



President Tony Tan Keng Yam and Mrs Mary Tan meeting Singaporean students studying at Bristol University. Dr Tan also launched a competition that challenges teams of scientists, medics, engineers and designers to come up with a piece of health-care technology that can be worn. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

NTU, Bristol University in tie-up to develop smart health-care wearables

By **CHARISSA YONG**
IN BRISTOL

CLOTHES that can monitor the health status of seniors in their homes may be the future of health care – and it is a future Singapore and Britain’s universities are exploring together.

A tie-up between Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the University of Bristol aims to conduct research and develop health-care technology that uses smart sensors and can be worn.

President Tony Tan Keng Yam, who is in Britain on a six-day state visit, witnessed the signing of the memorandum of understanding – a move that formalises the joint venture – at the University of Bristol on Thursday.

The partnership comes amid a push for both countries to collaborate further in scientific research, something the President called for this week at various events, including in a speech at the Royal Society, Britain’s top science institution.

Dr Tan also launched a competition that challenges teams of scientists, medics, engineers and designers to come up with a piece of health-care technology that can be worn. For instance, a wristband that can automatically detect and track its wearer’s movements, and can

alert others if he falls or faints.

Said NTU president Bertil Andersson at the launch: “Population ageing has become a big challenge in many countries. In Singapore, about one in eight residents is over 65, and this ratio is increasing rapidly.”

Britain’s Minister of State for Universities, Science and Cities Greg Clark, who attended the launch, noted the links Singapore and the United Kingdom have with each other in the field of higher education. More than 6,000 Singaporeans were students in Britain last year and over 55 universities have partnerships with Singapore, he said.

After the launch, Dr Tan, a former education minister, met 80 Singaporeans studying at the University of Bristol.

The President also visited the studio of Aardman Animations, the company behind stop-motion films like Wallace and Gromit, and the franchise’s spin-off series Shaun the Sheep.

Aardman and the British Council are teaming up to teach English to young children in Singapore, using Aardman’s animated sheep characters Shaun and Timmy, both of which have their own TV shows. A learning centre, which will be ready next year, will have classrooms and resources like activity booklets themed on the shows.

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