

HONG KONG SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: October 29, 2026 - November 05, 2026

This report was produced using 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 (October 29, 2026 - November 05, 2026)

Executive Summary

During the period of October 29 to November 05, 2026, Hong Kong's security landscape was primarily shaped by significant developments in cybersecurity, the ongoing enforcement of the National Security Law (NSL), and responses to internal governance issues. A large-scale cybersecurity drill demonstrated the city's commitment to enhancing digital defenses and collaboration with mainland China. Concurrently, the sentencing of prominent activist Joshua Wong to 10 years for "foreign collusion" underscored the continued tightening of political freedoms under the NSL, drawing international criticism. Furthermore, the government addressed public concerns regarding a past fire tragedy, with a key official taking political accountability. These internal dynamics are set against a backdrop of complex US-China relations and Hong Kong's strategic integration into Beijing's long-term economic plans.

Key Security Developments

- Large-Scale Cybersecurity Drill Concludes Successfully

The Hong Kong Cybersecurity Attack and Defence Drill 2026, launched on October 29 and concluding on October 31, involved 51 defending teams from 28 government departments, 23 public organizations, and for the first time, private enterprises. The three-day, 60-hour exercise, spearheaded by the Digital Policy Office, simulated cyber threat scenarios to test defense mechanisms and incident response capabilities. Twenty-three attacking teams, including representatives from Hong Kong and Mainland cybersecurity professional organizations and local tertiary institutions, participated, highlighting cross-border collaboration in cybersecurity talent cultivation. This drill signifies Hong Kong's proactive approach to bolstering its digital infrastructure resilience against evolving cyber threats.

- Prominent Activist Joshua Wong Sentenced to 10 Years Under National Security Law

On November 5, pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong was sentenced to 10 years in prison after pleading guilty to "foreign collusion" under Hong Kong's National Security Law. Wong, 30, was accused of conspiring with exiled activist Nathan Law and others to urge foreign powers to impose sanctions or other hostile measures against China and Hong Kong. High Court Judge William Tam described Wong's actions as "grave in nature" and part of a "scheme" to collude with foreign governments. This marks Wong's second conviction under the NSL and has been criticized by human rights groups as a tool to punish dissent and stifle hopes for freedom and democracy.

• Government Addresses Accountability for Deadly Tai Po Fire

On October 29, Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu and seven principal officials publicly apologized for the November 2025 Wang Fuk Court fire in Tai Po, which killed 168 people. The apology followed the release of an independent committee's investigation report that identified "decades of failure" by government bodies and regulatory shortcomings. Housing Secretary Winnie Ho Wing-yin resigned immediately, taking political responsibility for the tragedy. While not a direct security incident, the government's response to this disaster is significant for public trust and internal stability, particularly given past instances of public discontent.

• China-Aligned Hackers Deploy DarkVigil Backdoor Targeting Hong Kong

A report released on November 4 by ESET revealed that China-aligned hackers, identified as "SlippyNunchucks," have been deploying the DarkVigil backdoor since July 1, 2026. The campaign targeted organizations and Chinese-speaking individuals in Hong Kong, among other regions, by hijacking DNS requests of popular Chinese applications like Sogou Input Method. The vulnerability (CVE-2026-120422) was addressed by Tencent on October 29, 2026, by migrating affected HTTP requests to HTTPS. This incident highlights persistent state-sponsored cyber espionage and surveillance threats against entities and individuals within Hong Kong.

• Counter-Terrorism Education Thematic Exhibition Ongoing

An educational counter-terrorism exhibition, organized by the Inter-departmental Counter Terrorism Unit (ICTU) with support from the National Security Department of the Hong Kong Police Force and the Security Bureau, opened on October 24. The exhibition, held at the Hong Kong Museum of History, aims to deepen public understanding of terrorism, the global counter-terrorism landscape, and Hong Kong's strategies, encouraging vigilance and strengthening public response capabilities. This initiative reflects Hong Kong's ongoing efforts to enhance community-level preparedness against potential terrorist threats.

• US and China Hold Defense Officials Meeting to Reduce Risks

On November 2 and 3, US and Chinese defense officials met in Washington to establish a Crisis Communications and Prevention Working Group, agreeing on the importance of "advancing practical communication measures" to reduce risks

between the two nations. While not directly focused on Hong Kong, the broader stability and communication channels between the US and China are critical for Hong Kong's diplomatic and geopolitical environment, as tensions between the two major powers often have repercussions for the city.

- Hong Kong's Role in China's 15th Five-Year Plan Emphasized

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng, in a video address to the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit held in Hong Kong from November 2 to 4, expressed confidence in Hong Kong's ability to consolidate its competitive advantages through its first five-year plan, aligned with China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030). Chief Executive John Lee also stated that Hong Kong is "rethinking its playbook" to offer stability amid global shifts, pivoting towards commodity trading, fintech, and green finance. This signals Beijing's strategic vision for Hong Kong's economic integration and its role within the national development framework, which has significant long-term geopolitical and security implications for the city's autonomy and international standing.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Hong Kong's security developments during this period continue to reflect its evolving position within the broader geopolitical landscape, particularly concerning its relationship with mainland China and major Western powers. The sentencing of Joshua Wong to a decade in prison under the NSL is a stark reminder of Beijing's firm grip on the city's political and legal systems, further eroding the "One Country, Two Systems" framework in the eyes of many international observers. This action is likely to intensify criticism from the United States and European Union, who have consistently voiced concerns over the erosion of freedoms in Hong Kong. Such developments contribute to a narrative of diminishing autonomy, potentially impacting Hong Kong's appeal as an international financial hub and its diplomatic relations with countries prioritizing human rights and rule of law.

The ongoing cybersecurity drill, involving both Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese entities, underscores the deepening integration of Hong Kong's digital security infrastructure with that of the mainland. While presented as a measure to enhance resilience, it also raises questions among some international actors about data sovereignty and potential for increased surveillance, especially in light of the reported China-aligned cyberattacks targeting Hong Kong residents. This integration, coupled with the emphasis on Hong Kong's role in China's 15th Five-Year Plan, signals Beijing's intent to firmly embed Hong Kong into its national strategic and economic architecture, potentially reducing its distinct international identity.

The broader US-China defense dialogue, aimed at improving communication and reducing risks, offers a glimmer of stability in an otherwise tense relationship. However, the underlying ideological and strategic competition between these powers continues to exert pressure on Hong Kong. The city remains a flashpoint in this competition, with Western nations often using its human rights situation as a point of leverage against Beijing. The ongoing enforcement of the NSL and the perceived crackdown on dissent could further complicate diplomatic efforts and lead to continued targeted sanctions or policy adjustments from the US and its allies, impacting Hong Kong's economic and political ties with these nations.

Military and Defense Analysis

Direct military activities and defense posture shifts within Hong Kong itself are rarely publicly reported, and this period is no exception. The city's defense is primarily handled by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison, whose activities are generally low-profile and focused on maintaining sovereignty and internal security. The key "defense" aspect for Hong Kong during this period lies more in its internal security apparatus and its efforts to counter non-traditional threats.

The successful conclusion of the Cybersecurity Attack and Defence Drill 2026 highlights a significant investment in cyber defense capabilities and inter-agency collaboration, including with mainland Chinese organizations. This indicates a strategic focus on protecting critical infrastructure and government systems from digital threats, which is a modern form of defense. The participation of private enterprises also suggests a whole-of-society approach to cybersecurity resilience. Similarly, the ongoing Counter-Terrorism Education Thematic Exhibition reflects a continued emphasis on public awareness and preparedness against terrorism, indicating a focus on intelligence gathering, prevention, and community engagement as core components of Hong Kong's internal security strategy.

