

MED FRONTIERS // Award-winning NUS researcher Prof Lim Chwee Teck has scored another first – in April, he received a collaborative research grant from the International Human Frontier Science Program Organization (HFSP). Prof Lim's team was one of 25 (out of over 700 submissions worldwide) to garner an HFSP grant for cutting-edge projects that study complex mechanisms of living organisms.

A member of the Departments of Bioengineering and Mechanical Engineering, as well as the NUS Mechanobiology Institute, Prof Lim is studying issues related to "Probing mechano-transduction by cell-cell junctions at the nano- and micro-scales". He is the only Singaporean researcher to receive the three-year grant, which entitles each recipient to up to US\$125,000 (almost S\$150,000) annually.

LEADING-EDGE LIFE SCIENCES // Taking the honours at this year's NUS Innovation and Enterprise Awards were Prof Ding Jeak Ling of NUS' Department of Biological Sciences and Assoc Prof Ho Bow from the Department of Microbiology of the Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. Known for their conservation work with horseshoe crabs, the researchers won the Outstanding NUS Innovator Award.

The Promising NUS Start-up Award went to BioMers and Clearbridge BioMedics, two start-ups with NUS roots. "The judges were impressed with the fact that BioMers and Clearbridge BioMedics have translated technologies from NUS laboratories into fully-commercialised products," said Prof Wong Poh Kam, Director of the NUS Entrepreneurship Centre and Co-chair of the Innovation and Enterprise Awards Organising Committee.

In May, Clearbridge BioMedics also beat 17 Asian start-ups to receive the First Prize of the 2012 Asian Entrepreneurship Award in Kashiwanoha, Japan. Judges were particularly taken by the company's ClearCell System, a diagnostic kit to retrieve viable tumour cells from blood.

WEBMASTER // At the Global INET conference in Geneva, Switzerland, in April, Assoc Prof Tan Tin Wee of NUS' Department of Biochemistry was inducted into the Internet Society's inaugural Internet Hall of Fame. The accolade recognises Assoc Prof Tan's leading role in applying web-based technologies in the field of computational biology as well as in developing the multilingual Internet domain name system. Among the other leading lights to be honoured this year were Internet pioneers Vint Cerf, Tim Berners-Lee and former United States Vice President Al Gore.



"Sea Show" photos by Karenne Tun

December 2005. The data was collated by the Singapore Cardiac Data Bank on Singaporean patients with acute coronary syndrome who were admitted into public hospitals and institutions.

TWO NEW CENTRES // Established in June, the Micro and Nano-Fabrication Facility at NUS' Graphene Research Centre seeks to pioneer new uses for graphene, a carbon allotrope with many potential high-tech applications. "I'm certain the facility will become a major site for graphene research and application for the region and the world," said NUS President Prof Tan Chorh Chuan at the launch of the S\$15-million lab. Joining the Kent Ridge research cluster in April was the

Zeiss Microscopy Lab; the first facility of its kind in Asia, the S\$6-million centre houses state-of-the-art microscopes to further research in biological and materials sciences.

CANCER CLUES // An international team led by researchers at Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School and the National Cancer Centre Singapore has identified hundreds of mutant genes in stomach cancer. The findings were published online in *Nature Genetics* in April. The second deadliest cancer globally, stomach cancer causes more than 700,000 deaths each year and is especially prevalent in East Asia. The findings

offer hope of customised treatments according to the genetic composition of a patient's gastric tumour.

FLOWER SWITCH // Researchers from NUS' Department of Biological Sciences and the Temasek Life Sciences Laboratory have provided new insight into what triggers flowering in plants. Over a period of five years, Assoc Prof Yu Hao and his team scanned some three million plant samples for proteins, identifying one known as FT-Interacting Protein 1 (FTIP1) that is essential for plants to produce flowers under normal light conditions. The findings were published in the April issue of the online journal *PLoS Biology*. The team is now studying other factors that can control flowering (and other key processes) in plants.



"Better Vision" photo by The Straits Times @ Singapore Press Photo Agency. Photo by Yu Hao