



RESILIENCE THROUGH HERITAGE I:
**HOTEL
NEW WORLD**

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HOTEL NEW WORLD

RESILIENCE THROUGH HERITAGE I

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FOREWORD

The National Heritage Board (NHB) introduced its “Resilience Through Heritage” series of projects in 2012 to document and promote national resilience and emergency preparedness through significant historical events in Singapore’s history.

The first project focused on the collapse of Hotel New World which shocked and riveted the entire nation, and eventually led to the deaths of 33 people, the rescue of 17 survivors, and the introduction of new construction and building maintenance legislation.

I still remember learning about the collapse on 15 March 1986. I was then studying in Australia. News about Singapore in the Australian media was rare, while the modern Internet that we know of today did not exist yet. So imagine my surprise when news reports on the hotel collapse appeared on Australian TV. My friends and I tuned in to news reports on TV and radio, and scoured the newspapers for updates on the collapse.

The collapse of Hotel New World was undoubtedly a tragic event, but it also showed how we responded as one nation. It served as a rallying point for Singaporeans and our foreign friends, who worked tirelessly together to locate and extricate survivors. It was heartening how many private organisations and ordinary individuals came forward to offer aid and to contribute in whichever way they could to help those in need.



Chan Yeng Kit

Permanent Secretary (Defence Development)
Ministry of Defence

I am glad that this Hotel New World project similarly epitomises a spirit of cooperation, with NHB collaborating with the Ministry of Home Affairs’ Heritage Development Unit, other public agencies as well as individuals who were involved in the rescue operations to curate a traveling exhibition and to organise public talks at libraries.

I hope that Singaporeans will be able to reflect upon the lessons learned from the collapse of Hotel New World and I look forward to more such projects from NHB.



▲ An exterior shot of the former Lian Yak Building taken in 1974.
 Courtesy of the former Public Works Department (PWD).

PROVIDING AN OVERVIEW

Located at the junction of Owen Road and Serangoon Road, the Lian Yak Building (more commonly known as Hotel New World) collapsed on 15 March 1986 at approximately 11.15 am. The collapse of Hotel New World was considered Singapore's first major civil disaster and one of the worst disasters in Singapore's post-war history.

Owned by Lian Yak Realty Company, the building was built between 1969 and 1971 and had six levels above ground and one basement carpark. The ground floor was occupied by a branch of the Industrial &

Commercial Bank and the second floor was occupied by a nightclub. The 67 room Hotel New World occupied the remaining third to sixth storeys.

As early as 1974, concerns regarding the safety of the building were raised when cracks appeared on the walls of several rooms. Prior to the collapse, the building, then known as New Serangoon Hotel, made the headlines on 19 August 1975 when a toxic carbon monoxide leak occurred and left 35 people unconscious.



▲ An aerial overview of the Hotel New World collapse with the water tank and air conditioner compressor lying on top of the heap of debris (1986).
 Courtesy of Singapore Press Holdings



▲ A photograph of Eagle Piano Company which served as the temporary command centre for the Hotel New World rescue operations (1986).
Courtesy of the former Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts

TRACING THE COLLAPSE

On the fateful Saturday morning of 15 March 1986, the Hotel New World building suddenly gave way and collapsed with a loud thunder-like sound. Eight minutes after the collapse, the first two fire engines dispatched from the Central Fire Station on Hill Street arrived at the scene followed by the police.

In view of the gravity of the disaster, the Executive Group¹ was activated. A Police Emergency Command Post was also established and a Command and Control Group set up to oversee the ground operations. A shophouse selling pianos operated by Eagle Piano Company opposite the collapse site, and later, the nearby Serangoon Plaza were used by the authorities as the command centre for the rescue operations.

A Casualty Information Bureau, an Information Collection Centre and a Services Action Group were also established, to collect and disseminate information and updates; provide supplies, equipment, logistical requirements; and coordinate all voluntary offers of assistance. In addition, a Temporary Mortuary was set up at a vacant piece of land near Burmah Road, and a Helicopter Landing Site was secured at the Farrer Park soccer field to airlift casualties to the hospitals. By late afternoon, government ministers and Cabinet members as well as relatives of the trapped victims had arrived at the site to assess the situation.



▲ A meeting involving commanders of rescue operations of the fifth day of the collapse (1986).
Courtesy of Singapore Press Holdings

¹ A Crisis Management Committee conceived at the national level and comprising a group of senior officials from various ministries formed to tackle crisis and emergency situations.



