

## Riyadh air orders 60 Airbus A321 jets

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Riyadh: Airbus SE has landed an order for 60 A321neo jets from Saudi Arabia's new carrier, Riyadh Air, as the kingdom makes significant investments to establish itself as an aviation and tourism hub."

Backed by Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund, Riyadh Air announced the purchase at the Future Investment Initiative conference on Wednesday (Oct 30). With this order, the airline's total purchases reach 132 planes.

Riyadh Air aims to start operations in 2025, according to a statement confirming an earlier news agency report.

The sale marks a win for Airbus over archrival Boeing Co. on a hotly contested order. Riyadh Air Chief Executive Officer Tony Douglas said in November that the carrier was studying narrowbody aircraft from both planemakers, and that he didn't want to split the order to keep

maintenance costs down.

The startup airline is adding short-haul aircraft to its fleet as it looks to challenge regional incumbents. It's part of Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman's initiative to make Saudi Arabia's economy less dependent on oil.

Last year, Riyadh Air ordered Boeing Co. 787-9 widebody jets for long-distance routes.

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