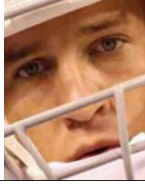


Ten films you shouldn't miss this autumn



Why Colts will win Super Bowl, and the best of the NFL season



Chinese in the first world war spark a history row



Sunday Morning Post

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September 12, 2010

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Dragonair bears brunt of long waits on tarmac

Anger over delays on mainland flights

Simon Parry
 Hong Kong flights in and out of the mainland are facing increasing delays, and passenger anger at being kept waiting for hours aboard grounded planes is rising.

Because so many of its flights are linked to the mainland, Dragonair is bearing the brunt of the problem - which is caused by growing air traffic and restrictions on air space because of military flights, VIP slot allocations and weather alerts.

Flights to and from mainland airports have been delayed for up to eight hours. About four out of every 10 Dragonair flights are taking off late

Enough is enough. You can't expect passengers and employees to deal with these huge delays every day

A Dragonair captain



and the average delay for flights by all airlines has climbed to 48 minutes. Most are made to wait on the tarmac with passengers on board before being given clearance for take-off.

The Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department confirmed that delays caused by "flow control" issues are on the rise. The number of flights affected between April and June was more than four times the number in the corresponding period last year. It has raised the matter with mainland aviation authorities.

Pilots say police had to be called to board a grounded flight in Hong Kong to deal with one irate passenger. They warn morale is slumping among cabin crew who bear the brunt of passengers' ire.

A memo circulated to regional and international pilots by David Kerr, the president of the Hong Kong Airline Pilots Association, warns the situation is now untenable and "becoming a flight safety issue".

"Unlucky passenger incidents in undetermined delays are of particular concern," Kerr said in the memo, seen by the *Sunday Morning Post*, which warns the issue is compromising Dragonair's operating efficiency.

Dragonair executives have acknowledged the seriousness of the issue in internal memos to pilots which describe the delays as "extremely frustrating for passengers and crew". But they say resolving the issue with mainland aviation and military officials is "a case of chip, chip, chipping at a fairly solid block".

Flight statistics circulated to pilots show that around four out of 10 Dragonair flights took off more than 15 minutes late over a two-week period last month. A management report said military exercises caused the closure of some airways, adding to the already heavy backlog of flights due to "flow control" and causing severe disruption.

Pilots say passenger anger is being stoked by the need for planes to be fully boarded with doors closed before clearance for take-off can be requested. Only then are cockpit crew informed of hold-ups. Almost invariably, they are told the reason for the delay is "undetermined".

They say priority is being given to mainland airlines when delays occur, with Dragonair and other foreign carriers at the back of the queue. That has led to suspicions that take-off slots are being sold or that favouritism is being exercised in the handing out of slots.

Narrow air routes to and from Shanghai and Beijing are the most prone to shutdowns because of bad weather or military activity, but the delays have knock-on effects on flights serving other airports. Ningbo (宁波), Nanjing (南京) and Hangzhou (杭州) have been hit particularly hard.

Kerr declined to comment beyond saying "It is an issue we are concerned about and we hope that some urgent action can be taken to improve the situation, for the good of both passengers and the airline".

Another Dragonair captain said: "CONTINUED ON PAGE 4"



100,000,000

A child cries as he receives a measles vaccination in Hefei (合肥), Anhui province (安徽), at the start of a mainland campaign to give the jab to nearly 100 million children this month. Photos: Reuters

Twists, turns that led Mendoza to despair

Irene Jay Liu in Manila
 August 23 was the day Rolando Mendoza stopped waiting.

It had been more than two years since the decorated police captain was first accused of extortion, robbery and assault.

It had also been 18 months since he was dismissed from the police force, nine months since he had filed a Motion for Reconsideration, and five months since he had written three letters to the Ombudsman pleading for an answer.

Mendoza should have heard back

about his motion in five days, but months later there was still no word. He was a desperate man.