▲ A photograph of rescue workers in the midst of rescue operations (1986).
Courtesy of the former Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts

CONDUCTING THE RESCUE

The Hotel New World rescue operations lasted for five days and involved more than 500 personnel from the Singapore Civil Defence Force, the former Singapore Fire Service, the Singapore Police Force, the Singapore Armed Forces and a team of foreign experts.

The initial phase of the rescue operations was fraught with many difficulties and challenges. The disaster site was chaotic with blocked roads, and access to the site was further obstructed by members of the public and the media who had gathered to witness the ongoing rescue operations. To make matters worse, some of the rescue personnel were not trained nor were they equipped to deal with a disaster of such a magnitude. The cut-and-lift method adopted by the rescue team was also ineffective.

The rescue team then decided on the tunneling method and enlisted the assistance of tunneling experts from Britain, Ireland and

Japan who were stationed in Singapore for the construction of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) subway. This resulted in a breakthrough in rescue operations and at the end of the first day, nine survivors were rescued and one body was extricated from the rubble.

The progress of rescue operations gathered momentum with the arrival of specialized equipment such as the ultra high pressure water machines that were able to blast through concrete without causing vibrations, 100-ton cranes that were able to lift heavy concrete slabs, life detector devices, and infrared imagers.

On 19 March 1986 - five days after collapse - at around 6.15am, the Executive Group called off rescue operations after a battery of sound checks established that there were no remaining survivors. The final death toll: 33 people died and 17 rescued.



▲ An photograph of rescue workers working through the night (1986).
Courtesy of Singapore Press Holdings



▲ A photograph of police officers collecting evidence from the Hotel New World disaster site for investigations (1986).
Courtesy of Singapore Police Force

INVESTIGATING THE COLLAPSE

Soon after the disaster, investigations were conducted to determine the causes of the collapse. The investigations were led by DSP S.K. Menon of the Criminal Investigations Department who was assisted by experts from different fields to provide advice on various technical aspects. A series of tests and analyses were carried out on structural components such as building columns, beams, foundation etc. In addition, building materials extracted from the debris were examined to determine if the quality of the building materials could have contributed to the collapse.

The investigations also sought to determine if any explosion took place and if the nearby construction works carried out by Mass Rapid Transit Corporation (MRTC) could have played a part that led to the collapse. The subsequent findings of the investigation ruled out the possibility of an explosion and further concluded that the MRTC works did not cause nor contribute to the collapse of the building.

On 22 March 1986, former President Wee Kim Wee appointed a four-man Commission of Inquiry to determine the cause of the building's collapse and recommend measures to prevent a similar occurrence. The Commission of Inquiry was headed by Mr. Justice L. P. Thean, Chairman of the Commission and the remaining three commissioners were all engineers.

The Hotel New World inquiry

Blast, MRT work among 10 areas being probed

By GERRY DE SILVA

THE FIRST stage of the commission of inquiry into the collapse of the Hotel New World ended yesterday with a startling disclosure.

Senior Deputy Public Prosecutor S. Tiwari said investigators are probing the likelihood of an explosion, and also the effects of Mass Rapid Transit work on the building. These are among 10 areas being looked into for the second stage of the inquiry which is expected to be held in late July or early August.

Mr Tiwari, who is leading the state's evidence, said investigations are expected to be completed by then. The head of the inquiry, Mr Justice L.P. Thean, adjourned the hearing to that date.

"Witnesses are being interviewed in relation to all of these and other ancillary areas," Mr Tiwari said.

It was thought all along that an explosion and MRT work had been ruled out as possible causes of the collapse.

At the time of the disaster, the Mass Rapid Transit Corporation had said its work was not the cause of the hotel disaster. The nearest site, Lavender station along Kallang Road, is at least three kilometres away.

Strong smell of gas

Police had also ruled out a bomb blast although the press had quoted witnesses as saying they heard an explosion before the building collapsed. There were also reports of a strong smell of gas in the area.

Mr Tiwari declined to elaborate on the possibility of an explosion and the MRT's possible role in the collapse.

He told The Straits Times later: "We will look into all aspects so as to allow the commission to determine the cause of the collapse."



MR TIWARI ... second stage of inquiry to examine 10 areas.

Mr Tiwari said various tests were also being conducted, some of which have been completed while others were still in progress.

He also spoke of progress on the second term of reference of the inquiry — making recommendations for appropriate measures to prevent a similar occurrence.

