



HONG KONG SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: March 03, 2026 - March 10, 2026

This report was produced using automated open-source intelligence analysis. The assessment is grounded in publicly available reporting and should be cross-referenced with primary sources. RSS feed articles are listed in the annex for reference.

Security Analysis Report: Hong Kong (March 03, 2026 - March 10, 2026)

Executive Summary

During the period of March 3-10, 2026, Hong Kong's security landscape remained primarily shaped by the ongoing enforcement of its national security legislation and evolving geopolitical tensions. The Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (Article 23) continued to be a central feature, with recent convictions highlighting its broad application and extraterritorial reach. Cybersecurity threats escalated, reaching a record high in 2025, driven by AI-powered attacks and supply chain vulnerabilities, prompting new legislative measures. Geopolitically, Hong Kong's economic stability was influenced by broader US-China relations and the Middle East conflict, while diplomatic friction with the EU persisted over human rights concerns. Military activities remained routine, with scheduled firing practices by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison.

Key Security Developments

- Continued Enforcement of National Security Legislation (Article 23)

In February 2026, Kwok Yin-sang, the father of pro-democracy activist Anna Kwok, was convicted under the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO) for attempting to access an insurance policy in his daughter's name, marking the first conviction of an "absconder's" family member under this law. He was sentenced to eight months in prison by West Kowloon Magistrates' Court. This event underscores the broad and far-reaching application of the SNSO, which was enacted in March 2024 and expands the scope of offenses like treason, espionage, and external interference, carrying severe penalties including life imprisonment. The law also obliges citizens to report others for national security offenses, potentially fostering a climate of fear.

- Escalating Cybersecurity Threats and New Legislation

The Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centre (HKCERT) released its "Hong Kong Cybersecurity Outlook 2026" in January 2026, revealing a record high of 15,877 cybersecurity incidents reported in 2025, a 27% increase year-on-year. Phishing attacks accounted for nearly 60% of these cases, with

generative AI making them more sophisticated. A new cybersecurity law, the Protection of Critical Infrastructures (Computer Systems) Bill, came into effect on January 1, 2026, aiming to enhance cybersecurity for critical and essential services by requiring large organizations to secure systems and report incidents.

- Routine Military Activities and Training

Military firing practice is scheduled for March 2026 at the San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range and the Tsing Shan Firing Range, with the public advised to stay away from these areas. Earlier in the year, on January 4, 2026, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison commenced its annual military training to enhance combat capabilities and strengthen its defense responsibilities in Hong Kong. These activities are part of routine readiness and training exercises.

- Drug Trafficking Incident at Hong Kong International Airport

On March 3, 2026, Hong Kong Customs detected a drug trafficking case at Hong Kong International Airport, seizing approximately 1.1 kilograms of suspected cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$1 million. Two male passengers, aged 52 and 24, arriving from Penang, Malaysia, were arrested after the drugs were found in their carry-on baggage. This highlights ongoing efforts in border security against illicit activities.

- Geopolitical Tensions Impacting Hong Kong Markets

Geopolitical tensions, particularly the Middle East conflict and US-China relations, continued to weigh on Asia-Pacific markets, including Hong Kong, during the reporting period. On March 3, 2026, the benchmark Hang Seng Index dropped 2.01 percent, closing at a nearly three-month low, reflecting a risk-averse sentiment among investors. Experts noted that while the Middle East conflict might hurt the trading sector, Hong Kong's financial market could benefit from its stability.

- US-China Diplomatic Engagements and Hong Kong's Status

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed hope for a "landmark year" in US-China relations ahead of an anticipated summit between President Xi Jinping and President Donald Trump at the end of March 2026. However, potential friction points remain, such as the expected sentence against Hong Kong media mogul Jimmy Lai, which could trigger a vote in the US Senate on the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Certification Act (HKETO). If passed, this act could lead to the closure of Hong Kong's offices in the United States and Chinese retaliation, further impacting Hong Kong's autonomy.

- EU-Hong Kong Relations Strained by Human Rights Concerns

In January 2026, the European Parliament passed a resolution condemning the "arbitrary prosecution" of Jimmy Lai and urged EU member states to suspend extradition treaties with China and Hong Kong. The resolution also called for the

European Commission to initiate the suspension of Hong Kong's status under the World Trade Organization (WTO) and for the European Council to sanction Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee and other officials. China strongly condemned this resolution as interference in its internal affairs and Hong Kong's judicial matters.

- Virtual Asset Licensing Regime Expected

Hong Kong is preparing to introduce a comprehensive licensing regime for virtual asset service providers in March 2026, covering dealing, custody, advisory, and asset management activities. This framework aims to significantly raise compliance expectations for operators serving Hong Kong clients, indicating a move towards stricter regulation in the burgeoning crypto economy.

- Border Security Management During High Traffic Periods

Hong Kong's border control points demonstrated near pre-pandemic capacity during the mainland's New Year holiday in January 2026, processing 3.2 million passenger movements over three days. Measures such as subsidized intercity trains, 24-hour e-Channel operations at busy land ports, and "immigration marshals" contributed to keeping average clearance times below 20 minutes. Major land and bridge checkpoints, including Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Port and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Port, continue to operate 24 hours.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Hong Kong's security and economic stability are increasingly intertwined with the broader geopolitical landscape, particularly the complex relationship between China and major global powers. The ongoing Middle East conflict has introduced a risk-averse sentiment in Asia-Pacific markets, with Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index experiencing declines. While the city's Financial Secretary, Paul Chan Mo-po, expressed confidence that Hong Kong's economic growth target for 2026 (2.5% to 3.5%) would not be affected, he acknowledged that the conflict could impact the trading sector due to increased freight charges, while potentially benefiting the financial market due to its stability. This highlights Hong Kong's vulnerability to global economic shocks and its role as a regional financial hub that can attract capital during times of uncertainty.

The US-China relationship remains a critical determinant of Hong Kong's strategic environment. Despite China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressing a desire for a "landmark year" and a less fraught relationship with the US, ahead of an expected Xi-Trump summit in late March 2026, underlying tensions persist. The potential for the US Senate to pass the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Certification Act (HKETO), particularly in response to the Jimmy Lai trial, could lead to the closure of Hong Kong's offices in the US and reciprocal actions from Beijing, further eroding

Hong Kong's international standing and perceived autonomy. This ongoing diplomatic friction underscores the challenge for Hong Kong in balancing its status as an international financial center with Beijing's tightening control.

Relations with the European Union are also strained, primarily due to human rights concerns following the enforcement of national security laws. The European Parliament's resolution in January 2026, condemning the prosecution of Jimmy Lai and calling for sanctions and the suspension of Hong Kong's WTO status, reflects a hardening stance from European lawmakers. China's strong condemnation of this as interference indicates a widening ideological chasm. While Hong Kong is moving to establish itself as a virtual asset hub with a new licensing regime, its ability to attract international business may be hampered by these diplomatic tensions and concerns over legal and political freedoms. The broader strategic landscape sees China expanding its influence, as evidenced by its military drone operations near Taiwan, which, while not directly involving Hong Kong, contribute to regional instability and signal Beijing's assertive posture.

Military and Defense Analysis

Hong Kong's military and defense posture is an integral part of China's overall national defense strategy, primarily managed by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison. During the reporting period, the PLA Hong Kong Garrison engaged in routine military training, having kicked off its annual exercises on January 4, 2026, with the stated aim of enhancing combat capabilities and fulfilling defense responsibilities. This aligns with broader Chinese military modernization programs, which involve the deployment of advanced weaponry and unmanned systems, as seen in the general Chinese military training for 2026.

Scheduled firing practices at the San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range and Tsing Shan Firing Range in March 2026 indicate a continued emphasis on maintaining operational readiness within the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. These exercises are standard procedure and serve to ensure the garrison's proficiency. There were no specific reports during this period of new defense acquisitions or significant strategic shifts unique to Hong Kong's defense capabilities, beyond the overarching integration into the PLA's modernizing force structure. Defense spending trends for Hong Kong are not separately reported, as the PLA Garrison's budget is part of the central Chinese military expenditure. The focus remains on internal security, border control, and counter-terrorism efforts, with the PLA providing a deterrent and ultimate security guarantee under Beijing's direction.

Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months): In the immediate future, Hong Kong will likely continue to experience the full implementation and effects of the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (Article 23). The legal proceedings against individuals deemed to endanger national security, such as the ongoing trial of Jimmy Lai, will remain a focal point, drawing international scrutiny and potentially exacerbating diplomatic tensions with Western powers. Economically, the city's markets will remain sensitive to global geopolitical developments, particularly the trajectory of the Middle East conflict and the outcomes of high-level US-China diplomatic engagements, including the anticipated Xi-Trump summit. Cybersecurity threats, especially those leveraging AI, are expected to persist and intensify, necessitating continued vigilance and the full operationalization of the new cybersecurity law for critical infrastructure.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas: A critical flashpoint remains the potential for the US Senate to pass the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Certification Act, which could lead to significant diplomatic fallout and further isolation of Hong Kong from the international community. Any further high-profile convictions under the national security laws, particularly involving foreign entities or individuals, could trigger renewed international condemnation and potential sanctions, impacting Hong Kong's status as a global financial hub. The ongoing tensions between China and the EU over human rights in Hong Kong also present a risk, potentially leading to trade or diplomatic repercussions. Internally, while large-scale protests have been suppressed, the underlying discontent could manifest in other forms, requiring constant monitoring by security forces.

Indicators to monitor: Key indicators to monitor include the progress and outcomes of high-profile national security cases, particularly those with international implications. Statements and actions from the US and EU regarding Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights will be crucial. Economic indicators, such as foreign direct investment, capital flows, and the performance of the Hang Seng Index, will reflect investor confidence amid geopolitical uncertainties. The frequency and sophistication of cyberattacks, as reported by HKCERT, will serve as a measure of the evolving threat landscape. Additionally, any changes in the posture or activities of the PLA Hong Kong Garrison, beyond routine exercises, would warrant close attention.

Strategic recommendations: For businesses and international organizations operating in Hong Kong, it is recommended to conduct thorough risk assessments regarding the implications of the national security laws, particularly concerning data security, freedom of information, and potential extraterritorial reach. Strengthening cybersecurity defenses and adhering to the new cybersecurity legislation for critical infrastructure is paramount. Diversifying supply chains and market exposure may mitigate risks associated with escalating US-China trade and geopolitical tensions. Diplomatic efforts should focus on encouraging dialogue between Beijing and Western capitals to de-escalate tensions and preserve Hong Kong's unique status, while

advocating for the protection of fundamental freedoms. For the Hong Kong government, transparent communication regarding the application of national security laws and continued efforts to maintain economic stability and attract international investment will be vital to navigate the complex security and geopolitical environment.

ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

Source: HK Free Press

- [Iran war: Ships brandish China-links to weave through Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-10 05:18)

Ships anchored in the Gulf or transiting the Strait of Hormuz are changing their tracking data to boast links to China in an attempt to evade Iranian attacks, according to data from shipping tracker Marine Traffic analysed by AFP. Iran has effectively closed the vital waterway since US-Israeli strikes on it began on February 28, [...]

- [Hong Kong woman, 21, charged over 2019 protests after returning from Australia](#) (2026-03-10 04:23)

A Hong Kong woman is facing charges stemming from the 2019 protests and unrest after returning from Australia – more than six years after her alleged offence took place. Ami Chan, 21, appeared in the Eastern Magistrates’ Courts on Monday to face one count of “possession of an offensive weapon in public” and another of [...]

- [Lawyers for Tiananmen vigil activist seek early acquittal in subversion trial](#) (2026-03-09 23:30)

Lawyers for a Tiananmen vigil activist have begun submissions seeking an early acquittal from the subversion charge, arguing that prosecutors misinterpreted China’s constitution and presented a flawed case. Barrister Erik Shum, representing Lee Cheuk-yan, argued on Monday that prosecutors erred in saying that there are no “lawful means” to call for an end to the [...]

- [Lawmaker Judy Chan fined HK\\$2,000, banned from driving for 1 month over traffic offence](#) (2026-03-09 10:52)

A Hong Kong lawmaker has been fined HK\$2,000 and banned from driving for one month after being filmed driving on the wrong side of a road in Wan Chai in January. Judy Chan, a New People’s Party lawmaker, appeared at Eastern Magistrates’ Courts on Monday. She pleaded guilty to one count of careless driving. Magistrate [...]

- [Mideast war: Hongkongers warned of higher energy bills and fuel costs, as oil exceeds US\\$100 and markets shaken](#) (2026-03-09 10:26)

Hongkongers were warned of rising energy costs on Monday, as regional markets were shaken by the war in the Middle East. Oil breached US\$100 (HK\$782) a barrel for the first time since 2022, as the US-Israeli war against Iran continued into a second week with no sign of abating. Billy Mak, an associate economics professor [...]

- [China says opposes any targeting of Iran’ s new supreme leader](#) (2026-03-09 09:14)

China said Monday that Iran’ s decision to name Mojtaba Khamenei as its new supreme leader following the killing of his father was a domestic matter, and it opposed any attempt to target him. Israel’ s military has threatened to target any successor to former supreme leader Ali Khamenei, who was killed in the first wave of [...]

- [Hong Kong court rejects Wall Street Journal’ s bid to throw out wrongful dismissal suit](#) (2026-03-09 08:47)

A Hong Kong court has rejected the Wall Street Journal’ s bid to throw out a wrongful dismissal suit it faces from a former employee who said she was fired for taking up a leadership role at a local press union. On Monday morning, Principal Magistrate David Cheung shot down the American newspaper’ s application and ordered [...]

- [Sharp drop in Chinese military aircraft near Taiwan raises questions](#) (2026-03-09 04:45)

Taiwan has not detected a single Chinese military aircraft around the island for nine of the past 10 days, leaving experts puzzling over the reasons for the dramatic reduction in sorties. China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and has threatened to use force to bring the island under its control. Beijing has stepped [...]

- [Tai Po fire: Workers at Wang Fuk Court to undergo tight security checks after 3 arrested for allegedly stealing jewellery](#) (2026-03-09 03:36)

Workers entering Wang Fuk Court will undergo tight security checks, including body searches before leaving, after three men were arrested on suspicion of stealing jewellery from the fire-ravaged estate while carrying out building reinforcement works. Commissioner of Police Joe Chow told reporters on Sunday that, starting Monday, police would boost security checks at the Tai [...]

- [Explainer: Hong Kong’ s national security crackdown – month 68](#) (2026-03-08 23:30)

In February 2026, Hong Kong saw developments in two landmark national security cases: the courts sentenced pro-democracy media tycoon Jimmy Lai and his former newsroom staff, and dismissed the appeal of all 12 activists who challenged their convictions or sentences in the “Hong Kong 47” case. The city also witnessed the sentencing of democrat Anna [...]

- [New hunt for flight MH370 ends with no clues to 12-year mystery](#) (2026-03-08 11:45)

The latest search for Malaysia Airlines flight MH370, which went missing 12 years ago in one of aviation’ s greatest enduring mysteries, concluded in January without yielding any findings, Malaysia’ s transport ministry said on Sunday. The Boeing 777 carrying 239 people vanished from radar screens on March 8, 2014, while en route from Kuala Lumpur to [...]

