

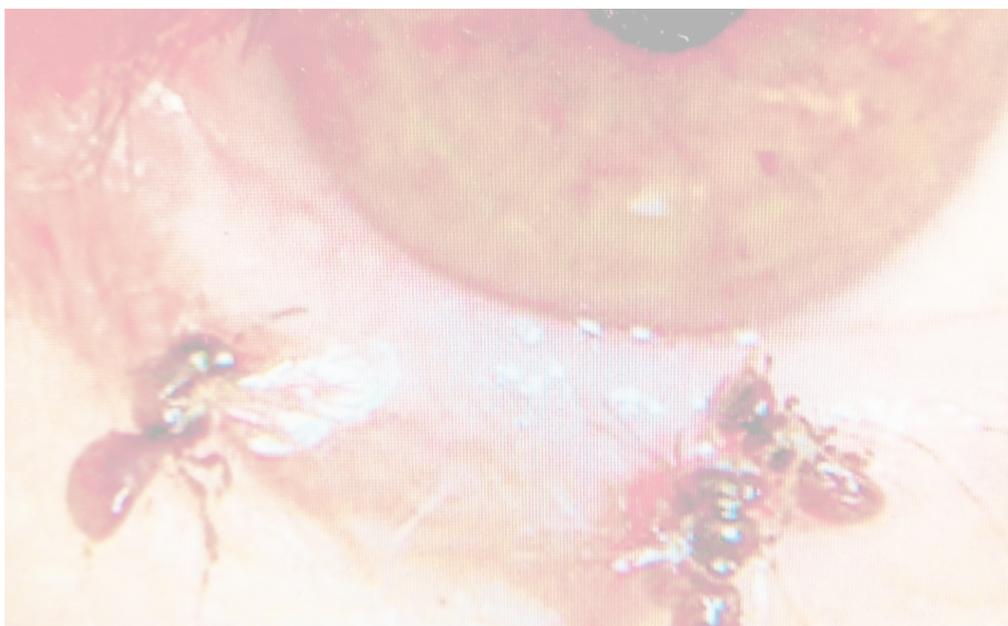
Bees feed off tears

Tiny "sweat bees" are seen around a woman's eye socket after a doctor in Taiwan spotted a "leg with hair" coming out from her eyelid.

A total of four bees were said to have been feasting on her tears. Doctors at Fooyin University Hospital in Kaohsiung described the incident as a "world first", having successfully managed to extract all four alive from the 29-year-old woman's tear duct.

According to CTS News, the woman, who was referred to only by her surname He, had been tending to a relative's grave and was pulling out weeds when she felt something go into her eye.

Presuming it was soil, she washed it out with water but by night it had begun to swell up and she felt a sharp stinging pain under her eyelid. Photo: AFP



DIPLOMACY

37 FIRMS AND UNIVERSITIES ON U.S. 'HANDLE WITH CARE' LIST

Chinese entities were put on list of possible rule breakers for national security reasons, analyst says

Lee Jeong-ho
jeongho.lee@scmp.com

The United States has put dozens of Chinese companies and universities on a Commerce Department "unverified list" demanding extra caution from American suppliers in dealing with the entities.

A 32-page report published yesterday added a total of 50 bodies to the list – making it harder for companies in the United States to do business with them.

The department said it was unable to verify that the organisations in question were abiding by American Export Administration regulations.

Those affected included 37 Chinese companies and universities, many of which work in fields such as precision optics, electronics, machine tools or aviation.

Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng said yesterday that the move would have a negative impact on Chinese enterprises, and accused the US of abusing its export restrictions.

"China called on the US to rectify its mistake by following the principle of mutual trust and mutual benefit," Gao said.

Kevin Wolf, a former assistant secretary of commerce for export administration who is now at US law firm Akin Gump, said that being placed on the unverified list

meant American suppliers could no longer use licence exemptions to sell products such as repair equipment to the entities.

