SINGAPORE: No merger is likely between the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) and the Media Development Authority (MDA), said Community Development, Youth and Sports Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan on Friday.

He was responding to a reporter who asked him to comment on talk about the two agencies merging.

The IDA is given the task of cultivating a vibrant infocomm industry, while the MDA aims to develop the media industry.

Dr Balakrishnan said: "I can reassure you that is not the case. Both IDA and MDA have their hands full. There are so many things happening on this space that everybody is stretched and fully busy. We are not contemplating or even planning any merger at this point in time."

Earlier, he presented prizes to the winning team of Singapore's first 24-hour computer programming competition. It was held over the weekend at the Singapore Management University (SMU).

The winners are Muhammad Mohsin and Jonathon Zhan, two students from SMU, and an entrepreneur, Jacqueline Choo, who walked away with an all-expenses trip to Internet search engine Google's headquarters in California. They also received cash prizes of S$5,000 each.

Their winning Web-based application allows users to share information on attractions in Singapore.

The Minister said such competitions will dispel the notion that programming is boring and will let the young exercise their creativity.

Dr Balakrishnan said: "There are many people who have this misconception that coding or programming is boring, it's low value work, it's grunt work. This is very, very wrong.

"In fact, I believe programming and coding especially for young people is a way to broaden their minds, give them new paradigms to think, and more importantly these are tools for them to exercise their creativity."

The competition has been organised to instil interest in computer programming, identify talent and to develop infocomm further in Singapore. - CNA/ch