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Mr Muhammad Haidil Kamali (far left) and Mr Ajit Kumar are recipients of the BCA-Industry Built Environment ITE Scholarship. They will be working at lift company Chevalier. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

## Study awards, diplomas to boost building sector

### 134 ITE graduates and students receive BCA-Industry Built Environment ITE scholarships and sponsorships

#### Derek Wong

At just five years old, Mr Ajit Kumar would take apart damaged household appliances, fascinated by the colourful and intricate wiring inside ovens and fans.

At seven, during his first experience of a power blackout at home, he was not afraid. Instead, he was curious about how it happened.

Now 21 and armed with a Certifi-

cate in Facility Technology (Mechanical and Electrical Services), he will start work in March as a technical supervisor at lift company Chevalier.

Mr Kumar was among 134 recipients who received BCA-Industry Built Environment ITE scholarships and sponsorships at an awards ceremony yesterday at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) College East in Simei.

New specialist diploma courses to upgrade workers' skills in the indus-

try were also unveiled at the event.

The study awards are part of a drive to draw more young people here to the construction sector.

The Construction Industry Transformation Map (ITM), launched last October, seeks to overhaul a sector that has long struggled to attract local workers.

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Second Minister for National Development Desmond Lee, who was guest of honour, announced the inaugural Building Specialist Sponsorship (BSS) awards to help current employees upgrade their skills.

The awards are for courses which include a new ITE Work-Learn diploma course which gives workers hands-on training in Building Information Modelling (BIM).

BIM, used by 60 per cent of major builders here, is a 3D-model-based process for more efficient planning, design, construction and management.

The BSS awards are also for specialist BIM diplomas for post-diploma graduates, offered by Temasek Polytechnic and Singapore Polytechnic.

"This is a fast-paced growth area. It is going to be a sector that generates interesting, varied and good jobs and this is where all of you come in," said Mr Lee, who is also Minister for Social and Family Development, in a speech to the award recipients. He added it is not just the Government that extends support, but industry partners too, as some of the scholarships are co-

sponsored by firms. The scholarships target ITE students enrolled in construction-related courses.

Chevalier is co-sponsoring seven such scholarships this year.

Its director, Mr Quah Eng Hing, 68, said the sponsorship is a good chance to attract more locals amid an acute shortage of manpower in the industry.

"With their technical background, they could be easier to train. Their eventual roles could be in leading maintenance teams with their good knowledge and skills," he said.

But the Government continues to be the main driver of the flagging construction industry. Recent estimates from the Building and Construction Authority show that public projects will lead industry demand in the coming few years.

Mr Muhammad Haidil Kamali, 23, who graduated in facility technology (vertical transportation), is another scholarship recipient who will work at Chevalier.

"Locals have to step up and take care of our own lifts," he said.

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