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## Alibaba and NTU launch first joint research institute outside of China, plans a DAMO lab in Singapore

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SINGAPORE (Feb 28): Alibaba Group is teaming up with Nanyang Technological University (NTU) to launch its first joint research institute outside of China.

Dubbed the Alibaba-NTU Singapore Joint Research Institute, the lab will bring together NTU's strength in artificial intelligence (AI), and Alibaba's capabilities in natural language processing, cloud computing and machine learning.

The partnership aims to find breakthroughs and real-world applications in areas such as home, retail, community and urban transportation to hospitals and nursing homes.

For instance, the two teams will work on AI technologies that can expedite medical diagnosis and preventive care. They will also focus on AI-assisted care for the elderly at homes and nursing facilities, as well as shared mobility.

The duo will invest millions of dollars each year for the first five years of the project.

The lab, which will have 50 researchers from NTU and Alibaba, will create solutions that will be tested at the NTU Smart Campus before being rolled out to the public. Students will also have the opportunities to go on an exchange to Alibaba's facilities to work on AI-related research.

"Using AI technologies, we can address fundamental societal challenges such as ageing population which is a huge issue for cities with a rapidly aging population such as Singapore. For example, virtual AI assistants can be deployed to improve work productivity and smart sensors can be used to watch the health of the elderly, with data stored on the cloud for continuous monitoring," says Subra Suresh, NTU Singapore President.

"We can tap into our existing business resources in the region to magnify the impact of the technology developed, making solutions affordable and accessible to all," says Jeff Zhang, CTO of Alibaba which has an 83% stake in Lazada that owns RedMart in Singapore.

Alibaba's contribution will come from its US\$15 billion (\$19.8 billion) fund set aside under the Alibaba DAMO Academy launched last October.

DAMO is Alibaba's global push to become a tech giant on par with Google, with the aim to build seven tech labs across the world, and Zhang says, it eventually wants to have a DAMO lab in Singapore.

Previously, NTU launched a \$42.4 million corporate lab with SingTel, which aims to develop technologies in areas of mobility, smart cities, healthcare and manufacturing.

ALIBABA GROUP    NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY (NTU)    JOINT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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