

BRIEFS

Cruise ship hit by blaze is left drifting for 24 hours

A cruise ship with 1,000 people on board, including two Hongkongers, that drifted for 24 hours after being disabled by a fire, was headed towards Malaysia following repairs, the Philippines coast guard said. The Azamara Quest, which departed Hong Kong for a 17-day cruise, was left drifting after a fire engulfed one of the ship's engine rooms. Five crew suffered smoke inhalation, with one seriously injured. AP

Record for fastest sail around island still stands

The record for the fastest sail around Hong Kong Island remains standing after the crew manning Genuine Risk were forced to call off their attempt due to poor wind. They started out from Causeway Bay at 10.40am heading east but gave up at Tai Tam Bay. Geoff Hill, owner of the Dubois 90 boat, said the crew might have another go today or tomorrow. Dennis Wong Shun-kit holds the record, at 2 hours 41 minutes and 57 seconds, set in December 1990.

Edward Eates, police chief during 1967 riots, dies

Former police commissioner Edward Eates died last week in England at age 96. Eates was head of the force during the 1967 riots, which were sparked by pro-communist sympathisers inspired by the Cultural Revolution on the mainland.

69 endangered animal seizures made

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department made 69 seizures involving endangered species at customs checkpoints from January to February.

MARK SIX

There was no first prize winner in last night's draw. The numbers were 11, 19, 30, 33, 37 and 44. The extra number was 18. One ticket won the second prize of HK\$1,804,510. Third prize paid HK\$80,870.

HONG KONG

REVIEW



A megastar then, a gigastar now, Dame Edna played to the young and old in two packed shows. Photo: Edward Wong

Dame's glorious exit hails end of era

Dame Edna Everage narrates Peter and the Wolf City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall March 31

If there was ever a show that was going to be more than the sum of its parts, this was it. The City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong made a double scoop, first by having had the wit to book the iconic Dame Edna Everage as narrator-cum-chanteuse, and then chancing to hold the starry event so soon after the gutting news that this was to be one of her last stage appearances.

City Hall may be celebrating a half-century of service to the community, but never to be upstaged, the Australian queen of comedy sprang into the world's footlights long before the hall's foundation stone was a twinkle in the mason's eye, as Mrs Norm Everage in 1956.

Pairing Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf with David Haslam's Juanita the Spanish Lobster (yes, you did read that correctly!), yesterday's show

played to two packed houses, attracting many a family. It also reeled in crinkles like me, who recall how the Dame made a rib-tickling diversion from university essay-writing.

Her later one-woman stage shows are also impossible to forget: teasing out details from ladies in the audience about the secrets of their bedroom wallpaper or their husbands' plumbing problems, the megastar displayed improvisation skills equal to any jazz giant of the day, and easily surpassed them with the number of blue notes in her repertoire.

One wondered if she would manage to keep the latter locked in her handbag for such a mixed Hong Kong audience, while still letting that wicked persona shine through. She did, and it did. All were at the mercy of her trademark, honey-coated barbs: Henry Tang, Li Ka-shing, Raymond Kwok et al all fell prey to her mischievous encore, Hong Kong, Hong Kong! (in its original form, she enlightened us, before the Americans got their hands on it and turned it into New York, New York!).

It must have crossed the minds of guest conductor Simon Over that the chameleon-tongued narrator might make unscripted changes of gear in Prokofiev's well-known tale, but in the end, there were no life-threatening deviations. The orchestra found all the right colours to illustrate the story, and during those moments when the musical action treads water, the Dame's expressive facial grouting provided just the ointment.

As Juanita, the errant Spanish crustacean living off the coast of Wales, Dame Edna crooned and ad-libbed through 20 minutes of pure, jolly nonsense. Hearing that inimitable singing voice for the last time made one realise how her earlier dabbling in Dadaism had left its mark.

All too soon, our 90 gorgeous minutes with the bling-laden housewife from Moonee Ponds were up, and it was a truly sad and historic moment to be bidding a moist-eyed goodbye, rather than an au revoir. Retirement may have beckoned, but that blue rinse will surely never fade. Sam Olliver

CRIME

KEY EVIDENCE IN LIBYAN'S CASE ERASED IN HK

City authorities destroyed 2004 flight data of dissident and his family, who were intercepted in HK en route to Britain and directed to Gaddafi's regime

Lana Lam lana.lam@scomp.com

Key evidence revealing Hong Kong's role in the rendition of Libyan dissident Sami al-Saadi to Muammar Gaddafi's torture chambers has been destroyed by city aviation officials, hampering the investigation of British lawyers.

Saadi, an outspoken opponent of the late Libyan dictator, had come to Hong Kong with his family in 2004 after the British government promised them a safe flight back to Britain, where he lived in exile during the 1990s prior to moving to China.

But when Saadi arrived at Chek Lap Kok airport, he was detained along with his wife and four children, aged six to 12, for almost a fortnight before being forced onto a private Egyptian-registered jet and flown to the Libyan capital, Tripoli.

The family was imprisoned and Saadi claims he was subjected to years of torture.

His legal team from UK law firm Leigh Day and legal charity Reprieve are suing Britain's spy agencies, Home Office and Foreign Office for their role in his rendition.



Exiled dissident Sami al-Saadi, here with his eldest daughter Khadija, was sent back to Libya in a secret operation. Photo: Reprieve

Lawyers following the paper trail had requested from Hong Kong the details of Saadi's flight on March 28, 2004.

Cori Crider, legal director for Reprieve, said a letter was sent to Hong Kong's Civil Aviation Department last month, but they had yet to receive a response even after the 10-day mandatory deadline for replying to data requests had passed.

But a spokeswoman from the aviation body said a response had been sent to Reprieve, stating that all flight details are destroyed after 90 days, at

which point "the paper flight strips would have been shredded and the magnetic record media erased and reused".