On August 23, Mendoza stepped onto the Hong Thai tour bus and took matters into his own hands, an extreme final act that would see him die along with eight innocent Hong Kong people. As of yesterday, one survivor, Jason Leung Song-sue was still being treated for severe head injuries but another, Joe Chan Kwok-chu, was discharged from Prince of Wales Hospital after surgery on hand injuries. A spokesman said he was in stable condition but still needed to see

doctors regularly. Chan thanked the government and medical staff, and said he "was moved by the social unity shown in this incident".

That unity is in contrast to the divide in the Philippines over whether Mendoza is villain or victim. To some, he exemplifies the worst of a corrupt police force and his hostage-taking was the final act of wrongdoing. To others, Mendoza is a victim of an unfair justice system that only protects the interests of the elite.

Human rights lawyer Harry Roque, who has used the police in a number of high-profile cases, said

Philip Bowring 10

corruption was rampant among police. In Mindanao province, for example, recruitment into the Philippine National Police was on a "three-for-one" basis, he said - three recruits for one million pesos (HK\$176,000). "If you have to buy your position, your object is not to discharge your functions, but to recover your investment," Roque said.

Mendoza's fall from decorated police officer started with an e-mail. On April 12, 2008, a man named Bob Kalaw wrote to a few friends and

former classmates, warning of a rogue unit of policemen that had terrorised his son Christian three days earlier. The e-mail told how after stopping Christian on a traffic violation, police stole his money, beat him and forced him to swallow the drug *shabu*, or crystal meth. The police threatened to file drug charges against Christian if he didn't pay 200,000 pesos, according to Kalaw.

The e-mail went viral and became a rallying point in the fight against police corruption. "It became an informal advocacy," Didi Gunzonen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Fake-Tiffany syndicate raided in Guangzhou

Phyllis Tsang

They say that if it looks too good to be true, it probably isn't.

So the next time you go online to buy that glittering Tiffany bauble for your loved one, beware.

It was only a matter of time before the coveted American jewellery brand fell victim to the mainland's relentless counterfeiters.

However, after months of help from Hong Kong private investigators, mainland public security bureau officers have seized tens of thousands of fake Tiffany jewellery pieces with a value estimated at HK\$92 million.

The raids on Monday in Guangzhou were carried out by police in co-operation with investigators hired by

Tiffany to probe fakes, some sold online. The counterfeit Tiffany pieces, numbering about 80,000, were seized by the Economic Crime Investigation Department of Guangzhou Public Security Bureau at several locations, including a packing factory in a residential area.

The fakes are estimated to account for more than half the counterfeit Tiffany pieces selling globally, and are believed to have been aimed at customers in Hong Kong, the United States, Canada and Britain.

Derek Elmer, chief executive of Hong Kong-based private investigators I-OnAsia, described the case as a huge blow for the criminal syndicate behind the racket.

"It sends a very clear message to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Inside News

Hong Kong

Could do better

Children enjoy term-time trips, but not four days in Shenzhen when many expected an outward bound adventure course in Sai Kung. Following a revolt among parents and dismay among pupils, the ESF's Clearwater Bay School is thinking again. **Full report Page 3**

National

Singing out about animal rights

Shay Xie Zheng (pictured) spearheads the grass-roots Don't Eat Friends animal rights group and has just released an album of folk-rock songs in support of the cause. The group promotes vegetarianism. **Changing Faces Page 6**

National

Inflation at 22-month high on mainland

The mainland's consumer price index hits a near-two-year high but economists don't expect any further fiscal tightening. The August CPI is up 3.5 per cent from a year earlier, compared with July's 3.3 per cent, mainly because floods and bad weather pushed up food prices. **Full report Page 6**

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BOBBY'S FASHIONS has been specialising in the custom-made hand-tailoring business for ladies and gents in Hong Kong for the last 62 years. In addition to the showroom, Bobby's Fashions runs five workshops with a team of approximately 126 tailors working full-time consisting of men's suits, shirts, leather jackets, slack for men's and ladies', ladies' suits, skirts, blouses and dresses, as well as overcoats and garments.

