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Saber Astronautics set to Launch Australian-Indian Mars Research Study

Sydney, Australia: Leading Australian space venture Saber Astronautics is in the final preparation stage for a joint research study to learn how to support a future crew of people and robots working together on Mars. As part of the new Australian-Indian Space Collaboration Program, the project is the first of a series of events aiming to build professional ties between space innovation teams from both countries.

Mars Research Study: Man Vs Machine Vs Wild in The Australian Outback

The "Mars Simulation Research Study" takes place from 4-20 July at Arkaroola, South Australia. Located in the rugged and spectacular Northern Flinder's Ranges mountains, the Arkaroola site has been chosen to simulate the harsh environment of the Martian plains. The study will compare how well different combinations of human astronauts and rovers (autonomous and guided vehicles with robot manipulator arms) can perform specific tasks. Research will also include geology and astrobiology in what is a 'Martian analogue' environment. Led by the team from Saber Astronautics in partnership with the Mars Society Australia and Mars Society India, the study was also part-funded by Australia's CSIRO. Participants include researchers and students from a number of universities including India's prestigious India Institute of Technology (known as "India's MIT"), the University of New South Wales, Murdoch University, and Macquarie University. A group of high



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school teachers will also attend as part of the Spaceward Bound program to develop classroom teaching materials for the next generation of space explorers.

Program Follows 2013 Civil Space MOU Between India and Australia

The timing of the program is significant for both countries which last year signed an MOU covering cooperation in Civil Space, Technology and Education.

Currently the 6th largest space-faring nation in the World today, India continues to ramp up its Mars Exploration Program. Its maiden interplanetary spacecraft – the US\$75m Mars Orbiter Mission – is currently en-route to Mars travelling at nearly 30km/s with less than 120 days to go before planetary rendezvous and orbital insertion. The program is also an opportunity for Australia to demonstrate its advanced commercial space operations capability. The joint mission to Arkaroola showcases an Australian treasure and one of Earth's few Mars-analogue training grounds, a key site for future tests of robotic vehicles in harsh environments.

In a statement, Saber Astronautics Co-Founder and Director Dr Jason Held said: "This is just one of many ways Australia and India fit each other and leverage ourselves as strong technical nations. "

Other projects in the program include an Australian delegation to India in September for bilateral talks on data sharing for Earth Observation and space weather research. Saber Astronautics will also provide support for a student build satellite from the Manipal Institute of Technology set to launch in 2015.

Funding for the program is from the Australian Government through the Australia-India Council, which is part of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.



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About Saber Astronautics

Saber Astronautics' mission is to reduce barriers to space flight, making it more accessible to people on Earth. Saber's Responsive Space Operations Center (RSOC) is a next-generation space mission control system developed by an experienced team of Australian and US space operations, systems control, ux and robotics experts. RSOC brings together the latest techniques in human factors, artificial intelligence, and dynamic 3D data visualisation to dramatically reduce the cost of ground-based space operations by making it easier for spacecraft operators to monitor, fly, and rapidly diagnose faults in spacecraft systems.

For more information, please visit www.saberastro.com

About the Australia India Council

The AIC's purpose is to broaden the relationship between Australia and India by encouraging and supporting contacts and increasing levels of knowledge and understanding between the peoples and institutions of the two countries. The Council initiates or supports a range of activities designed to promote a greater awareness of Australia in India and a greater awareness of India in Australia, including visits and exchanges between the two countries, development of institutional links, and support of studies in each country of the other.

For more information, please visit <http://www.dfat.gov.au>



Australian Government