Materials from overseas are being collected to find out the law and practice in relation to buildings.

Further, representations have also been received in this connection from local bodies and individuals. These are being looked into," he added.

Other highlights of yesterday's hearing:

• **THE SIX-STORY** building was occupied even before a temporary occupation licence was issued.

• **AMENDED** plans revealed that hotel rooms had been rearranged, the car park ramps repositioned, and the staircase and lift lobby shifted. But no corresponding changes seemed to have been made to the structural details.

• **A STRONG ROOM** that would put a load of 450 pounds per square foot was built on the building's ground floor when it could only take a load of only 40 pounds per square foot.

• **THE WATER TANK** on the roof top — which was located in the middle — was supposed to be in a covered area at one corner.

• **Dealers** said CPF investors, not wanting to miss out on the rally, continued to come into the market.

• **Fuller report** on Page 27

• **More reports** on Page 29

Index up 10.67 points

THE Singapore stock market rally continued yesterday with the Straits Times Industrial Index rising another 10.67 points to 656.

This is its highest level since last Nov 30, which was the last trading day before the three-day general suspension of the Singapore and Kuala Lumpur markets at the height of the Pan-Electric Industries crisis.

Rises led falls 140 to 32 yesterday while turnover continued high with 17.36 million units worth \$34.34 million traded compared with Thursday's 14.04 million units at \$24.83 million.

Dealers said CPF investors, not wanting to miss out on the rally, continued to come into the market.

• **Fuller report** on Page 27

• **More reports** on Page 29

▲ An article from *The Straits Times* regarding the investigations to determine the causes of the Hotel New World collapse (1986).
Reprinted with permission from Singapore Press Holdings.



▲ An examination of the piles disclosed poor construction practice where the piles were arranged haphazardly and in one case, there were 11 piles instead of the expected 9 piles (1987).
Reproduced from the Report of the Inquiry into the Collapse of Hotel New World

PRESENTING THE CAUSES

The Commission of Inquiry presented the findings of the investigations and recommendations to former President Wee Kim Wee at a ceremony at the Istana on 16 February 1987. The 115-page report concluded that the collapse could be attributed to structural faults as well as poor quality design and construction.

Firstly, the Commission noted that the building was designed by unqualified individuals and as a result, many of the columns and beams were unable to withstand the loads imposed on them. Secondly, the construction of the building was done in a very haphazard way with virtually no professional supervision.

In addition, the Commission noted that the building's structure was further over-loaded by new installations on the roof (which included a water tank, two water heaters, a cooling tower, condensing units of the air conditioning system etc.). The tiling of the building exterior also added another 50 tons to the weight of the building.

To make matters worse, there was no proper maintenance of the building and structural defects were either ignored or superficially treated. The building was thus in a state of progressive deterioration, up till its eventual collapse.

Untrained man drew the plans



MR. LEONG ... confessed he signed a number of bogus letters on tenders.

THE inquiry into the Hotel New World disaster learnt yesterday that the man who drew the architect's plans for the building was an unqualified draughtsman.

The commissioners investigating the building collapse on March 15, which left 33 people dead, also heard charges of shoddy workmanship.

The two main witnesses of the day both pointed a finger at Mr Ng Khong Lim, managing director of building owners Lian Yak Realty. He was among those who died in the disaster.

Architect's draughtsman Leong Shui Lung said he had no formal draughtsman's qualifications and confessed that he signed a number of bogus letters which were prepared to make it appear that tenders for the construction of the building were called.

But he claimed it was Mr Ng who asked him to sign the letters, which were tendered to

the commission on Tuesday. The letters had been found in a safe in Mr Ng's home after his death.

Some of the letters were written on stationery of the "Pan Singapore Group Architect and Engineer" and were apparently an exchange between the building's architects and various contractors over tender bids.

But Mr Leong told the in-

More reports on Pages 10 and 11

quiry that "Pan Singapore" did not exist and Mr Ng had told him so.

He said the whole charade — which he acknowledged was illegal — was meant to convince Mr Ng's partners that he had called for tenders.

Mr Leong said he drew all the site and building plans for the Lian Yak Building, which housed the New World Hotel, in Serangoon Road.

He said he recommended an architect to Mr Ng and received half of the \$20,000 architect's fees. He visited the site

on behalf of the architect two or three times a week while work went on.

On site, Mr Leong said, he noticed frequent changes in sub-contractors because "Ng Khong Lim was in the habit of using abusive words on workers". Mr Ng was also slow to pay the workers and sometimes underpaid them.

