

Air Arabia's new Pakistani carrier to fly mid-year

A Monitor Report

Date: 16 February, 2022

AirArabia
العربية للطيران



Karachi : Air Arabia Group chief Adel Ali expressed his expectations to start operations with its new Pakistani joint-venture airline by mid-year. The new airline Fly Jinnah is being established with conglomerate Lakson Group to be based in Karachi.

Speaking during an event in London on February 8, Ali said the airline would be flying around June and that it would operate domestically for a year. "Domestic Pakistan is good business," he claimed.

The discussions over the carrier's air operator's certificate are still underway. Ali indicated at least three Airbus A320s will be placed with the new carrier.

While a route network is yet to be disclosed, he said the eventual spread to international operations will enable Air Arabia to expand more to the east, perhaps into China.

"We tend to open routes nobody else wants," he said, adding, the company typically maintains about 80 per cent of the routes it tests and closes the other 20 per cent that turn out to be unsustainable.

Air Arabia has over 50 A320s in its fleet, mostly based at its Sharjah hub with another dozen stationed at its Moroccan and Egyptian hubs.

It has expanded to include long-range A321neos, which Ali described as a "need, not a nice-to-have", pointing out, the airline had been unable to connect its hubs before taking on the jets.

He claimed Air Arabia uses the A320s to fly routes of up to 6h, but that is "really pushing it", and the airline has enough aircraft capable of operating connections up to 7h, in order to reach new markets - pointing out that the Gulf region has large populations from Thailand and the Philippines.

Air Arabia was profitable for the first nine months of 2021, after a loss-making prior year, and the carrier will shortly unveil its full-year performance, which Ali hoped "should be good".