While there are no reports of increased defense spending or new arms acquisitions by Hong Kong, the enforcement of the National Security Law and the subsequent legal actions, such as the sentencing of Joshua Wong, serve as a powerful tool for internal security and control. This legal framework acts as a deterrent against perceived threats to national security, effectively shaping the political and social landscape. The absence of large-scale protests, as noted in previous reports, suggests that these measures have been effective in suppressing overt dissent, thereby contributing to a form of "stability" from Beijing's perspective. However, this stability comes at the cost of civil liberties and international condemnation.

Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months): In the immediate future, Hong Kong is likely to see continued rigorous enforcement of the National Security Law. The sentencing of Joshua Wong sets a precedent for severe penalties for "foreign collusion" and similar offenses, which will likely deter overt political activism and further consolidate Beijing's control over the city's political landscape. Cybersecurity efforts will remain a high priority, with the recent drill indicating ongoing investment and collaboration, potentially leading to more integrated cyber defense strategies with mainland China. Public discourse will continue to be carefully managed, with any significant dissent likely met with swift legal action. Economically, Hong Kong will continue its efforts to align with China's 15th Five-Year Plan, focusing on areas like fintech and green finance, while navigating geopolitical tensions that may affect its international business appeal.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas:

A critical flashpoint remains the ongoing application of the National Security Law and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (Article 23 legislation). Any further high-profile arrests or sentencings of activists, journalists, or foreign nationals could trigger renewed international condemnation and potentially lead to further sanctions or diplomatic repercussions from Western countries. The cyber domain is another significant risk area, as evidenced by the DarkVigil backdoor incident. Continued sophisticated cyberattacks, especially those with state-sponsored links, could compromise critical infrastructure, sensitive data, and erode public trust. Furthermore, any significant social unrest, however unlikely in the current climate, or a perceived mishandling of public grievances (such as the Tai Po fire aftermath) could destabilize the internal security situation.

Indicators to monitor:

Key indicators to monitor include the frequency and nature of arrests and prosecutions under the NSL, particularly involving individuals with international ties. Statements and actions from the US, EU, and other democratic nations regarding Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights will be crucial in gauging international pressure. Developments in cybersecurity policy, including new regulations or further integration with mainland China's cyber framework, should also be closely watched. Additionally, the rhetoric from Hong Kong and Beijing officials regarding the "One Country, Two Systems" framework and Hong Kong's role in national development will provide insights into future policy directions. Any signs of renewed public discontent, even in small-scale forms, or significant shifts in economic indicators could also signal underlying tensions.

Strategic recommendations:

For international businesses and organizations operating in Hong Kong, it is recommended to conduct thorough due diligence on legal and regulatory compliance,

particularly concerning data security and national security provisions. Companies should assess their exposure to geopolitical risks and consider diversifying operations where feasible. Diplomatic entities should continue to advocate for the preservation of Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights through multilateral platforms, while maintaining open channels of communication with both Hong Kong and Beijing authorities. For Hong Kong itself, fostering genuine public trust through transparent governance and addressing societal concerns, beyond mere political accountability, will be vital for long-term stability. Investing in robust, independent cybersecurity infrastructure and expertise, while collaborating internationally, could also enhance its resilience and international standing.

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ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

Source: HK Free Press

• Hong Kong lawmaker proposes digital ID checks for housing estate votes to combat bid-rigging (2026-11-05 05:08)

A Hong Kong lawmaker has suggested using a government-managed digital platform to verify property owners' identities when casting their ballots in estate meetings, a measure meant to help prevent unauthorised proxy voting. Lawmaker Christine Fong made the proposal at a Legislative Council (LegCo) meeting on Wednesday on combatting bid-rigging, an anti-competitive practice in the building [⋯]

• Jailed Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong sentenced to 10 years over foreign collusion (2026-11-05 03:07)

Jailed Hong Kong pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong has been sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment after pleading guilty to conspiring to collude with foreign forces, his second conviction under a Beijing-imposed national security law. Wong, who turned 30 in jail last month, appeared calm on Thursday as his sentence was handed down at the High Court. [⋯]

• Tai Po fire: Former top official urges gov't to publish building inspection report to clear buyout doubts (2026-11-04 23:30)

A former top Hong Kong official has called on the government to release a structural inspection report of the fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court to dispel the concerns of homeowners who have rejected the government's apartment buyback offer. Hong Kong's former secretary for transport and housing Anthony Cheung said in an op-ed published in Ming Pao [⋯]

• China seeks arrest of five Uyghurs held in Thailand: Bangkok (2026-11-04 10:02)

Five Uyghurs detained in Thailand since 2014 are subject to Chinese arrest warrants, the kingdom's security chief said Wednesday, adding that a court would decide if they would be returned to China. Human rights groups have raised concerns about the men — members of the Muslim minority group who activists say are persecuted in China [⋯]

• US President Donald Trump congratulates Democrats on midterms, says Iran war played role (2026-11-04 07:29)

President Donald Trump had rare praise for rival Democrats Tuesday after their stunning US midterm elections victory and admitted the Iran war may have played a part in the defeat of his Republican Party. But the 80-year-old refused to take any personal responsibility for the result that upends the final two years of his presidency, [⋯]

• Hong Kong records GDP rise of over 5% in first three quarters, marking strongest growth in 5 years (2026-11-04 04:46)

Hong Kong has seen a strong GDP increase of over 5 per cent in the third quarter of 2026, bringing the growth for the first nine months of the year to a five-year high. Driven by accelerating growth in exports and solid domestic demand, the city's GDP grew by 5.2 per cent in the third [⋯]

• Finance portal MoneySmart apologises after users' sensitive data accessed in IT system hack (2026-11-04 01:30)

Online finance portal MoneySmart told customers on Tuesday that became aware of a data breach last Thursday after hackers compromised its internal IT systems. "These systems hold personal data that customers share with us when they compare or apply for financial products through MoneySmart," it said, according to the email seen by HKFP on Tuesday. [⋯]

• Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders exempt from UK plan to double settlement wait to 10 years, but face tougher English requirement (2026-11-04 00:45)

Hong Kong BN(O) visa holders in the UK will be exempt from a proposal to double the qualifying period for settlement to ten years from 2027. On Monday, UK Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood laid out an immigration overhaul under which those on work visas would no longer automatically gain permanent residency after five years. Refugees [⋯]

• Anti-corruption watchdog charges ex-Johnson Cleaning execs over alleged bribes worth over HK$75m (2026-11-03 23:39)

Hong Kong's anti-corruption watchdog has charged two former senior Johnson Cleaning Services executives who allegedly accepted bribes worth over HK$75 million. William Fung, 54, former director of the firm and former chief executive officer of Johnson's parent company, appeared at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts on Monday alongside Jimmy Lee, 57, former general manager of Johnson. [⋯]

• Crypto.com to shut consumer-facing app in Hong Kong next Feb (2026-11-03 23:34)

Singaporean cryptocurrency exchange company Crypto.com will shut its consumer-facing app on February 1 next year, it said on Tuesday. "This decision reflects our ongoing efforts to optimise global operations and allocate resources where we see the most sustainable long-term opportunities," a spokesperson told HKFP on Tuesday. "All impacted customers have received advance notice, we will [⋯]

• Hong Kong prisoner support group says Customs confiscated over 60 books imported from Taiwan (2026-11-03 23:30)

A Hong Kong group that supports people jailed in politics-related cases has said that authorities have confiscated more than 60 books imported from Taiwan for its partner retail outlet. Waiting

Bird said in a social media post on Monday that it was meant to receive a shipment of books from Taiwan on October 13, but […]

• Hong Kong police arrest 61-year-old man over suspected drink spiking of Japanese DJ Mao Hamasaki (2026-11-03 08:12)

Hong Kong police have arrested a 61-year-old man for allegedly spiking drinks and drugging a Japanese DJ at a Halloween party. Police said on Tuesday that the suspect was arrested the previous day in Central on suspicion of "administering poison with intent to injure." He has been detained for investigation. Mao Hamasaki, a former adult […]