On another point, he said that there should not have

been a water tank in the middle of the flat roof of the building.

When he learnt that a water tank was being built on the rooftop, he said he told Mr Ng that the plans only provided for one in the building's motor room.

But Mr Ng replied that he would shoulder the responsibility for that, Mr Leong said. Then he told the architect, Mr Ee Hoong Khoo, but Mr Ee "don't say anything".

The other key witness yes-

terday was engineer's draughtsman Shum Cheong Heng, who said two tests normally carried out on building sites were not done for the Lian Yak Building because Mr Ng refused to pay for them.

No test was done to check the soil conditions at the site. Nor was any load test done to check the weight the piles could bear.

There was also no qualified person to supervise the work on site, because Mr Ng would not pay for a clerk-of-works who would have ensured that all work was done according to the architect's and engineer's specifications.

Mr Shum said he visited the site several times and found signs of shoddy construction work. The site was also ill-equipped to ensure that work was done properly.

He said he complained to Mr Ng about all these things, but Mr Ng was "a very arrogant man" and would not follow instructions.

Mr Shum will continue his testimony today.

▲ An article in *The Straits Times* outlining the main findings on the causes of the Hotel New World collapse from the Commission of Inquiry (1986).
Reprinted with permission from Singapore Press Holdings

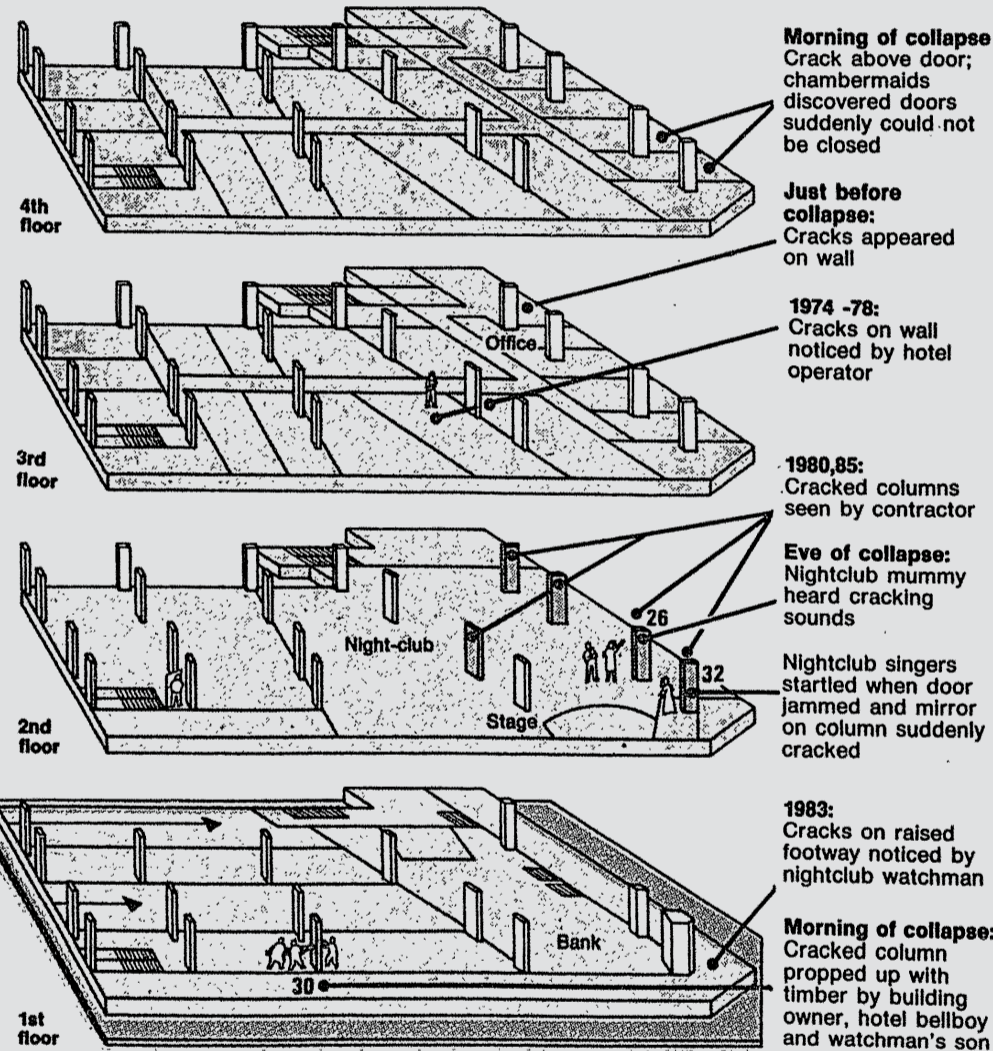
How to avoid another Hotel New World disaster

