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B8 NTU defence work under one roof

Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for Defence Chan Chun Sing (second from right) looking at the components of the X-Sat, a satellite built by NTU, yesterday. ST PHOTO: ONG WEE JIN

New office to oversee defence projects

NTU, Mindef team up to improve interaction among varsity's research centres

By LEE JIAN XUAN

MORE than 120 ongoing defence and security projects worth about $130 million will be coordinated from a new office at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) later this year.

In a partnership with the Defence Ministry, the Office of Research and Technology in Defence and Security will look to improving interaction among projects from five research centres at the university.

Announcing the office yesterday, NTU president Bertil Andersson said: "We have many collaborations with Mindef and other defence organisations so we wanted to make it more efficient, to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing."

This method is used by top universities in the world as it allows for an interdisciplinary approach to research, added Dr Andersson. He was speaking to reporters at the 10th anniversary of Temasek Laboratories@NTU (TL@NTU), a joint research centre set up by NTU and Mindef in 2003.

The guest of honour, Second Minister for Defence Chan Chun Sing, noted in his speech the long-standing cooperation between both parties and said he was pleased they were embarking on a "new strategic thrust in defence and security research".

Addressing a 200-strong crowd of researchers and defence officials, Mr Chan touched on some of TL@NTU's achievements, such as how researchers found a way to create flexible ceramics which can be used for body or vehicle armour. The breakthrough was published last September in top academic journal Science.

He also noted that some of TL@NTU's research included applications beyond the defence field. It has created advanced microchips for the SAF's sensors and communications systems, which can also be used in smartphones and in commercial vehicle radar systems to help avoid collisions.

Mr Chan, who is also Minister for Social and Family Development, added: "This 'dual-use' technology is an example of Mindef stretching our defence dollars, by developing technologies that contribute to Singapore's security and have commercial applications that benefit Singaporeans in their daily lives."

Mr Chan also noted how Mindef has built up Singapore's defence expertise and developed its own technologies – including the frigate and SAR 21 rifle which were tailored to defence requirements here.

He added that Mindef has also tapped into the larger scientific community to "build up a robust defence technology ecosystem".

"Our strategic collaborations with research institutions such as NTU have provided scientific expertise and talent to augment the research of DSTA and DSO," said Mr Chan, referring to the Defence, Science and Technology Agency, and DSO National Laboratories.

Mr Chan and Dr Andersson also toured NTU's research facilities like the Satellite Research Centre and the Electromagnetic Effects Research Laboratory.

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