

in 2005 to promote visits to the country.

Japanese pandas like a game of cat and mouse to us.

Russian rushes in on art world

Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich is the mystery buyer of two paintings by Francis Bacon and Lucian Freud that sold for record prices at auction last week, *The Art Newspaper* said on its website.

Abramovich, 41, who owns English Premier League football side Chelsea, bought Bacon's "Triptych,"

which sold for US\$86.2 million (HK\$672 million) at Sotheby's in New York last Thursday.

Two days before, he purchased Freud's 1995 painting "Benefits Supervisor Sleeping" for US\$34 million, at Christie's, also in New York.

Seems there's a bit of a rush on.

and the exchange to lower corporate governance by preparing for the installation of a professional board that would exclude retailers and adopt more flexible standards for new listings.

These were only some the accusations in his letter to

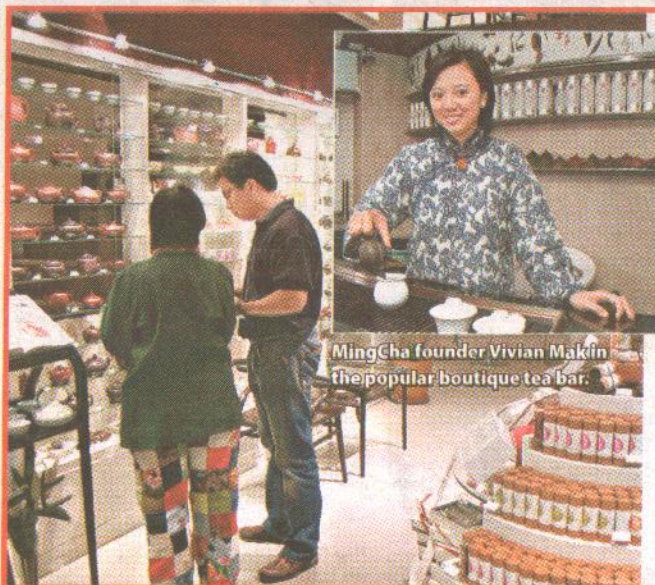
Webb would likely be voted out later if he did not resign now.

The outcome would be the same, so his resignation has allowed him a graceful exit.

Farewell, Webb.

Mary Ma

e-mail: mary.ma@thestandard.com.hk



MingCha founder Vivian Mak in the popular boutique tea bar.

Star tenant doesn't want to turn over a new leaf

Devoted customers of MingCha, a boutique tea bar and salon on Star Street in Wan Chai, have been writing in to the shop to show their support after it said it will need to relocate.

The landlord for Star Street Precinct, Swire Properties, wants to change the tenant mix of the area and will not be renewing MingCha's lease, founder Vivian Mak Wai-lan told us.

Mak, however, is convinced the modern-day Chinese tea shop has something special to add to the cultural and artistic feeling of the area, and hopes she will be able to remain.

MingCha was invited by Swire Properties to open a shop in Star Street Precinct about three years ago, she said, and it has been making long-term investments ever since then.

Mak's passion for the joys of tea is evident, and she hopes that MingCha can revive the 5,000 years of heritage and culture of Chinese tea, putting a modern

face on a very traditional product in order to woo a new generation of tea-lovers. "It's a cultural asset," she said. "It's becoming a landmark."

The tea salon has been written up in foreign guidebooks for Hong Kong, bringing in tourist dollars from places as diverse as Korea and England.

A fan of MingCha ourselves, *Central Station* can attest to the pleasant aromas of MingCha's fine teas and the relaxing atmosphere the shop provides for sipping them. It seems other MingCha customers feel the same way, and are hoping to convince Swire to let their favorite tea shop stay.

"There is substantial benefit of having MingCha in the neighborhood," one customer wrote in. "With the strong cultural atmosphere of MingCha, I believe it is one that could become truly international."

A spokeswoman for Swire Properties said the landlord will take the customer's comments into account.

Weather Bulletin

Today
19/5 Mon
Temperature
Hi: **26°C** Lo: **22°C**
Sunrise today **05:42**
Sunset tonight
RH Range: **75-95%** 18:58

Tidal Information

Tide Time	Tide Height
01:54	1.1m
08:19	2.1m
15:28	0.5m
22:13	1.4m

Four-day forecast for HK

20/5 Tue Hi: 25°C Lo: 22°C	21/5 Wed Hi: 26°C Lo: 22°C
22/5 Thu Hi: 28°C Lo: 23°C	23/5 Fri Hi: 29°C Lo: 25°C

Dial a Weather: 187 8200
HK Observatory website address:
<http://www.hko.gov.hk>
<http://www.weather.gov.hk>

The Standard

Editor-in-Chief Ivan Tong Tel: 27982798 editor@thestandard.com.hk; Executive Editor Steve Shellum Tel: 27982305 steven.shellum@singtaonewscorp.com; Business News Editor Nick Cheng Tel: 31813369 nick.cheng@singtaonewscorp.com; Local News Editor Marcal Joanelho Tel: 27982291 marcal.joanelho@singtaonewscorp.com; Markets Editor Zubair M Latif Tel: 27982816 zubair.latif@singtaonewscorp.com; Sports Editor Roger Ryan Tel: 27982738 roger.ryan@singtaonewscorp.com; Features Editor Kapila Bandara Tel: 27982851 kapila.bandara@singtaonewscorp.com; Business Director Irene Chan Tel: 31813188 irene.chan@singtaonewscorp.com; Circulation Tel: 31813355 circulation@thestandard.com.hk; Display Advertising Tel: 31813311 advertise@thestandard.com.hk; Classified Advertising Tel: 27982784 classified@thestandard.com.hk; Subscriptions Tel: 31813355 circulation@thestandard.com.hk; Copyright Permission Tel: 27982844 copyright@singtao.com; Notices Tel: 27982784 notices@thestandard.com.hk; General Tel: 31813668