She said the response also directed the lawyers to approach the Airport Authority instead.

Crider insisted there was no reply, adding she was disappointed by the apparent lack of co-operation.

"It's a very different response than, for example, the national aviation authorities across Europe, who have tended to give over information about rendition flights dating years in the past and have indeed retained that information," Crider said.

"If the Airport Authority is the government agency which holds the information, it would have been welcome for [the aviation department] to notify the appropriate agencies and inform them that they are in possession of vital evidence."

Crider said the flight details were a critical part of the case as Hong Kong was the "proverbial scene of the crime". "Reconstructing the logistical part of the operation will help us uncover who was behind the grim fate of the Saadi family, who tried to help cover it up, and why," she said.

"Follow the trail of the plane, and you learn a vast amount about the whole operation. It's a shame that we haven't received this information out of Hong Kong."



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Roehampton House will be released first in Hong Kong, prior to the UK launch. Exclusive Exhibition 30th March - 1st April 2012 (Friday - Sunday), 11am to 7pm Landmark Mandarin Hotel, Tian and Di Rooms, 7/F 15 Queen's Road Central, The Landmark, Central, Hong Kong

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Game over: cheats jailed
China soccer's big names, including star players and bosses, punished for graft

> LEADING THE NEWS A3

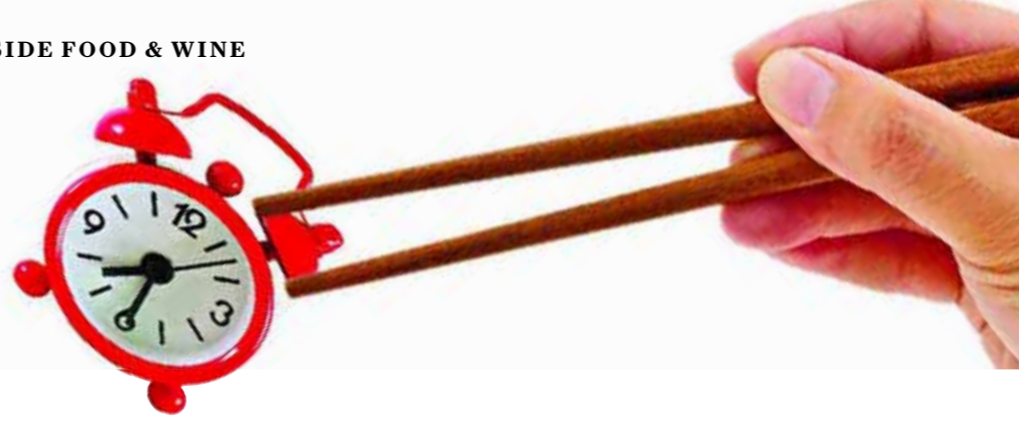
Forced abortion at 7 months
Pictures of tiny corpse spark outcry at treatment of mother under one-child policy

> CHINA A7

Lost in the detail

Real Hong Kong cooking is just too complicated for modern life

> INSIDE FOOD & WINE



Golf's green-eyed boy
14-year-old mainland prodigy is name on everyone's lips at US Open – even Tiger Woods'

> SPORT C14



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INTERVIEW

END SMALL-HOUSE POLICY, SAYS LAM

The woman tipped to be chief secretary says this rural 'right' cannot be preserved forever as she discusses her hopes for a 'big social experiment' to overhaul welfare

Olga Wong and Joyce Ng

The candidate favoured to become the next chief secretary is calling for an end to what some see as the infinite demand from rural indigenous villagers for homes under the small-house policy.

In an interview with the *South China Morning Post* in which she outlined the challenges the next government must tackle, Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor also hinted at "a big social experiment" to overhaul the welfare system.

"Not long after my appointment, I talked to the Heung Yee Kuk and asked if they could draw a line," she said, as she reviewed her term as the development minister since 2007.

"If life is unchanged for 50 years until 2047, as set out under the Basic Law, and only 18-year-old (or older) indigenous male villagers are eligible for a small house, how about ending it in 2029? I have asked them and offered different options. But they just didn't come back," she said.

Under her plan, the last generation to enjoy what the villagers regard as their right would be those born in 2029 and who would become 18 in



Carrie Lam, whose term as secretary for development ends this month, talked to the *Post* about her ideas for welfare reform. Photo: Nora Tam

2047. The small-house policy gives male indigenous villagers in the New Territories the right to build a house close to their ancestral homes. It has drawn criticism because in some cases it is being abused for profit.

Lam said she now sees an opportunity to propose an end to the policy in the next five years. However, she admitted her relationship with some rural representatives had turned sour as a result of stepped-up actions on clearing illegal structures in village houses since April.

"They were agitated about my enforcement [on illegal structures]," she said. "Now that they realise the law has to be enforced, they would probably think about what to do with the remaining village zones that cannot accommodate all their [housing]

demands. I do think the next administration should make a start."

One of the challenges, Lam said, is to convince the public that the government may need to give something to villagers in return when the policy is ended. This could include provid-

Not long after my appointment, I talked to the Heung Yee Kuk and asked if they could draw a line

CARRIE LAM CHENG YUET-NGOR

ing more infrastructure to the villages and speeding up the application process with more efficient use of land.

On welfare, Lam, who was director of social welfare between 2000 and 2003, said she had in mind a "very big social experiment" to tackle poverty and narrow the wealth gap. One idea was to reform the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance scheme, calling it "a whole new paradigm shift to deal with poverty".

"I have always felt that the CSSA is not the best scheme. If it is a good scheme, why are there so many 'three-nothings' and 'four-nothings' in Hong Kong," she said, referring to the working poor who do not benefit from government relief measures because they are not welfare recipients, taxpayers or eligible for public housing.

Improvements to the safety net in the past five years included means-tested transport subsidies for workers, and vouchers for kindergarten education and for health checks for the elderly with private doctors.

