

Singapore

Singapore must build on strength in materials research to seize new opportunities: DPM Heng



Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat (second from left) at the opening of the 10th International Conference on Materials for Advanced Technologies. (Photo: NTU)



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SINGAPORE: Singapore is strong in materials research, but the country must continue to build and strengthen global partnerships in order to seize new opportunities, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat said on Monday (Jun 24).

Speaking at the opening of the International Conference on Materials for Advanced Technologies, Mr Heng urged universities and research institutes to continue their work with international faculty and



companies.

This is to ensure the country maintains its strong research talent pool and pipeline of new materials that can be applied into products.

“Together, we can think of new ways to tap on science to develop innovative solutions and help users adopt them, so that we can all benefit,” Mr Heng said.

Mr Heng, who is also Finance Minister and chairman of the National Research Foundation, touched on the importance of materials science for Singapore.

He highlighted investments made under the Research, Innovation and Enterprise 2020 plan (RIE 2020), and how it has helped research scientists and engineers in Singapore produce world-class research in 2D and nanomaterials that can be applied in membranes, sensors and microelectronics.

“These are important areas of materials science that can have important applications. Researchers in Singapore are applying them in areas such as solar cells, biological membranes, additive manufacturing and batteries,” Mr Heng said.

“Singapore is applying them in impactful technologies such as solar cells, biological membranes, additive manufacturing and batteries.”

Progress in the area has also benefited the country’s manufacturing industry, Mr Heng added, pointing out how it is Singapore’s largest export sector, contributing around 20 per cent of gross domestic product today.

“We are able to achieve this because our universities and A*STAR research institutes are able to anchor R&D collaborations with global companies,” he said.

One example is **technology firm Dyson**, which picked Singapore to build its first electric car manufacturing plant.

“This important link sees basic science being translated in innovative ways to deliver new, improved materials. This helps to keep Singapore's manufacturing sector relevant,” Mr Heng said.

The five-day conference, organised by the Materials Research Society Singapore and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), brings together more than 3,000 delegates from around the world, including 850 scientists and leading experts, to discuss ways in which new materials can play to shape and improve society.