

More signing up for computer studies at tertiary institutes

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Enrolment in computer-related courses at Singapore's institutes of higher learning has shot up, as students are drawn by the highly attractive employment prospects and starting pay in the industry.

Education Minister Ong Ye Kung said yesterday universities here have seen a more than 20 per cent rise in the last two years, with National University of Singapore (NUS) projecting to admit 900 students this academic year, which starts in August.

This is an almost 40 per cent rise over last year, Mr Ong noted at an award ceremony of a cybersecurity competition for students.

To meet the demand, he has encouraged the institutes of higher learning, including polytechnics, to bring in expert practitioners to teach the students.

He also urged their faculty to keep abreast of developments in the industry.

To support their efforts, Mr Ong said the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) will sign agreements with Singapore's five polytechnics to strengthen their collaborations in curriculum development.

The DSTA has been organising the annual Cyber Defenders Dis-

covery Camp, which aims to raise youth's interest in cybersecurity.

Students, including those from integrated programme schools and junior colleges, were taught cyber defence skills and techniques in a three-week online training programme before slugging it out in competition.

A record 500 students took part this year. And for the first time, seven teams from six countries were invited to intensify competition and encourage knowledge-sharing.

Mr Tan Ah Tuan, DSTA director for cybersecurity and the camp's chairman, said one challenge given to the students this year was to override a drone system.

It is a task security agencies worry about these days, especially at major events like the National Day Parade, noted Minister Ong.

The competition's winner can choose to do his national service by being a cyber defender in the military.

It is an option that attracts Raffles Junior College student Jaryl Ngoh and his three teammates. They won in the junior college/integrated programme category.

Said the 18-year-old: "It's the most interesting vocation that matches our interests."

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(From left) The quartet from Raffles Junior College – Bryan Juniano, Ooi Ken Jin, Zhang Weiyao and Jaryl Ngoh – won in the category for junior colleges and integrated programme students. PHOTO: LIN ZHAOWEI FOR THE STRAITS TIMES