

The Grenfell Tower inferno

As feared all too many people died in the fire. The government has rightly set up an Inquiry. We need to know what caused the fire, why the fire spread so fiercely and rapidly, and what differences in the building could have prevented it or lessened the impact. We need to know if people were given the right advice on what to do on that fateful night. It is harrowing to hear of what happened and to learn that even now we do not know who died and where they died. Relatives live with dreadful uncertainty and are now warned that if their loved ones have died they may not be able to identify the bodies. We all are grieving for those lost and are appalled by the extent of the losses.

A full independent Judge Inquiry is needed and has been agreed between government and Opposition. However, these take time and do not satisfy the immediate need for some answers and urgent action elsewhere if other blocks are at risk. We will need statements from the government, Councils and housing management companies about the safety of all the blocks in the country. The government needs to advise Parliament if it wants to change fire regulations or issue any new guidance to Councils. Individual Councils need to review their housing and debate the matter in each locality. They are the main owners and purchasers of social housing with planning and building control functions that go to heart of this matter. Management organisations need to talk to tenants and review their homes, so they can either reassure or improve their safety.

I am glad the government has said it is now reviewing urgently all tower blocks and will report back. It has said it will make sure all those who have lost their homes from the fire will be housed by the government. It has made emergency money available to the local Council and has helped set up a local co-ordinating committee to deal with all problems. It has made money and other assistance available to those who have lost their homes.

Many say the new cladding put in to improve thermal insulation, cut tenant heating bills and improve the appearance of the block for residents and the wider neighbourhood may have speeded the progress of the fire. If this is so it follows that other buildings with the same system need safety improvements, and future improvement schemes need reviewing. It looks as if fire alarms and response systems were not good enough or did not exist. It would be prudent for all other public sector landlords to review their estates – and private sector ones as well for that matter.

Ensuring the safety of tenants or leaseholders should be the overriding priority. Local and national government needs to work hard and swiftly with that in mind.

Smart 'green cards' now available

A new ID card designed to give foreign permanent residents easier access to public services in China was issued across the country on Friday to expats holding "green cards".

The machine-readable Foreign Permanent Resident ID Card – similar to the second-generation ID cards held by Chinese citizens that store information about the card holder on an embedded chip – can be used independently as legal proof of identity when dealing with such issues as finance, education, health, communication, accommodations, telecommunication, employment, taxes, social security, property registration and lawsuits in China.

While the new card can be used by itself for such transactions, the previous permanent resident's permit needed to be used along with the holder's passport.

The change is a response to the long complaint from holders of "green cards" – as permanent resident cards are known – who said the card was more like a long-term visa rather than something that made their lives in China more convenient.

On Friday, the first group of foreigners, including 10 top-talent expats in Shanghai, eight in Beijing and five in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, received the new cards issued by the Ministry of Public Security.

"I absolutely believe the new card will give foreign permanent residents more convenience to enjoy all the rights related to residency," said Anders Lindquist, a chair professor of automation at Shanghai Jiao Tong University and a permanent resident in China from Sweden. "It also renders us a stronger sense of belonging in China."

Fan Weishu, a 48-year-old Chinese-American who is a senior manager at an international insurance company in Beijing, said he was really excited to receive the card.

"I was born and raised in China, and today I felt that I'm back and I'm a real 'Beijinger'," he said.

Expats who obtain permanent residence in China as of Friday will be granted the new ID cards. Those who have an old permanent resident card can go to exit and entry administration bureaus of local public security agencies to replace their cards. The old cards are valid until the expiration date, according to the ministry.

Ghulam Sajid, who is from Pakistan and obtained permanent residence in China four years ago, said he planned to exchange the permit for the new smart card soon.

"Currently, I need to bring along my two thick passports together with the permanent resident permit to show my identity if I go to banks or purchase

train tickets with manual service,” said Sajid, a 43-year-old manager of an import and export company in Shanghai.

“With the new card, I’ll be able to buy the train tickets on machines and get on a train by swiping the card like Chinese citizens,” he said.

China began issuing permanent resident permits for foreigners in 2004. More than 10,000 foreigners have been granted the status so far.

