

## Saudia to begin direct flights to Russia in October

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Dhaka: Saudi Arabia's national carrier, Saudia, will begin non-stop flights between Riyadh and Moscow starting October 1, in a move aimed at capitalizing on a sharp rise in Saudi tourism to Russia.

The new route will operate three times per week.

The announcement follows what officials have described as an unprecedented increase in Saudi arrivals to Russia, attributed largely to Moscow's introduction of a simplified electronic visa system in August 2023.

According to Russian government data, 52,400 Saudi nationals visited Russia in 2024—an increase of over 570pc compared to just 9,300 the previous year.

That momentum has continued into 2025. In the first six months of the year, Moscow welcomed over 9,900 Saudi visitors, marking a 50pc

increase compared to the same period in 2024.

Russian authorities have credited the spike to the e-visa programme, which allows Saudi passport holders to apply for travel authorisation online.

The introduction of direct flights by Saudia is expected to bolster that growth further, offering both convenience and connectivity at a time of deepening cultural and economic engagement between the two nations.

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