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A website (above) selling counterfeit-Tiffany products, which looks similar to the coveted jewelry brand's site; some of the tens of thousands of fakes seized (left and right). They are estimated to be worth HK\$92 million. Photos: SMP Pictures

Fake-Tiffany syndicate raided in Guangzhou

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the Pearl River Delta that brand owners will not tolerate trademark infringement," Elmer said. The private investigation firm used surveillance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and staff posed as customers to collect intelligence. Many websites selling counterfeit Tiffany pieces can be easily found on the internet. Some of the sites claim that the products they sell are from the original manufacturer for Tiffany. The websites look strikingly like Tiffany's website, and even use official Tiffany pictures.

Some sell what they claim to be the real thing, as well as pieces that look like the real thing. The counterfeiters were selling them globally at anything from 50 to 80 per cent off Tiffany's retail price. For example, a counterfeit cuff bracelet from Tiffany's 1837 collection sells for \$77.50 (HK\$930), less

than a third of a Tiffany's retail price of about HK\$3,600 in Hong Kong. The fakes are showcased in a systematic way on the Web, listed in different categories, including accessories, necklaces, bracelets, earrings and rings. Buyers can choose to pay online via PayPal or credit card. Some syndicates, Elmer said, even posted counterfeit products on

Rare vivid blue diamond set to sell for US\$15m

If you've got a spare HK\$26 million lying around, this not-so-small sparkler could be yours. The two-tone ring with a rare triangular blue diamond on a gold band of baguette-cut diamonds is expected to sell for at least US\$5 million when it is offered at auction at Christie's in New York next month. At 10.95 carats, it is the largest

hidden in a residential area known as a hangout for criminals. The private investigators rented an apartment opposite the suspected counterfeit factory for surveillance. During Monday's raids counterfeit-Tiffany silver pieces were found in storage, including about 35,000 packages in Tiffany blue, and several computers.

The syndicate even produced accessories for the products: a cutting machine seized in the factory was for making silver-polish cloth similar to Tiffany's, to make the fakes even more convincing. A mainland public security officer confirmed the existence of the operation. Although he declined to give details, it is understood that about 100 public security bureau officers were deployed in the synchronized raids, on different premises. Nine people were arrested. In recent years, many international luxury brands have employed private investigation firms to conduct trademark-infringement and market investigations. The brands co-operate with local law enforcement authorities when criminal acts are found. LYME, a company behind Louis Vuitton, has an internal counterfeit team, which provides information to Hong Kong Customs and Excise.

Lucindo, the de facto spokesperson for the Kalaws, said. The e-mail found its way to Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and high-level PNP officials and a month later, they contacted Lucindo, seeking her help to find the Kalaws. The investigation had barely begun and authorities were already updating him on the penalties they were imposing. On May 14, Police Superintendent Eleazar Pepto Matta e-mailed Lucindo, informing her that his office had received orders to conduct an investigation and had already administered sanctions to the accused politicians, transferring them to another unit. A week later, Deputy Ombudsman Romeo Mendoxa went to the Ombudsman's Office, a separate anti-graft organization. On May 23, Christian Kalaw filed a sworn affidavit with the Manila Police. In his complaint he accused two officers of beating him and forcing him to swallow drugs. Kalaw said that after a routine medical examination at a hospital, he was taken back to the police precinct, where three other officers, including Mendoxa, threatened to imprison him on drug charges unless he paid 200,000 pesos. Kalaw said the police let him go after his friend brought 200,000 pesos, which was given to the officers. The same morning the affidavit was filed, Mendoxa went to the Kalaws' house and protested his innocence, according to Bob Kalaw. The next day, Matta wrote to Lucindo to say that the officers named by Kalaw would be held criminally liable. In an e-mail to Lucindo, Matta asked her to "please pass to all concerned".