Doomed from the start

There was no single triggering act that brought down the ill-fated Lian Yak Building, the commission of inquiry found out. The root of the disaster was poor structural design. Shoddy construction added to the

problem. The only hope lay in proper maintenance. But the signs that the building was tottering were ignored or not taken seriously. The result: the building collapsed, 33 people died and a nation shook in horror and disbelief.

Tell-tale signs



New laws

Essentially, it wants the Government to:

- **FORCE** owners to conduct five-yearly maintenance checks by professional engineers on all buildings to which the public has access.

- **DOUBLE-CHECK** structural plans and calculations sent in by professional engineers;

- **MAKE** sure that there are professionals at the sites to supervise structural works.

- **CONDUCT** irregular spot checks at the sites;
- **GET** owners to do tests for piles and structural materials.

And to achieve all these, new laws may be necessary, the commission said. In addition, the Government should review and consider whether existing laws adequately protected it and its officers from any liability arising from the various functions assumed by the Development and Building Control Division.

Main concern

It is understood the Government is studying these and other recommendations in the 115-page report of the commission, which has been tabled before Parliament.

The report is the culmination of a two-stage inquiry, presided over by Mr Justice L. P. Thean and three other commissioners, Dr A. Vijjaratnam, Prof S. L. Lee and Prof Bengt B. Broms. They heard evidence from 117 witnesses.

And they made it clear what their main concern was — the small buildings.

"It is the small projects, such as the Lian Yak Building, with which we are most concerned. Ironically, the

• **What went wrong: at the design, construction and maintenance stages**

— Page 14

• **What was ruled out: MRT tunnelling, explosion, soil settlement, pile failure**

— Page 15

smaller the project, the greater the risk of human error and the greater the likelihood of professional malpractice and under-designing occurring; and because it is small, it is less likely to receive the professional attention which it deserves," they said.

In their analysis of why the tragedy which took 33 lives occurred, the commissioners said the causes had their origin more than 15 years ago when plans for the building were still on the drawing board.

Gross under-design by un-

qualified people laid the groundwork for the tragedy. Shoddy construction brought the building to the brink. And superficial maintenance sealed its fate.

It crumpled in a life-crushing heap on March 15, 1986.

"Clearly at about 11.15 that morning, the building could not stand the load any longer and its collapse was inevitable; and collapse it did, suddenly and swiftly within less than a minute it was all over.

"Until then, no one would have believed that such a disaster could happen in the way that it did," the report said.

An article in *The Straits Times* which outlined the key measures recommended by the Commission of Inquiry (1987).

