

Saudi Arabia launches new national airline Riyadh Air

A Monitor Report

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Riyadh : Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman formally announced on March 12 that the kingdom is launching a new national airline-Riyadh Air-with industry veteran Tony Douglas as its Chief Executive.

Riyadh Air will serve over 100 destinations around the world by 2030, making use of the kingdom's strategic location between Asia, Africa and Europe, as per reports.

The new airline is expected to add USD 20 billion to Saudi Arabia's non-oil GDP growth and generate over 200,000 jobs both directly and indirectly, reports added.

Riyadh Air is wholly owned by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, the Public Investment Fund (PIF), which has over USD 600 billion in assets

and is the main driver of the kingdom's efforts to diversify its economy and wean itself off oil.

In October, 2022, Saudi Arabia was in advanced negotiations to order almost 40 A350 jets from Airbus, with Boeing also lobbying for a slice of the kingdom's transportation expansion, reports claimed.

The PIF is in talks with Boeing Co and Airbus regarding orders for about 80 jets, the first aircraft purchases for a new national airline, reports said in October, 2022.

Reports further mentioned in March 2023 that the fund is nearing a deal for Boeing jets with an order value of USD 35 billion.

Riyadh Air would acquire "modern aircraft equipped with the latest technology and will adopt world class sustainability and safety practices", mentioned reports.