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News Release

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF TECHNOLOGISTS AT DSTA'S LARGEST ANNUAL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FESTIVAL

Building and programming a CubeSat, solving real-world problems through Extended Reality (XR), coding and prototyping a mobile application using cloud technology, as well as debunking fake news using machine learning, computer vision and natural language processing – these were just some experiential activities that close to 3,500 students from some 90 schools delved into at the fifth edition of BrainHack organised by the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA).

Since its inception in 2019, DSTA's flagship annual learning festival for aspiring young technologists has steadily expanded from cybersecurity and artificial intelligence, to also include activities in space technology, extended reality, fake news detection and app development. Themed "Decode the Future", BrainHack 2023 marked its return to a physical format since the pandemic, and boasted the largest number of physical activities to date. Activities were designed to be accessible and riveting for students from Secondary Schools, Junior Colleges, Integrated Programme schools, Institutes of Technical Education, Polytechnics, as well as Universities. Participants put their skills to the test in a series of physical and virtual workshops, hackathons and competitions from May to June, culminating in a finale on 21 and 22 June.

Permanent Secretary (Defence Development) and Chairman of DSTA, Mr Melvyn Ong said at the award ceremony on 22 June, "I hope that [BrainHack has] inspired you to go further in your own S&T (Science & Technology) journey, perhaps even as part of our DTC (Defence Technology Community). I have seen the fast-moving threat landscape. You will have opportunities – and I have seen it – to do interesting work; work that people outside of defence industry will not get to do; challenging work. We will need people like you, potential defence scientists, engineers and cybersecurity enthusiasts."

BrainHack provides a stepping stone into the defence science and technology sector, and continues to draw sustained interest from budding youths. Among them is Alicia Tan, who participated in the Cyber Defenders Discovery Camp (CDDC) – one of the activities at BrainHack – for the fourth time this year. She said, "Each CDDC challenge I have taken part in since 2020 was unique and refreshing, which incentivises me to keep coming back to learn and compete with like-minded peers. I am also thankful for the opportunities to explore possible scholarship and career opportunities with DSTA through BrainHack." Alicia is a DSTA Merit Cyber Scholarship recipient, and is currently on an internship stint with DSTA.

Recognising the importance of creating greater opportunities for youths to be acquainted with emerging technologies, DSTA Chief Executive Mervyn Tan said, "Through BrainHack, we hope to make defence tech more relatable to youths, and give them a teaser of the exciting work of the Defence Technology Community through immersive activities and simulating real-world challenges. This year, some students also had the rare opportunity to interact with guest speaker Dr Soichi Noguchi, a former astronaut from the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency who has been on multiple space missions. We have also put together a Tech Showcase with a diverse range of interactive booths with quizzes that will allow participants to gain insights into various technologies and their applications in a fun and engaging way."

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About Defence Science and Technology Agency
The Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) is a top-notch technology organisation that drives innovation and delivers state-of-the-art capabilities to make the Singapore Armed Forces a formidable fighting force. Harnessing and exploiting science and technology, our engineers and IT professionals leverage multidisciplinary expertise to equip our soldiers with advanced systems to defend Singapore. DSTA also contributes its technological expertise to support national-level developments. To achieve our mission, DSTA excels in systems engineering, digitalised platforms, cyber, software development and more.

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