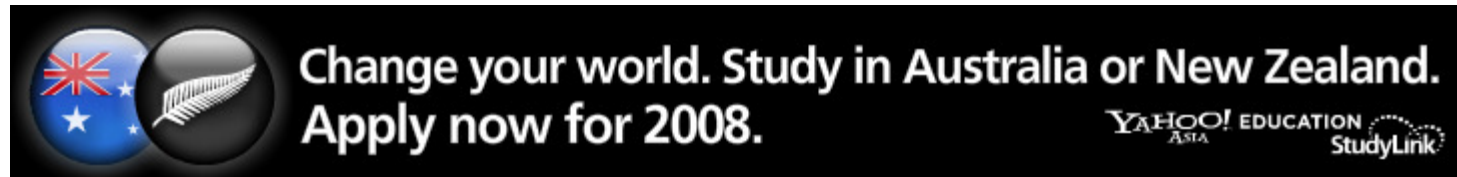


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Tuesday February 19, 1:17 AM

Aviation investments worth billions expected at Singapore Airshow

SINGAPORE: Billions of dollars worth of aviation investments are expected to be announced at the Singapore Airshow which opens on Tuesday.

Singapore's Economic Development Board is confident of huge investments mainly from the maintenance, repair and overhaul or MRO sector.

It said this is a good sign and shows the vibrancy of the industry.

Even as last minute preparations go full swing for the official opening, the inaugural Singapore Airshow is already off to a flying start.

Deals could quickly reach the S\$2 billion mark by day one.

Big names like Rolls Royce have already committed to a facility, building the next generation of commercial jet engines in Singapore. And the EDB said other companies will also announce their investments at the airshow.

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Edwin Tan, Head of Aerospace, Economic Development Board, said: "It will be a very busy week ahead. Singapore today is already the most comprehensive MRO hub in the region, and I think that these announcements, projects will further reinforce this.

A Man

25 to 35 years old

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"But apart from MRO, we are also moving forward and promote aerospace manufacturing in a bigger way. We think that the Rolls Royce engine plant will be the first step, a very big step in helping us to do that," he continued.

More than 17,000 people are employed in the aviation sector in Singapore, and the

number is expected to rise.

EDB said Singapore's total aviation turnover was about S\$6.2 billion in 2006, an 18 per cent increase over 2007. In the last 15 years, the compounded annual growth rate was a healthy 13.3 per cent.

Aside from commercial aviation, defence manufacturers are also making a heavy presence in Singapore. About 55 per cent of exhibitors are defence companies.

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Niall Irving, Executive Vice-President of Asia Pacific, BAE Systems, said: "We see Asia as a very large market, we particularly want to develop our industrial partnerships in Singapore. Exciting possibilities together with economic growth of the region provides a great challenge, but also a lot of excitement."

There's also a lot of buzz about the new site - which was purpose-built for this show. Exhibitors Channel NewsAsia spoke to said they are happy with the new location and its design. - CNA/vm

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