

AVIATION LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

Aiming to become industry's 'Davos'

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SINGAPORE — The “Davos of the aviation industry”. That’s the kind of buzz organisers of the Aviation Leadership Summit and other related forums hope to achieve when some 1,000 delegates, including more than a dozen ministers, arrive Singapore next week for the Singapore Airshow.

Davos in Switzerland is well-known for hosting the annual World Economic Forum, which brings together top business leaders, political leaders and intellectuals to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world.

Noting that the aviation industry is still not at full throttle after the global crisis of the past year, Jimmy Lau, managing director, Singapore Airshow and Events, hopes the aviation summit will be the catalyst for full take-off.

Mr Lau said: “There’s nowhere in the world there’s a platform such as this where a minister can meet up with an airline operator to talk about challenges and hopefully open new pathways towards liberalisation of the industry.”

The pathway has been dismal over the last 10 years with airlines losing an average of US\$5 billion (\$7.03 billion) a year.

Sop Poh Theen, director, Air Transport Division, Singapore Transport Ministry, said: “The aviation industry is a highly

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regulated industry. In order to achieve real and significant changes you really need the government officials, regulators and the industry to work very closely together.

“We have some good news about numbers picking up at Changi Airport, for instance. In December, we had healthy figures. But there’s a deeper structural problem that the industry has been grappling with.”

Besides the business aspects, discussions will also focus on environmental issues. The aviation industry is committed to a 50 per cent absolute reduction in carbon emissions by 2050. A special highlight of green initiatives will also be showcased at the Singapore Airshow.

Other forums, such as the Asia-Pacific Security Conference, and discussions on aerospace technology will also take place.