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Expect smooth access to S'pore Airshow

New 2.5km-long road, on-site parking, self-service kiosks aim to make event more accessible

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A NEW 2.5km-long road to the site is ready, a massive hall has been built and all available exhibition space has been booked. The countdown now begins for the first Singapore Airshow which flies into town early next year.

Visitors to the event, which runs from Feb 19 to 24, will have easy access to the site, built on reclaimed land near Changi Airport, via a new road – Aviation Park Road.

Recently completed, it has six lanes and no permanent median. The number of lanes in any one direction can be increased to suit traffic conditions, Mr Jimmy Lau, the show's managing director, told The Straits Times. The road could also spark more developments in the area.

When the air show, which will be held once every two years, is not on, the 40,000 sq m exhibition hall will be leased out.

With the road, getting in and out of the venue will be less of a hassle than in previous years, said Mr Lau, adding that there will be separate lanes for buses, taxis and cars.

For the first time, parking – about 2,000 lots – will also be available on site.

He said: "Gaining access into air shows around the world is one big hassle, be it for the exhibitor or visitor.

"Our intention is to try to bring down some of these barriers to entry and improve on things like queueing time."

As part of road upgrading works in the area, the Land Transport Authority also awarded a \$9.41 million contract last year to widen nearby Telok Paku Road and Nicoll Drive.

As for the other bugbear, long queues at the entry counters, self-service ticket kiosks should help, Mr Lau said.

As in previous shows, trade-show visitors, including exhibitors, can apply for passes online. But instead of waiting at the counters with a long list of supporting documents, they need only present a computer printout in exchange for a pass. They can also sign themselves in at one of 15 kiosks.

To ease congestion on the final few days, when the show is typically open to the public, there will be more counters to process visitors.

For added convenience, public tickets will also be sold at outlets islandwide. Actual locations and charges will be announced later.

Boeing communications director for Asia, Mr Raymond Francis, visited the new site recently and was impressed with what he saw.

He said: "It is a bigger exhibition hall so that is good and the place has also been designed to ensure that there is easy access between the hall, the chalets and the aircraft display area.

"The new road will also help ease congestion getting in and out. Overall, we are confident that it is going to be an amazing show."

This will be the 14th air show held here, but the first organised by a joint venture between the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore and the Defence Science and Technology Agency.

The previous shows were organised by London-based Reed Exhibitions under the Asian Aerospace brand name.

The new show looks set to be a crowd-pleaser. Aerobatics, sorely missed at last year's event, will make a comeback with at least two shows planned, including one by the Republic of Singapore Air Force F-16s.