

Headline	China expects 48,000 new HIV cases this year		
MediaTitle	New Straits Times		
Date	01 Dec 2011	Color	Black/white
Section	World	Circulation	136,530
Page No	34	Readership	330,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	151 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 2,091
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 6,273



China expects 48,000 new HIV cases this year

BEIJING: China will have about 780,000 people infected with the AIDS virus by the end of this year, state media reported yesterday, with most having contracted it through heterosexual sex.

The official Xinhua news agency said that a report from the Ministry of Health and the United Nations estimated there would be about 48,000 new HIV infections in China this year. Xinhua quoted the report as saying the virus remained "mildly prevalent" in China.

HIV gained a foothold in China largely because of unsanitary blood plasma buying schemes and tainted transfusions in hospitals. Health authorities say heterosexual sex has now overtaken drug abuse as the main channel of transmission.

After ignoring or demonising peo-

ple with AIDS for much of the 1980s and 1990s, the government has taken a more compassionate line on the disease and combating its spread in recent years. But people with AIDS still face difficulties in getting treatment and compensation, and authorities remain deeply suspicious of independent activists.

Yesterday, a handful of relatives of HIV or AIDS patients who contracted the virus through tainted transfusions planned to protest in front of the Ministry of Finance here but abandoned the plan because of the tight security.

Organiser Sun Ya said the group demanded government compensation. Sun's 15-year-old son contracted HIV from a tainted blood transfusion in 2002 at the Peking University Dental Hospital.

Sun said he and others had tried to use the legal system to fight for compensation but the courts had declined to take their cases, so they had resorted to sporadic protests in the capital.

China is due to hold its first AIDS Walk — a fundraising walkathon already popular in the United States — on the Great Wall.

The AIDS Walk first took place in Los Angeles in 1985 to raise awareness of the epidemic and has since been held all around the US and in Canada.

The walk — to take place in October next year — is being organised by three non-profit organisations, including the government-backed China Population Welfare Foundation, and has been approved by Chinese authorities. **Agencies**