• Legislature's legal advice arm urges clarity on public interest rules as gov't moves to tighten land records access (2026-11-03 06:22)

The Hong Kong legislature's legal services arm has asked the government to clarify how it would consider applications to access the city's land records on the basis of public interest after passing new rules to tighten media access. The Legislative Council's (LegCo) Assistant Legal Adviser Vanessa Cheng posed the questions in correspondence addressed to the […]

• Sea drone makers compete in Taiwan for soaring investment (2026-11-03 05:50)

Silver-hulled sea drones skim across the water as part of an exhibition in Taiwan where local and foreign companies are competing for a share of surging government investment in uncrewed vehicles to deter China. As Chinese military pressure increases, Taiwan is pouring billions of dollars into aerial and sea drones, which have been widely used […]

• Jailed activist Joshua Wong to be sentenced on Thursday in 2nd national security trial (2026-11-03 04:56)

A Hong Kong court has set Thursday to sentence pro-democracy activist Joshua Wong in his second national security case, which could carry a sentence of up to life imprisonment for the 30-year-old former student leader. High Court Judge William Tam is set to hand down the sentence for Wong's conviction for foreign collusion at 9.30am […]

• Yuen Long district councillor jailed for 2.5 years over unlawful sexual intercourse with 13-year-old girl (2026-11-03 04:15)

A Yuen Long district councillor found guilty of having unlawful intercourse with a girl under 16 has been jailed for two and a half years, with the judge saying he lacked remorse. Sei Chun-hing was sentenced at the District Court on Monday after his conviction in September. He was found guilty of having unlawful intercourse […]

• China calls for Mideast dialogue in talks with Iran, Saudi, Oman (2026-11-03 02:43)

China stepped up diplomatic efforts on Monday to resolve the Middle East crisis, urging a return to the negotiating table in back-to-back meetings with Iranian, Omani and Saudi officials in Beijing. The meetings come days after US President Donald Trump issued a fresh war threat

more than eight months into the conflict, which was triggered by […]

• Gov’t departments received 180 complaints about smoking, fire safety before Wang Fuk Court fire: report (2026-11-02 23:45)

Hong Kong government departments received 180 complaints or enquiries, ranging from construction workers smoking and renovation materials suspected not to have met fire safety standards, ahead of the deadly Tai Po fire last year, an investigation has revealed. Released last Thursday, an investigation report into the Wang Fuk Court blaze detailed almost 200 pages of […]

• Chinese Communist Party outlines closer scrutiny of officials (2026-11-02 11:46)

The Chinese Communist Party is set to tighten oversight of its officials by scrutinising their assets and online activities, according to a party document released on Sunday. The document from the CCP’s powerful Central Committee was published by the Xinhua state news agency following this week’s annual plenary session in Beijing, which focused on governance […]

• Hong Kong top court rejects actor Gregory Wong’s final appeal over 2019 LegCo rioting conviction (2026-11-02 10:30)

Hong Kong’s Court of Final Appeal has dismissed an appeal bid by actor Gregory Wong to overturn his rioting conviction and sentence over the storming of the Legislative Council (LegCo) during the 2019 protests and unrest. An Appeal Committee of the Court of Final Appeal comprising permanent judges Roberto Ribeiro and Johnson Lam, alongside non-permanent […]

• Ex-Apple Daily publisher joins mainland tour for ‘rehabilitated persons’, praises China in TV interview (2026-11-02 10:13)

Former Apple Daily publisher Cheung Kim-hung, who was convicted of foreign collusion and jailed for six years and nine months, has joined a government-organised tour to Shenzhen, praising China’s development in an interview with a state-owned broadcaster. The one-day tour, arranged for “rehabilitated persons” by Hong Kong’s Correctional Services Department, sought to “smash prejudices and […]

• Tai Po fire: Hong Kong Bar Assoc. urges sweeping overhauls with ‘two-envelope’ tendering and safety blacklist (2026-11-02 07:40)

A task force on last year’s deadly Tai Po fire under the professional body for Hong Kong barristers has backed a move to criminalise bid-rigging and proposed 50 legal reforms, including a strengthened tendering mechanism designed to bar colluding cartels from bidding for projects. The Hong Kong Bar Association’s Tai Po Fire Taskforce on Law […]

• Hong Kong records hottest October in at least 142 years, with mean daily high of 30.5°C (2026-11-02 06:33)

Hong Kong has sweltered through its hottest October since records began nearly a century and a half ago, figures from the Hong Kong Observatory have revealed The mean daily maximum temperature over the month was 30.5 degrees Celsius, 2.4 degrees higher than normal. The mean temperature and mean daily minimum temperature, at 27.6 and 25.8 [⋯]

• Tourism Board axes controversial Peak lighting project following backlash (2026-11-02 04:37)

The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) has scrapped a controversial lighting project on The Peak following complaints from residents and trail users that it would ruin the natural environment. In a paper submitted to the Central and Western District Council, the HKTB said it had met with district councillors and conducted site visits with lawmakers [⋯]

• Pushed not jumped: What a 19th-century shipwreck reveals about Hong Kong’s political casualties (2026-11-02 01:10)

From an anthropological point of view, the government reaction to the Wang Fuk Court fire inquiry report makes for interesting reading. It criticised four arms of the government, after 168 people were killed in last November’s blaze in Tai Po. Also, after a major catastrophe, one might question the future of the Chief Executive. However, [⋯]

• Technopole to University Towns: Why Hong Kong’s Northern Metropolis shifted focus from hi-tech to higher ed (2026-11-01 23:45)

Government ministers, academics, and business leaders gathered at a Hong Kong auditorium for a two-day summit last week to discuss an ambitious project: building three universities towns in a sprawling area near the city’s border with mainland China. Hong Kong is betting on the multibillion-dollar Northern Metropolis project, which is set to transform about 300 [⋯]

• China state TV does not air first La Liga games since Mbappe furore (2026-11-01 03:56)

Chinese state television did not air on Saturday the first La Liga games since Real Madrid star Kylian Mbappe caused anger with a joke about the country’s former leader Mao Zedong. It was not immediately clear whether state broadcaster CCTV had scheduled screenings of the matches and then cancelled them, or whether they were not [⋯]

• Zhang Shengmin, Xi’s lone ‘hatchet man’ at the top of China’s military (2026-11-01 03:45)

Zhang Shengmin, the last general remaining in the highest echelon of China’s military, has received an unexpected promotion to the Politburo, the rarefied group of about 20 Communist Party officials who run the country. It is a significant milestone for the 68-year-old, who has risen from his modest upbringing to become a quiet architect of [⋯]

• ‘Groundless speculation’: China denies spying on Nvidia’s Jensen Huang (2026-10-31 04:25)

Beijing dismissed as “groundless speculation” on Friday a report that said Jensen Huang, head of US chip giant Nvidia, was the target of a Chinese spy plot. The article by The New York Times, published Thursday, said that US intelligence officials concluded that a Chinese executive linked to a Singapore-based data centre company had been […]

- US imprisons two Chinese nationals who tried to recruit military service members to spy for Beijing (2026-10-31 04:13)

Two Chinese men who admitted trying to recruit US military service members to spy for Beijing were imprisoned in California on Friday. Liren Lai and Yuance Chen were ordered to serve 30 months in a federal lockup and to undergo three years of supervised release after pleading guilty to acting on the orders of China’s […]

- ‘I am not important’: Security chief defends staying in post following Wang Fuk Court fire inquiry (2026-10-31 00:00)

Hong Kong’s security chief has said that his duty to society, the city, and the country outweighs his personal interests, after facing questions over his political accountability for last year’s fatal Tai Po fire. Secretary for Security Chris Tang offered an apology to the public on Friday over last November’s blaze at Wang Fuk Court, […]

- China ruling party says ‘eliminated dangers’ after expelling record 33 top officials (2026-10-30 11:04)