- [Young Chinese parents tighten belts as childcare costs rise](#) (2026-03-08 11:37)

By Mary Yang New mother Zhang Xiaofei wanted to be financially secure before having a baby, wary of high childcare costs that have been softened only a little by Chinese government cash incentives to boost record-low births. The world's second-most populous country is threatened with a demographic crisis after its birth rate halved over the [...]

- [‘A silent killer’ : How Hong Kong’s elderly face deadly heat inside cramped cage homes](#) (2026-03-08 01:00)

After climbing three flights of stairs in a building in Hong Kong's bustling Mong Kok district, HKFP found an open metal gate and a wooden door adorned with Spring Festival decorations. The air was stale, thick with humidity from a shared bathroom and dust from the building's ongoing renovation. There was no breeze entering the [...]

- [Australia says Chinese military helicopter in ‘unsafe’ manoeuvres at sea](#) (2026-03-07 11:52)

Australia's military on Friday said a Chinese navy helicopter flew dangerously close to one of its aircraft during a routine passage through the Yellow Sea that Beijing criticised as a “provocation.” The defence ministry in Canberra said it has raised concerns with Beijing after the incident, which both governments said took place Wednesday over open [...]

- [Fat chance: The government’s new weight loss campaign misses the mark](#) (2026-03-07 02:00)

Many years ago I read a short story about a man who successfully summoned a genie, and on being offered the traditional wish said he wished to lose weight. “Certainly,” said the genie, and in a matter of seconds the lucky fellow was glued to the ceiling, having become lighter than air. The point of [...]

- [‘Your inner self is red’ : UK border officer accused of ‘infiltrating’ Hong Kong pro-democracy group](#) (2026-03-06 13:53)

A man facing national security charges in the UK provided information on pro-democracy dissidents to former Hong Kong police officers, a London court has heard. Former UK border officer Peter Wai, 38, and Bill Yuen, 65, a manager at the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in London, face charges of assisting a foreign intelligence [...]

- [China says ‘clearly aware’ of economic risks, vows to boost spending](#) (2026-03-06 11:21)

China's leaders are “clearly aware” of challenges facing growth, the head of the country's top economic planning body said on Friday, vowing to boost sluggish domestic consumption. The comments were made on the sidelines of the annual “Two Sessions” in Beijing, a closely watched political gathering at which the government unveiled on Thursday a growth [...]

- [HKFP Lens: Villain hitting at Hung Hom temple marks ‘awakening of insects’ festival](#) (2026-03-06 10:19)

Jingzhe, the “awakening of insects” festival that falls a few weeks after the start of the Lunar New Year, took place on Thursday – marking the third of the Chinese calendar’s 24 solar terms. The festival is named for the awakening of insects from hibernation as spring arrives. A common ritual during Jingzhe is “villain [...]

- [Family of Hong Kong firefighter killed in Tai Po blaze to receive HK\\$6.15 million in gov’t financial aid](#) (2026-03-06 10:14)

The family of the Hong Kong firefighter who died battling November’s Wang Fuk Court fire in Tai Po will receive HK\$6.15 million in financial support, the government has announced. Ho Wai-ho, 37, was among the 168 lives lost in Hong Kong’s deadliest fire in almost eight decades. He died in the line of duty on [...]

- [UK MP quits parliament group as husband accused of spying for China](#) (2026-03-06 07:22)

A UK lawmaker said Thursday she was stepping out of the parliamentary group of the governing party after her husband was reportedly arrested on suspicion of spying for China. UK police on Thursday said they had released three people, reportedly including David Taylor, the husband of Labour member of parliament Joani Reid. “I am voluntarily [...]

- [Hong Kong court dismisses press group’s legal challenge to limits on access to vehicle registry](#) (2026-03-06 06:55)

The High Court has dismissed a Hong Kong press group’s legal challenge against government restrictions on media access to the vehicle registry. High Court Judge Russell Coleman handed down his judgment on Friday, rejecting the Hong Kong Journalists Association’s (HKJA) judicial review against the Transport Department. The HKJA argued that the new arrangement on media [...]

- [Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai will not appeal nat. security conviction, 20-year jail term, lawyer says](#) (2026-03-06 04:10)

Hong Kong pro-democracy tycoon Jimmy Lai will not appeal against his national security conviction and 20-year jail term, his lawyer has said. Lai, 78, was sentenced to 20 years behind bars on February 9 – the longest jail term handed down so far under the national security law that Beijing imposed following the 2019 protests [...]

- [Over 40% of Hong Kong’s ‘Gen Z’ suffer from moderate to severe depression, survey finds](#) (2026-03-05 23:30)

Over 40 per cent of Hong Kong’s “Generation Z” population, or those aged 18 to 24, suffer from moderate to severe depression, a survey has found, with researchers identifying excessive screen time as strongly linked with emotional distress. The Mental Health Association of Hong Kong (MHAHK) said on Thursday that Hong Kong residents had reported [...]

- [Hong Kong urged to provide ‘humane education’ after 14-year-old boy arrested over alleged animal abuse](#) (2026-03-05 10:53)

An animal rights NGO has urged the Hong Kong government to provide “humane education” and teach respect after a 14-year-old student was arrested on suspicion of animal abuse. PETA Asia said in a statement on Thursday that it was “rushing humane education materials” to the Education Bureau and urging the government to prevent violence by [...]

- [China boosts military spending with eyes on US, Taiwan](#) (2026-03-05 07:51)

China announced a seven percent boost to its defence budget for 2026 on Thursday as it steadily increases spending to counter the United States and enforce its claims over Taiwan and the South China Sea. The latest rise keeps China’s spending at a third of that of the United States, but the Asian power is [...]

- [Taiwan scholar barred from testifying in Tiananmen vigil trial over ‘irrelevant’ expertise, Hong Kong court says](#) (2026-03-05 06:48)

A Taiwanese academic was barred from testifying in Tiananmen vigil activist Chow Hang-tung’s national security trial as the evidence he planned to give was “irrelevant” to the case at hand, a Hong Kong court has said. Chow had initially applied to have Ho Ming-sho, a sociology professor at National Taiwan University, testify in her national [...]

- [Hongkongers stranded in Dubai return home on first Middle East flight since conflict began](#) (2026-03-05 04:39)

An Emirates flight from Dubai carrying stranded Hongkongers landed on Wednesday night, marking the first flight from the Middle East since the conflict began. Emirates flight EK 380 landed in Hong Kong at 9:50pm, according to the Hong Kong International Airport’s record of arrival flights. On the flight were Hongkongers and mainland Chinese residents who [...]

- [Hong Kong trade office employee, ex-British border officer accused of ‘shadow policing’ for China as UK trial begins](#) (2026-03-05 03:45)

By Martin Pollard A retired Hong Kong police officer and a British Border Force official engaged in “shadow policing” for China on UK soil, prosecutors said at the start of their London trial Wednesday. Peter Wai, 38, and Bill Yuen, 65, both dual British and Chinese nationals, face charges of assisting a foreign intelligence service [...]

- [Hong Kong launches first action plan to combat obesity](#) (2026-03-04 23:30)

The Hong Kong government has launched a three-year Action Plan on Weight Management – the first of its kind – to fight obesity. The government unveiled the action plan on Wednesday to mark World Obesity Day. The plan brings together different government bureaux and departments and aims to enhance collaboration between Chinese and Western medicine, [...]

- [Swedish businessman jailed for 7 years over rape of domestic worker appeals conviction at Hong Kong court](#) (2026-03-04 12:23)

A Swedish businessman jailed for seven years in 2024 after being found guilty of raping a domestic worker has appealed his conviction. Patrik Tobias Ekstrom appeared at the Court of Appeal on Wednesday. Ekstrom was found guilty of one count of rape and one count of non-consensual buggery in August 2024, after a seven-member jury returned a [...]

- [Wang Fuk Court residents to testify at probe hearings on deadly fire](#) (2026-03-04 11:43)

Wang Fuk Court residents will give evidence regarding the deadly fire that ravaged their housing estate, the committee investigating the disaster has said. The committee said in a statement on Tuesday that legal teams would give opening remarks on the first day of the evidential hearings on March 19. The process will take “a few [...]

- [China’ s shipping giant Cosco halts services to and from Gulf](#) (2026-03-04 11:42)

Chinese shipping giant Cosco, which operates one of the world’ s biggest oil tanker fleets, announced it was suspending services to and from Gulf countries from Wednesday, including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Kuwait. The state-owned, Shanghai-based firm is among several major shipping groups that have halted vessel operations in the Strait [...]

- [Jailed ex-Hong Kong lawmaker released on HK\\$5 million bail pending appeal against fraud conviction](#) (2026-03-04 08:49)

A former Hong Kong lawmaker serving an almost three-year jail term for a fraud conviction has been released on HK\$5 million bail pending appeal. Chim Pui-chung, 79, appeared at the High Court’ s Court of Appeal on Wednesday for a second application for bail pending his appeal in a HK\$210 million fraud case, which occurred between [...]

- [Taiwan charges 62 linked to Cambodia’ s alleged scam operator Prince Group](#) (2026-03-04 05:40)

Taiwanese prosecutors charged 62 people and 13 companies on Wednesday in connection with a Cambodian conglomerate whose founder is accused of running forced labour camps. Prince Holding Group founder Chen Zhi has been indicted by the United States on fraud and money-laundering charges for allegedly running a multibillion-dollar cyberscam network from Cambodia. The Southeast Asian [...]

- [Hong Kong sees warmest winter on record, with only 5 cold days](#) (2026-03-04 04:56)

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has said the city experienced its warmest winter on record in recent months, with an average temperature reaching 19.3 degrees Celsius. “Together with the well-above-normal temperatures in December 2025 and warmer-than-usual weather in January 2026, Hong Kong experienced the warmest winter on record from December 2025 to February 2026 with [...]

- [British woman who reported rape in Hong Kong found guilty of blackmail, perverting justice](#) (2026-03-03 23:30)

A British woman who was travelling in Hong Kong has been found guilty of blackmail and perverting the course of justice, after initially reporting a man for alleged rape in 2024. Isabel Rose appeared at the District Court to receive the verdict on Tuesday. The 25-year-old was accused of demanding £100,000 (HK\$1,040,500) from a man [...]

- [UK national security trial involving Hong Kong trade office employee set to begin](#) (2026-03-03 12:26)

A UK national security trial tied to the Hong Kong government is set to begin this week in London, as jury selection is underway. The two defendants – Bill Yuen, a manager of Hong Kong’s trade office in London, and Peter Wai, a former UK border officer – previously pleaded not guilty to spying charges. [...]

- [Ex-Apple Daily editor files appeal for sentence cut in national security case](#) (2026-03-03 11:10)

A former Apple Daily editor who was sentenced to 10 years in prison last month in a national security trial alongside his former boss, Jimmy Lai, has filed an appeal seeking a shorter sentence. Fung Wai-kong, former editorial writer and editor-in-chief of Apple Daily’s English news section, filed his appeal on Monday, local media reported, [...]

- [China votes to oust 3 generals from political advisory body](#) (2026-03-03 08:04)

China’s top political advisory body has voted to remove three generals, state media said, a week after nine military officials were ousted from its legislature. The move comes as Beijing escalates a sweeping purge of military officials, days before thousands of delegates from across the country meet for the annual Two Sessions political conclave on [...]

- [Over 400 Hongkongers stranded in Middle East, reported safe amid conflict](#) (2026-03-03 07:21)

More than 400 Hong Kong residents were stranded in the Middle East as of Monday afternoon, according to the Immigration Department, amid the ongoing conflict triggered by US-Israel strikes on Iran. The Immigration Department said that as of 5pm Monday, it had been contacted by 432 Hong Kong residents in the Middle East, all of [...]

- [China backs Iran in ‘defending sovereignty,’ vows to push for peace](#) (2026-03-03 05:57)

China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi told his Iranian counterpart on a call Monday that Beijing supports Tehran defending itself against US-Israeli strikes, as war spread across the Middle East. Hundreds have died in Iran since Saturday when the United States and Israel began striking dozens of targets in the country. Tehran responded by launching waves [...]

- [Hong Kong Arts Centre revives Asian film competition after 17-month hiatus, adds national security terms](#) (2026-03-03 05:04)

The Hong Kong Arts Centre (HKAC) has revived an Asian film competition after a 17-month hiatus, adding new terms requiring participants to ensure their work complies with the city's national security legislation. The HKAC's Incubator for Film and Visual Media in Asia (ifva) Awards opened for applications on Sunday. According to the awards' rules and [...]

Source: RTHK English News

- [Islands ferry fare hikes move leaves sinking feeling](#) (2026-03-10 05:03)

Islands district councillor Yip Pui-kei said on Tuesday many residents had been left with the feeling they had little choice but to accept proposed fare adjustments on six major outlying island ferry routes. Set to take effect from April 1, a 12.5 percent increase will be applied to a standard journey and freight service on routes to Cheung Chau, Lamma and the inter-islands services. Prices for multi-ride tickets for services to Cheung Chau, Lamma, Mui Wo and Peng Chau are also set to see an eight percent increase. According to a paper submitted to the district council, the Transport Department said the changes would be part of the renewal of the five-year operating licences for Sun Ferry and Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry. The department said the fare hikes were “moderate and minimal” and necessary to balance the financial viability risks of operators facing declining ridership and rising operational costs. Yip, vice chairman of the Islands district council traffic and transport committee, disagreed. “The ferry service operators originally applied for a fare increase of around 20 percent to 30 percent. We – and the local community – have already given a lot of feedback to the Transport Department, trying our best to get the increase reduced,” he said on an RTHK radio programme. “But overall the islanders feel they have no choice but to accept the fare hike – even though they think it's still too much in the way of what they should be paying for what is a daily expense.” Yip added that the elderly would bear the brunt most as the revamped HK\$2 transport subsidy scheme was also set to take effect from the beginning of next month. Following the changes, beneficiaries of the subsidy scheme will have to pay 20 percent of fares for trips that cost more than HK\$10 – instead of the current flat HK\$2 fare. Yip urged ferry service operators to offer discounts to the elderly, such as half-price fares and designated monthly passes. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- ['Interpol event to showcase HK police's capabilities'](#) (2026-03-10 04:56)

A former mainland security official said an Interpol annual event to be hosted in Hong Kong in November would showcase the SAR police force's capabilities. Hong Kong's hosting of the Interpol general assembly will see the city gather, for the first time, more than 1,000 police executives from around the world. Speaking to RTHK in Beijing, former vice minister of public security Chen Siyuan said the event held great importance. “This is a major event of great practical and historical significance. It is also an event that the Chinese authorities, especially the Chinese police, attach great importance to,” he said. “It strengthens international exchanges

and law enforcement co-operation to jointly combat transnational crimes. It is a meaningful event." Hosting the annual event in the SAR for the first time holds, Chen said, great significance. "[The meeting] would showcase the capabilities of law enforcement and international exchanges of Chinese police, including Hong Kong police," he said. "I believe this year's Interpol meeting should include rich content, including international law enforcement co-operation, and content that we need to discuss in accordance with Interpol's principles. "The content should be quite extensive and I believe [the event] can yield fruitful results." Chen said he hoped global law enforcement agencies could reach a consensus through exchanges at the meeting to step up their war on online scams as they were harmful to people all over the world. With the efforts of Interpol, mainland and Hong Kong police forces, he said, online scams can be rendered less ubiquitous to pose less of a risk to people and their hard-earned assets. Chen also called for closer co-operation between mainland, Hong Kong and Macao police forces. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- ['More should be done to ensure Wang Fuk security'](#) (2026-03-10 03:11)

