

NEW PORTAL TO BOOST RACIAL TIES

By Haresh Sivaram



PM Lee tries out one of the games at the launch of OnePeople.sg.

A new initiative — OnePeople.sg — has been introduced to strengthen the ties that bind Singaporeans, not only by helping them appreciate each other's customs and traditions better, but by also allowing them to see how much we all have in common.

It contains information about the various ethnic groups in Singapore and their practices, academic papers on ethnicity, games and activities, such as stories, quizzes and jigsaw puzzles, to involve visitors to the site in an interactive learning process.

The initiative was launched on May 27 at the open space outside The Arts House and Asian Civilisations Museum in Empress Place by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

At the event, he noted in his speech: "We are fortunate in Singapore to enjoy strong inter-racial understanding and harmony. But it would be a grievous mistake to take this for granted."



All the races here eat rice, they just cook it differently as these samples show.

He added that he envisions OnePeople.sg as being "a one-stop resource centre for information on inter-racial and inter-faith issues".

The launch also doubled up as the opening act of a series of events to mark the 10th anniversary of Community Development Councils.

Mayors of the five CDCs as well as senior representatives of the five self-help groups were all present at the event. It was the second year in a row the five CDCs came together to celebrate racial harmony.

There, the VIPs toured the various areas set up to display the similarities the various ethnic groups here have in terms of food, music and even value systems.

For instance, there was the musical group comprising people of different races who got the audience head banging as they played instruments such as Chinese gongs and cellos.

OnePeople.sg is also the new name of the revamped Joint Social Services Centre managed by the Central Singapore Community Development Council. It will continue to use the centre's premises at Toa Payoh, and will be chaired by Mayor Zainudin Nordin.



PM Lee (right) and Minister Balakrishnan officially launch OnePeople.sg



Musicians from the different races playing instruments used by the various ethnic groups proved a hit with the crowd at the event, called Common Spaces.



A round of applause from Central Singapore Mayor Zainudin (from left), PM Lee, Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, Mayors Matthias Yao, Zainul Abidin Rusheed, Teo Ho Pin, Amy Khor, and PA chief executive director Tan Boon Huat.

Do you know...

that Hindus celebrate the auspicious Guru Purnima Festival to show respect to teachers and gurus in July, while the Chinese will celebrate the Hungry Ghosts' Festival and Chinese Valentine's Day (also called Daughter's Festival) in August. Find out more about these special celebrations at www.trustcentral.org.sg, a new website portraying the beliefs, customs and traditions of Singapore's ethnic communities.