

# New \$54m centre to study congestion in Singapore

By **LESTER HIO**

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CROWDS and congestion – these are two words familiar to people living in Singapore. Many often grapple with how to get in and out of crowded events and places in the fastest and smoothest way.

Fittingly, congestion and its solutions are some of the things to be studied at the \$54 million Urban Computing and Engineering Centre of Excellence launched in Singapore yesterday.

The centre is a five-year partnership between the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A\*Star), Singapore Management University (SMU) and Japanese information and communication technology company Fujitsu. It will study the flow of traffic, both human and vehicular, and model simulations to test how Singapore can ensure smooth traffic flow in crowded areas.

A key area of research, for instance, focuses on large urban areas where many people gather in a short time for activities such as sporting events or concerts.

“The idea is to provide visitors to such events with intelligent and timely information through their mobile devices to help in decision making,” said Professor Lau Hoong Chuin, deputy director of SMU’s school of information systems.

A\*Star executive director Tan Geok Leng said Singapore was an ideal testbed for such research, given its advanced infrastructure and small size, which tend to generate urban congestion.

The centre will also examine Singapore’s maritime ports and come up with ways to improve capacity. For instance, the centre can use past data to simulate the number of ships arriving each day and the time taken for goods to be unloaded. It can then use the simulation to plan future logistics, allocating time and resources more efficiently.

✉ [lesterh@sph.com.sg](mailto:lesterh@sph.com.sg)