A construction industry representative on Tuesday suggested that items at fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court be returned to homeowners and tenants before construction works take place. Police have tightened security measures since Monday, after three construction workers were arrested for allegedly stealing valuables from a flat at the estate. These include requiring workers to store their personal belongings in lockers before they are escorted by officers, who will check for valuable items in units beforehand. Workers also have to undergo a body search with metal detectors after their work is done. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, Chau Sze-kit, chairman of the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union said the measures have a deterrent effect, but cannot solve the problem. "Given that police can go in to make a note of the valuables, and we have a record of homeowners and tenants, why can't the items be returned to them after stocktaking?" he asked. "This can eliminate the motives, and it is also fairer to workers who are in situations where they are likely to arouse suspicion." Even though this way would cause delays to reinforcement works, he said, it can make homeowners feel at ease, and protect them as well as workers. He also condemned the alleged theft, and expressed regret over the incident. But Chau said he believes it is an isolated case. Edited by Aaron Tam

- ['Five-year plan crucial amid economic transformation'](#) (2026-03-10 02:45)

The city's sole delegate to the top national legislature has said that the formulation of Hong Kong's own five-year plan will be crucial for the SAR amid a period of economic transformation. Starry Lee, who sits on the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, has also said the blueprint for the city will be in line with the One Country, Two Systems principle. A new national development planning law is currently under review at the annual Two Sessions in Beijing, highlighting the importance of One Country, Two Systems, and supporting Hong Kong and Macao in aligning with national development. On the sidelines of the annual political gatherings, Lee underscored the importance for Hong Kong to have its own policy goals. "Due to the lack of planning in the past, our economic transformation has yet to

see obvious changes for quite a long while,” she said. “We have also seen that under the country’s plans every five years, the nation’s technological advancements and all aspects of development are progressing at full speed according to that plan.” Lee pointed out that it is important for the territory to serve the nation’s development, and pointed out that people should look beyond the chapter on Hong Kong and Macao in the 15th Five-Year Plan.

“Now our country is doing a lot of things to boost local consumption, [we should see] how we can help in this aspect. A lot of [mainland] enterprises do want to expand their market overseas. Hong Kong has its professional services and strengths to help all these enterprises expand their network outside the country.” Lee was among Hong Kong deputies to the National People’s Congress who met Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang in the capital, where he said the Legislative Council has “much to offer under the executive-led system”. The delegate, who is also the Legco president, said it is important for lawmakers to monitor the government by way of putting forward their own thoughts on improving what authorities have proposed. Monitoring officials does not necessarily mean opposing plans or using “relatively strong words” to criticise the government, Lee added. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [MidEast war to pose minimal impact on HK: tycoon](#) (2026-03-10 00:42)

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East should have limited impact on Hong Kong's overall economy due to the region's "insignificant" direct investment, according to a property tycoon. Far East Consortium chairman David Chiu added that there would not be much capital flowing out of the Middle East due to the conservative approach by wealthy families. Continued strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran -- coupled with Tehran's retaliatory attacks -- disrupted global supply chains and upended the world's energy and transport sectors. Chiu, a Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Standing Committee member, is currently in Beijing to attend the Two Sessions meetings. In an exclusive interview with RTHK, he spoke on a wide range of issues. "When it comes to investing in Hong Kong – direct investment [from the Middle East] – today is absolutely insignificant, and therefore, it won't affect our economy at all," he said. "But of course, on the macro-economy side, because of the war, interest rates may not come down as rapidly as we all want, oil prices may go up further. "I don't think we should expect, especially now [with] the war situation, too much money will come into Hong Kong for the time being." The businessman also gave a bright outlook of Hong Kong's housing market, saying he would "boldly predict" prices to rise by over 15 percent this year and the next. However, Chiu had reservations on Financial Secretary Paul Chan's decision to raise stamp duty for luxury home transactions valued at HK\$100 million or more to up to 6.5 percent. "I personally think that it's a little bit too early," he said, explaining that developers rely on both buyers at home and abroad to recoup their investment. "Especially now, we need a lot of money to develop our Northern Metropolis, and that releases a lot of new investment for the developers. And the developers would not be able to invest a lot of money, unless they can release some of the inventory." Chiu, who's "very bullish" of the Northern Metropolis development, revealed his company is in the "final stage of negotiation" with authorities on land premium regarding a land parcel in the area. "We have a piece of land, which will... allow

us to build about 600,000 square feet of residential [buildings], amounting to close to 900 units, next to the Hung Shui Kiu light rail station." Under a 2024 pilot scheme, the government will award plots of land in the Northern Metropolis to winning bidders for collective development. In submitting a bid, firms must also tender for a site reserved for technology development. To that, Chiu said it is a "new territory" for developers as they have to look for partners in the tendering process. Edited by Raymond Yeung

- ['SAR deputies should take part in external exchanges'](#) (2026-03-09 12:28)

Local National People's Congress (NPC) deputy Ma Fung-kwok on Monday said Hong Kong delegates should be allowed to play a bigger role in the NPC's future outbound exchanges or overseas visits. His remarks came after Zhao Leji, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, delivered the committee's work report at the second plenary meeting in Beijing. As one of the six main tasks for the coming year, Zhao stressed that the NPC would "pursue rigorous international engagement" to contribute to the country's overall diplomatic agenda. Ma, who led the Hong Kong delegation, said SAR deputies have a lot to contribute in this regard. "I suggested that Hong Kong can play an active role in international engagement. In particular, we have built a strong international network and have good language skills. However, we lack practice and experience in the area of 'diplomacy'," he said. "So I think if we could participate in outbound exchanges, it would also be a rare opportunity for the Hong Kong representatives to improve their capabilities." Hong Kong's sole delegate to the NPC Standing Committee, Starry Lee, echoed Ma's suggestion, saying SAR representatives could contribute further to the country's development. She also hailed the work report as being "comprehensive and well-written", noting that the NPC Standing Committee had "rigorously and meticulously" vetted a large number of laws and reviewed dozens of reports over the past year. Fellow NPC deputy Priscilla Leung, meanwhile, highlighted Zhao's call on NPC deputies to conduct more non-governmental diplomacy and strengthen collaboration with foreign parliaments. Leung, who also chairs the Legislative Council's Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee, said she would consider ways to drive the initiative at the local level. Edited by Priscilla Ng

- [Judy Chan fined, banned from driving for one month](#) (2026-03-09 09:35)

Lawmaker Judy Chan was on Monday fined HK\$2,000 and disqualified from driving for one month after pleading guilty to careless driving. The lawmaker was charged with careless driving after a video, which was circulated online in January, captured her driving against the flow of traffic in Wan Chai. In handing down the sentence, magistrate Ko Wai-hung described Chan's offence as "serious" and "premeditated", saying her decision to drive against the flow of traffic wasn't made in a split second and that the duration of her offence was not short. He said the sentence had taken into account Chan's clean criminal and traffic conviction records. Speaking after attending the hearing, Chan said she regretted the incident and again apologised to the public. "Since the incident occurred I have stopped driving. I also promised the [magistrate] that I won't offend again," she said. "I would also like to apologise to road users

for causing any inconvenience.” Chan said she would attend a driving improvement course despite not being required by the court to do so, adding that “although I might not drive again, but if I really need to drive again, I will only do so after completing the driving improvement course.” She added that Legislative Council president Starry Lee had given her a verbal warning over the incident. Lee, who’s in Beijing for the annual Two Sessions meetings, has said the Legislative Council’s supervisory committee would issue a formal response after reviewing the case. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Mandatory e-payment drive sits well with cabbies](#) (2026-03-09 06:48)

A veteran taxi driver has welcomed an upcoming government regulation that makes the availability of electronic payments mandatory for all taxis, saying e-payment systems had already made journeys more convenient for both passengers and drivers and also boosted his earnings. From April 1, all taxi drivers in Hong Kong will be required to offer at least one QR-code-based and one non-QR-code electronic payment method to enhance service quality and improve passenger convenience. Cheng, a taxi driver with more than a decade of experience, said the policy shift has had a positive impact on his business. “Customers often check their wallets before getting in. If they have cash, they’ll hop in. Sometimes they don’t, but when they see my car accepts electronic payment, they will get in,” he said. “It definitely helps bring in more business.” Cheng noted that signing up for electronic payment systems was quick and hassle-free. He observed that most of his local customers preferred to use Octopus while tourists tended to opt for credit card payments. Ryan Wong, chairman of the Hong Kong Taxi Council, echoed Cheng’s sentiments, saying the new requirement would boost public confidence in taking taxis and improve overall satisfaction. He urged drivers who had yet to sign up to visit the nearest service centre and complete their registration before the deadline. “According to one of the biggest [platforms] Octopus, there have already been more than 40,000 taxi drivers registered for their systems and are ready for electronic payments,” he said. “We believe that already covers the majority of the taxi drivers, but of course, there are still some taxi drivers who have not yet completed their registration, so we encourage them to do it as soon as possible.” Wong said both the authorities and various e-payment platforms have ramped up training and technical support, especially for older drivers. He also noted that intense competition among e-payment providers had led many to waive activation and handling fees, easing the financial burden on drivers and encouraging adoption. Louisa Fung, Assistant Commissioner for Transport, revealed that about one third of taxis across the territory – including all taxi fleets – had already installed integrated payment terminals that accept multiple forms of payment. She also highlighted the Transport Department’s efforts over the past few months in rolling out publicity and educational campaigns, supervising e-payment platforms in hosting workshops, explaining legal requirements and providing on-site assistance to help drivers open accounts. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [War fallout hits debuts of three IPOs in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-09 05:23)

War in the Middle East weighed on the market debuts of three Hong Kong listings on Monday that had hoped to ride a wave of momentum for share sales in the city this year. Shenzhen Zhaowei Machinery & Electronics, Estun Automation and AlSCO Pooling Service are the first Hong Kong share listings since the conflict broke out at the end of last month. Of the three, Zhaowei fared best, with shares in the micro-drive provider rising about four percent from its offer price of HK\$71.28. Its initial public offering (IPO) priced the stock well below its maximum offer price of HK\$73.68. Industrial robot maker Estun dropped around 14 percent after pricing at the bottom of its offer range. Reusable packaging service provider AlSCO saw its shares tumble 40 percent after also pricing at the bottom of its IPO range. AlSCO's retail tranche was oversubscribed more than 5,000 times, but that did not shield the stock from a sharp first-day selloff as investors took profits amid the jump in oil prices and broader macro jitters, said Dickie Wong, executive director of research at uSmart Securities. "This highlights a fragile market environment right now," he said. "Upcoming IPOs could face heightened volatility, subdued openings or even deeper dives unless oil prices and geopolitical tensions ease and the Hang Seng Index stages a meaningful rebound." Hong Kong has had the strongest start to a year for share sales since 2021, with IPOs and secondary listings in January raising around US\$5.5 billion, LSEG data showed. A wave of Chinese companies planned to come to market after last month's Chinese New Year holiday, but face souring investor sentiment as the Middle East war sends oil prices surging and stokes worries about a hit to global growth. In a research note on Monday, CICC said Hong Kong equities were likely to be more volatile than the mainland's A shares in any oil-driven risk-off move, but warned prolonged high oil prices would still hurt China's economy. The three companies raised a combined HK\$3.62 billion in share sales last week. Zhaowei raised the bulk of that at HK\$1.91 billion, after launching its offer on February 27, a day before the war broke out. The company, which is already listed in Shenzhen, has said proceeds would be used for research and development and for capacity expansion, among other purposes. Estun raised HK\$1.49 billion in its Hong Kong share sale, while AlSCO raised HK\$223.7 million. The Hong Kong pipeline continues this week with MeiG Smart Technology scheduled to list on Tuesday after setting its offer price at the maximum HK\$28.86. (Reuters) Edited by Tony Sabine

- [NPCSC 'must push for sound start to five-year plan'](#) (2026-03-09 04:28)

The chairman of the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC), Zhao Leji, on Monday said the committee must strive for high-quality development to contribute to a sound start of the 15th Five-Year Plan. The exhortation came as he delivered the NPCSC's work report at the second plenary meeting in Beijing, which was attended by President Xi Jinping and other state leaders. Zhao said it must uphold the president's core position in the party's central committee and in the party as a whole and earnestly carry out plans made during the fourth plenary session of the 20th central committee in October. "We must improve the people's congress system and deeply study general secretary Xi Jinping's key theory on it," he said in the Great Hall of the People. "We must uphold the unity of leadership by the party, the running of the country by the people, and law-based governance. We must develop whole-process people's

democracy and work to ensure the people's congress system is upheld, improved and implemented successfully." Zhao also said there was room for improvement insofar as the legislature's work was concerned. "We are also keenly aware that there still exists a number of gaps and shortcomings in our work. The quality of our legislation must be further improved. The effectiveness of our oversight has room for enhancement," he said. Zhao also hailed the successful co-ordination and completion of the 14th Five-Year Plan amid what he described as a "truly remarkable" year in 2025. He said the central government had formulated policies that better addressed the needs of the people and improved livelihoods in 2025, as the congress implemented the major decisions and plans of the party's central committee. The government's areas of focus, he said, included protecting workers in flexible and new forms of employment, as well as deepening urban-rural integration. "We designated a number of topics for special reports, conducted thorough preliminary research, and fostered closer work communication, and urged relevant parties to take rectification measures," Zhao said. Zhao also said Beijing officials had arranged seminars for deputies from Hong Kong and Macao to provide them with the necessary information that would help them better perform their duties. "We have also strengthened the duties and oversight of management of their performance," he said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Tightened security at Wang Fuk Court protects all'](#) (2026-03-09 03:41)

Some renovation workers at inferno-hit Wang Fuk Court on Monday said tightened security measures can help safeguard workers and flat owners. The measures came after three workers were arrested for allegedly stealing jewellery from a unit of the estate. Workers are now required to put their personal belongings and cash into lockers, before being escorted by police officers, who will enter flats beforehand to check for valuable items. They are also subject to a body search with metal detectors after their work is done to prevent theft. A worker, Wong, said the new measures are acceptable. "We're just working, so the measures are alright. A body search is a must-do, given that we're working inside someone's flat. We have to put down your own stuff before going into the flat, it's just to protect ourselves and others," he said. But another worker, Chan, said theft is uncommon at construction sites. "I rarely see any stealing at sites, so it seems a bit excessive to enhance security just because of the incident earlier, given that everyone needs to do a body search," he said. "But I think it's still acceptable as it just serves the purpose of a security check," he added. Meanwhile, flat owner Au Yeung said he walks around the estate each day and sees a lot of strangers coming and going. "Will you let a stranger go into your house? The authorities should have let us go into our flats and collect our belongings before the workers come in and work. Who can we blame now if we lose anything?" he said. "Why don't they tighten security and let us go in three months ago? If they let us in and grab our valuable items, the workers could have done their work however they like without receiving any complaints," he added. Edited by Aaron Tam

- ['HK 5-year plan will uphold One Country, Two Systems'](#) (2026-03-08 23:34)

Former chief executive and Vice-Chairman of Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference CY Leung has said an initiative by Hong Kong to draft its own five-year plan to align with the national development blueprint won't affect the continued implementation of 'One Country, Two Systems'. Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of the annual "Two Sessions" in Beijing on Sunday, Leung said a new national development planning law that is under review highlights the importance of One Country, Two Systems, and supports Hong Kong and Macao in aligning with national development. "Some people may ask: why is Hong Kong also doing a five-year plan? Does that make us the same as provinces and cities on the mainland? Does it mean Hong Kong no longer has One Country, Two Systems? No. The National People's Congress is now deliberating a National Development Planning Law," he said. "In this law, it is stated that the country upholds the policy of One Country, Two Systems and supports the two SARs in proactively aligning with, integrating into and serving the overall national development framework." He noted the SAR has long made sectoral plans – on housing, transport, and land. But he said Hong Kong's first comprehensive five-year plan to align with that of the nation's is different from past, single sector efforts. It will not be planning "in isolation", he said. Instead, Hong Kong will proactively align with the country's development agenda. Edited by Cecil Wong

- [Wang Fuk Court security to be tightened: police chief](#) (2026-03-08 11:02)

Police Commissioner Joe Chow said reinforcement works at fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court would resume on Monday with tightened security measures in place. His remarks came after three renovation workers were arrested for allegedly stealing jewellery from a unit of the estate. Speaking at a press briefing on Sunday, Chow said more police officers would be deployed to the site to enhance security. He added that lockers would be provided for workers' personal belongings and cash. "We have arranged some lockers, some storage boxes, for all the workers to store their valuables like watches or jewellery, and they are not allowed to bring cash more than HK\$500," Chow said. "But, of course, they are allowed to bring with them their mobile phones." Police will inspect units before workers are allowed to enter, he said.