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> MY TAKE A2, MORE REPORTS C3

DIGEST

Beijing measures poised to help Hong Kong

A Beijing official tells Hong Kong it could benefit from a series of mainland initiatives designed to lift the city's economy as it prepares to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the handover. > LEADING THE NEWS A3

Portugal win see-saw game to keep hopes alive

Portugal defeated Denmark 3-2 to keep alive their hopes of qualifying for the knockout rounds of the Euro 2012 soccer championships. Goals from Pepe and Helder Postiga gave the Portuguese a 2-0 lead, but Denmark drew level through Nicklas Bendtner, his second goal a header in the 80th minute, to set up a nervy ending sealed by Silvestre Varela.

Esprit hit by resignations of two key bosses

The resignation of a second top manager in as many days at Esprit Holdings is likely to send the Hong Kong fashion retailer's share price even lower today, after a 21.8 per cent drop yesterday. Hans-Joachim Koerber resigned as chairman last night, following chief executive Ronald van der Vis. > BUSINESS B1

Mainland media needs to clean up its act

Companies are increasingly paying off media outlets to ensure glowing reports on their listing plans ... In view of its harm to China's development, we must not let the perpetrators get away with it, writes Hu Shuli. > CAIXIN VIEW A15



Yam's paper on the peg goes beyond the money

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In addition to raising speculation about the future of the Hong Kong dollar, Joseph Yam Chi-kyong's controversial paper on the city's monetary system has led to speculation about his own motives and political aspirations.

The former central banker raised eyebrows on Tuesday when he released an academic paper calling for "informed debate" on the 29-year-old peg between the Hong Kong and US dollars, the most detailed article yet written on the mechanism by a former senior government official.

The comments by Yam, one of the staunchest defenders of the peg in the past, immediately achieved its ostensible aim of creating a public discussion, but his paper also contained intriguing comments about politics and the quality of Hong Kong's leadership that have set tongues wagging in the city's political corridors.

Some critics saw it as an indirect attack on chief executive-elect Leung Chun-ying, who rebuffed Yam's paper within hours of its release.

After going through the technical issues, Yam swayed his discussion to politics and set an apocalyptic tone.

"Democracy, public opinion and

> CONTINUED ON A5

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CRIME

Libyan dissident sues HK over family's 2004 arrest

Lawyer's letter says captives were subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment in Hong Kong

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A Libyan dissident, arrested by local authorities at Chek Lap Kok airport and handed to late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi's henchmen, is suing the Hong Kong government for its complicity in his "extraordinary rendition".

Sami al-Saadi is seeking damages and full disclosure of documents relating to his and his family's arrest by local authorities, with the help of US and UK secret agents, in March 2004.

Saadi, his wife and four young children – all under 13 years old at the time – were held for almost two weeks in Hong Kong before they were bundled onto a Libya-bound plane.

Saadi was then tortured and beaten at Tajoura prison where he spent the next three years. His family was also jailed for several months in the same prison.

Solicitor Jonathan Man, of law firm Ho, Tse, Wai & Partners, con-



Saadi: sent to Libya, jailed for three years.

firmed that a 12-page letter detailing the legal action was hand-delivered to the Department of Justice yesterday.

The firm has a six-member team working on the case under instructions from London-based human rights law firm Reprieve.

Cori Crider, of Reprieve, which is also suing the UK government on behalf of Saadi, said Hong Kong's involvement was key to the case.

"Correspondence seized from the fallen Gaddafi regime shows Hong Kong officials were heavily involved in this illegal operation, advising foreign spies how the kidnap could best be managed with a minimum of fuss in Hong Kong," Crider said.

"Rendition to Gaddafi's Libya would have been a terrifying ordeal for any grown man, so it is unimaginable what it was like for [Saadi's daughter] Khadija al-Saadi, a 12-year-old girl, and her three younger

siblings. All the al-Saadi family seek now is justice and accountability for those responsible, so other families never face the awful fate they did."

In the letter, lawyers claim that Saadi and his family were subjected to "unlawful detention" as well as "inhuman and degrading treatment" in Hong Kong.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Justice refused to confirm if it had received the letter, saying: "We don't comment on individual cases." The Security Bureau also refused to comment.

The case only came to light last August after Saadi was freed from one of Gaddafi's prisons by rebels and after secret papers were discovered at the headquarters of Gaddafi's intelligence chief Moussa Koussa.

In the secret documents, the then permanent secretary for security, Stanley Yiu-hong, is listed as the contact person to ensure the rendition is executed quickly. Last month, the *Post* sought to obtain any documents held by the Security Bureau relating to Saadi's case but a spokeswoman said no such records existed.

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WORLD

Gangster's gal, 61, jailed

82-year-old mobster's lover helped him elude capture for 16 years > PAGE A13

WORLD

Small, but deadly

Pentagon to deploy kamikaze drones the size of model planes > PAGE A10

CITY

Teen dating app closed

Shutdown follows series of rape allegations in the United States > PAGE C4

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BRIEFS

Pre-trial appearance for pilot accused of rape

A Cathay Pacific pilot accused of sexually assaulting a woman colleague in a New York hotel on New Year's Eve will make a pre-trial appearance on August 9 in New York. David Tonn, 34, is charged with a criminal sexual act in the third degree, two counts of forcible touching, third-degree rape and third-degree sexual abuse. Tonn was arraigned in May with bail set at US\$5,000. The District Attorney's office describes the victim as a 44-year-old cabin crew member who lives in Hong Kong.

Still no trace of missing American man, police say

Police say there is still no trace of an American man who went missing six weeks ago. Gregory Brooks disappeared after visiting a Buddhist temple in Sung Shan New Village, Yuen Long, with his wife. About 1.7 metres tall, weighing 76kg and bald, Brooks, 49, was wearing a yellow and green T-shirt, white shorts, white socks and white slippers. His sister, Leslie, said he had started showing signs of extreme paranoia before his disappearance and appeared to have suffered a nervous breakdown. People with information can contact investigating officers on 2860 1045 or 9886 0034. The missing man's family can be contacted by e-mail at helpfindgregb@gmail.com.

HK\$2 fare for over-65s and disabled to start early

About 1.1 million people – over-65s and the disabled – can ride on most buses in the city for a flat fare of HK\$2 from August 5, Labour and Welfare Secretary Matthew Cheung Kin-chung said. He said the scheme would be introduced a month ahead of the original schedule. The New Lantao Bus Company and ferry operators are expected to join early next year. The scheme was announced by former chief executive Donald Tsang Yam-kuen in October, and its first phase was enacted last month.

Four more Legco nominations submitted

Four more nomination forms were submitted yesterday for the Legislative Council election in September. That brings the total number of nominations received to 58. The candidates who submitted their forms yesterday included Paul Tse Wai-chun, a tourism sector lawmaker who will run in Kowloon East, and the NeoDemocrats' ticket led by a Sai Kung district councillor, Gary Fan Kwok-wai, who will run in New Territories East. Engineering sector lawmaker Raymond Ho Chung-tai and Patrick Lau Sau-shing, an architectural, surveying and planning sector lawmaker, also submitted their forms yesterday to seek re-election. The nomination period ends on July 31.

Famed Taiwanese writer's talk silenced by a cold

Famed Taiwanese writer Pai Hsien-yung managed to appear for his talk at the Asia-Pacific Taiwan Federation of Industry and Commerce yesterday despite losing his voice due to a cold. Pai – the 75-year-old son of Kuomintang general Pai Chung-hsi – said only that the city's air-conditioning was too cold.

MARK SIX

One ticket won the HK\$34,938,270 first prize in last night's draw. The winning numbers were 7, 19, 23, 30, 34 and 45 and the extra number 13. The second prize of HK\$979,700 was won by 2.5 tickets. The third prize paid HK\$105,340.

TOYS

Sindy eyes a comeback on the mainland

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Fun-loving, fashionable British girl (with roots in Hong Kong) seeks long-term partner for travel – and making money – on the mainland.

Sindy (pictured), Britain's Hong Kong-made answer to the Barbie doll, turns 50 next year.

And while the toy's popularity in the UK and Europe has dwindled in recent years, its owner is hoping to crack the mainland market by partnering with a new licensee or equity partner.

UK-based Pedigree Group owns the rights to Sindy and has put a call out to anyone who would like to revive the brand.

Henry Hu Hai-lin, the Hong Kong-based director of Pedigree's toy and dolls division, said there



was growth potential for a fashion doll with a strong British brand history to expand into the mainland.

"Younger girls in China don't have a lot of good toys because most of the toys are for boys," he said.

"Their parents will be in their late-30s – the highest income group – and willing to spend money on their kids, contrary to the older generation which was more conservative and didn't spend as much.

"Girls of about eight to 12 years are probably the first generation where their parents are going to spoil them, so there is a market for a far-sighted manufacturer who wants to market a doll and a whole lot of merchandise."

Hu said a potential licensee could also develop a fashion doll with Chinese characteristics under the Sindy brand.

He added: "As a licensor, we

encourage a more diverse and expanded thinking of how the licence could be exploited."

More than 150 million Sindy dolls have been sold since she burst onto the scene in 1963, four years after Barbie. For decades she dominated the fashion doll market in Britain before her more glamorous rival entered the UK in the 1980s.

In 1986, Hasbro took over the licence and changed Sindy to look more like Mattel's Barbie. The move lifted sales but also attracted a lawsuit over copyright issues, won by Mattel.

Hasbro quit the brand in the mid-90s and a 2006 partnership with Woolworths in the UK which was intended to revive the brand failed when the British offshoot of the US retail giant collapsed in 2008.

Jerry Reynolds, chief executive of Pedigree Group, said part of Sindy's appeal was her "demure girl-next-

MESSAGE OF HOPE



William Chan Wai-lam sings (right) at a rehearsal for his own "living funeral" to celebrate his 30th birthday and the launch of his book. Photo: K.Y. Cheng

Cancer sufferer stages own funeral

William Chan, who has rare melanoma, marks 30th birthday with prayers and mourners ... but no coffin

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It had all the trappings of a traditional funeral, complete with prayers, music and mourners – but with one exception. The "deceased" was able to get up and walk away.

The International Funeral Parlour in Hung Hom is normally a place for tears and farewells.

But for William Chan Wai-lam, who has suffered from an extremely rare form of skin cancer since birth, a service there was an opportunity to mark his 30th birthday and the launch of his autobiography *My Will*.

Chan, who prefers to go by the name William Outcast, was born with a rare form of malignant melanoma, a type of skin cancer, that has peppered his face and body with painful dark moles.

He was told as a youngster that his days were numbered, but has surprised doctors by surviving to the age of 30. The freelance filmmaker has refused chemotherapy and any

medical treatment, deeming all of it "useless". He says his health is not deteriorating and he has no clue how long he has to live. But he decided his 30th birthday was the right time to hold his "living funeral".

Chan was the only person to speak at the ceremony. He said before the ceremony, attended by more than 100 relatives and friends: "It's my lifelong dream to spread the message: no one is an outcast. This is the purpose of the living funeral."

The cancer has left protruding moles sprouting on Chan's gums, tongue and throat.

"The pain from the moles is a feeling I've learned to live with," he said. "It feels a bit like the discomfort you get from walking on pebbles."

His family gave him full support for the funeral. And the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals – a charitable organisation with which Chan has volunteered for eight years – waived the rent for the hall that it owns and donated HK\$14,000 to him to cover his expenses. Tung Wah says this is the first time it has offered a funeral to

a living person – and it does not plan to offer such a service routinely.

Chan was carried into the funeral hall on a wooden couch made from coffin wood. Initially, he had wanted to be carried into the hall in a coffin, but his family felt uncomfortable.

A portrait of a smiling Chan stood in the centre, with the Chinese characters for "Leaving with Style" emblazoned above. Cupcakes featuring Chan's face were given to guests.

Chan shared anecdotes from his life, including how he has been the target of taunts, such as being called a "dalmatian". He also told of the time he was refused entry to a taxi because the driver said he might have trouble picking up the moles falling off his body.

"Hongkongers are pretty creative with their insults," he reflected.

The topic of death is typically regarded as taboo in Chinese culture, especially by elderly people.

But Chan said: "We can choose a lot of things in life. You can choose to marry or not.

"But you will certainly die. If only we can view death rationally, as simply the final destination of life."

He said leaving a clearly written will behind can relieve stress for

loved ones. "Write a will and write it fully – not just a sentence," Chan said.

According to the World Health Organisation, around 132,000 melanoma skin cancers occur globally each year – there are two to three million cases of non-melanoma skin cancer annually. But melanoma is far more deadly than other forms of skin cancer and accounts for 75 per cent of skin cancer deaths.

Melanoma usually develops later in life, often as a result of exposure to sun, with cases like Chan's extremely rare. Dr Jonathan Sham Shun-tong, a professor of clinical oncology at the University of Hong Kong, said melanoma occurring at birth is due to genetics. "If diagnosed early, the malignant mole must be removed for a full recovery," he said. "If diagnosed late and the cancer is out of control, the chances of survival are slim."

But rather than portraying himself as a victim ravaged by disease, Chan says: "I entered the world with skin cancer, and will leave with it. The skin cancer and I live as one."

Joint Publishing has printed 3,000 copies of his book, which launched at the Book Fair that kicked off on Wednesday. The book is the company's fourth-biggest seller at the fair.



There is a market for a far-sighted manufacturer who wants to market a doll and a whole lot of merchandise

HENRY HU HAI-LIN

door" image. Hu said this could be a key to cracking the mainland toy market. "If a Chinese manufacturer decided that they would like a doll of good virtue, as perceived by parents,

they can then capture the spirit but interpret the values," he explained.

A Sindy doll for mainland children also may not wear Chanel and Gucci dresses. Instead "she will wear T-shirts and jeans", he said.

Hu, 67, has had a long relationship with the British fashion doll icon as he started making the product at a Quarry Bay factory in 1975.

Hu opened his own factory in Chai Wan during the height of Hong Kong's toy manufacturing boom and continued to make the doll along with many other toys before retiring from the business in 1990.

"Hong Kong was in the right time and place in the 60s, 70s and 80s to emerge as the manufacturing centre for the toys of the world," he said.

"Even as we speak today, the largest toy manufacturers are still in southern China for top brand names such as Mattel and Hasbro."

HUMAN RIGHTS

ROW OVER RENDITION CASE DEADLINE

Lawyers representing Sami al-Saadi reject justice department's claim it needs until December to respond to allegations about HK's role in his deportation

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Justice officials say they need until December to respond to allegations that Hong Kong security chiefs conspired with the British and US secret services to deport a Libyan dissident to his homeland in 2004 – but lawyers preparing to sue the government have set an October deadline.

For the first time since the controversial case of a secret rendition flight involving the Hong Kong government came to light last September,

the Department of Justice confirmed it was investigating the claims.

In a letter to the lawyers representing Sami al-Saadi – who alleges authorities in Hong Kong forced him and his family onto a Tripoli-bound plane and back into the hands of the late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi – the department said last week that it needed more time before it could respond to the allegations.

"We are instructed that, given the long lapse of time in this matter, more time is required to look into the matter," senior government counsel Daphne Yeung wrote.

The department said in the letter that it needed until December 12 to address the detailed claims outlined in a pre-action letter Saadi's legal team in Hong Kong sent in June.

Jonathan Man from, Ho, Tse, Wai & Partners, has rejected the request and written to the department saying that he and his partners expect the government to reply to the allegations by October.

Man said he was being lenient by allowing an extension of another three months. "I understand they need more time because it happened years ago but they have to seriously

respond to the merits of our case," he said.

The department's letter also raised the issue of the limitation period in civil law suits. In public injury cases such as Saadi's, a victim must launch legal action within three years of the incident. However, Man said the limitation period in Saadi's case should start when the details first emerged: in this case last September when secret documents were unearthed at the abandoned Tripoli headquarters of Gaddafi's intelligence chief.

The documents named Stanley Ying Yiu-hong, permanent secretary for security at the time, as the key contact to ensure the rendition was executed quickly and smoothly.

A spokesman for the Security Bureau refused to answer any questions in the case, saying "we do not comment on individual cases".

Saadi has also launched legal action against Britain's spy agencies, the Home Office and Foreign Office for their alleged role in his rendition.

Lawyer Cori Crider from legal charity Reprieve, which is representing Saadi in the UK, said she hoped the Hong Kong justice department's response would be a substantial one.

"What I hope we won't see is the same 'neither confirm nor deny' rubbish we got out of the UK," Crider told the *Sunday Morning Post*.

"When you have documents not only implicating Hong Kong in the renditions but specific individuals

within government and business, to not respond properly will just look silly and undermine public confidence in the security services.

"Everyone involved in this mess would do best to come clean quickly and apologise to the Saadis."

Saadi's legal team has also requested voluntary disclosure of documents in the hope that government departments will turn over papers requested, instead of going through a formal court process which is costly and time consuming. Man also requested justice officials share any other documents they may come across in their investigation. "This is a sensible step to save more time and money and let all the parties put their cards on the table," he said.

WEAPONS TRADE

UK arms dealer jailed for attempt to sell missiles

Michael Ranger used HK firm to buy surface-to-air ordnance from North Korea to hawk to Azerbaijan

Reuters in London

A British arms dealer was jailed on Friday for using a Hong Kong-registered firm to try to buy surface-to-air missiles from North Korea to sell them to the former Soviet republic of Azerbaijan.

British prosecutors described Michael Ranger as an established international arms dealer who used a company registered in Hong Kong under the name of his girlfriend to organise illegal arms deals between the two countries.

According to Britain's *Independent* newspaper, Ranger was responsible for the sale of a legally licensed gun used in the 1987 Hungerford massacre, one of Britain's most notorious mass murders, in which 16 people were shot dead.

E-mail correspondence read out in court showed that Ranger had boasted to his arms supplier in North Korea that he had been a guest of the Azeri government and was chauffeured in a luxury limousine during a visit to the country to discuss arms sales.

Azerbaijan, an oil-producing Caspian Sea nation bordering Iran, is under an international arms embargo following a 1990s ethnic conflict in the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service said Ranger intended to evade

the embargo by promoting the supply of hand-held surface-to-air missiles from North Korea to Azerbaijan, as well as Beretta pistols from the United States.

Ranger was sentenced to 3½ years' imprisonment.

"Ranger's dealings with Azerbaijan were not only illegal, but potentially very dangerous

Ranger's dealings with Azerbaijan were not only illegal, but potentially very dangerous

ENGLAND'S STATE PROSECUTING SERVICE

tially very dangerous," the state prosecuting service said.

"Arms embargos are in place for a reason and those who seek to ignore them in the hope of lining their own pocket should understand that they are liable to prosecution in the criminal courts."

Armenian-backed forces wrested Nagorno-Karabakh, a mainly Armenian-populated enclave inside Azerbaijan, from Azeri control after the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991.

ASTRONOMY

Veteran cyclist nearly gets place among the stars

Jolie Ho
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Veteran cyclist Wong Kam-po is gearing up to be a star at his fifth Olympics – and a young fan inspired by his fighting spirit tried to give Wong another stellar honour.

Henry Tsang Chun-man, a Primary Three pupil, was the judge's choice of winner in a Commercial Press competition to name an asteroid. He picked the cyclist after seeing his medal-winning performances on TV.

"I have drawn Wong Kam-po cycling his way to the little star and many aliens are welcoming him," Henry said. "When I see him on television, I think he has an undaunted spirit, I think he's excellent, so I chose him."

The nine-year-old does not have sporting ambitions of his own but wants to become an academic, studying space – although he still sees Wong as an inspiration.

Wong, 39, has won international honours including three individual road-race gold medals in the Asian Games and was the first Chinese cyclist to win the 15 kilometre scratch race at the UCI Track Cycling World Championships in Spain in 2007. He will participate in Saturday's road race, one of the first events at the Games after the opening ceremony on Friday, and plans to carry on com-



Henry Tsang shows his drawing of the asteroid. Photo: David Wong

peting for Hong Kong after he turns 40.

Unfortunately for Wong, he was not the overall winner of the star-naming competition and will not be lending his name to asteroid 26738, discovered by local astronomer Bill Yeung Kwong-yu in 2001.

Wong was pipped at the finishing line when the decision was put to a vote of 200 of the 800 primary school children who took part in the competition. The winner was Li Shichen, a Chinese herbalist of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), who classified herbs in the epic *Compendium of Materia Medica*. His name was put forward by 11-year-old Angel Poon Hiu-ping, who said the herbalist had made a great contribution to Chinese medicine and saved many lives.

Yeung has discovered more than 2,000 astronomical objects since 1999.

FOCUS

VIP FLIGHT to a Gaddafi jail

Small fortunes
The rising costs of bringing up children

FAMILY POST

China's leadership transition
Case of who doesn't dare wins for Hunan boss?

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Red letter day
Ferguson writes to United fans ahead of Liverpool clash

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Claws in
The human traffickers behind rise of the nail bar

POST MAGAZINE

Sunday Morning Post

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INSIDE

Chinese sailor aims for round trip

When Guo Chuan sets sail from Shandong (山東) province he aims not to stop until he has become the first Chinese person to complete a solo circumnavigation and the first sailor to do it in a 40ft yacht. > LEADING THE NEWS PAGE 3

Muslim march against movie 'will be peaceful'

Hong Kong's Muslim leaders insisted that today's protest in Central against an anti-Islam film would not erupt into the kind of riots the US-made movie has provoked around the world. > HONG KONG PAGE 6

China and Philippines make up over island

Chinese leader-in-waiting Xi Jinping (習近平) told a visiting Philippine envoy that he hoped the stand-off over a disputed island in the South China Sea would not happen again, adding bilateral relations were heading back to normal. > CHINA PAGE 8

Mining firm sets out to woo Mongolia

With many Mongolians calling for a massive mining deal with Rio Tinto to be torn up, the Anglo-Australian firm has launched a campaign to win hearts and minds. > ASIA PAGE 10

LEADING THE NEWS

It's Carrie Lam pulling the strings

Chief secretary puts politics aside to play the zither in Hong Kong orchestra > PAGE 3

HONG KONG

The HK\$3m giant horses of Disco Bay

Pears as 2-metre high horses from United States stroll around North Plaza > PAGE 7

REVIEW

All about pride without the prejudice

Whatever your sexuality, the Pink! Season is a great time to be in Hong Kong

DIPLOMACY

Officials head to Japan to ease Diaoyu tensions

Minnie Chan and Agencies in Tokyo minnie.chan@scmp.com

Diplomatic efforts are under way to ease tensions over the disputed Diaoyu Islands. The international affairs office

DEVELOPMENT



Scuffles broke out as villagers and concern groups protested against new towns for the northeastern New Territories. Photo: David Wong

MINISTER FIRM ON NEW TOWNS AMID PROTEST

6,000 people attend chaotic public forum over plans to develop northeastern New Territories; Paul Chan signals determination to build homes

Emily Tsang and Johnny Tam

A public forum on government plans to develop new towns near the border with Shenzhen descended into chaos yesterday but left officials determined to push the scheme through.

At a fiery open-air consultation in Sheung Shui attended by 6,000 people, many chanting and waving banners, Development Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said the project would not be shelved. He said the final round of consultations, which ends this month, would not be extended.

Many groups oppose the plans to build three new towns on 787 hectares of land in the northeastern New Territories; some residents want to hang on to their land. But others would move in return for compensation. Yesterday's meeting in Man Kok village, Sheung Shui, was repeatedly interrupted by scuffles between supporters and opponents of the plans.

The government, having caved in to pressure on national

education in schools and multi-entry visitor permits for an additional 4.1 million people in Shenzhen, needs to win the battle over the new towns to keep its credibility. The fact that its opponents are not united could work in its favour.

Chan said one argument for the development was undeniable – everyone wants somewhere to live. "I wish the public would understand that the land supply in Hong Kong is really limited," Chan told the crowd at the beginning of the forum. "The New Territories are the major source of

We do not want compensation, and we will not move off our land

CHO KAI-KAL, VILLAGER REPRESENTATIVE

our land supply. It is inevitable that the land will be needed for development."

Throughout the three-hour forum, villagers, environmentalists and social activists waved banners and chanted slogans. The moderator repeatedly appealed for the crowd of 6,000 to remain calm and rational.

A representative of villagers who will be displaced under the plan made an emotional plea for them to be allowed to stay in their homeland. "We do not want any compensation, and we will not move off our land. Please return the land to the farmers," said Cho Kai-kal, who represents an anti-development group formed by villagers from Sheung Shui, Fanling North and Sai Kung.

As Cho was speaking, a supporter of the plan jostled her. He said his village in Sheung Shui supported the plans, and urged the government to extend them to include their land.

Police eventually intervened to separate supporters and opponents so speakers could express their views.

Another fight started between villagers who support the project and protesters with a dragon-and-lion flag symbolising the autonomy of Hong Kong. Some activists fear the new towns will

HUMAN RIGHTS

Jet hub executive 'has no memory' of rendition flight

Hongkonger listed in classified files as key part of scheme that a Libyan says led to his torture

Lana Lam lana.lam@scmp.com

A senior executive with extensive operational knowledge of Hong Kong's private-jet hub says she cannot remember what happened in March 2004 when the centre is believed to have played a key role in the secret rendition of a dissident into the hands of late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi's torturers.

Madonna Fung, general manager of the Hong Kong Business Aviation Centre at Chek Lap Kok, was customer services manager of the centre in 2004. She is listed in classified documents found in the offices of Gaddafi's intelligence chief, Moussa Koussa, when rebels stormed the leader's compound in August of last year.

Fung's name was provided as a key contact to ensure the secret rendition would go ahead as quickly and quietly as possible, taking Sami al-Saadi – a Libyan dissident suspected of terrorism – and his family back to Tripoli, where torture was routine.

The documents, seen by the *Sunday Morning Post*, reveal for the first time details of how the secret flight was carried out and raise wider questions over Hong Kong's role in renditions.

Saadi, also known as Abu Munthir, claims that on March 27, 2004, a privately chartered

plane took him, his wife and four young children from Hong Kong to Libya via Bangkok, undoing his decades-long efforts to escape the grip of Gaddafi's henchmen.

The Hong Kong Airport Authority has confirmed that an Egypt Air Boeing 777-200 arrived at Chek Lap Kok at 8:07pm and departed at 9:40pm.

Fung declined to be interviewed yesterday and through a spokeswoman said she "has little recollection of what happened as far back as 2004 or whether she was in fact on duty on that particular day".

The spokeswoman also refused to provide details about the flight, saying that "the matters you asked about are confidential records" and "not available for disclosure".

Lawyers acting for Saadi in Hong Kong are preparing to sue the government for its complicity in the alleged rendition and for conspiring with American, British and Libyan spies.

The legal team has requested information from the Airport Authority and the business-aviation centre, but key documents appear to have been destroyed. The centre is majority owned by Hong Kong Business Aviation Holding, whose directors include Michael Kadoorie, Sun Hung Kai Properties owns 35 per cent.

form a special economic zone with visa-free access for mainlanders.

Chan was finally escorted from the venue by 30 police officers, but protesters still managed to throw a water bottle at the minister, which missed, and break through police lines to briefly encircle his car.

> ANALYSIS PAGE 3

> VIP FLIGHT PAGE 4

A hub for tycoons at Chek Lap Kok is at the centre of claims by a Libyan dissident over his forced removal to face torture in his homeland

Lana Lam lana.lam@scmp.com

It was a Saturday evening, just after 8pm on March 27, 2004 when a secluded corner of Chek Lap Kok – one of the world's busiest airports – played host to a very unusual event.

An Egypt Air Boeing 777, with the tail number SU-GBP, had just landed at the Hong Kong Business Aviation Centre, tucked away in the southwestern corner of the airport.

The large, multimillion-dollar hangar is a hub for tycoons and those who can afford to fly on private jets.

But on this warm, spring evening eight years ago, there was little time for the usual pleasures enjoyed by luxury-jet passengers.

Instead, Sami al-Saadi – a Libyan dissident and suspected terrorist – and his wife were hand-

and chief strategist of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, a militant guerrilla movement.

He has launched legal action against the British government for its alleged role in the rendition and is also preparing to sue the Hong Kong government for its hand in allowing the secret flight to go ahead.

Saadi's case first came to light when secret files were unearthed at the offices of Gaddafi's intelligence chief, Moussa Koussa.

In a 32-page fax, labelled "top secret", details emerged of the correspondence believed to be between the CIA, Britain's MI6, Libyan officials and those in Hong Kong who were tasked with arranging the secret flight.

The documents form the backbone of the legal case that Saadi is mounting against the British government as well as Hong Kong.

At the centre of the secret flight is Madonna Fung, a senior aviation executive who was the customer services manager of the Hong Kong Business Aviation Centre at the time of the alleged rendition.

A spokeswoman for the centre said Fung, now the general manager of the centre, "has little recollection of what happened as far back as 2004 or whether she was, in fact, on duty on that particular day". The spokeswoman refused to answer questions about the centre's involvement in the rendition flight, claiming "the matters you asked about are confidential records" and "not available for disclosure".

The centre's major shareholder is Hong Kong Business Aviation Holding, whose directors include Michael Kadoorie, David Tong Chi-leung, Christopher Cheng Wai-chee, Yung Wing-chung, Bernard Pun Chun-sun and Hung Bo-in. In June 2004, former chief secretary Rafael Hui Si-yan, currently under investigation by the ICAC, joined the centre as a director.

Guangzhou-based China Southern Airlines and Signature Combs, a US company registered with an address in Florida, both have minority stakes in the centre.

The centre's current chairman is Tony Miller, a former civil servant who was permanent secretary of financial services and the treasury between 2002 and 2004.

It is also a principal subsidiary of Sun Hung Kai Properties, which owns 35 per cent of the operations.

An affiliate of the centre is Signature Flight Support (SFS), owned by London-listed company BBA Aviation.



A very private business

1984 Saadi, a founding member of dissident organisation the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, is jailed for distributing anti-Gaddafi leaflets

1988 He and his family flee Libya, beginning a long period in exile in several countries

2003 After obtaining a Chinese visa, the family take refuge on the mainland

2004 Saadi and his family prepare to relocate to Norway, and in March he and the family attempt to fly to Europe from Hong Kong

March 15, 2004 On arrival at Hong Kong airport, the family are detained by authorities and held for almost two weeks

March 25, 2004 Then British prime minister Tony Blair meets Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, the first visit to Libya by a British prime minister since 1943

March 27, 2004 An Egypt Air Boeing 777-200 lands at the Business Aviation Centre in Hong Kong at 8:07pm and leaves with Saadi and family on board at 9:40pm bound for Tripoli

Madonna Fung General manager of the Business Aviation Centre – in 2004 was customer services manager

*The Business Aviation Centre is a dedicated airport terminal for private aviation

SFS, which operates aviation services across the US and Europe, including military and government support, has been linked to rendition flights including those of current Guantanamo Bay detainees, according to investigations by human rights legal charity Reprieve.

The company's only Asian presence is at the Hong Kong Business Aviation Centre.

Saadi's legal team in Hong Kong from Ho, Tse, Wai & Partners say repeated attempts to retrieve records from the centre have been refused.

They [the centre] have been stalling on requests for evidence about their role in the Saadi rendition for months

CORI CRIDER, LAWYER

Cori Crider, one of the lead lawyers representing Saadi in the British lawsuit, said the centre and the Hong Kong Airport Authority's refusal to hand over documents did not give a good impression.

"They have been stalling on requests for evidence about their role in the Saadi rendition for months," she said from Tripoli where she is investigating the case.

"Why is this, if there is nothing to hide? All this stonewalling looks unhappily like a cover-up."

Earlier this month, Gaddafi's

chief spy, Abdullah al-Senussi, was extradited from Mauritania after he fled Tripoli last August.

Senussi was regarded as a senior member of Gaddafi's team and was linked to the 1996 massacre of more than 1,200 prisoners in the Abu Salim jail.

Saadi told the Libyan press that Senussi had threatened to kill him during his time at the notorious jail.

"How ironic that the tables have turned," Saadi told a Libyan news channel, which was established after Gaddafi fell.

"The same people who are

guarding you now in prison are the same people you sentenced to death in your prison."

Gaddafi first took power in 1969 after leading a military coup to overthrow King Idris. He was 27 at the time.

Over the next few decades, he cemented a reputation as an authoritarian leader linked to terrorist groups including an attack in Berlin which killed three US soldiers, prompting Washington to sever ties with Libya.

In 1988, the explosion of a bomb on an airliner flying over Lockerbie in Scotland killed more than 250 people.

The US and British governments were desperate to capture the two Libyans suspected to be responsible for the tragedy, but Gaddafi refused to hand them over, leading to UN sanctions against Libya.

In 1999, Gaddafi decided to turn over the suspects and by 2003, the sanctions were lifted as Western powers started to court the dictator in a bid to seek and destroy weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

On March 25, 2004, then British prime minister Tony Blair made an historic visit to Libya, meeting Gaddafi in a tent in Tripoli, months after the dictator agreed to stop a WMD programme.

Days later, Saadi – a long-time opponent of Gaddafi – was handed over to Gaddafi's henchmen, beginning years of torture, according to Saadi's claims.

Saadi's case is the first of its kind in Hong Kong.

In Europe, political and judicial inquiries into secret rendition flights have led to claims either being dismissed or in some cases, compensation of up to €1 million (HK\$10 million) paid to the victims.

In May this year, the Justice and Home Affairs section of the Centre for European Policy Studies released a report looking at the various political and judicial inquiries into the CIA's programme of extraordinary renditions and secret prisons in Europe.

The report was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs.

It found that while the European Parliament had been proactive in investigating European member states and their roles in active or passive complicity with US-led renditions and secret detentions since 2001, "politics and state secrecy have placed disproportionate roles in preventing disclosure of the truth and hindering the aggrieved individuals' access to justice".

A spokesman for the Security Bureau in Hong Kong refused to answer questions about Saadi's case.

"We do not comment on individual cases," he said

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