China has eradicated “serious hidden dangers” in its Communist Party and military under President Xi Jinping’s leadership, a senior official said on Friday, a day after authorities confirmed the expulsion of a record 33 figures. In more than a decade in charge, Xi has cracked down hard on graft, ensnaring thousands of officials and purging […]

- Tai Po fire: 300 civil servants from disgraced inspection unit to be transferred to new regulatory body (2026-10-30 11:02)

Around 300 civil servants at a government inspection unit will be transferred to a new regulatory body set up to replace the unit, authorities have said, after an independent investigation blamed it for regulatory failures leading to last year’s deadly fire in Tai Po. Authorities announced plans on Thursday to axe the Housing Bureau’s Independent […]

- ‘Following captain’s orders’: Asked about resigning over Tai Po fire, development chief likens self to crew under John Lee (2026-10-30 08:12)

Hong Kong’s development chief has likened herself to a sailor who must put her captain’s orders over her “personal wishes,” when asked by a reporter about calls for her to resign over the deadly Tai Po fire that killed 168 people last year. Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn’s comments, made during a press conference on […]

• Evidence insufficient to link district councillor Peggy Wong to Wang Fuk Court bid-rigging, inquiry report says (2026-10-30 06:36)

Evidence presented to an independent committee investigating last year's deadly Wang Fuk Court fire has shown insufficient proof that a local politician was involved in bid-rigging at the Tai Po housing estate, the inquiry's final report has concluded. The report, submitted to the government last week ahead of a Thursday press conference where Chief Executive [⋯]

• Event: 'The Last Two Cannibals on Cannibal Island' – new theatre production at The Hive Studios (2026-10-30 05:49)

[Sponsored] Experimental theatre at The Hive Studios, Kennedy Town, this November. Tickets available now. The Last Two Cannibals on Cannibal Island is not an allegory for a failing marriage, or anything so high-minded. It is, in fact, about the last two cannibals left on a small, forgotten island on the day they discover each other's [⋯]

• Some Wang Fuk Court survivors say top officials' apology nearly one year since fatal fire lacked 'sincerity' (2026-10-30 05:04)

Former residents of the fire-hit Wang Fuk Court housing estate have criticised Hong Kong leader John Lee and top officials for their apology, saying the gesture — coming nearly a year after a blaze claimed 168 lives and left thousands homeless — lacked "sincerity." Lee led senior officials in bowing in apology during a press [⋯]

• Hello Kitty firm apologises, scraps Japan TV tie-up after China anger (2026-10-30 04:10)

Sanrio, the Japanese company behind the popular character Hello Kitty, apologised on Thursday over its tie-up with a TV spy drama criticised as anti-China, cancelling a merchandise collaboration with the show. It comes days after Chinese sponsors dropped football superstar Kylian Mbappe over comments calling communist leader Mao Zedong a "dictator", for which the Real [⋯]

• Hong Kong catches nearly 110,000 live rats in first nine months of 2026 (2026-10-29 23:45)

The Hong Kong government has caught nearly 110,000 live rats and collected over 20,000 dead ones in the first nine months of this year as the city steps up efforts to combat rodent infestation. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department told local media in a written response that from January to September, staff caught 109,087 [⋯]

• Tai Po fire: Housing Bureau to replace inspection unit criticised for multiple failings, 'slack' attitude (2026-10-29 10:40)

The Housing Bureau will replace an independent inspection unit following heavy criticism over policy and operational failures and a "slack" work attitude in the lead-up to last year's massive Tai Po fire. Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee said on Thursday that a major shake-up will see the Housing Bureau's Independent Checking Unit (ICU) replaced [⋯]

• Tai Po fire: Hong Kong gov't to set up company to assist owners with building renovations, criminalise bid-rigging (2026-10-29 10:30)

The Hong Kong government will set up a company to provide property owners with building renovations support, authorities have said, as part of reforms announced following the release of an investigation report on the deadly Tai Po fire. Leading a press conference with the city's top officials on Thursday, Chief Executive John Lee said authorities [⋯]

• 70% of Hong Kong subdivided flats register for grace period under new regulatory system (2026-10-29 09:49)

Some 70 per cent of Hong Kong's subdivided flats have been registered under a grace period system that will give landlords three years to ensure their properties meet minimum living standards laid out by a new law implemented eight months ago. Secretary for Housing Winnie Ho told the city's legislature on Wednesday that around 75,000 [⋯]

• Taiwan says Pakistan briefly closed airspace to Taiwanese flights, citing Beijing's 'One China policy' (2026-10-29 08:42)

Pakistan briefly closed its airspace to Taiwanese cargo and passenger flights, Taiwan said on Thursday, suspecting China of being behind the unprecedented move. "We suspect definitely China was behind this," Deputy Foreign Minister Chen Ming-chi told AFP after confirming that Pakistan had closed and reopened its airspace to Taiwanese airlines. China Airlines and EVA Air, [⋯]

• HK officials bow in apology almost a year after Tai Po blaze killed 168, housing chief steps down (2026-10-29 06:56)

Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee and other top officials bowed in apology at a Thursday press conference where Lee announced that housing chief Winnie Ho would step down over the Wang Fuk Court fire, almost a year after the tragedy killed 168 people. Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong, who currently leads the government's task [⋯]

• Australian defence chief says China military buildup creating 'pressure' in SE Asia (2026-10-29 02:32)

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said Thursday that China's military build-up was creating a "condition of pressure" in Southeast Asia, and urged allies and partners to deepen cooperation. Beijing deploys hundreds of coast guard, navy and other vessels to patrol disputed areas of the South China Sea, which it claims almost entirely despite an international [⋯]

• Hong Kong to distribute 'Security Bear' national security picture books to 900 kindergartens (2026-10-29 01:30)

The Security Bureau held a launch ceremony for its Andy and Security Bear: Young Citizens Safeguarding National Security educational picture books on Tuesday. The three-volume set of titles includes new stories and national security-themed children's songs. They will be

distributed to 900 kindergartens and public libraries by the end of the year. According to a […]

• Samsung to exit Hong Kong's home appliance market – report (2026-10-29 01:24)

South Korean tech giant Samsung is reportedly withdrawing from Hong Kong's large home appliance sector, months after exiting the mainland Chinese market. Korea Economic TV reported on Wednesday that Samsung's smartphone, TV and computer monitor operations in Hong Kong will be unaffected. However, air conditioners, vacuum cleaners and fridges are among the products already marked […]

Source: RTHK English News

• Road worker killed in Sha Tin vehicle collision (2026-11-05 05:05)

Police said a road maintenance worker died after being struck by a medium goods vehicle in Sha Tin on Thursday morning. The incident occurred at around 11am on Sha Tin Road near Pok Hong Estate. The vehicle was travelling towards Tai Po at the time. The female worker, who was about 60 years old, was found unconscious with head injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene. Edited by Tony Sabine

• Joshua Wong jailed 10 years for foreign collusion (2026-11-05 04:13)

Former activist Joshua Wong was on Thursday jailed for 10 years after pleading guilty to conspiracy to collude with foreign countries or external elements to endanger national security. High Court Judge William Tam found the offence was of a "grave nature" under the National Security Law. The court said Wong and his affiliates, including Nathan Law, persisted after the NSL took effect in calling for foreign sanctions, blockade or other hostile measures against the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong SAR and their officials. They deliberately adapted roles so overseas allies made blatant calls for such sanctions, while Wong, remaining in Hong Kong, published and bolstered the calls. Judge Tam took a starting point of 13 years, then cut three years for the guilty plea and mitigation, leaving 10 years – the statutory minimum for a grave offence. Two months and two days of the new term will run concurrently with the sentence Wong is already serving for another subversion case. Speaking to reporters outside the High Court, Steve Li, Chief Superintendent of the police's National Security Department, said that Wong took part in social movements from a young age and committed various offences as an adult. Li said he hopes Wong will reflect on his wrongdoings. "I sincerely hope that for the rest of his time in prison, apart from reflecting on the wrongdoings he has done to the country and to the Hong Kong SAR, he must seize the opportunity to learn how to respect the law and properly understand his own country," he said. Edited by Aaron Tam