"Right after they go up to the buildings for strengthening work...my escorting officers will go in to inspect the premises to see if there are any valuables placed conspicuously, like on the table or on the shelves, etc," Chow said. "So if there are, they will make a record, and also, they will ask the workers to countersign, so that we are all on the same page." Chow went on to say that all workers would be subject to a body search with metal detectors after finishing their work inside the buildings to prevent items from being taken out. He added that the force received 81 enquiries related to Wang Fuk Court as of 5pm on Sunday, mostly from residents who were concerned about the security of their flats. Chow also said the force will conduct a review of the case involving three renovation workers who allegedly stole jewellery to see if negligence was involved. Edited by Aaron Tam

- ['HK, GBA tech parks can yield cutting-edge advances'](#) (2026-03-08 08:21)

Businessman Irons Sze has called for collaboration between technology parks in Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area to make advances in artificial intelligence and biotechnology. The local delegate to the Chinese People’ s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) on Sunday told a CPPCC plenary meeting that the focus should be on cutting-edge technology and striving for support to establish more national-level scientific research platforms. “[We should] treat the Northern Metropolis and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park as the core, and align with the development of the Greater Bay Area National Centre of Technology Innovation, to promote the collaboration between Hong Kong and Macao universities and mainland research institutions and leading enterprises to build more national-level laboratories,” Sze said in Beijing. He also said the SAR should focus on efforts to create the world’ s top innovation ecosystem. There should also be efforts in improving the financing mechanism, removing cross-border flow barriers, and promoting data exchange, Sze added. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Good service despite Tuen Ma Line special arrangements](#) (2026-03-08 07:58)

The MTR Corporation said Tuen Ma Line train services on Sunday were smooth, despite the implementation of special arrangements to facilitate track modification works between Hung Hom and East Tsim Sha Tsui stations. Passengers passing through Hung Hom Station on Tuen Ma Line were required to alight first and change trains at the opposite platform. The travelling directions of Tuen Ma Line trains at Hung Hom Station platforms were also swapped to facilitate the works. The MTR’ s head of Line Group Management for the Tuen Ma Line David Chan said the company would monitor the service operation and thanked passengers for their understanding. “To provide clear information, many signs at Hung Hom Station have been temporarily changed, including route maps, directional signs and passenger information displays at the concourse and platforms,” he said. “In addition, we have deployed staff on the East Rail Line platforms at Hung Hom Station. Before passengers interchange to the Tuen Ma Line, we would remind them to pay attention to the trains’ travelling directions on Tuen Ma Line platforms.” Chan pointed out that the track modification works are being conducted to enhance passenger comfort and will not have an impact on travelling times. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [HK enjoys opportunities under 15th Five-Year Plan: FS](#) (2026-03-08 07:22)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan said on Sunday that Hong Kong has great potential, as the country’ s 15th Five-Year Plan brings boundless opportunities. He said the plan offers a clear direction for the SAR’ s future development. In a blog post, Chan said Hong Kong has unique advantages under the One Country, Two Systems principle. He said the city can contribute by leveraging the advantages of the vast mainland market and coordinating international resources. “As the country develops new quality productive forces and promotes the development of future industries such as artificial intelligence, low-altitude economy and biomedicine, Hong Kong can make good use of its advantages in international scientific research platforms, professional services and capital market to introduce global innovation

resources to the country while injecting new momentum into the local economy," he said. Chan also said the establishment of the Northern Metropolis would further drive innovative collaboration in the Greater Bay Area. The finance chief also highlighted the importance of AI training in Hong Kong, saying it would ensure the workforce's adaptability to future structural changes in the economy. Meanwhile, Chan said that despite a turbulent global landscape and complex geopolitics, China has effectively withstood external challenges and maintained economic stability. Hong Kong must align with the 15th Five-Year Plan and work on its own five-year plan to drive high-quality development, he added. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Women are a powerful source of energy for HK: CE](#) (2026-03-08 06:59)

Chief Executive John Lee on Sunday described women as a "powerful source of energy for social progress" that is essential to Hong Kong's continuing success. Speaking at the International Women's Day Reception, he noted that women account for 54 percent of the city's population. "Over the years, in so many ways women have challenged prejudices, erased boundaries and embraced opportunities and done so through remarkable achievements in government, business, and professions, academia, the arts, innovation, family life, and so much more," he said. "Women are a powerful source of energy for social progress, women's talent and determination are essential to Hong Kong's continuing success." He pointed out that the number of female civil servants and bureau leaders reflects the government's efforts in promoting equal rights. "Among all civil servants, women account for 49 percent, directorate civil servants account for over 45 percent," he pointed out. Lee said the government has worked closely with the Women's Commission to expand opportunities for women. He also said that the second Family and Women Development Summit will take place on March 31. Edited by Aaron Tam

- ['Hetao Innovation Zone development accelerated'](#) (2026-03-08 04:28)

Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry Sun Dong on Sunday said construction for the remaining areas in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Cooperation Zone had been accelerated. This came after the government proposed in its latest budget of earmarking HK\$10 billion as initial capital to further develop the zone. Speaking on a radio programme, Sun said development for the zone had entered its second phase and the HK\$10 billion would be used for public-private sector collaboration. Following the zone's launch at the end of last year, two wet laboratory buildings and one talent accommodation building under the first phase had been completed. Sun said construction of the remaining five buildings had been accelerated to get them completed ahead of the original schedule. "We launched the zone at the end of last year. We had previously proposed to finish the remaining five buildings in Phase 1 progressively from 2027. But now we changed our plan, and decided to complete them from the end of 2026," he said. He explained the latest Five-Year plan for both the country and Hong Kong was generating increased demand. "So now construction at the zone is happening 24 hours a day," he said. As the Hetao area is a "spade-ready site" and a key national project, Sun said the area possesses advantages for future land tenders. He also noted that

authorities have received 27 letters of intent regarding the zone's Hong Kong Park section from local, mainland and overseas groups, reflecting a positive market response. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Taskforce set to help make supercomputing hub click](#) (2026-03-07 11:08)

Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry Sun Dong said on Saturday that a taskforce would be established to ensure that the development of a supercomputing hub at Sandy Ridge stayed on track. The move will come days after Hong Kong Range Intelligent Computing Technology won the tender with a HK\$581 million bid. Under the terms of the tender award, it has to complete its investments of more than HK\$23 billion over the first three years and begin operations within 42 months. The firm will lose its guarantee money of HK\$400 million, or two percent of the targeted investments, if it fails to meet specified targets. Speaking on a television programme, Sun noted that the sole bidder faces a significant challenge. He said the land development cost was extremely high at over HK\$1 billion and that the land premium only made up a small proportion of it. "The government will set up a dedicated task force internally to follow up on the project," Sun said. "It is not for monitoring but to mainly provide comprehensive support for the company so that it can fulfil its commitment as scheduled and in accordance with the regulations." Zhou Chaonan, founder of the parent company of Hong Kong Range Intelligent Computing Technology, told RTHK on the sidelines of the "Two Sessions" meetings in Beijing that she felt honoured that the company had won the tender award. She is confident that the company will meet the targets, given that the group has experience of more than a decade in the field. "We will work hard at building the data centres," Zhou said. "This is a duty we ought to be able to fulfil." The firm will work with universities and talents in the research, academic and industry sectors in the SAR, Zhou said, adding that the city holds high promise in artificial intelligence advances. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Hainan CPPCC chief wants to leverage HK port strengths](#) (2026-03-07 10:22)

Hainan may seek closer ties with Hong Kong to leverage the SAR's strengths as a free trade port, a delegate to the country's top political advisory body said on Saturday. Li Rongcan, who chairs the Hainan provincial committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), called for deepening collaboration between the two places. "Hainan is the only free trade port with Chinese characteristics while Hong Kong is an internationally renowned and highly mature free trade port," he told a CPPCC plenary meeting in Beijing.

"Collaboration between the two places offers not just support for Hainan's development with the help of Hong Kong's capital, technology and international experience but also what it takes for the joint development of the Hainan free trade port and the Greater Bay Area." Li also called for support at the national level to foster deeper collaboration between the two places on commerce and finance. China has launched island-wide special customs operations on Hainan, the world's largest free trade port by area, allowing freer entry of overseas goods, expanding zero-tariff coverage and more business-friendly measures. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Two warded after assault, arson and attempted suicide](#) (2026-03-07 10:07)

Police launched an investigation after a man and a woman were hospitalised following a violent incident involving assault, arson and an apparent suicide attempt in Yuen Long on Saturday morning. According to officers, emergency services were alerted at 9.43am after a 31-year-old woman reported that she had been attacked by her husband inside a flat on Fung Cheung Road. She told officers that her husband also used a knife during the assault. Senior inspector Chan Man-hei said the woman managed to escape from the lower-storey flat and call for help. "Upon arrival, police arranged for the victim, who had sustained a hand injury, to be sent to Tuen Mun Hospital," she said. "Later, officers also found the suspect lying on the pedestrian walkway outside the building, believed to have fallen from height. "He was immediately rushed to Tuen Mun Hospital for emergency treatment. He is currently unconscious but in a stable condition." Chan said thick smoke billowed from the unit and that the Fire Services Department extinguished the blaze. "During the fire, around 30 residents heard the fire alarm and evacuated the building," she said. "The fire was quickly contained, did not spread to any other units, and caused no further injuries." Preliminary police investigations suggest the suspect, a 31-year-old man who runs a restaurant, had been arguing with the victim over business matters. "During the argument, the suspect became emotionally agitated, took a fruit knife from the kitchen. The victim immediately tried to stop him, and during the struggle, the suspect cut her in the hand," Chan said. "After she managed to take the knife away, the male suspect locked himself in the bedroom. While the victim was leaving the flat and calling police, the suspect used a lighter to set fire to the mattress and then fell from the unit." The police said the motive for the incident had yet to be ascertained. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Lawmakers get 'proactive' national development call](#) (2026-03-07 07:05)

Beijing expects the current Legislative Council to be “more proactive” in aligning Hong Kong with the country’s latest five-year plan, according to local National People’s Congress (NPC) deputies. They were speaking following a meeting with Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang in the capital on the sidelines of the “Two Sessions” assemblies during which he directed Legco to come up with practical ways to better implement the executive-led governance system in Hong Kong. The city’s sole delegate to the NPC Standing Committee, Starry Lee, said she shared her thoughts on how to further develop the governing structure during the hour-long meeting with Ding. “I think he does, of course, expect [lawmakers in] this term to have a more proactive approach, especially when we talk about how to integrate into the 15th Five-Year Plan,” she said. “We will work according to his advice.” Asked about how the next SAR administration could follow through with the city’s own five-year plan, Lee said the focus of the development initiatives would always be geared towards helping the country achieve its policy targets. Fellow NPC deputy and finance-sector lawmaker Ronick Chan said Ding also called for vigilance in maintaining financial stability, which is vital for Hong Kong. “In terms of the current financial development, we have a lot of virtual asset products to be introduced in Hong Kong and also the wider application of artificial intelligence in Hong Kong,” Chan said “[Ding] reminded us to be mindful of the current development, and we must be vigilant [with regards to] the financial stability for Hong Kong.” Other issues discussed at the meeting included the recent Legco

elections, the Wang Fuk Court blaze and “important national security cases” , said other NPCdeputies who were at the meeting. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK 'keeping eye on Middle East to safeguard markets'](#) (2026-03-07 06:35)

The government will take the necessary action and introduce measures to safeguard market stability as geopolitical hostilities escalate in the Middle East, according to Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury Christopher Hui. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme on Saturday, he said authorities would monitor the situation closely and respond in a timely manner, acknowledging the Middle East’s critical role in global energy supplies. "Everyone is very concerned about the conflict in the Middle East because its continuation will have an impact on the real economy and other aspects. We are continuously monitoring this closely," Hui said. "In fact, this moment precisely highlights Hong Kong's role as a safe harbour. From the perspective of policy foresight and stability, this is an advantage amid major global changes." Hui also addressed the immediate impact of the Middle East conflict on financial markets, with Hong Kong stocks having experienced declines alongside other Asian markets. He attributed this volatility to rising global uncertainty, describing the stock market as a "thermometer" that naturally reflects prevailing conditions. Amid these challenges, Hui reaffirmed the government's commitment to its core duties. "As the government, regardless of the changes, we must do the right thing and do what we ought to do," he said. "This includes continuously maintaining market stability while simultaneously introducing different measures to develop our market." Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK's safety a big draw for overseas talent](#) (2026-03-07 05:39)

