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**Speaking at the 2015 Cyber Defenders Discovery Camp Awards Ceremony on Monday (Jun 22), Minister of State for Defence Maliki Osman says the nature of warfare has changed from battles fought in the physical space to cyberspace.**

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File photo of a man looking at computer code. (Photo: AFP/Joe Raedle)

**SINGAPORE:** There is a need for smart and innovative cyber defenders to keep Singapore safe from cyber threats as technology progresses and becomes more pervasive, said Minister of State for Defence and National Development Maliki Osman.

Speaking at the 2015 Cyber Defenders Discovery Camp Awards ceremony on Monday (Jun 22), Dr Maliki said cybersecurity is equally critical to the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). "On Jul 1, the SAF will celebrate its 50th anniversary, marking its transformation from a rudimentary military in the 1960s to a networked, integrated fighting force of the 21st century," he said.

"The nature of warfare has also changed in tandem, from battles fought in physical space to battles today in cyberspace. The SAF will need to continually evolve to become smarter, sharper and stronger to overcome new threats in today's digital age."

Dr Maliki encouraged students taking part in the camp to join the Defence Technology Community to help strengthen Singapore's defence systems. A record 323 students from 22 Junior Colleges, Integrated Programmes, universities and polytechnics took part in this year's Cyber Defenders Discovery Camp organised by the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA).

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A total of two teams emerged champions this year. They are students from Anderson Junior College, and also a group of participants from Singapore Management University, Nanyang Technological University and National University of Singapore.

"There's a certain mindset we need to have when we're trying to penetrate into their system. They taught us a very structured framework so that we could understand how to think, and not be a whole mess when we try to approach the problem at hand," said Bryan Lim, a second-year student from Anderson Junior College.

Erickson Tjoa, a third-year student from Nanyang Technological University added: "I realise that actually, defence is very complex, and that goes all the way to the cyber world."

"The fact that hackers can do so much more than what our defence can handle at certain times, makes it all the more important that we put our resources to the defence capabilities for cybersecurity."

The camp, which started three years ago, is meant to help create awareness in cybersecurity, and nurture future cyber defenders. This is done through hands-on lab exercises and lectures. Guided by DSTA professionals, students are exposed to the methodologies and mindsets of both cyber defenders and attackers.

During the competition on the final day, teams used their skills to find vulnerabilities in a simulated real-world IT environment, and enforced countermeasures to secure these systems.

- CNA/dl