Students embark on SMU’s first study trip to Middle East

SINGAPORE should plug into high-growth economies such as the Middle East to accelerate its own growth, said Minister of State for Trade and Industry Lee Yi Shyan yesterday.

He told a send-off for 32 Singapore Management University (SMU) students headed for the Gulf region on a study tour, that Singapore can play the role of a modern “Silk Road”.

He said local firms should explore tie-ups with Middle East counterparts and take these partners with them when seeking opportunities in China and South-east Asia.

The students will visit the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar later this month during their week-long trip, SMU’s first business study mission to the Middle East.

The cost of the trip is about $2,200 per student and the itinerary includes networking dinners with UAE government officials, meetings with real estate firms such as Akar Properties and Nakheel Properties, as well as visits to major infrastructure developments like Dubai Logistics City.

Mr Terence Seow, an assistant director at IE Singapore, which is supporting the trip, said: “Through the learning experience of these students, we hope to grow the capabilities of Singapore companies in the area of manpower development for the purpose of overseas expansion.”

Second-year SMU student Muhamad Farhan said: ”This will be an eye-opening opportunity for us to see how business is done in the Middle East...in a different country with a totally different socio-political environment.”