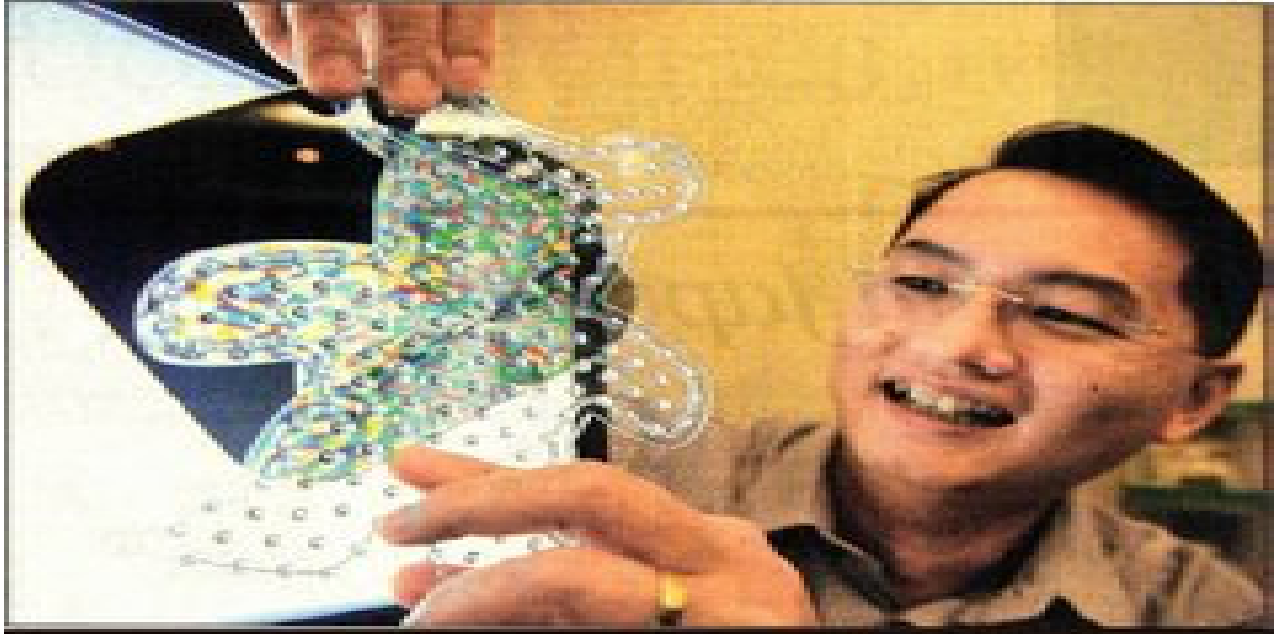


# A bright spark inspired by squids!

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## PHYSICIST WINS DEFENCE TECH PRIZE FOR LASER BEAM IDEA

Applied physicist Phua Poh Boon, 38, borrowed the method that when squids mate in the dark depths of the sea, their bodies glow, to produce laser beams powerful enough to pierce the densest fog.

On the battlefield, this gives soldiers visual advantage, because these perfectly radial polarized beams of light stay true to their course over long distances. This invention by Dr Phua of the DSO National Laboratories could do the same favour for firefighters amid dense smoke. It has also won him the nation's prestigious prize for defence technology. Dr Phua has more than 8 United States patents to date.

The DSO and DSTA hothouse the nation's pool of 5,000 defence scientists and engineers. DSO has had 22 patents granted to its researchers since 1999.