Secretary for Labour and Welfare Chris Sun has highlighted Hong Kong’s stable and secure environment as a growing competitive advantage in the global race for talent, particularly amid the escalating conflict in the Middle East. Speaking on a Commercial Radio programme on Saturday, he said that against the current backdrop of geopolitical instability, Hong Kong's unique strengths were set to become increasingly prominent, both in the immediate future and over the medium to long term. Drawing on recent experience, Sun noted that feedback from newcomers consistently pointed to security as a top reason for their choosing the city. “One of Hong Kong's advantages that is frequently mentioned is safety," he said. "In addition to our strong educational resources and diverse opportunities, safety is a crucial factor – often ranked first or second – in their considerations." A secure and stable environment, Sun said, is valued immensely by global professionals. “With the shift in events, the importance of safety is growing," he said. "From that perspective, both my team and I believe that this enhances our ability to draw talent, not only from the Middle East but from around the world." While acknowledging that relocation decisions take time due to family and other considerations, the labour chief expressed confidence that the city's reputation as a safe environment would greatly amplify its ability to attract international professionals. Sun also revealed that, after three years of focused work, approximately 270,000 talents had arrived in Hong Kong through various talent schemes, injecting fresh momentum into the economy and yielding encouraging

results. Among these, he said, the Top Talent Pass Scheme accounted for about 40 percent of arrivals. Sun added that the scheme boasts an application renewal rate of approximately 54 percent and a success rate of nearly 95 percent. The majority of these top-tier professionals are engaged in business and trade, he said, followed by the finance sector. A significant portion of these new arrivals, he added, is also contributing to innovation and technology, with one in every six new arrivals working in that field. Sun emphasised that these individuals were contributing to tech innovations and diversifying Hong Kong's economic development. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [HK households face power bill hike as fuel costs rise](#) (2026-03-07 04:43)

Hong Kong households may soon face higher electricity bills, as the conflict in the Middle East ties up oil and liquefied natural gas supplies and pushes up fuel costs. Speaking to reporters after a Commercial Radio programme, Billy Mak, an associate economics professor at Baptist University, said electricity bills in Hong Kong reflect fuel costs through the Fuel Adjustment Clause. "Yesterday, the oil price was about US\$90 per barrel. This is pretty high because a month ago, the oil price was just about US\$50 to US\$60," Mak said. "So in the near future, we can foresee that our electricity prices will increase because the fuel cost adjustment account will increase," he added, referring to the monthly tariff adjustment. The clause reflects the difference between the projected and actual fuel costs for Hong Kong's two electricity providers, Hongkong Electric and CLP Power. Mak warned the cost of a barrel could surge to US\$100 or even US\$150, saying that when the Russia-Ukraine conflict broke out four years ago, oil hit US\$120 per barrel. Oil prices have risen about 30 percent this week. About 20 percent of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas supplies are shipped through the Strait of Hormuz between Iran and Oman. Meanwhile, Chairman of the Hong Kong Shippers' Council Peter Hui told reporters that air-freight costs had increased by at least 20 to 30 percent due to the Middle East conflict, especially since airports in Dubai and Qatar are vital transshipment hubs for shipments from Asia to European countries. Import and export sector lawmaker Tommy Chung, though, was more optimistic. Also speaking after the same programme, he said that even though the conflict was a hindrance to traders in the short run, he believed it would be business as usual once hostilities ended. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [No licence issued for alleged Kowloon Tong dorm](#) (2026-03-07 04:34)

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) says a mainland organisation, which media reports allege is running a student dormitory without authorisation, does not hold a bedspace apartment licence. The organisation, Gleam Haven, in a recent social media post, said it was offering 60 bed spaces for students who had just arrived in Hong Kong at premises on Waterloo Road in Kowloon Tong. Regulations require any flat with at least 12 bed spaces to be licensed prior to operation, unless managed by a registered school. HAD said Gleam Haven had not made any applications. HAD said the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) has stepped up inspections of premises that claim to be student dormitories and boarding apartments. HAD said OLA had conducted around 3,000 checks between 2025 and January 30 this year, and that it had pressed

charges against eight operators over unlicensed bedspace apartments between 2021 and 2025. All eight were convicted. The Education Bureau earlier said the Kowloon Tong premises were neither registered nor provisionally registered as a school. It also said it had not received an application from the organisation to operate a school at the site. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Legco urged to help better executive-led system](#) (2026-03-07 04:04)

Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang has asked the Legislative Council to come up with practical ways to better implement the executive-led political system in Hong Kong. He made the remarks at a meeting on Saturday during which Hong Kong's sole delegate to the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee Starry Lee said Legco plays an important role in carrying out executive-led governance. Ding urged Lee, the Legco president, to lead lawmakers on the matter. "The Legislative Council, in particular, has much to offer under the topic of executive-led governance, with ample room for implementation, exploration, and theoretical research," he said. "I hope that during the eighth Legco term, Lee will lead the legislature to explore, study and put into practice such an issue to yield more practical results that are in line with Hong Kong's actual situation and the central government's requirements." Other Beijing officials who were present at the meeting with SAR deputies to the NPC include Xia Baolong, director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office; Xu Qifang, the office's executive deputy director; and Zhou Ji, who heads the liaison office. The meeting came a day after the vice premier met Hong Kong and Macao members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, where he had also said they shared a duty to better implement the executive-led governing system. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Three arrested over Wang Fuk Court theft](#) (2026-03-06 14:15)

Police said on Friday that they've arrested three renovation workers for allegedly stealing jewellery from a unit at fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court. Officers said they became suspicious about the three men, aged between 32 and 38, who were carrying out reinforcement works inside a unit of Wang Tai House on Thursday. Brian Chung, Assistant District Commander of Tai Po, said the workers were arrested after seven pieces of jewellery, worth around HK\$90,000, were found on them. "It is believed they stole the items from the unit that they were working in. Police arrested the trio for suspected theft," Chung said. "Officers have contacted the tenant of the unit, who confirmed ownership of the jewellery." Chung stressed there are security measures in place to monitor those who work in Wang Fuk Court. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK women's football team returns home after Dubai exit](#) (2026-03-06 13:57)

The SAR's women's football team returned to Hong Kong on Friday after pulling out of a tournament in Dubai amid rising tensions in the Middle East. The squad was initially stranded in Dubai, but they flew to Bangkok on Wednesday. Captain Ma Chak shun thanked the Football Association of Hong Kong, China and the Immigration Department for their help, saying she's glad all players and staff are home safe. "It's an unforgettable experience. In Hong Kong, we've never experienced any real threat to our lives. Now we're back, we will cherish each other more.

To safely return to HK, we feel fortunate and happy," she said. In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Football Association of Hong Kong, China, confirmed the team's decision to pull out of the Pink Ladies Cup 2026, saying their safety is the top priority. The squad had originally been scheduled to return to Hong Kong on March 8. Edited by Priscilla Ng

- [Three arrested in bid to rob forex duo of HK\\$10m](#) (2026-03-06 10:36)

Three men have been arrested for conspiracy to rob after two people carrying HK\$10 million were held up at knifepoint at Sheung Wan MTR Station in the morning on Friday. Superintendent Lo Ka-chun from the police's organised crime and triad bureau said the robbery attempt occurred after two victims had exchanged yuan and US dollars for Hong Kong dollars at a foreign exchange shop on Hillier Street in Sheung Wan. Police officers, waiting nearby as part of a stakeout following a tip-off, subdued two suspects on the spot. Another suspect, a driver who was waiting in a car nearby, was also arrested. Lo said all three suspects, aged between 19 and 31, were detained for investigations. The two victims, who were relatives, are residents of Macao and Hong Kong. One of them was in a stable condition after being sent to Queen Mary Hospital with an injury on the left hand, Lo said. "It has come to the attention of the police that there have been three robberies involving foreign currency exchange outlets in recent months, in which customers of these shops have been robbed," he said, with the two earlier robberies also happening in Sheung Wan. "The police attach great importance to solving these cases and has used intelligence-led operations to that end. "Using surveillance cameras installed as part of the SmartView programme, officers were able to collect important evidence to crack these cases." Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Top advisers urged to do more for executive-led system](#) (2026-03-06 09:19)

Henry Tang, a Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Standing Committee member, said on Friday Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang had encouraged Hong Kong delegates to the top political advisory body to contribute more in advancing executive-led governance in the city. The former SAR chief secretary was speaking after taking part in a meeting between Ding and CPPCC deputies from Hong Kong and Macao during the annual "Two Sessions" in Beijing. Tang noted that Ding singled out for mention several significant events that happened in Hong Kong over the past year, including a Legislative Council election turnout that was higher than the previous one and the national security trial of Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai. On the Wang Fuk Court fire that claimed 168 lives in November, Ding said the SAR government had "properly handled the aftermath", according to Tang. He also said the vice premier outlined five expectations for CPPCC deputies. One is to offer further support to the SAR chief executive and the government in providing executive-led governance. "The vice premier did say quite a bit about how CPPCC members can play an active and positive role in the executive-led government of Hong Kong," Tang said. "This role is demonstrated by the CPPCC members [having] in the past always contributed to the development of the mainland and we will continue to do so in many areas... the CPPCC members can continue to play that role in taking that lead and participate in the process." Tang added that people can also show their support

for the executive-led system by backing the government. Other expectations Ding conveyed, Tang said, included ensuring a smooth subsector election for the Election Committee this year; supporting Hong Kong's prosperity and financial stability and accelerating the development of Northern Metropolis; and safeguarding national security to make sure future governments are led by patriots. Ding also said CPPCC delegates should be actively involved with the 15th Five-Year Plan, Tang said. "I think the most important point was that Hong Kong must grasp the opportunities presented by the 15th Five-Year Plan," Tang said. Using shipping as an example, Tang said some people might think it was a sunset industry in Hong Kong given the steady decline in shipping volumes over the past few years. He stressed that a lot of shipping-related matters involved opportunities in financial and professional services that Hong Kong could seize, as the 15th Five-Year Plan explored new development fields for the shipping industry. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK should step up N Metropolis development: Ding](#) (2026-03-06 09:03)

Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang outlined the need for Hong Kong to develop innovation and technology and the Northern Metropolis, according to local delegates of the nation's top political advisory body. Hong Kong members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), including CPPCC Standing Committee member Jonathan Choi, told RTHK that a two-hour meeting on Friday between Ding and delegates from Hong Kong and Macao covered the SAR's high-quality development, among other matters. Choi quoted the vice premier as saying that while Hong Kong excels in finance, the city has to build an international innovation and technology hub. "The Northern Metropolis is an area of concern for [Ding], and [he] wishes that we can... connect with the Greater Bay Area, Qianhai, Nansha and Hetao," he said. Choi, who chairs the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce, also said that among the directives were for Hong Kong to align with the national Five-Year Plan, and that it is a shared duty to implement the executive-led governing system. "He hoped that the business community, CPPCC members, and people from all sectors of society would support the SAR government and the chief executive under the executive-led system, to govern Hong Kong well and maintain its prosperity and stability," Choi said. Fellow CPPCC delegate and former president of the Law Society, Melissa Pang, said promoting patriotism and safeguarding national security were also mentioned at the meeting with the vice premier. "There are external forces remaining in Hong Kong. We must stay vigilant and prevent foreign interference. We will take resolute and effective actions," Pang said. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Most childless women reluctant to start families](#) (2026-03-06 08:34)

A new survey has found that a majority of Hong Kong women of childbearing age, who do not have any offspring, remain reluctant to have children, citing financial pressures, housing constraints and career priorities as key factors for their hesitation. The poll, conducted online in February by the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions, surveyed 550 childless women aged between 18 and 45. Around 60 percent of the respondents said they had no intention of having children while others would only consider having, at most, one or two.

Financial considerations and housing problems topped the list of obstacles, followed by age related and work related concerns, the survey found. Among women aged 36 to 45 who did not plan to have children, around one third cited physiological factors while age was a decisive consideration in the refusal by the rest. Career development featured frequently as a reason to delay or forego having children among women earning more than HK\$50,000 a month. Childcare subsidies topped the list of incentives for most of the respondents at over 90 percent, and that was followed by enhanced tax relief and longer paid childcare leave. Federation chairman Lam Chun-sing said there was an increasing need for support measures as having two or more babies would exact a financial burden on both the grassroots and the middle class. "We hope that the government can provide long-term support for them because promoting childbirth is a long-term, not just a short-term, policy or part of one or two promotional efforts," he said. The federation urged the government to strengthen fertility-support measures through co-operative efforts with mainland medical institutions or funding for egg-freezing. It also called for stronger childcare and after-school support, including more nursery places, a higher subsidy for parents and extending the newborn baby bonus scheme, which is available up until October. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Judges 'delivered flawless ruling in Jimmy Lai case'](#) (2026-03-06 05:59)

A Beijing official said Hong Kong's judges handed down the right judgement in the case involving Jimmy Lai, founder of the now-defunct Apple Daily. Sun Qingye, deputy head of the Office for Safeguarding National Security, made the remarks on the sidelines of the ongoing Two Sessions in Beijing, after Lai was sentenced to 20 years in prison on three national security-related charges last month. Sun, also a delegate to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, told RTHK that the judges in Lai's case should not be subject to sanctions imposed by foreign nations. "The judges handed down the ruling based on his criminal acts in accordance with the National Security Law. Therefore, they made a very good judgement. I think there weren't any flaws," he said. Sun also said he's not worried about new sanctions that may be imposed by foreign countries on Hong Kong and mainland officials. He expressed confidence in the situation in Hong Kong now that the National Security Law and Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, enacted in line with Article 23 of the Basic Law, are in force. "I believe Hong Kong's national security situation will be even better, with the safeguards becoming increasingly robust," Sun said. "In the coming five years, as long as the SAR adheres to the National Security Law and Article 23, I have full confidence [in the city's national security]." Sun also said Hong Kong should further enhance financial, technology as well as cyber security in the future to protect national security. Meanwhile, Lai's lawyer said on Friday he would not lodge an appeal against his conviction and 20-year prison sentence. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Family of deceased fireman receives more than HK\\$6m](#) (2026-03-06 04:25)

The government announced on Friday that it had disbursed HK\$6.15 million to the family of the firefighter who died while battling the Wang Fuk Court blaze last November. Senior fireman Ho

Wai-ho, 37, was one of 168 people who lost their lives in the Tai Po inferno. The grant was approved by the Committee on Financial Assistance for Family Members of those who Sacrificed their Lives to Save Others. Its chairman, labour and welfare minister Chris Sun, described Ho as demonstrating exceptional courage and a high degree of gallantry to save and protect other people's lives. "We deeply mourn the loss of such an excellent and devoted public servant," he said in a statement. "The grant represents the government's recognition of the late Mr Ho's gallantry and selflessness of the highest order." The government said the current range of grants offered under the scheme is between HK\$6.15 million and HK\$12.3 million. It went on to say that grants are worked out according to a formula with reference to the age of the deceased, normal retirement age, as well as the median monthly employment earnings in Hong Kong at the time. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Executive-led system 'needs support from everyone'](#) (2026-03-06 03:59)

Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang has stressed that the executive-led political system in Hong Kong is “not a matter that concerns only the chief executive” and that truly implementing the governing principle is not an easy task. The senior Beijing official also told Hong Kong and Macao members of the nation’s top political advisory body on Friday that executive-led governance required strong understanding from SAR officials of their leadership roles in the territories. The remarks came in a meeting between Ding, a Politburo Standing Committee member, and the delegates of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) during the ongoing “Two Sessions” in Beijing. “The actual implementation of the [executive-led system] is not an easy task,” he said. “It requires the chief executive and the government to strengthen their sense that they lead the SAR. “It also requires co-operation and support from all aspects of society, including the legislative and judicial organs. “The executive-led system is not a matter that concerns only the chief executive, it is also the collective responsibility of the Hong Kong and Macao governments, members of the public and all sectors of society.” The director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, Xia Baolong, and CPPCC vice-chairman and former SAR chief executive Leung Chun-ying were among those present at the meeting. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Get guardians accredited for non-local students'](#) (2026-03-06 03:44)

