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**FLYNAS TO BE FIRST SAUDI AIRLINE TO FLY DIRECT TO IRAQ IN 27 YEARS FAST**

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Saudi budget airline Flynas said Wednesday that it would start operating direct flights to Iraq, making it the first Saudi airline to offer this route in 27 years. Flights from main airports in the kingdom to a number of Iraqi cities will start within weeks, the airline said in a statement published on its website. Direct air connection between the two countries stopped after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, writes Ahmed Al Omran. Officials from Saudi Arabia and Iraq have exchanged visits in recent months as the kingdom seeks to improve relations with its neighbor in a bid to counter the influence of its arch-rival Iran. Iraqi pilgrims were allowed to use the Arar border land crossing during the hajj season last August, and the kingdom said it would be open the route for trade soon. Flynas was launched in 2007 as the kingdom's first budget airline.

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Kaynak/Source: