

LEADING THE NEWS

SCMP

5 PRESSURE ON HK

public commitment to end ivory sales in China.

Hong Kong is a major trading hub for illegal ivory products; the city ranks fifth in the world in terms of the quantity of ivory contraband confiscated, ivory researchers Esmond Martin & Lucy Vigne say in a 2015 report.

It is also the city with the world's largest retail market for ivory, with 400 licensed businesses offering more than 30,000 pieces on sale, the report says.

The news out of the White House follows a WWF-Hong Kong report this month linking the city directly to ongoing poaching in Africa.

That report, titled The Hard Truth, is largely based on video dialogues with three ivory traders in the city.

A global ivory ban came into force in Hong Kong in 1990, but domestic trade continues with licensed dealers allowed to use and sell their existing private stocks obtained before the ban.

The private stocks are separate from the government's 29.6-tonne stockpile of seized illegal ivory, which is being destroyed in a process that started in May last year.

In the video, undercover activists get the three retailers to admit they know how to manipulate the system.

One trader reveals a buyer in Hong Kong could make a "purchase order" for ivory directly smuggled from Africa.

"Most of it goes to mainland China through two routes; some is smuggled into China. We don't

care, as long as the transactions are conducted in Hong Kong," one of the trio says. "Sometimes, [mainland clients] buy the ivory, then 'escape' to Zhuhai (珠海) through Macau. So simple."

Another trader states: "After I sell an ivory item, I can use illegal ivory to top up my stock again. The government officials have no idea how to govern."

The report also revealed re-exporting ivory from Hong Kong without a permit - which is illegal - was rampant.

"This investigation confirmed what we long suspected, that there's an ongoing trade in illegal ivory here," Edwards said.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department said it was investigating claims made in the video.

Dalai Lama cancels trip to US amid health fears

Tibet's exiled spiritual leader, 80, advised to rest by doctors weeks before planned tour

Agence France-Presse in New York

The Dalai Lama has cancelled a US trip next month after doctors advised him to rest - a decision that will heighten concerns among supporters of the 80-year-old Tibetan spiritual leader.

The exiled Buddhist monk visited doctors in the United States who "advised His Holiness to rest for the next several weeks", a statement from his office said.

"As a result [his] planned October US visit has been cancelled," it said, apologising to all involved in organising the trip.

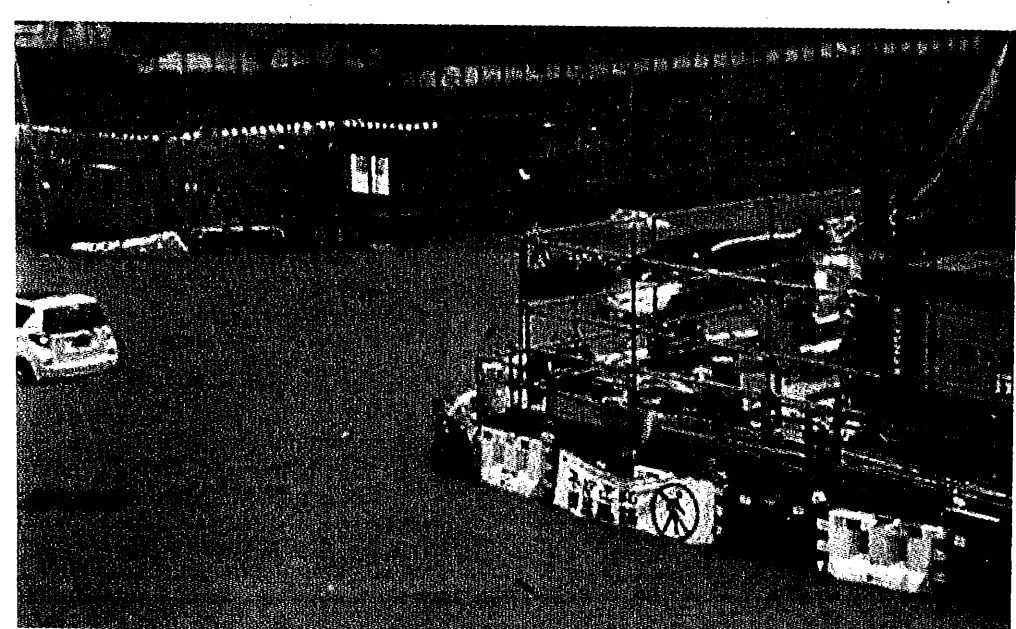
The Dalai Lama had scheduled several stops, including Philadelphia, where he was to receive the Liberty Medal in recognition of his advocacy of human rights.

Despite his age, the Dalai Lama maintains a rigorous travel schedule.

He recently wrapped up a visit to Britain and in July celebrated his 80th birthday among supporters in California.

The Dalai Lama fled Tibet for exile in India in 1959 amid an abortive uprising against China's iron-fisted rule. His spiritual teachings have won him a global following but he remains shunned by China, which has tried to ostracise leaders and artists who deal with the monk.

The Dalai Lama, an avowed pacifist, says he recognises China's rule over Tibet and is seeking greater freedoms. China insists that the Dalai Lama is nonetheless a "splittist", and some younger Tibetan activists in exile have advocated a more militant approach.



Kowloon, with residents reporting water six inches deep flooded into cars and shops. A rain gauge recorded more than 70mm of rain across eastern Kowloon. It issued an amber

rainstorm warning at 2.20pm, and cancelled it at 3.40pm. The owner of a pharmacy on nearby Tseuk Luk Street said water as deep as six inches flooded his shop "in less than 10 minutes". Photo: Facebook



ght extradition to Britain

ll mount legal challenge

back to Britain to face sentencing for the two trials.

Tsang's lawyer, Oliver Davies, said his client "intends to challenge" the extradition order.

Magistrate Jason Wan Siu-ming rejected a bail application. "I cannot see there is any special circumstance in this case that I should grant bail," he said.

Davies told the court that Tsang, a dual national of Britain and Hong Kong, had arrived in the city in late August using his Hong Kong identity card.

It is understood that last week, a friend of Tsang alerted Hong Kong police to the fugitive's whereabouts, prompting a covert surveillance operation on Tsang's hideout for several days.

Detectives swooped on the home on Friday at 11pm, sources said, adding that Tsang had returned to Hong Kong because his other lives here. Tsang's sister is also a Hong Kong resident.

"We would like to thank the public and media for their

assistance during our wanted investigation," said acting chief inspector John Turner, the deputy local police chief for Oxford, shortly after the arrest.

He also thanked partner agencies including the Hong Kong prosecution service, Interpol and immigration officers.

Tsang's arrest on Friday came after British police made a formal extradition request, triggering a provisional arrest warrant for the fugitive. Interpol had also sent out a red notice for Tsang's arrest.

In January this year, a British court found Tsang guilty of taking indecent images of children, in-

citing a child under 16 to engage in sexual activity, and engaging in sexual activity with a minor.

That case involved a 14-year-old girl and happened in 2012.

The judge in his first trial granted Tsang bail with the conditions he surrender his British passport, wear an electronic tag, pay a bond, observe a curfew and attend court hearings - conditions that he had complied with.

The judge did not consider Tsang a flight risk, despite the pending second trial in August.

When Tsang failed to turn up to the trial last month, it sparked an international manhunt.

It is understood that Tsang, who was last seen around August 16, broke free of his electronic tag and left Britain on another passport or fake documents.

Thames Valley police have previously described Tsang, a former competitive ice skater, as a "high-risk" sex offender because he used the sport to groom young female victims.

The case was adjourned until November 23.

Additional reporting by Lana Lam



The Dalai Lama has had a busy travelling schedule. Photo: AP

Barry Sautman, a political scientist from Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, said health concerns might not be the only reason for the Dalai Lama to cancel his US trip, as his office in India had stated that he has no medical complaints.

"Although the Dalai Lama's pace of activities during trips abroad has slowed somewhat in recent years, it is still hectic," he said. "A 'diplomatic cold' of the kind 19th-century British prime minister [William] Gladstone was said to have had occasionally cannot be ruled out."

But Sautman said it is doubtful the cancellation was related to Xi Jinping's (习近平) US visit, as Xi would have left weeks before the Dalai Lama was scheduled for his US speaking engagements.



I cannot see there is any special circumstance ... [to] grant bail

MAGISTRATE JASON WAN SIU-MING

nesian firms over haze



palm oil production, an industry widely blamed for forest fires in Indonesia.

In its statement issued on Friday, the Singapore government said it was "examining how to apply more economic pressure against errant companies", including a review of its own procurement policies.

Singapore's Minister for the Environment and Water Resources Vivian Balakrishnan said the haze problem has lasted "for far too long".

"This is not a natural disaster. Haze is a man-made problem that should not be tolerated. It has caused major impact on the health, society and economy of our region," he said in the statement.

Singapore declared emergency shutdowns of elementary and high schools on Friday after the air pollutant index hit "hazardous" levels.

It eased to "moderate" levels yesterday but a shift in wind direction can quickly change the situation.

DIPLOMACY

UN approves 15-year plan to beat world's problems

Associated Press

With the bang of a gavel, international leaders approved an ambitious 15-year plan on Friday to tackle the world's biggest problems, from eradicating poverty to preserving the planet to reducing inequality. Now comes the tough part: Drumming up support and money to achieve the goals.

Pope Francis gave his backing to the agenda in an address to the UN General Assembly before the summit to adopt the 17-point plan, calling it "an important sign of hope" at a very troubled time.

When Danish Prime Minister Lars Rasmussen struck his gavel to approve the development road map, leaders from the 193 UN member states applauded.

Then, the summit turned to the real business of the three-day meeting - implementation of the goals, which is expected to cost US\$3.5 trillion to US\$5 trillion every year until 2030.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the goals were "a to-do list for people and the planet, and a blueprint for success".

The document, titled "Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," not only outlines 17 broad goals but sets 169 specific targets.

The non-binding goals succeed the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted by world leaders 15 years ago. Only one of those has been achieved: halving the number of people living in extreme poverty, due primarily to economic growth in China. At least one other is close-cutting in half the proportion of people without access to clean water.

The new goals include ensuring "healthy lives" and quality education for all, clean water, sanitation and reliable modern energy, as well as making cities safe, reducing inequality within and among countries, and promoting economic growth and good governance.

5 Indonesian companies served with legal notices over Singapore's smoky haze problem