

Delta and Riyadh Air announce strategic partnership

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Riyadh: Riyadh Air on Tuesday (July 9) signed an agreement with US-based Delta Air Lines, a significant partnership for the Saudi start-up before it begins operations next year.

As part of the agreement, the Saudi airline will be Delta's exclusive partner in Riyadh and beyond.

The airlines also said the partnership would include a non-stop service on Delta between the US and King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh. No US airline currently offers non-stop flights to Saudi Arabia.

Saudia operates non-stop flights to Saudi Arabia from Los Angeles, Washington's Dulles Airport and New York.

“This partnership with Riyadh Air will further Delta’s mission of connecting the world and open an array of new choices, benefits and destinations for our customers travelling to and from the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia,” said Delta chief executive Ed Bastian.

Delta will also be Riyadh Air's exclusive partner in the US, offering hundreds of destinations in the US for Riyadh Air customers.

“Riyadh Air and Delta Air Lines share common goals and pursue the highest standards in many areas including guest experience, loyalty and sustainability, built upon great networks and strong connectivity,” Riyadh Air chief executive Tony Douglas said.

The partnership will also allow them to collaborate on flight times and routes, and allow the airlines to sell tickets on each other's flights. It will also allow for other services, such as maintenance, repairs, ground handling and training, they said in a statement.

The airlines said they would explore plans to further expand their partnership and allow collaboration on network planning in the region.

Riyadh Air's agreement with Delta comes as Saudi Arabia aims to greatly expand its tourism industry, backed by billions of dollars to diversify its economy through the Vision 2030 project.

The airline is due to launch its maiden flight in 2025 and hopes to fly to more than 100 destinations worldwide by 2030.

The preliminary agreement, signed at Delta's headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, is subject to regulatory approval.

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