The principal of a school with a semi-boarding programme on Friday said the government should get guardians accredited to help tackle potential problems arising from an expected increase in the number of non-local students coming to study in the city. The government has approved 48 Direct Subsidy Scheme schools to increase the number and size of their classes in order to take in more non-local students with visas starting in the next academic year. Speaking on RTHK, Samuel Cheng from United Christian College (Kowloon East), also said there was a high demand for student hostels due to the expected influx, but more than 30 of the schools that had been given the green light for class expansion do not have dormitories. He said Hong Kong needs to get guardians accredited to help monitor boarders. "For instance, universities and tertiary institutions can set up guardianship accreditation programmes, so as to allow those

who wish to host non-local students studying in Hong Kong to understand how they should take care of them and become an accredited guardian through such programmes," he said. Cheng's school has been operating a dormitory for over a decade. He said that it is vital for student hostels, which are privately run and not managed by actual schools, to ensure the needs of these minors are met and their living environment, as well as matters such as curfew and tutorial sessions, are handled properly. If they are unable to address these issues, they should not be open for business, the principal said. Cheng, who is also the external affairs secretary of the Hong Kong Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools Council, went on to say that dorm operators have to address students' psychological needs, as they can be homesick while struggling with the new academic system. On a more advanced level, dorm operators should also arrange activities to help students adapt to the living and learning environments in Hong Kong. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [TKO Hospital probes patient's death after surgery](#) (2026-03-06 03:38)

Tseung Kwan O Hospital has launched a probe into the death of an 85-year-old patient after surgery. According to the Hospital Authority, the patient, who had colon cancer, underwent a transverse colostomy on February 7 to relieve an intestinal obstruction. The procedure involves creating a surgical opening, known as a stoma, in the abdomen to allow waste to leave the body. The stoma was intended to be placed in the transverse colon. Following the surgery, the patient was admitted to the intensive care unit before being transferred to a general surgical ward. On February 16, she was moved to Haven of Hope Hospital for rehabilitation, where her vital signs remained stable. However, medical staff noted that the stoma continued to produce a relatively high output. On March 1, the patient began experiencing abdominal pain, low blood pressure and a rapid heartbeat. She was transferred back to the surgical ward at Tseung Kwan O Hospital the following day for further treatment. An emergency CT scan conducted on March 3 revealed that the stoma was located in the stomach, rather than the intended position in the transverse colon. Hospital officials reported that the patient then developed severe dehydration and supraventricular tachycardia, a condition characterised by a sudden acceleration in heart rate. The patient required cardioversion and medication before being transferred back to the intensive care unit. As her condition worsened, medical staff consulted with her family and agreed not to perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation. The patient passed away that evening from multiple organ failure. The hospital expressed deep sorrow over the incident and confirmed that staff have already met the patient's family to offer a detailed explanation and an apology. The hospital said it has also implemented immediate measures to enhance relevant surgical training and reminded medical staff to maintain vigilant postoperative monitoring. A root-cause analysis panel will conduct a thorough investigation, with a comprehensive report and improvement recommendations expected within eight weeks. The hospital has pledged to maintain close communication with the family and provide necessary support. The case has also been referred to the coroner for follow-up. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Govt works to get stranded HK people home safely](#) (2026-03-05 13:45)

The Immigration Department said on Thursday that it's doubled the manpower of a unit responsible for helping Hong Kong people stranded in the Middle East because of the Iran war. Those who require assistance can call the hotline, 852-1868. The department said on social media that it set up an emergency command centre soon after the conflict broke out, and the unit has been giving stranded residents advice regarding flight arrangements and itineraries. It said officers have been offering help through staying in close liaison with the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the SAR, Chinese embassies and consulates overseas, as well as the local tourism sector regulator. "The Director of Immigration, Benson Kwok, visited the 1868 hotline centre today for an inspection and listened to a briefing, while encouraging colleagues to keep working hard to help stranded Hong Kong people depart as soon as possible," the department said. It added that as airports in the region gradually resume limited operations, the centre will stay in contact with the hundreds of Hongkongers and help them return home. Edited by Priscilla Ng

- [Report responds to global challenges: NPC deputies](#) (2026-03-05 13:01)

Local National People's Congress (NPC) deputies have hailed a government work report unveiled by the country's leaders, saying it is effective in responding to external challenges. Beijing has set an economic growth target of 4.5 percent to 5 percent for the year. Ronick Chan, a Hong Kong member and lawmaker, said setting a range for the nation's GDP growth target allows for more flexibility in implementing fiscal and monetary policies. "As we all know, the international situation is complex and ever-changing, and setting a single target may make the country's policies passive," Chan said. "Having a range can set a base with the lower limit, while having the upper limit as a goal to work towards." Fellow NPC deputy Priscilla Leung said the work report – delivered by Premier Li Qiang – not only outlines the direction of developments at home, but also carries "huge international value". "Under the uncertain international economic and political situation in the world, China has provided a very practical work report together with an international strategic development for humankind," Leung said. Edited by Priscilla Ng

- [RTHK, Malaysia station sign MoU to boost collaboration](#) (2026-03-05 09:33)

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) has taken another step in expanding its regional partnerships, signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Malaysia's Ministry of Communications on Thursday to enhance media collaboration and foster cultural exchange. In a statement, the Hong Kong broadcaster said the agreement focuses on several core areas of cooperation, which include joint productions aimed at showcasing the cultural and tourism highlights of both the SAR and Malaysia, with the goal of encouraging more visitors between the two destinations. The signing ceremony took place at the headquarters of Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM) in Kuala Lumpur and was officiated by Director of Broadcasting Angelina Kwan and RTM Director-General Ashwad Ismail. During her visit to Malaysia, Kwan held discussions with Ismail to explore future avenues for collaboration. Talks covered potential programme exchanges, co-productions and talent development initiatives. These efforts, the statement said,

are expected to strengthen people-to-people ties under the Belt and Road Initiative and deepencultural connections between Hong Kong and the Asean region. Kwan emphasised RTHK' s commitment to supporting government efforts in building closer ties with Asean, noting thatthe public broadcaster is actively expanding cooperation with media organisations across theregion. With the signing of MoUs with broadcasting bodies in both Indonesia and Malaysia,RTHK is bolstering its international communication capabilities. These agreements are part of abroad strategy to elevate Hong Kong' s media profile and reinforce its cultural presencewithin the Belt and Road region, Southeast Asia and beyond. RTHK is currently in discussionswith other Asean media organisations with the aim of further deepening regional collaboration.Looking ahead, RTHK said it would continue to leverage the SAR' s unique position as a bridgebetween the mainland and the world in telling the stories of the nation and the city whilepromoting Chinese culture on the global stage. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Cabbie, woman passenger killed in collision with truck](#) (2026-03-05 08:27)

Two people have died following a vehicular collision near Hong Kong Golf Club in Fanling. Police received reports at 11.30am on Thursday of a collision between a taxi and a 16-tonne truck on Fan Kam Road. The collision, which saw the taxi pile into the side of the truck, left the 56-year-old cabbie and a female passenger, 65, trapped inside the vehicle. Firefighters managed to extricate the two. Both of them were pronounced dead at Northern Hospital. The truck driver, 35, was arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving causing death and was being detained for further enquiries. _____ Last updated: 2026-03-05 HKT 18:11 Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK cruises ahead towards green fuel supply chain](#) (2026-03-05 08:13)

Hong Kong has been building a comprehensive supply chain for green fuel since rolling out the Action Plan on Green Maritime Fuel Bunkering in November 2024, Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan said. Officiating at the first green methanol bunkering ceremony on Thursday, Chan said the SAR had established itself as a port for regular operations and bunkering involving liquefied natural gas and biofuel. "Last year, we carried out 16 bunkering operations for liquefied natural gas and 110 operations for biofuels, involving up to 220,000 tonnes of fuel-loading capacity for marine vessels," she said. "We will focus on green methanol next to provide global shipping companies with a comprehensive supply chain and trading environment, with the aim of offering the best solution for different stakeholders in the international shipping industry." To achieve the goal, Chan said, the Marine Department had already released a set of working guidelines on methanol bunkering. She added the relevant tax incentive policies had gained support from the Legislative Council. Sinopec Hong Kong, the company providing green methanol for the ceremony, said it was planning to build a storage facility for the fuel in the city, after it became the first company in the SAR to blend and provide biofuel in July – with the amount supplied so far exceeding 50,000 tonnes. Clean energy storage facility provider, CIMC Enric, said Hong Kong could offer a great opportunity for the development of green methanol bunkering despite limitations in operational costs and space. It

was also confident that the city's competitiveness in biofuels would continue to rise in the future. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['HK should strategise to keep its doctoral graduates'](#) (2026-03-05 07:03)

Hong Kong should strengthen its strategies for retaining doctoral graduates so as to allow them to pursue their academic careers in Hong Kong more easily. This would consolidate the city's leading position among global tertiary education hubs, a new study by Hang Seng University suggested. The study conducted between September 2025 and February 2026 draws on comparative policy analysis and in-depth interviews with 50 doctoral students and university leaders in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and the UK. Provost and vice-president of the university Joshua Mok said the study shows Hong Kong's immigration policies and post-study work opportunities are the most decisive factors influencing international doctoral students' choices. Currently, non-local university graduates can stay in Hong Kong for two years without a job offer. Mok suggested lengthening this period to attract more students and graduates to Hong Kong. "If the government is very keen to retain those talent trained in Hong Kong for some selected area of high technology, which Hong Kong and also our country really needs, then the government may be more open in retaining them... maybe [for] a longer period of time for them to stay in Hong Kong for [the] further enhancement of the research," Mok said. He also urged the government to deepen local research investment, promote the strengths of local doctoral programmes, collaborate with mainland universities and offer housing and living cost support to graduate students. Mok noted students were also concerned about geopolitical tensions affecting research collaboration, mobility, travel opportunities and visa process when deciding on study destinations. Amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, Mok anticipated more students from the Middle East would come to Hong Kong and other Asian regions for their studies instead of the US due to existing tensions. "My experience of working with colleagues and students coming from the Belt and Road and Middle East is that they're very hard working... if we can attract them and retain them, it would be to the advantage of Hong Kong as a hub in future," he said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK to set broad, strategic five-year plan: CE](#) (2026-03-05 05:39)

Chief Executive John Lee has pledged to formulate a "broad, strategic and forward-looking" five-year plan for Hong Kong, which is expected to be completed within this year. The city's leader attended Thursday's opening of the National People's Congress in Beijing, during which the country unveiled its development targets for the 15th Five-Year Plan and mentioned the SAR in the work report. Lee, on social media, said his administration will unswervingly implement One Country, Two Systems, and unite all sectors to further deepen reforms and make better use of the city's advantages. He also vowed to lead SAR authorities in aligning with the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan. "We will make a more comprehensive, precise and detailed strategic deployment of key development areas and formulate the first broad, strategic and forward-looking five-year plan for Hong Kong," Lee wrote. The chief executive said officials are committed to building an international innovation and technology centre and bring in more

high-value-added industries to settle in the Northern Metropolis. The city will explore emerging markets and deepen international collaboration, Lee added. Edited by Aaron Tam

- ['4.5-5pc growth target a reasonable forecast'](#) (2026-03-05 04:41)

Hong Kong deputies attending the annual “Two Sessions” meetings in Beijing on Thursday voiced support for the country’s economic growth target of between 4.5 percent and five percent this year, saying it was a reasonable forecast given the current geopolitical instability. Henry Tang, former financial secretary and a local Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Standing Committee member, said he was confident the country could meet the target. “I believe the forecast for this year at 4.5 percent to five percent is a reasonable forecast. Last year we achieved five percent growth despite the circumstances being quite challenging,” he said. “It is a reflection and a ratification of the country's leadership and the party's leadership. So I am confident that we will be able to achieve the forecast growth.” Local CPPCC delegate and non-executive chairman of HSBC, Peter Wong, also said he believes the growth target is suitable. “Because the economic base is getting larger, a 4.5 percent growth rate is actually very impressive. This indicator is a very solid benchmark, especially given the current state of global instability,” he said. Meanwhile, CPPCC Standing Committee member and mainland economist Justin Lin said he expects steady and sustained growth throughout the 15th Five-Year Plan period. “This can be extrapolated from the growth target of 4.5 percent to 5 percent this year,” he said. “The economy has increased by 10 trillion yuan every year over the past years. I believe this growth rate will continue.” He added that China’s total economic output could “very likely” reach 170-180 trillion yuan in five years. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Li urges HK to contribute to national development](#) (2026-03-05 04:26)

Premier Li Qiang pledged in his annual work report that the central government will fully implement One Country, Two Systems, while reiterating Beijing's resolve to advance the cause of national unification. Li made the remarks at the opening of the annual National People's Congress in Beijing on Thursday. Apart from recapping the government's work in 2025, he also laid down 10 targets for this year. Hong Kong came up numerous times in the 35-page report, most notably in the 10th and final target of "strengthening risk prevention and mitigation, and enhancing security capacity in key areas". "We will resolutely implement the policy of One Country, Two Systems, under which the people of Hong Kong administer Hong Kong, and the people of Macao administer Macao," the premier read. "And we will see that Hong Kong and Macao are administered by patriots, so as to raise the governance efficiency and foster economic and social development." He also pledged support for the two SARs to integrate into and serve the country's overall development. The report also called for the full integration of technological innovation and industrial innovation, including the construction of a world-class tech hub in the Greater Bay Area. On the Taiwan issue, Li made clear Beijing's position. "We will stay committed to the One-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, resolutely fight against separatist forces aimed at 'Taiwan independence', and oppose external interference so as to promote the peaceful development of cross-strait relations and advance the cause of national

reunification," he said. Edited by Cecil Wong

- ['Cognitive gap' among obese key hurdle for action plan](#) (2026-03-05 04:11)

Health and sports experts have welcomed the city's first-ever action plan to tackle rising obesity rates but pointed out that the biggest hurdle isn't just dietary or a lack of exercise but a significant "cognitive gap" where people simply do not realise they are overweight. The three-year strategy, launched on World Obesity Day on Wednesday, aims to curb obesity through a cross-departmental approach built on five key pillars – strengthening health education, fostering a supportive social environment, enhancing healthcare services, adopting a life-course approach to health promotion and continuously monitoring weight trends. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, Dr Anne Chee, head of the non-communicable disease branch at the Department of Health, said data from a 2022 health survey showed that over half of Hong Kong adults are either overweight or obese. "In Hong Kong, over half of chronic diseases are related to obesity," she said. "Many people with obesity also suffer from diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure. It is very possible that over half of these individuals have these comorbidity issues." However, Chee noted a major disconnect in public perception. "Hong Kong citizens have pretty good self-perception. We see that among overweight individuals, two thirds feel their weight is just right, or even feel that they are too thin," she said. "The downside is that in the past year, many of them haven't done anything to control their weight, so we see a significant perception gap." Chee emphasised that many people might not fully understand how to calculate their body mass index, underscoring the need for intensified public education. The plan distinguishes itself by adopting a "whole-of-government and community approach", she said, adding willpower and clinical care alone cannot solve the obesity crisis and that the broader environment must also support healthy choices. As such, Chee said, the initiative brings together health services, education, labour safety, public housing management and urban planning, with practical steps including improving access to local services and providing multi-disciplinary support – from nurses and dietitians to occupational therapists – at district health centres. Urban planning will also play a role, with plans to expand exercise infrastructure in public housing estates and new guidelines encouraging pedestrian-friendly waterfronts, cycling paths and building designs that nudge people to use stairs. "We hope that after three years of effort, Hong Kong citizens' knowledge of weight management, including how to manage it, can increase by 10 percent," Chee said. "Our aim, in line with global targets, is to halt the upward trend of obesity – to stop it from rising further." Speaking on the same programme, sports professor Lobo Louie from the Education University welcomed the initiative but warned that changing behaviour patterns was a long game. "The biggest difficulty is that people lack motivation," he said. "There is an interesting analysis from the US. If you buy an exercise bike for home, on average, after three to six months, it will disappear because you've lost motivation, and you've probably started draping clothes over it." He stressed that while the action plan was a positive step, "raising awareness and promoting active behaviour is the crucial strategy in promoting healthy living, especially weight management". Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- ['Student dorms should be licensed amid rising demand'](#) (2026-03-05 03:43)