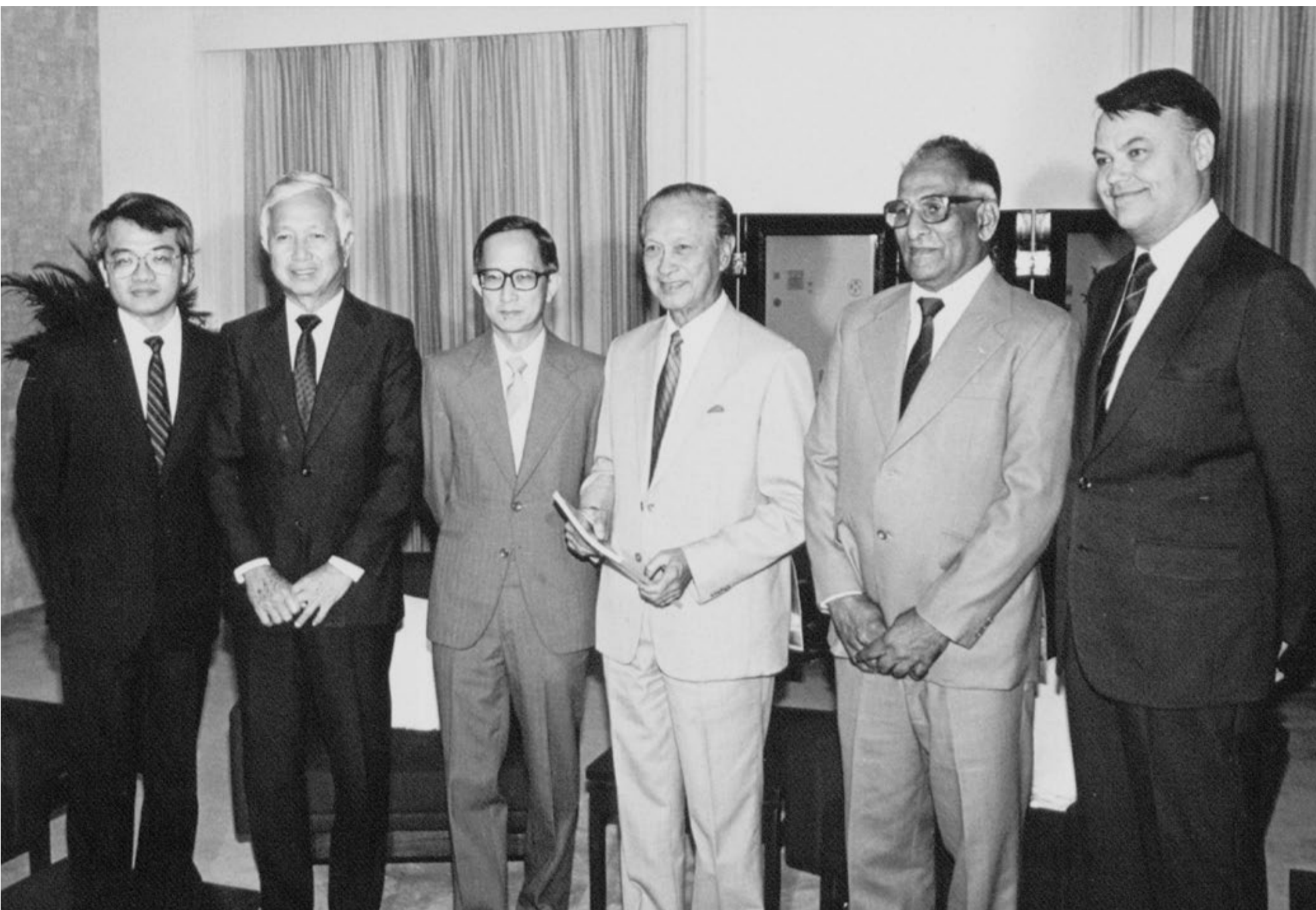
Reprinted with permission from *Singapore Press Holdings*

RECOMMENDING MEASURES

The Commission made several recommendations to prevent similar disasters from occurring in the future. More importantly, it recommended that the government should assume a more active role in the building industry to avert potential disasters of this nature.

The recommended measures included more spot checks on buildings and legislation to enforce maintenance checks every five years. The revised laws also encouraged building owners to adopt more stringent standards in reviewing building plans, testing structural materials and supervising structural works.

Following the disaster, the government called on owners of buildings designed by the architect and engineer of Hotel New World to carry out structural checks on their buildings. In addition, the government merged the former Singapore Fire Service and the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) on 15 April 1989 to ensure better coordination and a more systematic approach to rescue work, especially during disasters. The integration would also result in a standardization of response time and strategies when tackling civil emergencies.



Following the Hotel New World disaster, an investiture ceremony was held at the Singapore Conference Hall on 26 April 1986 during which former President Wee Kim Wee gave out national awards to 94 individuals and 33 organisations involved in the rescue operations as a national expression of gratitude.

The four award categories included the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal, the Public Service Star and the Public Service Medal for individuals, and the President's Certification of Commendation to private corporations and public organisations.

In addition, to assist the families of the 33 victims, an amount of S\$24,000 was given to each family in May 1986 from the relief fund set up by the Community Chest.

The families of the seven foreigners who died in the disaster received the amount through their respective High Commissions. The public, moved by the entire incident, had donated more than S\$1.5 million when the Hotel New World Disaster Relief Fund closed on 30 April 1986. An annuity scheme worth S\$900,000 was also set up for the 35 children of the victims.

▲ A group photograph taken during the presentation of the Commission of Inquiry Report to former President Wee Kim Wee at the Istana (1987).
Courtesy of the Istana

HONORING THE RESCUERS

National honours for three CD volunteers

By KONG SOOK CHIN

THREE Civil Defence volunteers will be given national honours tonight for their part in the Hotel New World rescue operations.

Dr Edward Pang, Mr Henry Han Liang Kwang and Tengku Abdul Rahman will receive the Public Service Medal from President Wee Kim Wee at the Singapore Conference Hall.