Victim or villain? Manila hostage-taker's case for justice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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UFO researcher wants more explanations from authorities

John Carney

A Hong Kong-based researcher of extraterrestrial life says the Hong Kong Observatory was right to shoot down reports a UFO had appeared during rainstorms last week, but says other recent sightings have been ignored by authorities. On Wednesday the Observatory received eight reports, three of them concerning alleged UFO sightings near an entrance to the Tai Lam Tunnel. Something resembling a UFO

was also seen on a weather photo taken at Cheung Chau by the observatory. A spokesman said it was caused by light from a lamp reflected by protective glass in front of the camera. Neil Gould, who has a diploma in "exopolitics" - the study of key individuals, political institutions and processes associated with extraterrestrial life - from the Hawaii-based Exopolitics Institute, agreed that the concerning alleged UFO sightings were not of a UFO. "It was light reflected," he said.

Gould pointed to cases in which, he believes, the opposite occurred: a UFO incident or sighting actually happened but was explained away as something else. The most obvious case, he said, took place in July when what was thought to be a UFO shut down the airport in Hangzhou (杭州), Zhejiang (浙江), for nearly an hour. According to an official investigation jointly launched by aviation experts from Beijing and Shanghai, it was identified as a descending plane.

It's a global conspiracy. A few powerful countries influence and dictate the way we think

The object did not show on radar. It was deemed not extraterrestrial, because there was no evidence. "These sightings are happening all the time, but there's always a veil of secrecy surrounding them from governments," Gould said. "It's a global conspiracy. A few powerful countries influence and dictate the way we think." The observatory has reports of UFOs going back to 1984. The latest figures available are from 2008, when 45 reports were received.

Weather

HONG KONG FORECAST

Today: Cloudy with rain, heavy at times with a few squally thunderstorms in the morning. Tomorrow: Sunny periods, a few showers at first. Tuesday: Fine. Wednesday: Fine. Thursday: Mainly fine.

GENERAL SITUATION (UPPER HEMISPHERE): A trough of low pressure is bringing rainy weather to the coastal areas of Guangdong and the northern part of the South China Sea.

Table with 4 columns: Forecast, AP Level, Min, Max. Rows for General Situation, Roadside Station.

Table with 4 columns: AP Level, Min, Max. Rows for Central/Western, Eastern, Kwai Chung, Kwan Tong, Sha Tin, Sham Shui Po, Tai Po, Tsuen Wan, Tung Chung, Yuen Long.

Table with 4 columns: AP Level, Min, Max. Rows for Causeway Bay, Central/Western, Mong Kok.

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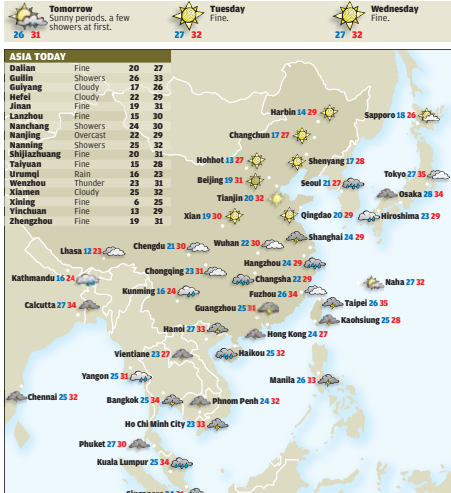


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THE WORLD TODAY

Table with 4 columns: City, Weather, Min, Max. Rows for Asia-Pacific, Europe, Middle East & Africa.

