

NEWS

Concrete pile topples

» CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The SCDF received a call about the incident around 8.30am, and a fire engine and two support vehicles were deployed to the scene. Officers detected the smell of gas, which they traced to a ball valve in a gas pipe nearby. Repair works were completed at about 10.30am.

Nearby residents said they heard loud noises and their apartments shook from the rumble.

Mr Shingis Madakhmetov from Kazakhstan, who lives at Evelyn Mansions, said the concrete blocks were on a metallic platform and that it had apparently given way.

"The noise woke me up; my initial reaction was that something



Workers clearing the rubble yesterday. PHOTOS BY DON WONG

had exploded," he said of the incident that took place next to two churches.

"I looked out of my window and just saw blocks spilling onto the street and lots of dust. Usually,

there are cars parked along that street; luckily, this morning, there were no cars. It was early enough and not many people were walking along that street, but a lot of people do ... (The toppled blocks)



took out a pretty large area and could have taken some lives."

Some residents said they had noticed the pile of blocks was slanting to one side since about a week ago.

"It's the shortest way to the MRT, and I feel very unsafe now using this road until the construction site is really safe," said Mr Uwe Hornik, a resident at Residences@Evelyn.

NEWS

Swiss whistle-blower to hand bank data to WikiLeaks

LONDON — The offshore bank account details of 2,000 "high-net-worth individuals" and corporations — detailing massive potential tax evasion — will be handed over to WikiLeaks in London today by Swiss whistle-blower Rudolf Elmer, before he goes on trial in his native Switzerland.

British, American and Asian individuals and companies are among the offshore clients whose details will be contained on two CDs to be presented to WikiLeaks. Those involved include, Elmer told *The Observer*, "approximately 40 politicians".

Elmer — who, after his press conference will return to Switzerland from exile in Mauritius to face trial for breaching bank secrecy — is a former chief operating officer in the Cayman Islands. He was fired in 2002 by Julius Baer bank, which accuses him of stealing the information.

Elmer is one of a small band of employees and executives seeking to blow the

whistle on what they see as unprofessional, immoral and even potentially criminal activity by powerful international financial institutions. Switzerland's banks, in particular, are famously secretive.

Elmer said the list includes "high-net-worth individuals", multinational conglomerates and financial institutions — hedge funds. They are said to be "using secrecy as a screen to hide behind in order to avoid paying tax". They come from the United States, Britain, Germany, Austria and Asia — "from all over".

Clients include "business people, politicians, people who have made their living in the arts and multinational conglomerates".

He said he understood the data would likely not show up immediately on WikiLeaks while it went through a vetting process — a shorter list of clients that Elmer had handed to WikiLeaks in 2008 has remained hitherto undisclosed.

The latest data came from at least three financial institutions, he told *Der Sonntag* newspaper, and covered the period from 1990 to 2009.

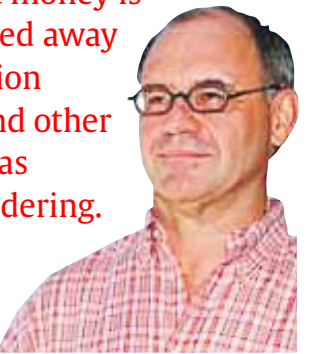
Elmer, who has worked for several major banks, said: "The one thing on which I am absolutely clear is that the banks know ... that money is being secreted away for tax-evasion purposes, and other things such as money-laundering."

While he agreed with "privacy in banking for the person in the street and legitimate activity", in these instances, he argued: "Privacy is being abused." Those in banking inner circles know "what the real products and service are, and why they are so expensive ... Crimes are committed and lies spread in order to protect this secrecy".

Elmer is charged with breaking Swiss bank secrecy laws, forging documents and sending threatening messages to two officials at Julius Baer. Julius Baer has denied all wrong-

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Swiss whistle-blower Rudolf Elmer



doing, and said Elmer "altered" documents in order to "create a distorted fact pattern".

In a statement, the bank said his aim was "to discredit Julius Baer as well as clients" by spreading "baseless accusations" and passing on "unlawfully acquired" documents to the media and WikiLeaks. "To back up his campaign, he also used falsified documents."

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At refurbished old folk's home, the elderly stay active the tech way

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SINGAPORE — Nestled in a quiet corner of Toa Payoh, a sheltered home for the aged and elderly destitute may be showing the way forward in the provision of care and residential services.

The Adventist Home for the Elders, which completed its first refurbishment in 16 years, has installed reading lights at bedsides, night lights along the corridor and motion-activated lights at the toilets.

There is a Nintendo Wii game console at the exercise area, which allows seniors to go bowling in the virtual world, while university researchers test interactive digital technologies.

