

## Saudia Group, Airbus sign largest aircraft deal in Saudi aviation

- A Monitor Report

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Riyadh : Saudia Group announced the largest aircraft deal in Saudi aviation history with European planemaker Airbus during the first day of the Future Aviation Forum 2024 held at King Abdulaziz International Conference Centre in Riyadh from May 20-22.

The ceremony, in the presence of Minister of Transport and Logistics Services and Chairman of Saudi Arabian Airlines Corporation Engr Saleh Al-Jasser, was attended by dignitaries, country ambassadors and key figures from the global aviation sector, as well as a multitude of media representatives and industry experts.

The deal, signed by Engr Ibrahim Al Omar, Director General of Saudia Group and Benoît de Saint-Exupéry, Executive Vice President Sales of Commercial Aircraft Business, Airbus, includes A320neo and A321neo models.

Speaking on the occasion, Engr Ibrahim Al-Omar, Director General, Saudia Group, said, "Saudia has ambitious operational objectives to meet growing demand. We are increasing flights and seat capacity across our existing 100+ destinations on four continents, with plans for further expansion."

These aircraft will be distributed between Saudia and flyadeal, the group's low-cost carrier. Saudia will acquire 54 A321neo aircraft, while flyadeal will receive 12 A320neo and 39 A321neo aircraft.

The new aircraft directly support Saudia Group's objectives that include the transportation and logistics objective to increase guests' capacity to 330 million and expand destinations to 250 by 2030, and the tourism objective to attract 150 million visits by 2030. This is in addition to the Hajj and Umrah objective to contribute to the increase of Umrah pilgrim capacity to 30 million by 2030.

The ceremony marked a new chapter for Saudia, unveiling their largest investment ever in guest experience. This includes a first-of-its-kind AI-powered "Travel Companion", to support guests through trip planning to after sales support. Business class cabins will be transformed into luxurious, privacy-focused suites that convert into flat beds, progressively rolling out across both existing and new fleets. Guests can also stay connected with high speed in-flight connectivity and enjoy unparalleled entertainment with the highest-definition screens soon to be on board.