China’s air quality worsens in May



Cyclists in Tianjin wear masks on May 5, 2017, as dust hits the city. [File photo/Xinhua]

The air quality in China’s major cities was worse in May than the same period last year, due to a sandstorm that swept across much of north China, the environment ministry said Friday.

Some 338 prefecture-level-and-above cities around China enjoyed good air quality for 70.5 percent of the month, down 12.4 percentage points from a year earlier, the Ministry of Environmental Protection said in a statement.

The average density of fine particulate matter PM2.5 in those cities stayed unchanged from last May at 38 micrograms per cubic meter, but the density of PM10 jumped 12.7 percent year on year to 89 micrograms per cubic meter, according to the ministry.

In early May, the country's northern areas witnessed the most severe sandstorm so far this year, which affected more than 10 provincial-level regions including Beijing, and covered an area of 1.63 million square kilometers.

Due to the sandstorm, 13 cities in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, saw the amount of days with good air quality drop by 23.5 percentage points to 39 percent in May. The density of PM2.5 and PM10 surged 14.9 percent and 59.4 percent, respectively, from a year ago, the ministry said.

The number of good air days in Beijing was down 12.9 percentage points to 48.4 percent last month.

A good air day is defined as an average daily Air Quality Index (AQI) of under 100 in Chinese air quality standards.

Haikou in south China's Hainan Province had the cleanest air of the country's 74 major cities, followed by Zhoushan/Lhasa, Xiamen, Lishui, Guiyang, Fuzhou, Taizhou/Zhuhai and Huizhou.

Tangshan in Hebei Province was the most polluted, followed by Handan, Shijiazhuang, Xingtai, Baoding, Zhengzhou, Tianjin, Hengshui, Xuzhou and Lanzhou.

China is addressing air pollution with stricter measures on emissions and an emphasis on clean energy.

[China receives data from first X-ray space telescope](#)



A Long March-4B rocket carrying X-ray space telescope to observe black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts blasts off from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's Gobi Desert, June 15, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

China Friday received the first package of data from its x-ray space telescope launched Thursday, according to the Institute of Remote Sensing and Digital Earth of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

The package of high quality data with a total size of 2.1 gigabytes was received by the remote sensing satellite station in northwest China's Kashgar, before being transferred to the CAS National Space Science Center.

The ground stations in Beijing's Miyun District and south China's Sanya also tracked the signals from the telescope.

Weighing 2.5 tonnes, the Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope, dubbed Insight, was launched via a Long March-4B rocket from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's Gobi Desert at 11 a.m. Thursday.

In the following five days, other components of Insight will start working in succession.

After five months of in-orbit tests and calibrations, the telescope will be officially put into use to conduct broadband x-ray space observations. Its main tasks are to observe black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts.

Kicking off in March 2011, the Insight project was jointly carried out by the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence and the CAS, and is a crucial part of China's high-energy astrophysics space research.

[News story: 2017 Birthday Honours for Service personnel and Defence civilians](#)

113 Service personnel have been granted state honours, and 50 civilians have also been honoured either for work in the Ministry of Defence or in other aspects of UK Defence.

The Defence personnel named in the Birthday Honours List for 2017 are listed below; the full list is available [here](#)

Amongst those who were granted state honours are the following:

Cpl Amber Rose Hollands, 25, received an MBE for her work as a Combat Medical Technician whilst deployed in Sierra Leone with 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards. She was the only female in a 58-strong Short Term Training Team that deployed to Sierra Leone to train the nation's Army in peace support operations.

Working in stifling 36 degrees heat and 90% humidity, Amber was one of two medics who delivered medical training to over 130 Sierra Leonean troops. The Short Term Training Team also trained more than 850 troops in basic military skills.

Amber said:

I am very proud to receive this honour. Communication was a challenge in Sierra Leone because some of the troops found it difficult to understand my accent. I had to adapt and slow down my speech. I also asked two of the Sierra Leonean medics to translate.

Col Mike Butterwick, whose work with the British Muslim community during his time as deputy Commander of 4th Infantry Brigade based at Catterick Garrison in North Yorkshire has seen him awarded a CBE, said being told the news left him in "total shock" and "slightly embarrassed".

He said:

I am completely overwhelmed by the award, but it reflects the energy the whole of the 4 Brigade team put into making a difference in this vital area. What we tried to do was change the perceptions of the military in Muslim communities we are working in.

