

# SAUDI ARABIA TO LAUNCH A NEW AIRLINE

Saudi Arabia is looking to pull up an Emirates rival to boost international transit and tourism.

As local media report, a new airline is planned to be launched in Saudi Arabia. Modeled after Emirates in Dubai, it is to turn the airport in Riyadh into an international hub.

## **New Airline RIA**

According to insiders, the new airline is expected to be called RIA. However, the CEO and the name of the airline have not yet been named exactly. Whoever takes over the CEO's job will have to achieve very lofty goals. **The final decision, however, will probably rest with Crown Prince Mohamed Bin Salman.**

The launch, which has been in preparation for a year, has been backed by the government to the tune of about \$30 billion. A total of \$100 billion has been allocated for a tourism promotion program.

## **Riyadh as an International Hub**

With the creation of a second national airline in Saudi Arabia, the airport in Riyadh is to become an international hub. It will follow the example of Emirates in Dubai, but it will do so in the shortest possible time.

We're talking about a brand-new airline that wants to achieve what Emirates has done in a quarter of the time. That's unprecedented in the history of aviation.

## **2030: 30 Million Transit Passengers**

Saudi Arabia has high hopes for expanding its tourism sector. Partial changes are also being made to tourism laws. As a major goal, the country would like to increase the number of international transit passengers from four million today to 30 million by 2030. This would require serving more than 150 routes in Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America. The African market in particular is seen as having strong potential for development. **By comparison, Emirates currently flies to 158 destinations in 85 countries.** The government's Vision 2030 program has set aside \$100 billion for the aviation sector alone.

There is far more to be done in Saudi Arabia if the country wants to expand its tourism sector. Just launching a new airline probably won't change much. It is also questionable whether there is really a need for another airline in the region served by Emirates, Etihad Airways and Qatar. Nevertheless, RIA offers new opportunities for the country to develop.

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