• HK 'is largest cross-boundary wealth management hub' (2026-11-05 03:59)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Thursday said Hong Kong's wealth management sector is growing strongly and is well positioned to capture a fair share of business emanating from

shifting global affluence. In a keynote speech at the Wealth Management Summit, he pointed toa survey in July by the Securities and Futures Commission that showed assets undermanagement jumped 20 percent to more than HK$42 trillion. The city, Chan said, is now thelargest cross-boundary wealth management centre in the world. A survey by summit organiserPrivate Wealth Management Association offered a similarly encouraging picture, as it found 77percent of member firms reported stronger demand to open accounts or book client assets inHong Kong and that 94 percent were moderately or highly optimistic about the city's prospectsover the next five years. Chan said sentiment at this week’s Global Financial Leaders’ Investment Summit, which drew some 280 international leaders from the sector, includingaround 120 chairmen or chief executives, was "decidedly positive", with some planning toincrease investment and headcount in the city. International capital was showing freshconfidence in Hong Kong, he said, with it being reinforced by policy measures to boost privatewealth management. "Our tax concession for family-owned investment vehicles is now wellestablished and Hong Kong is home to over 3,300 single-family offices, up 25 percent in just twoyears," he said at the summit. "The New Capital Investment Entrant Scheme has received some4,300 applications, representing an expected investment of HK$150 billion, and we haveintroduced legislation to further enhance the preferential tax regimes for funds, single-familyoffices and carry interest, which we aim to pass by the end of this year." Chan said higher ratesand uncertainty were redrawing the map for capital flows, with cash earning a return again andinvestors diversifying across markets and currencies. Hong Kong is a clear beneficiary, he said,noting that deposits rose 7.7 percent to HK$20.9 trillion in the first nine months of this year.Initial public offerings raised, Chan pointed out, a record HK$388 billion and capital is arrivingfrom the United States and Europe, as well as the mainland, Southeast Asia, Central Asia andthe Middle East. He also pointed to technology and AI as a growing source of wealth: tech isnow the largest source of wealth among the world's richest tycoons, and mainland billionairefortunes rose over 20 percent to US$1.8 trillion last year. Hong Kong is capturing it at source –116 A- and H-share listings in the first three quarters accounted for about 70 percent of fundsraised, over half of which were in AI, semiconductors and robotics, with some 500 applicationsin the pipeline. Edited by Tony Sabine

- John Lee visits Shanghai to promote SAR businesses (2026-11-04 14:00)

Chief Executive John Lee arrived in Shanghai on Wednesday afternoon after visiting Beijing, where he attended the opening ceremony of the 29th Beijing Hong Kong Economic Cooperation Symposium. In a Facebook post, Lee thanked representatives from the Ministry of Commerce, Beijing's Liaison Office in the SAR, and the Shanghai Municipal People's Government, as well as colleagues from the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Shanghai for meeting him at the airport. Lee will attend the opening ceremony of the ninth China International Import Expo (CIIE) on Thursday. "This year's CIIE has attracted participants from 162 countries, regions, and international organisations, with a total exhibition area exceeding 440,000 square metres," the post read. The CE will also attend the Hongqiao International Economic Forum. "There, I will highlight how Hong Kong is leveraging its unique strengths to integrate into and serve the

nation's overall development, showcasing our achievements and opportunities." Lee saidShanghai and Hong Kong share deep historical ties, with the SAR pushing ahead plans toestablish a "sister port" relationship with Shanghai within this year. He added that a pilotproject for the mutual exchange of trade data was launched last month and is expected tobenefit local small and medium-sized enterprises that export goods from the mainland. Lee isalso expected to meet with Shanghai officials to deepen cooperation before returning to HongKong on Friday. Edited by Aaron Tam

- RTHK signs MoU with Tianjin Haihe Media Group (2026-11-04 13:00)

Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tianjin Haihe Media Group, in a bid to boost bilateral collaboration in areas such as talent exchange and events. The MoU was signed during a four-day trip by Director of Broadcasting Angelina Kwan to the mainland, which ended on Wednesday. During the trip, Kwan, as well as participants of RTHK's national studies programme, called on the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, and met Deputy Director Zhang Dongmei. Kwan also visited the National Radio and Television Administration and the Beijing Radio and Television Station to explore opportunities for strengthening exchange and co-operation. On Tuesday, Kwan signed an MoU with Tianjin Haihe Media Group President Ma Bo. The two sides agreed to establish a framework for bilateral collaboration spanning programme resources, talent exchanges, co-operation on platform and copyright licensing, as well as on-ground events. RTHK said the the partnership will facilitate the distribution of its content to the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, while enabling Tianjin Haihe Media Group's productions to reach international audiences through RTHK's platforms. RTHK has signed MoUs with eight mainland and overseas media organisations so far this year. "By building a growing network of broadcaster partnerships and deepening collaboration on an ongoing basis, RTHK is giving concrete expression to its strategic commitment to leveraging Hong Kong's unique role as a connector between the Chinese mainland and the wider world, thereby enhancing Hong Kong's international communication capacity and sharing the stories of the nation and Hong Kong on the global stage," a statement read. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Evening News on TV32 - Nov 4 (2026-11-04 12:47)

Top stories for Wednesday, Nov 4, 2026 - Americans reject Donald Trump's Republicans with Democrats taking control of Congress. - Eric Chan says it's not by chance that Hong Kong has done well in a ranking of Asian universities. - CE urges closer ties with the city of Beijing.

- ICAC charges former HKEX vice president (2026-11-04 08:21)

A former vice president of the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing (HKEX) was charged by the ICAC on Wednesday for allegedly obtaining dishonest access to the HKEX’s internal information system. The system contained confidential information involving listed companies, according to the anti-graft agency. Geoffrey Tong, 39, and his mother, Leung Yiu-chun, 68, jointly face one count of obtaining access to computer with a view to dishonest gain for himself

or another under the Crimes Ordinance. The charge alleges that the two defendants obtainedaccess to the HKEX’s internal information system with a view to dishonest gain betweenFebruary 2018 and April 2023. The ICAC investigation revealed that Tong allegedly accessedconfidential information of listed companies unrelated to his duties on multiple occasions. “Subsequently, the investment account of his mother, Leung, engaged in share transactions ofthe relevant listed companies, yielding profits exceeding HK$500,000,” the ICAC said in astatement. The case was brought to the Eastern Magistrates’ Courts for mention onWednesday. The ICAC said it would not rule out further prosecution as the investigationcontinues. Edited by Edmond Fong

- 'Reservation effective in cutting Po Pin Chau visits' (2026-11-04 05:30)

Secretary for Environment and Ecology Tse Chin-wan on Wednesday said the government was reviewing the trial results of the real-name reservation system for the Po Pin Chau trail in Sai Kung East Country Park. Speaking to lawmakers at the Legislative Council, Tse said authorities were looking at areas for further improvement and whether a fee could be imposed. Tse noted that the reservation system had effectively controlled visitor numbers on peak days compared to the past. He said the Po Pin Chau section received an average of 2,000 visitors per day during the Chinese New Year and Labour Day Golden Week holidays – before the reservation system was introduced, while the number was kept to around 950 during the National Day Golden Week with the reservation requirement. The highest visitor flow recorded at the Po Pin Chau viewing platform was also cut by more than 30 percent compared to the past, he added. “Visitors mainly arrived in the morning. As the reservation system effectively kept the number of visitors within 500 per time slot, visitor flow on the trail was dispersed in an orderly manner, and visitors were able to tour in a more comfortable and safe environment without overcrowding,” he said. “Implementation experience shows that by effectively controlling the visitor numbers and diverting visitor flow, the reservation system not only reduced the wear and tear caused by visitors to the natural environment but also significantly improved the overall visitor experience.” He added that the reservation system operated well, with most visitors satisfied with the arrangement. The minister also said the government could collaborate with the tourism sector to launch eco-tours to further develop ecotourism products. He said part of the 2,000 daily quota of Po Pin Chau trail could be reserved for tour groups. Edited by Tony Sabine