I am humbled by this award. This is the start of what I hope will

continue for many years to come.

Flt Sgt Mark Elliman received an MBE for his role as Acting Warrant Officer Fuels and Lubricants at RAF Akrotiri, supporting Op SHADER and the successful running of the station.

He said:

I am humbled, grateful and overjoyed to receive the MBE. My family will be so proud. I work with a fantastic team who have supported me with professionalism, honesty and pure hard work.

My time working at RAF Akrotiri as part of Joint Forces Command has been challenging but exciting due to the serviceability and resilience of fixed assets. Contingency and forward planning has been at the forefront of delivering aviation fuel without compromising output.

Jonathan Lyle, Chief Executive of Dstl, has been made a Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB) in recognition of his contribution to Defence science and engineering over the past 41 years.

He said:

I have had the privilege to work with so many talented and committed people. I am deeply honoured to have been recognised with the CB and really do feel this is a reflection of a combined team effort across the lab.

The military division of The Queen's Birthday Honours list 2017

Royal Navy Awards

PROMOTIONS IN AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH

As Knight Commander

Vice Admiral Simon Robert LISTER, CB, OBE

As Companions

Surgeon Vice Admiral Alasdair James WALKER, OBE, QHS

Rear Admiral Simon Paul WILLIAMS, CVO

PROMOTIONS IN AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

As Commanders

Rear Admiral Timothy Miles LOWE, QCVS

Rear Admiral John Robert Hamilton CLINK, OBE

Brigadier Richard Anthony Winchcombe SPENCER, OBE

As Officers

Commodore Richard Mark ALLEN

Captain Mark John CAMERON

Colonel Michael John TANNER, QCVS

Commander James WYPER

As Members

Warrant Officer 1 Logistician (Catering Services) Wayne BURBURY

Lieutenant Commander Simon James CHURCH

Warrant Officer 1 Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering) Iain CUNNINGHAM

Chief Petty Officer Air Engineering Technican (Avionics) Andrew Smyth FLEMING

Lieutenant Deborah Daphne HARMER

Leading Logistician (Writer) Claire HUGHES

Lieutenant Commander (Acting Commander) James Alistair Delange KIRKWOOD

Commander Robert Graeme SPENCE

Commander Stephen Michael THOMAS

Commander Michael Leslie WOOD

QUEEN'S VOLUNTEER RESERVE MEDAL

Sergeant David HOLMAN

ARMY AWARDS

PROMOTIONS IN AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH

As Companions

Major General Mark Jarvis GAUNT

Major General John Robert PATTERSON

PROMOTIONS IN AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

As Commanders

Colonel Michael Robert BUTTERWICK

Colonel William Pemble Owen ENGLISH

Brigadier Colin Thomas McCLEAN, MBE

Brigadier Tom Richardson COPINGER-SYMES, OBE

Major General Ralph William WOODDISSE, MBE, MC

As Officers

Lieutenant Colonel Hamish George Gordon CORMACK, MBE, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher David DAVIES, MBE, The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Jamie Ian HARTLEY, The Rifles

Colonel Thomas Jonathan MURRAY

Colonel Andrew Keith ROBINSON

Colonel Christopher John Strathern ROSE

Colonel Khashayar Dominic SHARIFI

Lieutenant Colonel Jason SHEFFIELD, Royal Tank Regiment

Colonel Jonathan Roderick Henry TIMMIS

Acting Colonel Richard George WALKER, Corps of Royal Engineers

As Members

Major Levi Vincent ASHLEY, The Royal Logistic Corps

Major John Mark BARRY, The Rifles

Major Richard Allan BELL, Royal Corps of Signals

Major Denis BURTON, The Royal Welsh, Army Reserve

Major Kevin Charles CAMMACK, Royal Regiment of Artillery

Major David CAMPEY, Corps of Royal Engineers

Colonel Frances Elizabeth CASTLE, ADC

Sergeant Arun Lewis COFAX, Corps of Royal Engineers

Lieutenant Colonel Dominic Martin Lyall COOPER, The Royal Logistic Corps

Major Richard John CRANE, The Royal Logistic Corps

Captain Anthony Angelo DAVIES, Corps of Royal Engineers

Warrant Officer Class 2 Marc David ELLIOTT, Corps of Royal Engineers

Warrant Officer Class 1 Gavin Arran EMMERSON, The Royal Logistic Corps

Major Simon William EVERETT, The Royal Irish Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Alison Helen FALCON, The Royal Logistic Corps, Army Reserve

Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Mark GEE, Royal Regiment of Artillery

Major Prembahadur GURUNG, The Royal Gurkha Rifles

Captain Andrew HAINES, Royal Regiment of Artillery, Army Reserve

Acting Major Tobias Robin Sanford HARRIS, The Parachute Regiment

Sergeant Andrew Craig HARRISON, Corps of Royal Engineers

Major William Derek HODGKINSON, The King's Royal Hussars

Corporal Amber Rose HOLLANDS, Royal Army Medical Corps

Colonel Stephanie Lotte Eleanor Louise JACKMAN, TD,
Army Reserve, The Royal Logistic Corps

Acting Lieutenant Colonel Ami JONES, Royal Army Medical Corps, Army Reserve

Acting Lieutenant Colonel Norman Owen JONES, ARRC, Queen Alexandra's
Royal Army Nursing Corps, Army Reserve

Major Pauline MURRAY-KNIGHT, Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel
Support Branch)

Acting Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Thomas LAMB, Combined Cadet Force

Lieutenant Colonel Catherine Charlotte Anne LIVINGSTONE, Royal Army Medical
Corps, Army Reserve

Major Paul LOGIE, Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Captain James William LYONS, Army Air Corps

Major David Robert MACKLIN, The Rifles

Warrant Officer Class 1 Iain Crichton MARTIN, The Royal Logistic Corps

Warrant Officer Class 2 Rolf Alan MASON, Royal Regiment of Artillery

Corporal Jessica Layla MASTERMAN, The Royal Logistic Corps

Lance Corporal Rossa Dominick McPHILLIPS, Intelligence Corps, Army Reserve

Colour Sergeant David Malcolm MILLS, Irish Guards

Captain Ian David STOKES, Royal Regiment of Artillery

Warrant Officer Class 2 Karen Ann STYLES, Adjutant General's Corps (Staff and Personnel Support Branch)

Major Fergus Keegan SULLIVAN, Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Major William John TOWER, Coldstream Guards

Acting Major Richard Simon WOOD, The Parachute Regiment

Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Robert Edward WOOLGAR, The Royal Lancers

ROYAL RED CROSS

As an Ordinary Associate of the Royal Red Cross, Second Class

Major Jennifer Ann BUCK, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps

Major Rosemary GODFREY, Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, Army Reserve

QUEEN'S VOLUNTEER RESERVES MEDAL

Major Paul Harry JACKSON, General List, Army Reserve

Staff Sergeant Hayley Elizabeth JUST, Corps of Royal Engineers, Army Reserve

Colonel Mark Christopher SHERIDAN

Staff Sergeant Careen Gillian THORN, The Royal Logistic Corps, Army Reserve

ROYAL AIR FORCE AWARDS

PROMOTIONS IN AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE MILITARY DIVISION OF THE MOST HONOURABLE ORDER OF THE BATH

As Companions

Air Vice-Marshal Malcolm Andrew John BRECHT, CBE

Air Vice-Marshal Edward Jackson STRINGER, CBE

PROMOTIONS IN AND APPOINTMENTS TO THE MILITARY DIVISION

OF THE MOST EXCELLENT ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

As Commanders

Group Captain Stephen Alec BENTLEY

Air Commodore Dawn Allison MCCAFFERTY

As Officers

Wing Commander Gareth John BRYANT

Wing Commander Mark Thomas DUNLOP

Wing Commander James Alexander FREEBOROUGH

Wing Commander Andrew MASSIE

Wing Commander Elizabeth Joan NICHOLL

Wing Commander Michael John Edward SUTTON

As Members

Warrant Officer Anthony Joseph BARKER

Squadron Leader Darren BASSETT

Warrant Officer Alan Roy BUTTERFILL

Wing Commander Davis Charles COX, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve

Flight Sergeant Mark James ELLIMAN

Sergeant Alan Albert FENNEY

Sergeant Matthew Ian FOSTER

Squadron Leader Adrian MORRIS

Warrant Officer Michael George MORRIS

Squadron Leader Hugh John Warr NICHOLS

Flight Lieutenant Derek Vincent OLDHAM, Royal Auxiliary Air Force

Warrant Officer Adrian Mark PATON

Warrant Officer Michelle SMITH

ROYAL RED CROSS

As an Ordinary Associate of the Royal Red Cross, Second Class

Corporal Clare Louise HARVEY

Flight Lieutenant Laura Jane HODSON

QUEEN'S VOLUNTEER RESERVES MEDAL

Sergeant Philip Baden BOWER, Royal Auxiliary Air Force

Senior Aircraftman Shane Victor STANIFORTH, Royal Auxiliary Air Force

CIVILIAN RECIPIENTS

COMPANION, ORDER OF THE BATH (CB)

Jonathan Henry LYLE, For services to Defence

COMMANDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (CBE)

Alan Frank SMITH, For voluntary service to RAF personnel

OFFICERS, ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (OBE)

William John CHRISPIN, For services to Defence acquisition and to military capability

Maj Gen Patrick Anthony John CORDINGLEY, For voluntary service

John Sebastian COX, For services to the Royal Air Force and aviation heritage

Michael GOODHAND, For services to Disaster Relief

Dr Deborah Katherine GOODWIN, For services in support of Armed Forces staff education

Ms Carmel Jane GRANT, For services to Army reform

Dr Julie Patricia GREEVES, For services to military operational effectiveness

Philip HORROCKS, For services to Defence

Dr Cheryll Denise PITT, For services to aviation safety

Paul John RUSSELL, For services to Defence

Rakesh SHARMA, For services to defence capability

Richard THOMASON, For services to Defence

Mrs Melanie Dawn WATERS, For services to ex-Service personnel

MEMBERS, ORDER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE (MBE)

Mrs Saeeda ALI, For services to Defence

Andrew Donald BALLANTYNE, For services to Defence

Lt Colonel Robert Henry Lynn BLOMFIELD TD, For services to the Reserves and Cadets

Peter Alan BLYTH, For services to the Reserve Forces & Cadets on Tyneside

Patrick Joseph CONWAY, For services to industrial relations and the community in Yeovil, Somerset

Christopher DAVIES, For services to drug awareness in the Armed Forces

Captain (Rtd) Gaubahadur GURUNG, For services in support of Service personnel

Mohamed Amin ISSA, For services to the Defence Centre for Languages & Culture

David McALLISTER, For voluntary service to Service personnel

Frederick MILLES, For services to Defence

Mrs Irene MILNE, For services in support of military operations

Miss Nicola Ann MURDOCH, For services to Armed Forces personnel and their families

Philip NEAME, For voluntary service to Reserve Forces and Cadets

Mrs Angela Gwen O'SULLIVAN, For voluntary service to First Aid

Nicholas Mark SALES, For services to Defence

Richard SALMON, For services to Defence

Grahame SHEPHERD, For voluntary service to the children of military personnel

Mrs Dawn WALKER, For services to Defence

Colonel Michael Robert Lorne WARD, For voluntary service to veterans

THE BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL (BEM)

Mrs Carol Margaret BRATTY, For voluntary service to ex-Service personnel personnel

Mrs Eileen Fiona BUCHAN, For voluntary service to young people

Mrs Carol Margaret CHAPMAN, For voluntary service to St John Ambulance

Mrs Helen CHAPMAN, For services to Defence

Dean FAULKNER, For voluntary service to St John Ambulance

Barry Anthony FURNESS, For voluntary service to ex-Service personnel

Raymond GRIFFITHS, For voluntary service to ex-Service personnel

Mrs Marie HAWTHORNE, For voluntary service to the Army Cadet Force

Dr Samantha Georgina HEALY, For services to apprenticeship and graduate programmes in the Defence Industry

Ronald William Godfrey JONES, For voluntary service to ex-Service personnel and their families

Jacqueline LONGDEN, For services to veterans

Mrs Mary McGOWAN, For voluntary service to First Aid in Aberdeen

Mrs Barbara Liddle MORTIMER, For voluntary service to ex-Service personnel

Mrs Trudi SHAW, For services to Defence

Mrs Teresa Maria SMITH, For voluntary service to the Sea Cadet Corps

Miss Marie TAYLOR, For services to veterans and the community in York