He told Reuters that in some cases they would need to obtain fresh licences to supply things they had previously sold them, adding: "Even though it's not an embargo, because of the hassle sometimes suppliers will treat it as an embargo."

Besides the 37 mainland entities, six Hong Kong firms – Able Supply Chain, Boson Technology, HK Hengyu Storage Logistics, Rising Logistics, Swelatel Technology and Universe Market – were also included on the list.

A Chinese subsidiary of

Japanese auto parts maker Aisin Nantong Technical Centre and high-end screen manufacturing company Beijing Baiyi Space LCD Materials Technology Company were also on the list.

Even though it's not an embargo [some] suppliers will treat it as an embargo

KEVIN WOLF, FORMER U.S. OFFICIAL

Educational institutes affected included Changchun Institute of Applied Chemistry, Guangdong University of Technology, Renmin University and Tongji University in Shanghai.

The entities "could not verify their bona fides because an end-use check could not be completed satisfactorily for reasons outside the US government's control," the Commerce Department wrote in its report. These checks included pre-licence and post-shipment verification, it said.

Zhang Baohui, a professor of political science at Lingnan University, said the additions to the unverified list were part of US efforts to "tighten control over technology exports to China for national security reasons". Additional reporting by Reuters

SOCIETY

Mother slammed as video shows her kicking child model

Linda Lew
linda.lew@scmp.com

A woman who was caught on film kicking her daughter for not following instructions while having her photo taken has apologised after being condemned by fashion brands and accused of child abuse.

In a video filmed by an on-looker that was posted on Weibo, China's Twitter-like platform, a young girl is seen holding a bag while a woman and a man take photos of her with their phones.

When she puts the bag down on the ground, the woman kicks her bottom and orders her to pick it up.

Clothing vendors on Chinese e-commerce platform Taobao quickly identified the girl as three-year-old Niuniu, a popular child fashion model in Hangzhou, the capital of the eastern Zhejiang province, where Taobao and many other online retailers are based. By yesterday afternoon, the clip had generated more than 16 million views.

More than 100 brands have signed an open letter condemning the abuse of child models and demanding that they be better protected. Taobao has responded positively to the letter, *The Beijing News* reported. "After anger, we need actions," Taobao said.

"We support the Taobao vendors and brands who are full of love," it said, adding the companies demanded "prompt protection of the children".

The *Post* is owned by Alibaba, the parent company of Taobao. Niuniu's 33-year-old mother – whose name is not known but whose Weibo account has been verified – issued an apology.

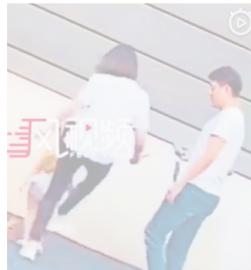
She said she was a loving parent who did not mean to harm her daughter. "The actions in the video ... were never intended to hurt her. If this has created any

confusion and misunderstanding, I am deeply sorry. I reiterate, my daughter is most cherished, she is well protected and loved," she said.

In an interview with *The Beijing News* that was released on Wednesday, Niuniu was asked whether she enjoyed posing for photos and wearing pretty clothes.

"I don't like it," the girl said, clad in pink. But her mother insisted, "She's joking."

More videos showing Niuniu's mother abusing the young girl were posted yesterday on Weibo. One showed her scolding a crying Niuniu during a photo shoot and hitting her with a coat hanger.



