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## S'pore to get space camp

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IN JUST five years, Singaporeans will be able to experience the zero-gravity environment that astronauts work in – through a space-themed training camp that the Science Centre is set to develop.

Part of a drive to encourage students to get involved in the space industry, some of the equipment to be brought in for the camp will also be opened to the public and serve as a tourist draw.

The camp, Space Odyssey – Singapore, will be the first such programme in Asia, said Mr Jonathan Hung, president of the Singapore Space and Technology Association (SSTA).

By 2015, he hopes to house heavy space equipment – such as weightlessness simulators, dive tanks and shuttle simulators – in the Science Centre.

Mr Hung was speaking to reporters at the **Global Space and Technology Convention and Satellite Technology Asia**, where a memorandum of understanding was signed by SSTA, the Science Centre and Vanguard International Consultants – the three parties bringing the camp here.

The main aim of the camp is to train young professionals, space enthusiasts and students who are keen to take up astronautics – the science and technology of space flight – and to spur youth to join the science and engineering fields, said Mr Hung.

The first camp will be held in June for 40 secondary-school students, with the next one scheduled for

December. The camps will run twice a year and last three days each.

The participants will be put through a curriculum modelled on astronaut training. They will listen to talks by industry players, get hands-on experience from practical assignments, and may even get to serve attachments at space-industry companies, said Mr Hung.

When asked about the size of the investment in this project, as well as the camp's admission fees, Mr Hung said that the details have not yet been finalised.

Mr S. Iswaran, Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Education, said that the space industry is poised to grow rapidly in Asia, and Singapore is well-positioned to take it on.

He said that Singapore can leverage on its "strengths in aerospace, precision engineering, and electronics ecosystems" to gain a head start and tap on the industry's significant potential for commercial opportunities.

Many large space-related corporations like Spot Image and GeoEye have already picked Singapore as their base in the Asia- Pacific, he said.

Information-technology executive Wyman Hor, 25, said the idea of a space-themed attraction sounds "amazing".

"I've always dreamt of seeing the Earth and other planets from outer space, so I guess this is a small step towards that. It's a cheap alternative to sitting in a real shuttle," he said.

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