A lawmaker on Thursday called on the government to set up a student dormitory licensing system, after media reports alleged that a mainland organisation is operating such a facility without authorisation. The group – Gleam Haven – marketed itself as a trilingual secondary school, located at 101 Waterloo Road in Kowloon Tong, that offers 60 beds for students who have just arrived in Hong Kong. Education sector legislator Tang Fei told RTHK that the closest thing to a student dormitory licence is a bedspace apartment licence. But, noting that many newly-arrived students are not adults, he pointed out that bedspace licences have no guidelines on supporting measures, such as whether or not guests have to have guardians. "Can we set up a student dormitory licence or boarding licence? Certainly, it will be different from those in mainstream schools," he said. "But we can reference them, such as the student-teacher ratio for a housemaster, and whether there is a need for a social worker. This is worth looking into, and stepping up legislation." He went on to say that the government should offer unified licensing to save applicants' time, and believed demand for such services will go up under the "Study in Hong Kong" brand. Shang Hailong, the founding president of the Hong Kong Top Talent Services Association told the same programme that he is concerned about the students' safety as he suspected there are unauthorised works at the Gleam Haven site. He suggested the government should offer more guidelines – such as by taking reference to the hardware requirements similar to those for guesthouses or basic housing units – to schools that wish to set up dormitories for students from outside the territory. The Buildings Department told RTHK that it has found existing and newly built unauthorised structures at the site's courtyard, but they pose no immediate danger. It said a removal notice has been issued to the owners, adding that it will follow up on enforcement actions. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Travellers flying back from Dubai glad to be home](#) (2026-03-04 15:32)

The first Hong Kong-bound flight departing from Dubai since the Middle East conflict broke out landed in the SAR on Wednesday evening. Emirates flight EK380 touched down at Hong Kong International Airport at 9.50pm after flying for nearly seven hours. Among those on board was jockey Karis Teetan, along with his wife and daughter. Teetan said the past few days had been stressful, adding that he was just grateful to be home. "I've never felt so good to be home in my whole life," he said. "It was a bit hectic. Even buying tickets was not easy. We had the Hong Kong Jockey Club team trying to buy us tickets every day because we had to always keep [track of] the schedule of the flights. "And also I had my family with me so it was difficult to actually get three tickets at once." Teetan recalled that on Saturday night, when the conflict first broke out, was a hectic and terrifying moment. "It was very scary, especially like the first night... We could see the missiles high in the sky, especially on Saturday night we could see a few going through," he said. A woman surnamed Kwok, who had travelled to Dubai with five others, is also grateful to be back. "I'm very happy. It turns out Hong Kong is the safest place in the world. Coming back to Hong Kong without living in constant fear is just relieving and something I'm deeply grateful for," she said. A man surnamed Leung, who owns a restaurant in Dubai, said he was thrilled to be back in Hong Kong after waiting several days for a flight. He

said this experience would not change his future work plans, and added that he intends to return to the Middle East once the situation de-escalates. Meanwhile, the Football Association of Hong Kong, China said the SAR women's football team had safely landed in Bangkok and would depart for Hong Kong on Saturday. The squad had been in Dubai for the Pink Ladies Cup 2026 but withdrew from the tournament earlier this week due to safety concerns. The Immigration Department said that as of 5pm, it received inquiries from about 680 Hong Kong residents in the Middle East over flight and travel arrangements. The department said about 100 of them had safely left the region, while others reported that they were in safe locations. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Xia confident in HK setting its own five-year plan](#) (2026-03-04 10:50)

A senior Beijing official has expressed confidence that Hong Kong will formulate a “sound” five-year plan of its own, as the country is set to unveil more policy goals during the Two Sessions meetings in Beijing. Xia Baolong, director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, met Chief Executive John Lee in the capital on Wednesday. According to a statement from Xia’s office, the Beijing official told the chief executive that the SAR administration had “achieved remarkable results” in every aspect of its work. He praised the city’s officials for their efforts in firmly safeguarding national security and promoting high-quality development. On the nation’s 15th Five-Year Plan, Xia was quoted as saying he believes the SAR government and the whole of society will seize opportunities, focus on the nation’s development, and set the city’s own five-year plan well. He also expressed the hope for the SAR in making full use of its strengths, consolidating its status as an international finance, shipping and trade centre, and accelerating the construction of a global innovation and technology hub. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [NPC delegates 'well-prepared for longer meetings'](#) (2026-03-04 08:13)

Hong Kong delegates to the nation’s top legislature body on Wednesday said they are ready and well-prepared for longer meetings this year. The National People's Congress (NPC) will hold its annual session from March 5 to 12, with 11 items on the agenda. Speaking to reporters a day before the session opens, local NPC delegate Ma Fung-kwok pointed out that the agenda for this year is a bit more extensive than in previous years. “This year’s meetings are a bit special. The first thing is to review the draft outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan. In addition, there are a few more draft laws to be deliberated, covering areas including the environment, ethnic unity and national development planning. So the meeting time will be a bit longer,” he said. Echoing Ma’s remarks, another local NPC member, Allen Yeung, said the most important thing for the 35 Hong Kong delegates was to get themselves prepared to rigorously review each item on the agenda. “We will have small group discussions every day to review all items on the agenda... As this year marks the beginning of the 15th Five-Year Plan, everyone will likely focus on how to further improve the plan,” he said. Yeung, who is a former government Chief Information Officer, added that as Hong Kong is set to formulate its first-ever five-year plan to better integrate into the national development, he personally would drive forward initiatives to transform the SAR into an international innovation and technology hub. Edited by Thomas

McAlinden

- ['More measures to benefit HK in new 5-year plan'](#) (2026-03-04 07:28)

There will be more measures benefiting the SAR in the country's 15th Five-Year Plan, according to a spokesman of the National People's Congress (NPC) which will open in Beijing on Thursday. At a press conference ahead of the annual NPC meeting, Lou Qinjian said the measures will support the city in leveraging its unique strengths and roles. With the central government's strong backing, he said the SAR government has led society in striving for economic development. The NPC spokesman noted there had been a large number of stock launches on the Hong Kong bourse while a record of more than 10,000 outside firms had set up shop in the SAR. Lou stressed that under the country's latest plans, Beijing supported the city in building an international innovation and technology hub, as well as efforts for both Hong Kong and Macao in attracting global high-end talent. On the mainland economy, the spokesman said China would roll out more measures to boost domestic consumption, after achieving steady GDP growth last year. Lou said more than half of last year's GDP growth came from consumption-based activities. Overall retail sales of consumer goods exceeded 50 trillion yuan for the first time, he said, while double-digit percentage growth was seen in areas such as consumer spending on culture, tourism, recreation and travel. China's gross GDP exceeded 140 trillion yuan, Lou noted, contributing around 30 percent to the world's economic growth. "This year, we will continue expanding domestic demand as a strategic underpinning, vigorously boost consumption, and work to build a strong domestic market," he said. "We will carry out a programme of quality upgrade in the consumer services sector and move faster to cultivate new growth areas in services consumption. We will optimise the trading policy for consumer goods and expand and upgrade goods consumption." He added that efforts would be made to promote tourist consumption in China, such as organising a series of "Shopping in China" events. Lou said the NPC would vet 11 items during the session that will run from March 5 to 12. He described the draft outline of the 15th Five-Year Plan on the agenda as a major event for the country's politics. Other items to be reviewed include the government's work report and a code on ecology and the environment. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK unveils first weight management action plan](#) (2026-03-04 04:50)

Hong Kong unveiled its first-ever action plan for weight management on Wednesday, marking World Obesity Day with a comprehensive strategy built around five key pillars. These include strengthening health education to boost public understanding of personal weight indicators, fostering a supportive social environment, enhancing healthcare services, adopting a life-course approach to health promotion and continuously monitoring weight trends among citizens. In a statement, the Department of Health said the plan brings together multiple government bureaus and departments to pool resources and strengthen collaboration between Chinese and Western medicine. It sets out 15 specific objectives to be achieved through a variety of initiatives, aiming to drive weight management efforts across the city and support citizens in building a healthier, more vibrant community. Key objectives include promoting healthy eating

from market to table, encouraging a culture of physical activity, offering personalised weightmanagement care plans, improving referral mechanisms within primary healthcare andintegrating Traditional Chinese Medicine principles through multidisciplinary teams. The actionplan will be rolled out over three years with the themes "Raise Awareness", "Positive Changes"and "Maintenance - Part of Life". The department said this phased approach is designed toimplement the five strategic directions and 15 objectives in a systematic and progressivemanner. Dr Edwin Tsui, controller of the Centre for Health Protection, said the plan seeks tostrengthen primary healthcare' s role as the "gatekeeper" of public health. By promotingcollaboration between Chinese and Western medicine and integrating health data through the "eHealth" platform, the initiative aims to help citizens manage their wellbeing - allowingtraditional wisdom and modern evidence-based medicine to complement each other insafeguarding public health. Kicking off the first year under the "Raise Awareness" theme, thegovernment will launch a regularised walking challenge as part of the "10,000 Steps a Day"campaign. Starting March 21, the challenge will be available on the e+Life platform within the "eHealth" mobile app, encouraging the public to explore various themed routes with family andfriends and make physical activity a part of daily life. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Middle East conflict sparks fears for supply chain](#) (2026-03-04 04:35)

A shipping sector representative on Wednesday said the industry is worried about the impact to the global supply chain brought by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. "Some customers in Dubai have already asked manufacturers in Southeast Asia to hold dispatches for now as they are worried about the uncertainties," said Peter Hui, chairman of the Hong Kong Shippers' Council. Hui told an RTHK programme that traders will have to make constant changes, such as deciding whether to maintain their production lines or not. He added that the conflict has led some shipping firms to impose an additional war risk surcharge. Tommy Chung, who represents the import and export sector in Legco, told the same programme that he expects overall shipping costs to rise by 10 percent. He added that changes to shipping routes are extending journey times by at least 10 days. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Mega project will attract state-owned firms, Lee says](#) (2026-03-03 13:31)

Chief Executive John Lee has told mainland officials that he' s confident more state-owned enterprises will tap into opportunities in the Northern Metropolis. Lee, who's in Beijing to attend the opening of this year's National People's Congress on Thursday, met Zhang Yuzhuo, chairman of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission. The CE thanked Zhang for the commission's support for the mega infrastructure project. Lee expressed confidence that more state-owned enterprises would tap into opportunities in the Northern Metropolis, making good use of Hong Kong's role under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle in connecting with both the mainland and the world and leveraging Hong Kong as a springboard to explore overseas markets. The chief executive also met with the head of the Civil Aviation Administration of China, Song Zhiyong, and said the SAR government will "proactively" align with the 15th Five-Year Plan to seize new opportunities. Lee added his administration will

continue to reinforce Hong Kong's top global ranking in cargo throughput and its advantages as a transit hub in the Greater Bay Area, and accelerate the expansion of the SAR's aviation network. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Stars aligned' for HK under five-year plan: Xia](#) (2026-03-03 13:10)

A senior Beijing official overseeing Hong Kong affairs has told SAR delegates attending the upcoming "Two Sessions" in the capital that the city will enjoy numerous opportunities under the country's latest five-year plan. Xia Baolong, director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office, met National People's Congress (NPC) and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) members from the two SARs on Tuesday afternoon, a day before the CPPCC opens. In a statement by his office, Xia urged delegates during the closed-door meeting to fully understand the "extraordinary significance" for Hong Kong and Macao under the 15th Five-Year Plan. He called on them to cherish the hard-won situation in the two SARs and focus on the country's top priorities. Those attending the hour-long meeting said Xia noted that "the stars are aligned" for Hong Kong, which has many opportunities under the latest five-year plan. Starry Lee, the city's sole delegate to the NPC Standing Committee, said the meeting centred on Xia's call for members to unite and work together and "to make good use of the 15th Five-Year Plan". "In the meantime, if we implement that, Hong Kong and Macao will result in a better future because we can help our country grow stronger, and at the same time we benefit from all these measures," Lee told reporters. CPPCC delegate Thomas So said the senior Beijing official assured that the city has nothing to worry about in the face of external challenges. "The geopolitical situation is very uncertain, but for Hong Kong, if we are going to do what we are good at, if we are going to commit and do our development, there is nothing that we need to worry about because there are a lot of opportunities for Hong Kong and Macao coming from the 15th Five-Year Plan," So said. Fellow CPPCC member Michael Ngai said Xia urged delegates to take the lead in safeguarding national security and preventing external forces from posing a threat to the SAR. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Compound caregivers need better support'](#) (2026-03-03 11:33)

Researchers at Lingnan University have called for the introduction of a "care manager" system to help ease the pressure facing caregivers. Research carried out by the university's Asia-Pacific Institute of Ageing Studies highlights the plight of what it terms "compound caregivers" – individuals providing daily care for two or more family members, for example those who are caring for ageing parents and young children. Based on 45 in-depth interviews conducted between April 2025 and this January, the study found some respondents describing themselves as being trapped in a "state of being spread too thin". Many of them said they were "busy from morning to night" and had no time for themselves as they juggled medical appointments and household duties across multiple generations with work commitments, the institute's director Dickson Chan said. The study also cited issues such as insufficient workplace flexibility and mounting financial pressures. Chan said policy support and society's focus are on "single caregivers" – those looking after just one person. The institute is calling for a series of systemic

reforms, which includes the introduction of a "care manager" system under which dedicated personnel would act as a single point of contact between caregivers and various government departments over healthcare, rehabilitation and social welfare. "A lot of respondents said they did not know about available services and found it very difficult to go through the application procedures," Chan said. "If there is a care manager who can offer advice and help them find resources, it could quickly help them cope with their caregiving needs." Additional recommendations include establishing regular feedback mechanisms for caregivers, such as standardised annual surveys and consultation platforms, as well as amending labour policies to introduce seven days of leave per year for unpaid caregivers from their jobs. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Cathay cancels Dubai, Riyadh flights until March 14](#) (2026-03-03 10:19)

