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New supercomputer transforming research



Singapore's most powerful supercomputer, Aspire 1, was set up last year as the core facility of the country's new National Supercomputing Centre. Deputy director Jon Lau is part of the management team that keeps the computer humming along smoothly and ensures that researchers have their fair share of its massive computational resources. ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

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It is region's most powerful machine and can boost work in various disciplines

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A new supercomputer in Singapore, much more powerful than anything else in the region, is transforming research and industry here.

Not yet a year old, the machine is already being used to design safer and more cost-effective megastructures, as well as to understand how human genes cause disease. And it has the potential to transform research in many other areas.

Named Aspire 1, it is the heart of the National Supercomputing Centre (NSCC) Singapore jointly set up last year by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore University of Technology and Design.

Perched on the 17th floor of one of the Fusionopolis towers in Buona Vista, the machine made by Fujitsu has more than 30,000 cores, compared with two or four in a personal computer. It can do a thousand trillion floating point operations - decimal number calculations - per second.

In November last year, Aspire 1 was ranked No. 115 in the world by TOP500, a widely recognised ranking of supercomputers.

