RTA, said Dubai is moving quickly from ideas to real projects, turning years of discussions into services that residents and businesses will soon use, according to a media report on January 16.

“Dubai is taking a serious approach in dealing with future projects. We do what we say, and we say what we do,” Al Tayer told audiences.

Air taxis to go commercial

Al Tayer confirmed that the infrastructure for Dubai’s air taxi project,

developed with Skyports and its aviation partners, will become operational by the end of this year. He said the project has been discussed and refined through global experts and platforms such as the World Government Summit and is now ready for commercial launch.

The air taxi service is expected to ease congestion, shorten travel times, and offer a new premium transport option across the city.

Self-driving taxis from Q1 2026

Dubai will also begin operating self-driving taxis in the first quarter of 2026. Al Tayer said the project moved from planning to execution in just 10 months, following high-level meetings led by His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai.

A dedicated command and control center has already been set up and linked to Dubai's intelligent transport systems and telecom networks, allowing authorities to manage traffic and communications in real time.

Solving the 'first and last mile' problem

Al Tayer said RTA is also focusing on the "first and last mile" challenge—helping people move easily from homes to stations and offices. As part of this, Dubai is working with autonomous vehicle companies, including China's Baidu, to test self-driving vehicles in pilot zones before rolling them out on a wider scale.

"These projects allow people to experience the technology during the operational phase and help us turn innovation into real products," he said.

Infrastructure to drive growth

Al Tayer stressed that strong infrastructure is key to economic growth, investment, and quality of life.

"Everyone is aware that infrastructure is the backbone of any economy. Without it, you cannot attract businesses or build strong companies," he said.

He added that Dubai's strategy is to translate every idea discussed at global forums into practical, on-the-ground projects.

K