- 'World unis to step up collaboration over NM' (2026-11-04 05:18)

Leaders from universities around the world attending a conference in Hong Kong on Wednesday said they believe the Northern Metropolis project will foster closer collaboration among institutions. On the sidelines of the World Class University Presidents Forum, Mark Scott, vice chancellor and president of the University of Sydney, recognised Hong Kong’s leading position in education, which has five institutions ranked in the world’s top 100 in the QS World University Rankings 2027. “There isn’t another city in the world that is achieving so remarkably at such scale, and so we have much to learn from Hong Kong,” he said. “One of

the things I think we can learn is the commitment of leadership that sees investment in highereducation, in research and in learning – as a key to economic growth and prosperity, and aricher and fairer society." Scott also said the University of Sydney is very excited about whatthe mega project has to offer. "We are very impressed by the level of financial commitmentand long-term engagement from government and leadership here, and we are keen to find away to be productive partners." Ebrahim Al Hajri, president of Khalifa University of Science andTechnology in the United Arab Emirates, said the institution looks forward to playing a part inthe development of the Northern Metropolis by collaborating with other institutions to "createlocal and global impact". "This is actually physical research without borders – connectingboth sides to technology, development, research, talent cultivation," he said. "Not only that,but the translation of research into commercial opportunities to benefit society and economy atlarge." The Worldwide Universities Network – a leading global higher education network thatcomprises of 23 research-intensive universities – said the hub represents a "significantmoment" for institutions to rethink global collaboration. "It's not just about the scale andconcentration for Hong Kong," its executive director Dawn Freshwater said. "It's actuallyabout a beacon of excellence globally for ways in which we might partner, collaborate and trulyfocus on how we are going to solve the issues now facing civilisation – and that is substantial."Fudan University president Jin Li, for his part, believes the Northern Metropolis can further helpHong Kong connect to the world. The mega hub is also crucial for the SAR to contribute to thenation's development, he added. Edited by Edmond Fong

- CE calls for closer cooperation with nation's capital (2026-11-04 03:29)

Chief Executive John Lee on Wednesday called for closer financial and innovative ties with the city of Beijing, as he continued his visit to the capital. Speaking at a symposium on Beijing-Hong Kong cooperation, Lee said finance had been a key area for collaboration between the two cities over the years. He called for promoting two-way financial opening-up to facilitate economic transformation. "Hong Kong, as an international financial centre, connects mainland markets and global capital," he said. "It acts as the most convenient international financing platform for enterprises in Beijing. "Through cross-border fund management, wealth management and a network connecting global investors, it serves enterprises' needs for business expansion." Lee said the two cities would continue to serve two-way financing for enterprises, and jointly expand green and sustainable finance, as well as offshore renminbi business. He also expressed hope of deepening innovative cooperation between the SAR and Beijing, as the nation developed new quality productive forces and promoted technological revolution and industrial transformation. The innovation sectors in the two cities would promote collaboration in life and health technology, artificial intelligence and robotics, he said. Lee added that Hong Kong would continue to assist mainland enterprises in going global. Edited by Tony Sabine

- Yau highlights benefits of RCEP accession for HK (2026-11-04 03:21)

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Algernon Yau said Hong Kong's entry into the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership could inject fresh impetus into advancing

the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda. "We welcome the establishment of theAccession Working Group for Hong Kong in September this year, and hope that our accessioncould inject fresh impetus into advancing the FTAAP agenda," he said during a virtual meeting atthe 37th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Ministerial Meeting held on Tuesday. Yausaid that enhancing economic integration has been the core objective of Apec, and that one ofthe directions is to continue to advance the FTAAP. He called on member economies to continueto strengthen connectivity in various areas, enabling the efficient flow of goods, services, capitaland people, while narrowing development gaps and creating opportunities for all sectors acrossthe region. Yau also stressed that the multilateral trading system must remain the foundation ofregional integration and international trade, highlighting the importance of enhancingco-operation to deal with the seismic changes in the trade landscape. Edited by Edmond Fong

- HK offers businesses growth and capital: FS (2026-11-04 03:04)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan said Hong Kong is well-placed to provide businesses with both growth opportunities and long-term capital. The finance chief made his remarks on Wednesday during a conversation session with investors on the second day of the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit in Central. Chan noted that a company needs different forms of capital at each stage of development to turn its potential into sustained growth. This, he said, is exactly where Hong Kong comes into play. “Under the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework, Hong Kong is closely connected to the Chinese mainland, while a common law legal system, free flow of capital and international networks provide a trusted and familiar environment for global investors to take part in China's enormous growth,” Chan said. “Here, we already bring together venture capital, private equity, family offices and asset managers, with deep equity and bond markets. Our task is to connect them more closely across the corporate life cycle.” He said follow-on fundraising on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange reached HK$570 billion in the first nine months of the year, showing that the city’s market continues to support companies well beyond their initial listings. Chan also said the aim is to expand allocation choices to help investors manage risks and liquidity in support of long-term value creation. Hong Kong will keep raising its market efficiency with faster approvals, streamlined processes and clearer frameworks for new financial products – all without compromising its integrity, he added. Edited by Edmond Fong

- HK's dominance in QS rankings 'not by chance' (2026-11-04 03:00)

Acting chief executive Eric Chan on Wednesday said Hong Kong would continue to stay at the forefront of education amid the latest accolades for the city's univiersities. Speaking at the World Class University Presidents Forum, he noted that higher education had always served as a cornerstone for the SAR’s success. The city is a global hub for education and talent, Chan said, noting that five local institutions took half of top 10 places in the latest QS Asia University Rankings. Three of them ranked the top five. “This is not by chance. It is the result of sustained government investment, clear policy direction and the hard work of our universities,” he said.

“It reflects our commitment to excellence, openness, academic freedom and institutionalautonomy.” Hong Kong, Chan said, would keep expanding its horizon and align with thenation’s development to remain in its leading position. With the three university towns at theNorthern Metropolis as well as the SAR’s Study in Hong Kong brand, he said the governmentwelcomed people from the mainland and all over the world to pursue their studies here. “Hong Kong is a bridge between the mainland and the global higher education system. We areopening doors for our youth to engage with diverse cultures and cutting-edge ideas," Chan said. "By nurturing globally-minded innovators, we plant the seeds for a more collaborative andprosperous world.” Edited by Tony Sabine

- Software update triggers HK parking meter outage (2026-11-03 14:11)

The Transport Department said a software update triggered a citywide malfunction of Hong Kong’s parking meter system on Tuesday. The department said preliminary investigations found that a software update in the morning caused a back-end software fault, which prevented the system from making a normal connection with the parking meters. It added that about 11,000 parking meters were affected across the city. The department has instructed the operator to conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the outage and submit a detailed report. There is no evidence that the system was attacked at the moment, the department said, adding it has reported the matter to the Digital Policy Office. The operator will arrange for full refunds for all meter transactions between 8am and 12.15pm to users, and will strive to complete the approval of the refunds within this week, it added. The Transport Department received a report at around 8.20am from the operator that the parking meter system had malfunctioned, with payment functions suspended or meter displays not operating normally. The system resumed normal operations at 12.15pm. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Evening News on TV32 - Nov 3 (2026-11-03 12:43)

Top stories for Tuesday, Nov 3, 2026 - Hong Kong's economy grows 5.2 percent in the third quarter. - Parking meters across the city go on the blink for hours. - Americans vote in midterms set to upend Donald Trump's presidency.

