Huawei opens AI lab here to train 1,000 developers

Huawei's artificial intelligence lab at Changi Business Park. The lab cost US$10 million (S$13.6 million) to build and is said to be the first AI lab in Singapore to boast 5G capabilities. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

Chinese tech giant aims to help fill talent gap in sector in S'pore

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Chinese tech giant Huawei has opened a new artificial intelligence (AI) lab here, promising to train up to 100 AI architects and 1,000 AI developers over the next three years.

At the launch of the lab at Changi Business Park yesterday, Huawei International chief executive Nicholas Ma said the firm hopes to address the AI tech talent crunch here as the move is beneficial to all parties.

"Whenever I attend a tech summit in Singapore, people are asking me about getting more talent here. There is a need for more tech talents across every industry, and we want to help fill that gap.

"Hopefully, by doing so, these talents will help us in the long run and make contributions to our business," he said.

Other than the talent programme, Huawei signed a memorandum of understanding with Nanyang Polytechnic on the same day to explore various talent cultivation programmes in the fields of AI as well as 5G and cloud technology.

Earlier this week, in Guangzhou, Huawei also inked a collaboration with Singapore's CapitaLand and Business China to implement an intern exchange programme that will offer Singapore university students the opportunity to take up internships in China.

Mr Ma said: "In the past, we've organised some training workshops and courses with local universities and polytechnics, but this year, we wanted to do something different.

"We want to speed up the whole tech ecosystem."

The new lab, which cost the Chinese tech giant more than US$10 million (S$13.6 million) to build, is said to be the first AI lab in Singapore to boast 5G capabilities. That means that users can use the space to test bed a wide range of 5G applications and scenarios, on top of AI research and development projects.

The lab is open to government agencies, institutes of higher learning as well as small and medium-sized enterprises to use.

The lab opening comes a week after Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat unveiled Singapore's national AI strategy, which is its plan to harness artificial intelligence technologies for social and economic benefits.

Mr Ma said: "We hope that this lab can help to nurture a flourishing local AI ecosystem here and boost Singapore's AI capabilities towards its smart future."

Huawei's new lab adds to the list of high-profile openings of several other AI centres here, including the Nanyang Technological University-Alibaba Research Lab, Singapore Management University's Centre for AI and Data Governance, and American software firm Salesforce's AI centre at Suntec City.

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