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## News - Headlines

Sunday, May 27, 2007

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### New organisation, OnePeople.sg, to champion racial harmony

Cheerleaders of racial harmony now have extra help in the form of a new centre called OnePeople.sg.

It aims to pool together resources from the big three players in community bonding to facilitate ground-up efforts at harmony building.

These players are the five community development councils or CDCs, another five self help groups and the Ministry for community development youth and sports.

The centre is a revamp of an earlier one called the Joint Social Service Centre set up in 1997 by the Central Singapore CDC and the five self help groups.

Speaking at the launch of OnePeople today, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong reflects on the track record of CDCs.

***"As an experiment in local administration, the CDCs have shown that when a community is given the authority and responsibility to look after its own well-being, it will produce better results than when affairs are managed centrally by a distant bureaucracy. I know that many GRO advisers and people still feel the CDCs should move even faster. But I think the fact that we already have CDCs have already made a difference and is much better than if we had been centralised in one ministry, in some distant building somewhere in one corner of Singapore."***

Looking ahead, Mr Lee said he would like to see the CDCs play an even greater role in harmony building.

He said the government remains committed to ensuring meritocracy and that minority communities will not feel pressured by the majority Chinese community, but citizens must also play their part.

In this regard, the new centre, which hopes to register itself as a society, will offer training programmes to youths and grassroots leaders to help their members better understand racial harmony.

The centre, chaired by Central Singapore District Mayor Zainudin Nordin, will also build itself up as a repository for materials on race and religious issues.

More partners will be roped in too to jointly spread the word about racial harmony through frequent big scale celebrations.

The centre's website is at [www.onepeople.sg](http://www.onepeople.sg)



### China slams US defence report

China has slammed a US defence report voicing concerns about its military build-up.

It said the document was "totally unjustified" and designed to mislead international opinion.

In Beijing's first official reaction, the People's Daily said the Pentagon report propagated a "China threat" theory even though China was only covering its legitimate defence needs.

It added that the report paid no attention to the actual state of affairs and in a premeditated fashion exaggerates the "so-called Chinese military threat".

The Pentagon report, issued last week, expressed concern at the deployment of long-range ballistic nuclear missiles, and a ballooning and non-transparent budget.