The home paid special attention to these "fine details" as they were useful to the elderly, said chairman Wan Kwong Weng.

Mr Wan added: "When they get up at night, they don't have to scramble and find where the (light) switch is. They don't have to grope in the dark."

Located at a void deck in Kim Keat Avenue,



Residents exercising on new machines while Mr Lam Moon Weng plays Wii. PHOTOS BY LEONG WEE KEAT

the home now has 36 elderly residents.

It has also become a test-bed for Nanyang Technological University researchers studying how interactive digital technology, such as the Nintendo Wii, can encourage active ageing.

Preliminary findings suggest that Wii games could invoke positive feelings in elderly users, said Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information associate professor Theng Yin Leng.

The researchers are also exploring ways



to bridge the digital divide between the elderly and the young.

"Digital technologies are here to stay, but the elderly may feel alienated," said Dr Theng. "If we can harness these technologies to get grandparents and the young to interact, the elderly wouldn't feel left behind."

Home resident Lam Moon Weng, 87, was initially apprehensive about using Nintendo Wii as he had never played any electronic games. Now he plays bowling on the console every week for 15 minutes. "It allows me to

interact with visiting students, while also keeping me active and flexible," he said.

However, not all homes think digital interactive technology is suitable. The Ju Eng Home for Senior Citizens employs more occupational therapy methods for its residents to stimulate their minds, said chairman Lawrence Ang.

But the Adventist Home's Mr Wan feels that elderly residential service providers should look towards providing for the needs of the next generation of seniors.

"As society improves, we shouldn't let sheltered homes be third-class and low-rate," he said. "When our residents become more educated, they want something that's different."

The home's refurbishment did not come cheap, though. While the Nintendo Wii was sponsored, the final bill totalled \$260,000. About \$230,000 was raised through private donations; the voluntary welfare organisation tapped its reserves for the rest.

It costs between \$600 and \$800 for the home's full-paying residents, while those on the Government's public assistance scheme have \$300 deducted out of the \$360 given.

A CPR-savvy member in every family

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SINGAPORE — The likelihood of surviving an out-of-hospital heart attack in Singapore is 3 per cent, compared to cities such as Seattle, where the rate is 30 per cent.

This, even though help is at hand for one in five of the approximately 1,400 people here who collapse on the street from cardiac arrest each year. That means only an average of 42 people survive.

Doctors believe this can be improved if more people are trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). And Health Minister Khaw Boon Wan hopes that, eventually, there will be one first-aider in every home.

"I thought our rate of survival was low (as with) the rest of the world," he said. "But this morning, when I heard (about) Seattle ... obviously (raising the survival rate here) can



DON WONG

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE COLLAPSES ON THE STREET

- Tap his shoulder
- If there is no response, call 995 for the ambulance
- Watch for the chest rising and falling, listen for any sounds of breathing
- If there are none, start CPR
- Place the heel of your palm two fingers above the lower rib cage, apply firm and quick pressure for 30 counts
- Tilt the person's head back, lift his or her

- chin, pinch the nose and blow into the mouth
- Repeat the process for five cycles, then check for breathing
- If there is still no response, continue the cycle of compression and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation until help arrives
- If there is an automatic external defibrillator on hand, continue CPR until you can attach it to the victim and turn it on

be done. We ought to try to close that gap."

Mr Khaw said CPR skills could be introduced in schools. "The Singapore Armed Forces will follow up with National Service and reservist training, and the next thing is, we hope employers will see it to their benefit to teach their employees CPR," he said.

"At the community level, we're already trying to encourage (the learning of CPR) through the People's Association (PA). So, I think the target is not unrealistic."

Since last year, the Singapore Heart Foundation has been training staff from Philips and the Monetary Authority of Singapore, for instance.

A check on the National Resuscitation Council's website found that some other companies, such as Aardwolf Pestkare and NeoVita Computer Centre, also have testimonials for first-aid training.

Yesterday, 7,000 people took another first step toward Singapore's latest health target by signing up to learn CPR at Singapore's first National Life Saving Day.

Student Jonathan Koh, 19, took part in the event so that he would not just have to "stand helplessly by the side" if he ever were to see someone have a heart attack.

People often hold back, though, from performing CPR because they are afraid of

doing it wrong, said Singapore Heart Foundation (SHF) chairman Terrance Chua.

"But think about it this way — it's a balance of risk and benefit. If that person has an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest and the chance of survival without resuscitation is virtually nil, then you're certainly better off doing some form of CPR if you've been trained," he said.

The mass event, organised by SHF and the National Resuscitation Council, along with PA and the Institute of Technical Education, also earned participants a place in the *Guinness Book of Records* for the largest number of people trained and certified in CPR at a single event.