

Nearly threefold rise in Smart Nation Scholarship applicants

Mr Silas Yeo, 19, used to spend his time learning programming languages and developing game applications as part of a school club.

Soon, he will be helping to develop defences to protect Singapore's online space at the Cyber Security Agency (CSA).

Mr Yeo, who will be pursuing a double degree in computer science and economics at Nanyang Technological University, is one of this year's 14 Smart Nation Scholarship awardees. All will be groomed to drive Singapore's Smart Nation and digitalisation efforts.

The 14, who received their scholarships yesterday, were selected from a pool of 614 applicants – a nearly threefold increase from last year's inaugural scholarship applications, which saw nine chosen from 233 applicants.

The scholarship is jointly offered by CSA, the Government Technology Agency (GovTech), and the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA).

All recipients of the scholarship, which was introduced to develop talent in the local information and communication technology (ICT)

sector, will eventually work in one of the three agencies after their studies.

A joint statement said eight of the latest scholarship recipients will join GovTech, while CSA and IMDA will each have three.

"The recipients will play a critical role in shaping Singapore's ICT ecosystem to chart our Smart Nation journey," said the agencies.

"They will be groomed for various ICT leadership roles in the public sector and work on a diverse range of projects that will benefit the nation."

The 14 recipients were chosen through a "rigorous" process that saw them going through aptitude tests, management interviews and agency-specific assessments.

The agencies also said they were assessed beyond academic results for qualities such as their passion for technology and dedication to public service.

Presenting the scholarships at a ceremony in the Conrad Centennial Singapore yesterday, Minister for Communications and Information S. Iswaran pointed out that the demand for infocomm profession-



als in Singapore is expected to grow by 28,500 from 2018 to 2020.

More talent, he added, is needed to help Singapore realise its Smart Nation ambitions, which he sketched out in his speech.

"We want to build an inclusive and thriving Smart Nation: a digital economy where every business is digitally empowered, every worker is digitally skilled, and every citizen

is digitally connected," said Mr Iswaran.

"And, undergirding this is a secure and trusted cyberspace."

Fortifying Singapore's online defences is something Mr Yeo said he is looking forward to.

He has participated in several cyber security competitions and is keen to learn from experts as well as gain more experience.

PUTTING PASSION TO GOOD USE

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MR SILAS YEO, 19, one of this year's 14 recipients of the Smart Nation Scholarship.

Mr Silas Yeo, 19, will be pursuing a double degree in computer science and economics. PHOTO: MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION

He said: "As I became more involved in cyber security, I saw how vulnerable we are to cyber threats and I realised that my passion could be put to good use if I pursue a cyber security career."

At a separate event yesterday, Mr Iswaran announced a new year-long apprenticeship scheme for budding filmmakers and media professionals as part of an effort to grow

local talent in the media sector.

The Story Lab Apprenticeship will, over two years, offer about 60 such professionals the chance to work with studios and companies that IMDA has partnered, such as Beach House Pictures, GHY Culture and Media, and mm2 Entertainment.

Hariz Baharudin