Hong Kong's flagship carrier Cathay Pacific on Tuesday said it is suspending all its flights to and from Dubai and Riyadh until March 14 because of the conflict in the Middle East. It called on customers affected who are yet to receive messages from the airline to check the latest status of their booking online. The company said a ticket waiver policy allows customers to rebook, reroute or refund their tickets without the usual fees, and staff will help with re-booking of flights. People who bought tickets via a travel agent or third-party website are advised to contact the companies involved to arrange refunds or flight changes. "We're continuing to monitor the situation closely. Further changes to our flight schedule may be needed in the coming days with the safety of our customers and people being our first priority," a statement from the airline said. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Bay 'on cusp of direct travel with southbound scheme'](#) (2026-03-03 09:08)

A spokesman for China's top political advisory body said on Tuesday the Greater Bay Area was entering a new era of direct cross-boundary travel following the successful rollout of the scheme allowing Guangdong vehicles to drive into Hong Kong. Liu Jieyi, spokesman for the fourth session of the 14th Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) national committee, was speaking at a news conference a day before this year's session, which runs until next Wednesday. He said Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao made strong progress in integration last year – co-hosting the 15th National Games, co-ordinating policies and regulations, and staging a major sporting event that showcased the bay's institutional strengths and unity. Liu pointed out that the elderly health care voucher pilot scheme now covered all nine bay cities and that there was a growing number of designated medical institutions serving Hong Kong and Macao residents living and working on the mainland. "In today's Greater Bay Area, roads link the three places, cities blend into one another, and the hearts beat as one. A world-class bay area and globally significant city clusters are emerging rapidly," he said. He said the CPPCC national committee would continue to offer proposals to boost co-operation between Hong Kong, Macao and the mainland and help the two SARs better integrate into and serve the country's overall development. On China's economy, Liu said the country had shown resilience and vitality despite a turbulent external environment and would

maintain a positive long term growth trend. Domestic consumption and tourism figures point to solid economic fundamentals, he added. "While there are still some old issues and new challenges, the Chinese economy enjoys solid fundamentals, plentiful strengths, strong resilience and vast potential. The supporting conditions and overall long-term positive trend remain unchanged," Liu said. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK set for lunar eclipse Tuesday](#) (2026-03-03 08:48)

Hong Kong residents will be able to take in a full lunar eclipse if weather conditions permit on Tuesday, according to the observatory. The eclipse will begin before moonrise, and part of the moon will enter the Earth's umbra by 6.22pm. The total eclipse phase will last for just under an hour, starting at 7.04pm, when the moon will be completely engulfed by the umbra, with the maximum eclipse occurring half an hour later and the moon exiting from the umbra at 8.03pm. The moon will appear dull red during the period. The entire astronomical event will conclude at 10.25pm. The forecaster said locations facing east with no obstructions are ideal for viewing the eclipse, subject to cloud cover and rainfall developments. "Our weather forecast for Tuesday night is mainly cloudy with occasional showers. If there are any coincidence that there are gaps between the clouds, that would make the lunar eclipse visible," said Scientific Officer Wong Yat-chun. "But I would say as of the weather forecast, the probability would be relatively on the low side." Meanwhile, the observatory also said that last month was unseasonably warm due to the generally weaker northeast monsoon over southern China, with Hong Kong recording a monthly mean temperature of 20.1 degrees Celsius – three degrees above normal. Only one cold-weather warning signal was issued during the month, with the mean maximum temperature hitting 22.9 degrees and the mean minimum temperature at 18.1 degrees – 3.5 degrees and 2.8 degrees higher than normal respectively. The hottest day of the month was on February 16, with the mercury rising to 27.9 degrees in the afternoon, making it the highest on record for Lunar New Year's Eve. This was followed by February 15, which clocked a maximum temperature of 26.9 degrees. The forecaster said the city experienced the warmest winter on record from December 2025 to February 2026, with mean temperatures reaching 19.3 degrees or two degrees above average. Only five cold days were recorded during the season. During the period, the mean maximum temperature was 21.9 degrees and the mean minimum temperature was 17.3 degrees – the highest and second highest on record respectively for this period of the year. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Supercomputing tender award powers N Metropolis hopes](#) (2026-03-03 08:32)

The successful tender of the right to build a supercomputing hub in the Northern Metropolis offers strong encouragement to more enterprises to follow in the footsteps of the mainland company that won the award, according to local industry representatives. The lawmaker representing technology and innovation also said the project would, once the hub came online, offer the artificial intelligence industry a strong shot in the arm, thanks to the expected 36-fold surge in the city's computing power. Their comments came a day after the government announced that it had awarded the tender for a data facility site at Sandy Ridge to the sole

bidder, Hong Kong Range Intelligent Computing Technology, in return for payment of a HK\$581million land premium and HK\$23.8 billion worth of investments. Speaking on an RTHK radioshow on Tuesday, Advisory Committee on the Northern Metropolis member Edward Lau said the successful tender marked the first major investment by a private industrial firm in the drive to develop an area linking Hong Kong and Shenzhen. "I think it will give other industrial companies a shot in the arm and let them know that the [government's] industry-oriented model can be successful," he said. "I believe [the tender] can also encourage more industries and enterprises to plan similar projects and invest in the Northern Metropolis." The firm's holding company, Hebei-based Range Intelligent Computing Technology Group, is one of the top enterprises in the country that specialises in developing and operating high-end data facilities. Under the terms of the tender award, the company must complete its investments over the first three years and begin operations within 42 months. The project is envisaged to raise the city's computing power to 180,000 petaflops by 2032, a level that is 36 times the current capacity. Technology lawmaker Duncan Chiu said on the same radio show that the long-anticipated move would offer a great boost to an artificial intelligence industry that was highly dependant on data-processing capacity. "In fact, if we talk about companies that handle large-scale computing power – for example firms that are dealing with meteorological data or data for social-media platforms – they consume some 20,000 to 30,000 petaflops on average," he said. "So if we want to have more such large-scale computing models to move to Hong Kong, we must have the computing power first. It'll provide one key reason for AI teams to settle in Hong Kong." Chiu also pointed to the scarcity of such supercomputing hubs, which are different from the conventional data centres and have more sophisticated and tailored construction layout. "There are actually not many supercomputing centres, even in China or the United States. Some might be used by tech firms such as Google or the mainland's [original version of] TikTok," he said. In a statement, the Hong Kong Productivity Council said the site would help attract tech firms and talent and facilitate the city in ushering in its own "Silicon Valley moment". Separately, Ryan Ip, vice president of think tank Our Hong Kong Foundation said the adoption of a "two-envelope" approach to the tender exercise – under which a weighting of 70 percent was given to the non-premium proposal and 30 percent to the premium proposal – marked "a milestone". "This approach is more effective as it ensures that the project closely aligns with the government's industrial policy orientation, allowing strategic and high-quality investments to stand out," he said, adding that such an approach should be used in more future tenders. CLP Power said in a statement that it would fully co-operate with the government and support the SAR in transforming the area into a regional data centre hub. It added that it would keep in close communication with the company to understand the planned project's electricity needs, while offering tailored solutions, adding that it's confident of meeting the Northern Metropolis' higher power demands. Located to the east of Lo Wu, the Sandy Ridge Data Facility Cluster site covers an area of over 110,000 square metres. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK women's footballers withdraw from Dubai tournament](#) (2026-03-03 07:09)

The SAR's women's football team have withdrawn from an ongoing football tournament in Dubai due to increased tensions in the Middle East. The team arrived in Dubai for the Pink Ladies Cup 2026 on February 25 and were originally scheduled to return to Hong Kong on March 8. A statement released by the Football Association of Hong Kong, China, on Tuesday said it has informed organisers that the team will withdraw and that their safety is the top priority. The association also said the team have suspended all outings and are remaining in their hotels to ensure personal safety. It added that communication will be maintained with the team to understand their needs and make appropriate arrangements accordingly. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [CE calls for 'constructive' ideas at Two Sessions](#) (2026-03-03 04:23)

Chief Executive John Lee said on Tuesday he looked forward to “constructive suggestions and proposals” on ways Hong Kong could serve the nation’s development during the upcoming “Two Sessions” meetings in Beijing, as he arrived in the capital. Upon landing in the morning, he was greeted by officials from the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office. Writing on social media, Lee expressed the hope for National People’s Congress and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference delegates to offer their thoughts on promoting the city’s integration with and contribution to national development efforts as well as the high-quality development of the country and the SAR. “This year marks the start of the 15th Five-Year Plan,” he said. “I look forward to each and every delegate actively putting forward constructive suggestions and proposals from different fields and perspectives during the ‘Two Sessions’.” Lee will attend the opening of the National People’s Congress on Thursday. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK delegates set off for Two Sessions in Beijing](#) (2026-03-03 03:58)

Hong Kong delegates on Tuesday set off for Beijing to attend the Two Sessions meetings which start on Wednesday. Members of the National People's Congress (NPC) and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) will be joining the country's largest annual political gatherings in the capital this week. Speaking at the airport, Starry Lee, Hong Kong's sole delegate to the National People's Congress Standing Committee, said this year’s Two Sessions are of special significance, as it marks the opening year of the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan. "I also look forward to Hong Kong, under the leadership of the Chief Executive and the SAR government, formulating its first-ever five-year plan with joint efforts from all sectors of society. This will allow our development to align with, integrate into, and serve the overall national development, enabling Hong Kong to play a more significant role in this regard," she said. Lee, who is also the Legislative Council president, said she has prepared ten proposals for the Two Sessions, which include consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong’s status as an international financial centre, as well as promoting and normalising the issue of Renminbi (RMB) sovereign bonds in Hong Kong. Fellow lawmaker and local NPC member Stanley Ng said Legco will also establish a working committee to actively align with the 15th Five-Year Plan. The FTU president also outlined some of his proposals for the Two Sessions. "Personally, I will focus on enhancing Hong Kong’s AI computing capabilities and ensuring a stable power supply for them. To this

end, I propose importing electricity generated from environmentally friendly sources from the mainland, as a stable green energy supply is of strategic significance,” he said.

“Furthermore, I aim to facilitate smoother cross-border travel for personnel by further optimising the network coverage of the high-speed rail.” Another local NPC deputy and lawmaker Ronick Chan, for his part, suggested the People’s Bank of China and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority increase the size of the RMB business liquidity facility from the current 200 billion yuan to 250 billion yuan or even more. He also pointed out that this year’s Two Sessions will last one or two days longer to review several important draft laws, including the draft environmental code, the draft law on promoting ethnic unity and progress, and the draft law on national development planning. Local CPPCC deputy and chairman of the Liberal Party, Peter Shiu, called for the establishment of a platform in Hong Kong to bridge the mainland’s domestic product standards with international requirements. By aligning “national standards” to the global market through Hong Kong, mainland products can be easily and smoothly brought to all parts of the world with fewer hurdles, he said. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Travel agency cancels Middle East tours until Mar 10](#) (2026-03-03 03:40)

A local travel agency on Tuesday said it cancelled all tours to the Middle East until March 10, due to the ongoing conflict in the region. Yuen Chun-ning, chief executive of WWPKG told an RTHK programme that 20 Hong Kong travellers from two tour groups in Dubai will likely be stranded, even though they were supposed to be back by Thursday. But he said there was good news for the travellers, who had earlier been confined to their hotels. "There was good news. Because Dubai announced yesterday that they can go out for sightseeing and it is safe to go to the city centre today. This was better than during Saturday evening to Monday morning when they could not go out and had to stay indoors," he said. Many of them are concerned about when they can return home, given that many of the airports in the Middle East remain closed. He said that depending on the situation, the agency will decide whether or not to call off more tours after March 10. It has also allowed travellers who have booked Middle East tours scheduled for the Easter holiday to opt for other destinations, Yuen added. Wing On Travel told RTHK that 22 Hong Kong travellers taking part in their tour in Dubai were also stranded. But they did not comment on whether they would cancel upcoming Middle East tours. Speaking on Commercial Radio, a Hongkonger who is currently stranded in Dubai said that he had seen missiles flying from afar, and received missile alerts twice over the weekend asking people to stay indoors. He said malls were later operating as usual, even though there were fewer people on the streets. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Asian region feels bite as fuel prices, fares soar](#) (2026-03-03 03:24)

Asian airline shares remained under pressure on Tuesday as the US-Israeli attacks on Iran escalated, with carriers closely monitoring fuel price spikes and many seeing a surge in bookings as passengers switch from Middle Eastern airlines. Cathay Pacific Airways shares were down more than 2 percent while Air China, China Eastern Airlines and China Southern Airlines all dropped between 3 percent and 5 percent in both the Hong Kong and Shanghai

markets. The CEO of Australia's biggest investment bank Macquarie Group, Shemara Wikramanayake, said on Tuesday the conflict appeared likely to affect the availability of oil, as well as the cost. "There is going to be a deliverability issue there," said Wikramanayake, whose company is one of the world's largest traders of oil and gas. Alternatives to Gulf airlines showed a surge in passenger bookings and ticket prices, checks of the carriers' websites showed. A search on Cathay Pacific's website on Tuesday showed no available economy class seats on the Hong Kong-London route until March 11, with a one-way ticket on that day costing at least HK\$21,158, falling to a more normal HK\$5,054 later in the month. For flights from Sydney to London, Qantas is not offering any economy class tickets on flights via its normal Perth and Singapore routings until March 17, when one is available for A\$3,129 one way. For earlier dates, it has pricey options with non-traditional stopovers such as Los Angeles and Johannesburg. Mainland airlines' websites showed air fares on China-UK routes have also surged far above normal levels, with economy seats largely unavailable on near-term departures. A return economy ticket typically costs under 10,000 yuan, but Air China's only option for Wednesday is business class, with a one-way direct ticket priced at 50,490 yuan. China Eastern is offering a Wednesday Shanghai-London ticket for 38,108 yuan, also in business class. Economy seats reappear on Thursday, but prices remain several times higher than usual, with Shanghai-London at 25,808 yuan and Beijing-London at about 23,000 yuan. Oil prices have surged amid the widening Middle East conflict, potentially driving up the cost of jet fuel and hurting airlines' profits. Major Gulf hubs, including the world's busiest international airport Dubai, which usually handles over 1,000 flights a day, remained closed for a fourth day due to the conflict. That has left tens of thousands of passengers stranded as aviation faced its biggest test since the Covid-19 pandemic. Qantas said last week that it had 81 percent of its fuel hedged for the second half of its financial year ending June 30. Chief executive Vanessa Hudson said Qantas had "pretty good" fuel hedging in place but the spike in oil prices as the United States and Israel attacked Iran was significant for the aviation industry. "We've got pretty good hedging in place, but these are pretty significant impacts on aviation and we're just continuing to watch how it all unfolds," she said at the Australian Financial Review's business summit as the airline's shares fell for a second day, trading as much as 3.9 percent lower. Japan Airlines chief financial officer Yuji Saito said on Monday the carrier planned to adjust its fuel surcharge for international flights, but did not provide a timeframe. In the domestic market "since there is no surcharge, we're offsetting part of the price spike through hedging," he said. Japan Airlines shares were down 3.5 percent in early trading on Tuesday. (Reuters) Edited by Thomas McAlinden