

## Members of cyber group urged to serve NS as digital specialists

Those selected by SAF will get to work on military projects while taking classes at NTU



**Ng Wei Kai**

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PUBLISHED 3 HOURS AGO

All male members of Cyber Youth Singapore (CYS), a non-profit organisation, will be encouraged to volunteer to spend their national service (NS) as digital specialists in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF).

The length of their service will double from two years to four if they are selected as digital specialists by the SAF.

They will work on digital projects for the military while attending classes at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in a new programme announced by the university and the Ministry of Defence earlier this month.

Full-time national servicemen participating in the Digital Work-Learn Scheme will serve as digital specialists under the SAF's newly established Digital and Intelligence Service for four years.

CYS announced its support for the scheme at its relaunch by Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean yesterday at the Marina Bay Sands' expo and convention centre.

CYS was formed in 2019 and now has about 1,700 members, 75 per cent of whom are men. It seeks to help young Singaporeans develop digital skills and to be a national platform for them on digital issues.

CYS chief executive Ben Chua, 22, said in a speech at the event that CYS will commit to organising programmes with Mindef and SAF for the next two years, aside from the NS initiative.

The ongoing war in Ukraine is a reminder that Singapore's sovereignty cannot be taken for granted, Mr Chua added.

"While still actively engaging our partners in the industry, CYS will commit to augment, supplement and prioritise the manpower needs of national defence and security organisations in Singapore for the next two years."

Mr Teo spoke on the importance of cyber security to both personal and national security.

He said: "We need to strengthen collaboration for our collective defence. With the pervasiveness of digital technologies, cyber security cannot only be the responsibility of the Government, cyber-security professionals or cyber-security firms."

Mr Teo said Singapore must build its cyber-security capabilities by nurturing and grooming professionals in the industry.

He added that while the Government has invested heavily in growing the local talent pool, it welcomes more organisations to join in such efforts.

Communities such as CYS provide an important platform for students and young people to learn more outside school, he said.

CYS also inked an agreement with JTC Corporation to deepen their existing collaboration and to set up a physical headquarters in Punggol Digital District by 2024.

The district, now under construction in Punggol North, is designed to bring together industry and academia, and will house the Singapore Institute of Technology's (SIT) campus and JTC's business park spaces.

Mr Chua added that later this year, CYS will organise a competition with SIT and JTC for young people.

CYS also announced other initiatives to bring young people together to share knowledge on digital topics.

Mr Chua said: "Understandably, there is red tape when huge organisations like our institutes of higher learning (IHLs) interact with one another, slowing down the collaboration process."

He added that CYS will be bringing together students from the Institute of Technical Education, the five polytechnics and Singapore's autonomous universities at an IHL round-table event soon.

"This IHL round-table is meant to facilitate conversations among the computing school population across IHLs and will be officiated in the upcoming month," he said.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL

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MR TEO CHEE HEAN, SENIOR MINISTER AND COORDINATING MINISTER FOR NATIONAL SECURITY, ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CYBER SECURITY TO BOTH PERSONAL AND NATIONAL SECURITY.

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A version of this article appeared in the print edition of The Straits Times on March 30, 2022, with the headline Members of cyber group urged to serve NS as digital specialists. [Subscribe](#)