Niuniu's mother insists she never intended to hurt her. Photo: Sina

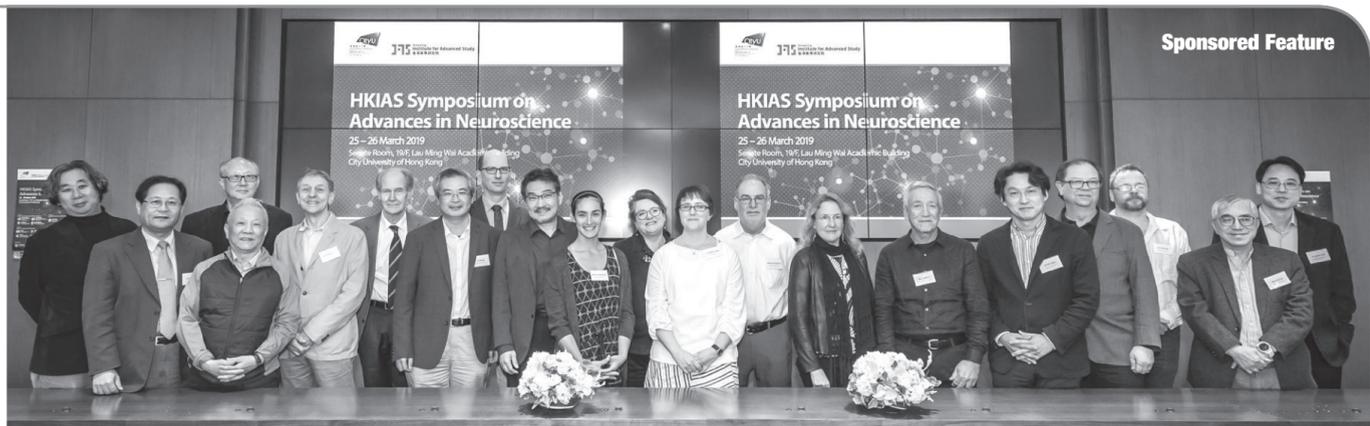
In another clip, the girl was asked several times to wave hello but was distracted. A woman, off-screen and presumed to be Niuniu's mother, made a slapping motion. Niuniu flinched and obeyed the instructions.

Niuniu's mother has not responded to the latest videos.

Many Weibo users criticised not only the treatment of Niuniu but also the fact that she was working at such a young age.

"This is terrifying," one person wrote. "I'm scared if one day the child can't earn money or gets ill, this mother would abandon her."

A recent two-day symposium hosted by the Hong Kong Institute for Advanced Study (HKIAS) at the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) gave leading experts from around the world a platform to discuss the latest research results in a complex field which has direct implications for all of us.



The organisers, speakers, session chairs and guests at the HKIAS Symposium on Advances in Neuroscience pose for a group photo.

HKIAS Explores New Frontiers in Neuroscience

The Hong Kong Institute for Advanced Study hosted a symposium to discuss the latest research in neuroscience

The Symposium on Advances in Neuroscience, which took place on March 25 and 26 at CityU, presented an opportunity to foster collaboration by highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of modern neuroscience and the possibilities for productive exchange with other areas. Such areas include genomics, engineering, computation, data science and the humanities.

The symposium also aimed to showcase the strength and breadth of the research undertaken at CityU, and to position the university and the HKIAS at the centre of a growing international community of neuroscientists.

The event was organised by Professor Sir Colin Blakemore, the Yeung Kin Man chair professor of neuroscience at CityU, and Professor Tomas Hökfelt, from the Department of Neuroscience at the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden, both of whom are Senior Fellows of HKIAS. Professor Jufang He, chair professor of the Department of Biomedical Sciences at CityU, was also an organiser.

The symposium was split into highly informative sessions built around four distinct themes. On day one, invited speakers focused on subjects related to "Molecular Regulation of Neural Circuits" and "Integrative Approaches in Neuroscience." On day two, a similarly distinguished line-up of scholars switched their attention to "Memory, Ageing and Dementia" and "Sensation, Cognition and Language."



The symposium was well attended by hundreds of students, faculty members and guests from CityU and the public.

The agenda covered the latest work on molecular and cellular mechanisms of regulation, control and development. But it also dealt with matters like sensory perception, decision making, and understanding what happens in the brain as individuals reach their later years and face the onset of Alzheimer's disease.

Among the many highlights, Professor Masashi Yanagisawa, from the University of Tsukuba, Japan, spoke about his recent research on the mechanism for homeostatic regulation of sleep.

