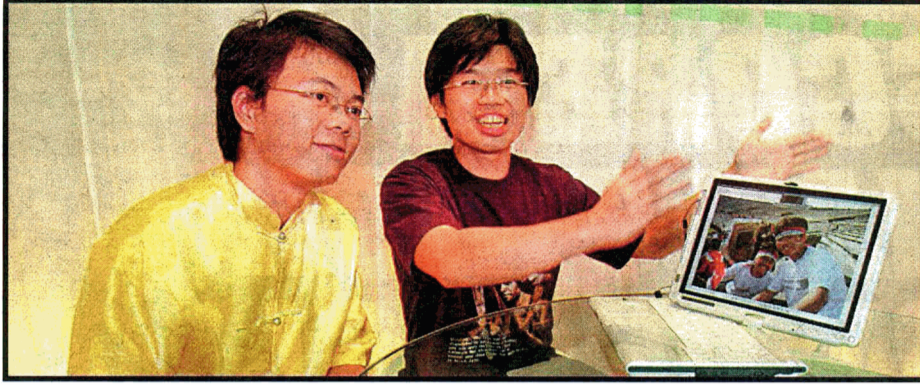


◆ Mr Huang (left) and Mr Lesmana are two recipients of the National Infocomm Scholarship.



Picture: PRISCILLA LIU

Masters' in just 4 years

Foreigners get Infocomm scholarships

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ADITYA Lesmana and Huang Liang are blazing a trail as far as the National Infocomm Scholarship (NIS) goes.

They are among four foreign students to be granted the scholarship for the first time.

Another first: Some of its scholars can get a Master's Degree in four years starting with either A levels or a polytechnic diploma.

Mr Lesmana, 21, an Indonesian, and Mr Huang, 23, a China national, will receive the scholarship today at Singapore Polytechnic.

The two other foreigners are also from Indonesia and China.

Mr Huang began his third year last month, while Mr Lesmana is in his first year. They applied for the scholarship early this year.

FAST TRACK

The two have opted for the new fast track Singapore Management University (SMU)-Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) programme, which will take them 4½ years.

Besides the SMU-CMU masters course, other local and overseas academic options await 36 NIS scholarship recipients.

For Mr Lesmana and Mr Huang, who are passionate about IT, the scholarship is a dream come true.

Said Mr Huang: "My motto has always been do IT, enjoy IT."

Passion for IT aside, another attraction of the scholarship is the opportunity to study abroad.

Students of the programme will be able to split their time — two years in SMU, another two at CMU in the US and a six-month internship.

Said Mr Lesmana: "I'm really looking forward to going overseas and expanding my horizons, I like challenges."

Mr Huang is similarly excited.

He said: "The US is where the emerging technologies are. It's the best place for an IT-passionate person to be."

The NIS scholarships, which range between \$85,000 to \$300,000 each, aim to nurture and develop top infocomm talents in Singapore.

Upon completion, graduates will be bonded to top Infocomm companies, local companies and government agencies for four years.

Mr Lesmana and Mr Huang have been in Singapore for the past six years.

They did their secondary and tertiary education here under a different scholarship by the Ministry of Education.

SINGAPORE TASTES

And after all these years here, their taste buds have become localised.

Mr Huang loves chicken curry and roti prata and Mr Lesmana is a fan of Hainanese chicken rice.

Having received two different scholarships during their time here, they are determined to pay their dues to Singapore once they complete their studies.

Said Mr Huang: "There's a saying in Chinese which says if you are given a little favour, return it 1,000 times if you get the opportunity."

Added Mr Lesmana: "I think as long as foreign talent is used in a positive way to help Singapore, it's a good thing."