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The root cause of this is (Mendoza's) sense of injustice ... The key there is the Ombudsman

Representative Neri Colmenares, in the Philippine Daily Inquirer

its final decision on Monday, denying Mendoza's motion. Gutierrez has been accused of protecting former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and sitting on cases involving members of the Arroyo administration. On August 22, 2008, Mendoza and the other accused officers filed a counter-affidavit with the Ombudsman, denying Kalaw's allegations. The two patrol officers said they stopped Kalaw for being illegally parked. When Kalaw could not produce his driver's license, he was told he could wait for his friend to bring documents at the police precinct, they said. In the morning, Kalaw's friend brought his driver's license, but the names did not match, according to the counter-affidavit. Kalaw promised to return with additional documents and the officers let him go. When Kalaw failed to return, a case was filed with the city prosecutor of Manila, according to the counter-affidavit. The city court clerk's office received a case record on June 13, 2008 from the city prosecutor's office, charging Kalaw with traffic violations. Kalaw failed to appear at his arraignment on August 12, 2008 and the judge issued a warrant for his arrest. Kalaw also failed to appear at pro-

Charting corruption

The Philippines is ranked 139th, and 24th within Asia, on Transparency International's 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score, the less the score, the more corrupt the country. Hong Kong ranked 12th, and fourth best within Asia. These are two of the questions its researchers asked:

Table with 2 columns: Question, Answer. Rows for Political parties, Business/private sector, Public officials/civil servants, etc.

Corrections & clarifications

The report, "Sports fans face threat of TV viewing drought", on the front page of last week's Sunday Morning Post said ESPN Star Sports shows the National Football League in Hong Kong. That is no longer the case. We TV now holds the rights to broadcast all NFL games in Hong Kong.

Mark Six: There was no first prize winner in last night's draw. The numbers drawn were 2, 4, 13, 37, 47. The extra number was 5. One ticket won the second prize of HK\$3,858,760. The third prize paid HK\$765,255.

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Headline: Twists, turns that led Mendoza to despair
Subhead: Victim or villain? Manila hostage-taker's case for justice
Byline: Irene Jay Liu in Manila

Remarks: Manila Bus Tragedy

August 23 was the day Rolando Mendoza stopped waiting.

It had been more than two years since the decorated police captain was first accused of extortion, robbery and assault.

It had also been 18 months since he was dismissed from the police force, nine months since he had filed a Motion for Reconsideration, and five months since he had written three letters to the Ombudsman pleading for an answer.

Mendoza should have heard back about his motion in five days, but months later there was still no word.

He was a desperate man.

On August 23, Mendoza stepped onto the Hong Thai tour bus and took matters into his own hands, an extreme final act that would see him die along with eight innocent Hong Kong people. As of yesterday, one survivor, Jason Leung Song-xue was still being treated for severe head injuries but another, Joe Chan Kwok-chu, was discharged from Prince of Wales Hospital after surgery on hand injuries. A spokesman said he was in stable condition but still needed to see doctors regularly. Chan thanked the government and medical staff, and said he "was moved by the social unity shown in this incident".

That unity is in contrast to the divide in the Philippines over whether Mendoza is villain or victim. To some, he exemplifies the worst of a corrupt police force and his hostage-taking was the final act of wrongdoing. To others, Mendoza is a victim of an unfair justice system that only protects the interests of the elite.

Human rights lawyer Harry Roque, who has sued the police in a number of high-profile cases, said corruption was rampant among police. In Mindanao province, for example, recruitment into the Philippine National Police was on a "three-for-one" basis, he said - three recruits for one million pesos (HK\$176,000). "If you have to buy your position, your object is not to discharge your functions, but to recover your investment," Roque said.

Mendoza's fall from decorated police officer started with an e-mail.

On April 12, 2008, a man named Bob Kalaw wrote to a few friends and former classmates, warning of a rogue unit of policemen that had terrorised his son Christian three days earlier. The e-mail told how after stopping Christian on a traffic violation, police stole his money, beat him and forced him to swallow the drug shabu, or crystal meth. The police threatened to file drug charges against Christian if he didn't pay 200,000 pesos, according to Kalaw.

The e-mail went viral and became a rallying point in the fight against police corruption. "It became an informal advocacy," Didi Guanzon-Lucindo, the de facto spokeswoman for the Kalaws, said. The e-mail found its way to Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim and high-level PNP officials and a month later, they contacted Lucindo, seeking her help to find the Kalaws.