- HK recovery uneven despite high GDP: economist (2026-11-03 12:38)

A local economist said Hong Kong’s third-quarter GDP performance has lifted business sentiment, but the recovery remains uneven and will take time to broaden. Ho Lok-sang, adjunct professor with the Academy for Applied Policy Studies and Education Futures at the Education University of Hong Kong, made the assessment as advance estimates showed Hong Kong’s economy grew 5.2 percent year on year in the third quarter of 2026. The clearest sign of recovery, he said, was in prime office space. "Especially for the Grade A centrally located locations, [the] office take-up rate is pretty impressive," he said. "Now, certainly it’s recovering." But Ho stressed that the strength is not spreading beyond that segment. "On the outside of the Grade A and centrally located areas, office demand is still relatively weak, and the demand for commercial properties is still relatively weak," he said. He added that a broader

recovery will not come quickly and will likely depend on lower rents. "I think that it will takequite some time to recover, and I think recovery will also necessitate a decline in rents," Hosaid. Ho was more upbeat about the rest of the year's outlook. "Definitely the full year growth isgoing to be quite strong, and I am pretty confident that it will be over four percent or could beas much as 4.5 percent," he said. The government's real GDP growth forecast for 2026 as awhole is 3.5 to 4.5 percent. Ho said the financial sector is performing "pretty well, extremelywell", with IPOs still at a very high level and "no sign of it ebbing". He added that exports, too,are "doing quite well". But he flagged persistent weak spots: "Demand in terms of bothconstruction demand and also the retail consumption demand and restaurant business are stilllagging behind". To support these sectors, Ho pointed to major events and tourism. "Of coursethe major events – for example concerts and Halloween and so on – it's entirely possible toboost tourism even more," he said. "Tourism is doing pretty well this year, and we hope that thetourists can stay a bit longer and consume a bit more." Ho said that outcome depends on thebusiness sector and the government continuing to promote such major events. Meanwhile,Kenny Shui, vice president of Our Hong Kong Foundation, said the third-quarter figures pointedto strengthening momentum: goods exports rose 30.4 percent on AI and electronics demand,while services exports grew 4.3 percent on tourism and financial activity. But he said privateconsumption rose just 2.8 percent, slower than the previous quarter, showing that the strengthin retail and investment has yet to fully reach households. "Growth momentum is broadening,but the recovery still needs to be felt more widely," Shui said. With first-nine-month growth at5.1 percent, Shui expects a fourth-quarter growth of four to five percent and full-year growth ofaround five percent – above the government's forecast, leaving room for an upward revision.He cautioned, however, that interest rates could weigh on business investment and householdspending, and with unemployment at 3.9 percent, consumption still needs job and incomesupport. In the fourth quarter, the key will be whether exports stay strong and consumptionand employment improve, Shui added. Edited by Aaron Tam

- HK takes five of top 10 in QS Asia university rankings (2026-11-03 12:26)

Hong Kong has dominated the QS Asia University Rankings 2027, with five of the city's institutions placing in the top 10. The University of Hong Kong (HKU) retained the top spot, while City University of Hong Kong (CityUHK) rose to fourth and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) climbed to fifth. CityUHK and CUHK had tied for seventh a year earlier. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) shared ninth place. The rankings, compiled by international higher education experts at QS, assessed more than 1,700 universities across 26 higher education systems. Ben Sowter, QS' senior vice-president, said Hong Kong continues to set the benchmark for university performance in Asia. "The University of Hong Kong leads the region for a second consecutive year, and having five Hong Kong institutions in the top 10, more than any other higher education system, is an exceptional achievement," he said. "Increasing international engagement and growing recognition among academics and employers reinforce Hong Kong's

regional strength, at a time when competition for students, researchers and academic talent isintensifying across Asia." Xiang Zhang, president and vice-chancellor of HKU, attributed theuniversity's second straight top ranking in Asia to its community's unwavering commitmentto academic excellence and its recent drive for change. "We will continue to draw the world'sfinest minds to shape an academic ecosystem driven by a spirit of inquiry, propelling HongKong's advancement as an international hub for education, innovation and technology, whilesupporting the nation's high-quality development through scientific breakthroughs andcontributing to solving global challenges," he said in a statement. Meanwhile, CityUHK actingpresident Lee Chun-sing described the university's rise into the top five for the first time as anencouraging achievement. "This progress reflects the collective efforts of our academiccommunity to pursue excellence in research and create an inspiring learning environment," Leesaid in a statement. "It also demonstrates the success of our strategic commitment to recruitingglobal academic talent and nurturing future leaders." The top 10 also included three mainlandinstitutions – among them Peking University and Tsinghua University – and two universitiesfrom Singapore. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Hong Kong economy grew 5.2pc in Q3 2026 (2026-11-03 09:13)

Hong Kong's economy grew 5.2 percent year on year in the third quarter of 2026, buoyed by stronger exports and domestic demand, according to advance estimates. The Census and Statistics Department said the increase compared with a 4.2 percent growth in the second quarter. On a seasonally adjusted basis, GDP rose 1.9 percent quarter on quarter. For the first nine months combined, the economy grew 5.1 percent – the fastest growth for the period in five years. Goods exports rose 30.4 percent in real terms, after 28.9 percent in the second quarter, while imports grew 29.9 percent. Exports of services increased 4.3 percent. Investment strengthened, with gross domestic fixed capital formation up 7.3 percent, while private consumption grew 2.8 percent and government consumption was up 1.7 percent. A government spokesman said the economy saw robust expansion, underpinned by accelerating exports and solid domestic demand. He said the outlook remained positive, citing global artificial intelligence investment, inbound tourism, cross-boundary traffic and financial market activity. But he advised caution over geopolitical tensions in the Middle East and tighter monetary policies by major central banks. Revised GDP figures and the updated forecast for 2026 will be released on November 13. Separately, retail sales rose 6.4 percent year on year in September to a provisional HK$33.4 billion – the 17th straight month of expansion. August's revised increase was 5.6 percent, and sales for the first nine months were up 8.3 percent by value. Online sales rose 12 percent to HK$4.4 billion in September, or 13.1 percent of total retail sales, and were up 21.2 percent for the first nine months. Retail sales volume rose 3.9 percent in September. The spokesman said solid local consumption sentiment, more visitor arrivals and earlier Mid-Autumn festive sales supported retail growth. He said upcoming mega events, festive celebrations and inbound tourism should add momentum, though external headwinds warranted close monitoring. Edited by Aaron Tam

- 'Joint task force to target bid-rigging early' (2026-11-03 08:48)

Secretary for Security Chris Tang on Tuesday said officers from an interdepartmental task force on combating bid-rigging in building maintenance and renovation projects would proactively look for clues to prevent such activities. Authorities have vowed to step up crackdowns on bid-rigging following the deadly Wang Fuk Court fire. Proposed measures included the criminalisation of bid-rigging in relation to these projects, enabling a dual-track approach of both criminal and civil enforcement. Authorities will also set up a joint task force that comprises officers from police, the ICAC and the Competition Commission to better coordinate law enforcement actions. Speaking to lawmakers at a meeting of the Legislative Council's Panel on Security and Panel on Economic Development, Tang said the task force's establishment could enable early intervention. Tang said officers would adopt different tactics against bid-rigging, such as surveillance, undercover operations and the use of informants. He added that the three agencies of the task force would also attend owners' corporation meetings to look for suspicious activities, including people who hold many proxy votes or suspected triad members engaging in harassment or intimidation. Officers would take enforcement actions when necessary, he added. "If we notice any abnormal situations at the scene that violate the law, such as intimidation and blackmail, our law enforcement colleagues on site will take immediate action," Tang said. "Even if the situation is not serious enough to require enforcement action, if we notice signs that may point to hidden crimes, we will carry out investigations." Tang said the task force would consider a series of factors when deciding which projects would be prioritised for investigation. "We will consider the impact of the projects, for example, projects conducted at large estates with a lot of residents and those involving a large amount of money, and if someone seeking to participate in bid-rigging has triad backgrounds – these are all factors we take into consideration." Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Algernon Yau, meanwhile, told lawmakers that relevant legislative amendments to combat bid-rigging would be submitted to the legislature as soon as possible. Edited by Aaron Tam