Dr Pang, Head of the Anaesthesia Department in Kandang Kerbau Hospital, played a key role in keeping survivors alive.

Yesterday, Dr Pang, 46, said he was honoured to get his first national award.

His 20-year experience as a specialist in handling critical cases came in useful in treating survivors at the disaster site, he said.

Dr Pang was so involved that he rarely went home. He was there all seven days, on top of duties at the hospital.

Dr Pang said his role was to give the survivors emotional reassurance and emergency medical care, which included resuscitating them.

He even crawled along a crevice to try and reach factory worker Helen Tan. He was blocked by rubble, but managed to comfort her.

He said on-site doctors worked in difficult conditions, often administering life support to survivors in



MR HAN

...prompted by overwhelming desire to help.

cramped spaces without much light. Some of them carried out medical treatment while they were lying on their bellies.

Dr Pang said: "We had to improvise a lot and use our common sense in those conditions."

He gave everyone involved in the rescue top marks for teamwork.

Dr Pang is married to a general practitioner in private practice. His favourite "hobby" is to teach medical students and doctors doing post-graduate studies. He is an old boy of St Joseph's Institution.

Transport company worker Han Liang Kwang said he was happy to get the Public Service Medal and would be thrilled to



DR PANG

...gave everyone top marks for teamwork.

meet President Wee in person.

"At last I will meet our President," he said.

Mr Han, 26, a bachelor, carried casualties, removed rubble and directed truck traffic at the disaster site. He did all this on top of his full-time duties at Integrated Agency Pte Ltd, which is also a shipping agency.

He said he rushed to the site soon after the hotel collapsed on March 15, prompted by an overwhelming desire to help.

Mr Han is the youngest of five children and passed Secondary One in Boys' Town Vocational Institute. He likes to swim and watch action-packed films.

Tengku Abdul Rahman could not be contacted for comment yesterday.

Recognition too for private firms and public organisations

By SUMIKO TAN

PRIVATE companies and public organisations will also be recognised for their role in the rescue work during the Hotel New World disaster.

Eleven firms, 26 units from the uniformed services, six government organisations and the METC will receive the President's Certificate of Commendation tonight.

Most of the private firms were involved in direct rescue and tunneling work.

Although the companies contacted yesterday shrugged off suggestions that they were heroes —

"we were just doing our job", one said — they were nevertheless pleased with the recognition.

Offered assistance

Aqua Jet's technical director and partner, Mr Richard Keers, 53, said: "We are happy that our work was recognised."

The company offered assistance with high pressure water machines that could blast through concrete without causing vibrations.

Also at the site throughout the disaster

were men from two METC contractors, the Kajima-Keppel Joint Venture and Becotra Construction.

Becotra project manager Joe Stacey, 47, said: "Digging tunnels is part of our trade although the rescue work was more dangerous than what we do every day. But people were trapped under and we had to rescue them."

Crucial in lifting vehicles

Two other companies that responded to the call for help was Singapore Shipbuilding and Engineering, which supplied the 100-tonne crane that was crucial in the lifting of heavy concrete slabs, and Fock Tong Choon Transport Company, which sent five cranes and four lorries to the scene.

Other companies to be awarded the President's Certificate of Commendation are:

Camponon Bernard-Singapore Piling Civil Contractors; Nishimatsu Lum Chang Joint Venture (Construction and Civil Engineering); Ohbayashi-Okumura Joint Venture; RDC Construction; Taisei-Shimizu-Marubeni Consortium and Tobishima/Takenaka Joint Venture.

▲ Two articles from *The Straits Times* on the national awards and accolades given to volunteers and organisations involved in the Hotel New World rescue operations (1986).
Reprinted with permission from Singapore Press Holdings



▲ A group of volunteers in action at the scene of the Hotel New World disaster (1986).
Courtesy of the former Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts

RESPONDING AS ONE NATION

The Hotel New World disaster highlighted the importance of emergency preparedness and national resilience. It also illustrated how everyone - from the military to the civil authorities, from the private to the public sector - has a part to play when the nation is faced with a crisis.

When disaster struck, the Singapore Armed Forces responded immediately to the call for assistance from the civil authorities, and worked side-by-side with the Civil Defence and Fire Service officers to clear the rubble. Likewise, the Singapore Civil Defence Force and hundreds of volunteers worked tirelessly to rescue the trapped victims.