The investigation had barely begun and authorities were already updating Lucindo on the penalties they were imposing.

On May 14, Police Superintendent Eleazar Pepito Matta e-mailed Lucindo, informing her that his office had received orders to conduct an investigation and had already administratively sanctioned the accused police officers, transferring them to another unit.

A week later, Deputy Ombudsman for the Military and Other Law Enforcement Offices Emilio Gonzalez called Lucindo, urging the Kalaws to file criminal charges with the Office of the Ombudsman, a separate anti-graft organisation.

On May 23, Christian Kalaw filed a sworn affidavit with the Manila police. In his complaint he accused two officers of beating him and forcing him to swallow drugs.

Kalaw said that after a routine medical examination at a hospital, he was taken back to the police precinct, where three other officers, including Mendoza, threatened to imprison him on drug charges unless he paid 200,000 pesos. Kalaw said the police let him go after his friend brought 20,000 pesos, which was given to the officers.

The same morning the affidavit was filed, Mendoza went to the Kalaws' house and protested his innocence, according to Bob Kalaw.

The next day, Matta wrote to Lucindo to saying that the officers named by Kalaw would be held criminally liable. In an e-mail to Lucindo, Matta asked her to "please pass to all concerned".

Mendoza was soon reassigned to Mindanao. On June 16, he was put on 90-day "preventive suspension".

But in July the case was transferred to the Ombudsman at Bob Kalaw's request.

On August 22, 2008, Mendoza and the other accused officers filed a counter-affidavit with the Ombudsman, denying Kalaw's allegations. The two patrol officers said they stopped Kalaw for being illegally parked. When Kalaw could not produce his driver's license, he was told he could wait for his friend to bring documents at the police precinct, they said.

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The city court clerk's office received a case record on June 13, 2008 from the city prosecutor's office, charging Kalaw with traffic violations. Kalaw failed to appear at his arraignment on August 12, 2008 and the judge issued a warrant for his arrest.

Kalaw also failed to appear at proceedings against the accused officers, forcing the PNP Internal Affairs Service and prosecutors to drop the criminal and administrative charges against Mendoza in the latter half of 2008.

But the Ombudsman's case was still pending, and on February 16, 2009, Ombudsman Mercedes Gutierrez recommended all the officers be dismissed from service for "grave misconduct".

It did not specify what Mendoza did that constituted "grave misconduct".

Mendoza was immediately dismissed, stripped of his retirement benefits and disqualified from re-employment in government service.

The officers filed a joint Motion for Reconsideration in November 2009. That same month, Mendoza also filed a separate Motion for Reconsideration.

Mendoza never received a response and in March of this year, he sent three letters to the Ombudsman, asking for resolution of his case.

On August 23, Mendoza made his final appeal.

After taking the Hong Thai bus occupants hostage, Mendoza posted his demands in the front window. At the top of that list:

"Please final decision: OMB-P-A-08-0670-H."

The Ombudsman's office issued its final decision on Monday, denying Mendoza's motion.

Gutierrez has been accused of protecting former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and sitting on cases involving members of the Arroyo administration.

Gutierrez is facing impeachment charges but has so far managed to evade government scrutiny for her role in Mendoza's case. She declined invitations to testify at hearings by the Department of Justice on the siege.

Last week, Representative Neri Colmenares asked Congress to summon the Ombudsman and look into Mendoza's complaint that he was dismissed from the police force without due process.

"The root cause of all this is (Mendoza's) sense of injustice. He felt so aggrieved that he had to resort to hostage-taking," Colmenares told the Philippine Daily Inquirer. "The key there is the Ombudsman."

Senator Gregorio Honasan, chairman of the Committee on Public Order and Illegal Drugs, pledged that his committee would examine legislative remedies for the anti-corruption system's failings and would summon the Ombudsman to testify.

"I see good signs," Honasan said. "It is just unfortunate that nine people had to die."

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