The professor noted that there are inbuilt phylogenetic signals for daily sleep time in all terrestrial mammals, but mysteries remain about how and why everything operates as it does. It is important to understand more about the neuro-physiological substrate for sleepiness and how exactly neuropeptides like orexin fit into the picture.

Professor Yanagisawa said his work looked into transitions between sleep and waking, and considered the fundamental pathology of conditions like narcolepsy, as well as the several distinct groups of neurons which promote wakefulness and compete with those promoting sleep. Professor Yanagisawa hopes that these advances can be applied to the development of suitable treatments for common sleep disorders.

A key area of research for Professor Michael Nusbaum, from the University of Pennsylvania in the US, is the level of individual neurons in the stomatogastric nervous system of crabs, lobsters and their relatives.

Professor Nusbaum pointed out that the "same" neurons are often not precisely the same in terms of their activity pattern and impact, within and across individual test subjects.

"We looked at the synaptic interactions to see what regulates the different motor functions [for the gastric mill and pyloric rhythms]," Professor Nusbaum said. "They operate in different patterns, but there is a functionally important link."

Professor Jack Feldman, from the University of California in Los Angeles addressed the subject of "Breathing Matters: Rhythm, Active Expiration, Sighs and Emotion."

Professor Feldman explained the progress that has been made towards understanding the "rhythmic core" of the breathing pattern generator and the part played by the microcircuits in the brain's



Organisers of the symposium: (from left) Professor Jufang He, Professor Sir Colin Blakemore and Professor Tomas Hökfelt.

pre-Bötzinger Complex and the lateral parafacial nucleus.

Introducing her own specialist area, Professor Moriel Zelikowsky, from the California Institute of Technology, noted that chronic social isolation stress (SIS) causes detrimental effects on the brain and behaviour. However, the neural basis for this is still poorly understood.

Professor Zelikowsky explained that studies involving mice have shown that prolonged isolation enhances aggression and persistent fear responses, which suggests profound changes in internal states. Furthermore, the data now available indicates that the neuropeptide Tachykinin 2 is an important factor in coordinating a global change in brain state.

Insightful presentations by Professor Xu Zhang of the Institute of Neuroscience in Shanghai, and by Professor Hiroki Ueda of the University of Tokyo, rounded out the first day of the symposium. They spoke respectively about somatosensory neuron types and the prospects for whole-organ cell profiling, showing how an integrative approach helps in interpreting neuronal circuits.

On day two, the headline speakers included CityU's Professor Jufang He, as well as three other highly regarded professors: Professor Carol Barnes, from the University of Arizona in the US;

Professor Nancy Ip, from the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; and Professor Tara Spire-Jones, from the University of Edinburgh.

The unifying theme of their talks was the function of neural circuits and the impact of various changes on memory, in the process of ageing, and in finding out the causes of dementia.

Professor Barnes explained the functional consequences of cell-specific changes on information processing and memory. Professor Ip focused on the types of synaptic dysfunction found in Alzheimer's disease and outlined some of the therapies being developed which may be able to target newly identified cell surface receptors. Professor Spire-Jones dealt with synapse degeneration and how that can be modulated by the genetic risk gene APOE4 in Alzheimer's disease.

The concluding session featured similarly in-depth lectures on the general theme of "Sensation, Cognition and Language." Recent research findings into the related brain mechanisms and "wiring" were presented by four eminent professors: Professor Tibor Harkany, from the Medical University of Vienna; Professor Jan Schnupp, from CityU; Professor William Newsome from the Stanford University; and Professor Sophie Scott, from the University College London.

HKIAS hopes that the success of events like the symposium will lead to more collaboration and interdisciplinary exchanges, and the creation of a separate Department of Neuroscience on campus.

HKIAS aspires to be an international centre of excellence for the advancement of technology and innovation. The institute brings together an interdisciplinary team of world-renowned scholars and researchers to contribute to the solutions of pressing real-world problems. HKIAS organises symposiums, workshops, and lectures to facilitate the exchange of ideas among academic communities locally, regionally and internationally.

For more information, please visit <https://www.hkias.cityu.edu.hk>