Private companies also pitched in by offering the use of specialist equipment such as the ultra high pressure water machines and 100-ton cranes to facilitate rescue operations while relief aid organisations rendered assistance to families of the victims. Ordinary citizens from different walks of life, races and nationalities also came forth to donate blood, food and money.

In conclusion, the Hotel New World disaster demonstrated that, in a time of crisis, the whole of Singapore was able to reach out in empathy, to give help in any way they could, and to move and feel as one.



▲ A group of exhausted National Servicemen taking a break after participating in rescue operations (1986).
Courtesy of Singapore Press Holdings

The Heart of One Nation

The tragedy struck
when the day was young,
when people rushed for the
meal hour,
when bankers hurried to
clear the cheques.
It was on a day when no
man could have guessed
that what was once a
proud, sturdy structure,
would be reduced to a
pyramid of death.
Nor was there any trace
of its glorious past.
The cloud of dust extended,
far throughout the island,
penetrating deep into every
heart,
stirring up more tears and
sympathy than any one
occasion before.

Aid poured in
from every source,
Hands reached out to rid
the heap of doom.
The trained and untrained,
the common man,
and even friends from
foreign lands.



The number that thronged
the streets
from dusk to dawn and
dusk again,
were no less than
a thousand.
Each displayed what was
now a permanent imprint
Of concern, of fear,

of dwindling hope.
Yet the spirit fought
ceaselessly on,
as if night and day
no longer differed.
No reward or prize was
more sought after
than a voice or breath
of life.

No one absent could have
heard,
the prayers said aloud
in the loved one's heart,
the heave of joy
after each drag of time,
when prayers emerged
from the prisoned hell.

No one young could
ever recall,
when a strange hand
reached out to feel his
neighbour,
giving him courage
and strength
as one stone was moved
after another.

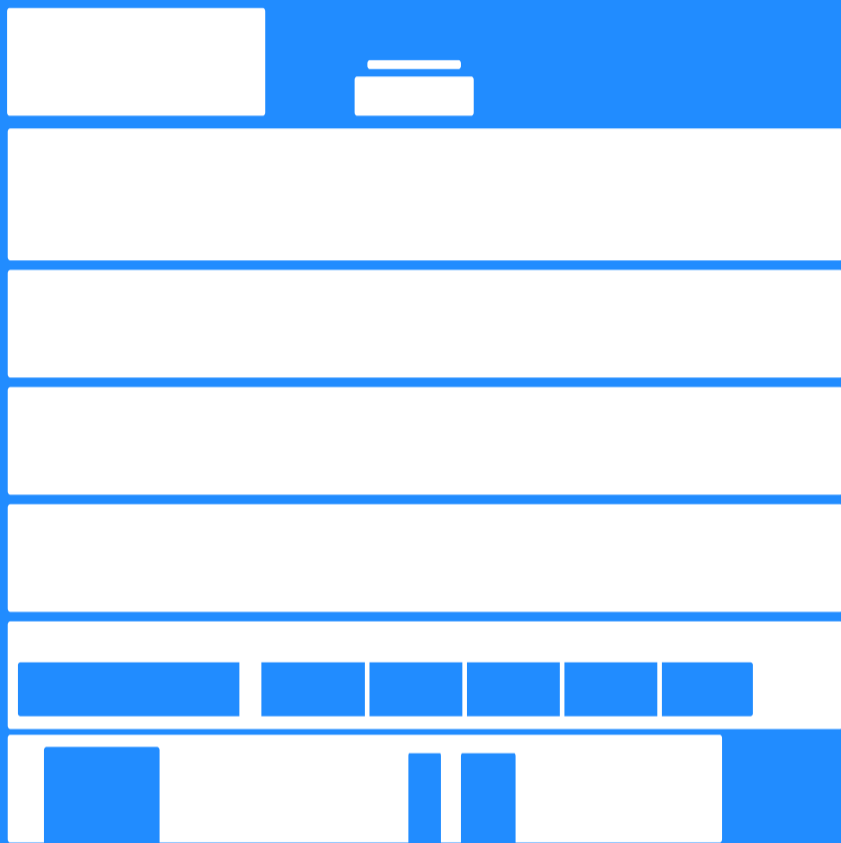
It was an event of great
loss, never preceded.
Yet it was an event
of enormous gain,
for all hearts of the nation
had heeded the message -
To stand together
and hold out strong.

CHAN WEE SHIAN, 19,
National University
of Singapore

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- National Library Board



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20

YEARS of
HERITAGE
with YOU