- HK eager to help build 'enterprises of tomorrow' (2026-11-03 08:10)

Hong Kong is ambitious about helping create the "enterprises of tomorrow", Financial Secretary Paul Chan said on Tuesday in amplifying the pivotal role the Northern Metropolis would play in realising this vision. That came as he told investors at the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit in Central about the dedication that investors can expect of Hong Kong to strengthening its contribution to innovation. "Our ambition is not only to finance businesses created elsewhere, but also to help create the enterprises of tomorrow," Chan said. "The Northern Metropolis is central to this effort. "It will bring universities, research facilities and technology enterprises closer together, linking education, technology and talent more closely with industry." The mega development project in the northern New Territories would, Chan said, serve as a base for closer ties with other Greater Bay Area cities, allowing Hong Kong to draw on their strengths in commercialisation, engineering and advanced manufacturing. Hong Kong was eager to pair promising businesses with capital and partners, as well as give investors trusted pathways into unfamiliar sectors and economies, he added. Hong Kong had, Chan pointed out, also taken steps to widen its connections with various economies and broaden

asset classes in various regions. “In Southeast Asia, we are welcoming more enterprises fromIndonesia, Thailand and Malaysia to lease in Hong Kong,” he said. “In the Middle East, HongKong and Saudi Arabia have listed ETFs, tracking each other's markets, giving investors newroutes to invest.” “In Central Asia, Kazakhstan has already tapped Hong Kong's equity andbond markets. We welcome more issuers to raise capital here through listings and bondissuances.” Chan added that Hong Kong would also continue to expand the range of assetsand financial services to give investors more options to diversify. This, he said, included acentral focus on developing a commodity and gold trading ecosystem. Edited by Tony Sabine

- Real estate recovery drives growth forecast higher: FS (2026-11-03 08:07)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Tuesday said all three drivers of economic growth performed well in the third quarter, with consumption, investment, and exports all recording growth to varying degrees. Hong Kong's advance estimates for the third-quarter GDP are set to be released later in the day. The financial chief had announced over the weekend that the city's full-year economic growth forecast will be revised upwards following a stronger-than-expected 5.1 percent GDP growth in the first half of the year. Chan said other factors also supported the projection, noting that full-year visitor arrivals are likely to exceed the target of 50 million and that the real estate market is improving. "The residential property market has been on the rise since the latter half of last year. Last year, the increase was approximately three percent, while the rise this year has been between seven and 10 percent. In the residential property market, it's fair to say we are moving into a stage of steady ascent.” he said. "In commercial real estate, we have observed significant improvements in office rentals, in terms of rental prices and vacancy rates, particularly in central business districts. It has also stabilised in other districts." An expected influx of visitors towards the end of the year will also have a positive impact on the retail and catering sectors, Chan added. While certain industries, such as construction, catering, and retail, are facing more pressure with higher jobless rates, Chan stressed that the overall employment situation is stable, with unemployment standing at around 3.9 percent. In predicting next year’s economic growth, Chan stressed that government economists are currently assessing the impact of several key factors. These, he said, include expected high interest rates, geopolitical uncertainties like fluctuating oil prices driven by Middle East wars, upcoming elections in major economies, and the reallocation of international funds. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Financial institutions laud HK's gateway guardianship (2026-11-03 07:09)

Global bank leaders have lauded Hong Kong for its role as a gateway between the mainland and the rest of the world, facilitating two-way financial flows and minimising risks in an era of uncertainty. At a panel meeting held at the Global Financial Leaders’ Investment Summit in Central, State Street chairman and chief executive Ronald O’Hanley noted that trade patterns had changed in recent years due to uncertainties brought by the pandemic and global conflicts. More borrowers and people looking to raise capital, he said, are looking for safer options when building supply chains and structuring financing – switching from “just in time to just in

case”. “Where we’re seeing the most change is around the role of China, and Hong Kong isthe gateway to that,” O’Hanley said. "It’s the kind of movement of money north and southand movement of capital north and south, and Hong Kong is playing that role.” Barclays groupchief executive C S Venkatakrishnan said firms had been reducing their dependency on strategicimports over the past decade and that the city which is positioned as both an internationalfinancial centre as well as a domestic one is the one that can help countries manage thedependencies. “I think in order for international finance not to get caught up in the strategicbreakdown of dependence, it’s important for the international financial centres like HongKong to do what you’re doing – which is to have fair and transparent regulation to promotegrowth and to make it easy for people to operate,” he said. BNP Paribas chairman JeanLemierre noted that more mainland firms were operating in Europe. With Hong Kong being arenminbi hub, it acts as a bridge between China and Europe that helps these companies gainaccess to the euro, he said, adding that mainland firms can have better understanding of theEuropean market through the SAR. Edited by Tony Sabine

- Beijing approves removal of Winnie Ho as housing chief (2026-11-03 05:17)

The State Council has decided to remove Winnie Ho from the post of housing secretary of the Hong Kong government, Xinhua reported on Tuesday. It said the decision, made on Tuesday, was in accordance with the Basic Law and based on the suggestion of Chief Executive John Lee. That came after Lee said Ho had tendered her resignation on October 28 and indicated that she would shoulder political accountability for the Wang Fuk Court fire in Tai Po. A day after that, the government made public the investigation report by an independent committee into the deadly blaze and unveiled sweeping measures to prevent a recurrence. In a statement, Lee recounted Ho's career from the time that she joined the government in 1992, becoming director of architectural services in 2020 to being appointed as secretary for housing in 2022. Lee said Ho had been dedicated to implementing his directives, including constructing some 30,000 Light Public Housing units, shortening the composite waiting time for subsidised rental housing from 6.1 years to 4.8 years, effectively combating the abuse of public rental housing and enacting the Basic Housing Units Ordinance to eradicate substandard subdivided units. "As she officially leaves her post today, I wish her all the best in her future endeavours and a healthy life," he said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- Parking meters restored after hours of breakdown (2026-11-03 04:47)

The Transport Department said the operation of the city's parking meter system had returned to normal following emergency repairs after a breakdown that lasted for nearly four hours on Tuesday morning. The department said it received a report from the operator at about 8.20am that the system had malfunctioned. The Digital Policy Office was notified of the incident, the department said, noting that there was no evidence to suggest the system had been hacked. Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan said officials had urged the operator of the parking meters to submit a report as soon as possible. "I want to reiterate that we attach huge importance to this incident and the system malfunction. I have instructed the Transport

Department to require the system operator, Hong Kong Telecom, to submit a report as soon aspossible. I hope an initial report can be submitted within the next 24 hours," she said. Edited byTony Sabine

- New service to simplify mainland flight transit in HK (2026-11-03 04:36)

Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan on Tuesday said a new service had been launched to streamline international travel for mainland passengers departing from regional airports via Hong Kong International Airport to destinations around the world. A pilot phase is underway in collaboration with airports in Hangzhou and Wuhan. The new initiative is part of the national aviation programme named: "Trunk-Branch Connectivity, Whole-Network Linkage". Passengers can check in for their entire journey at their local airports, and fly out to international destinations via Hong Kong, instead of having to re-claim their luggage and then check in again in the SAR. Speaking at the opening ceremony of this year's Super Terminal Expo, Chan described the scheme as a game-changing service. "To put this into perspective, this transfer platform is already active across more than 260 airports in the mainland and has accumulatively facilitated over 260 million transfer passengers, allowing tens of millions of travellers to enjoy the unprecedented convenience of one-stop check-in and seamless baggage transfers," she said. "This is far more than a commercial expansion. It is a policy breakthrough, which embeds Hong Kong directly into the national overall aviation architecture." Chan stressed that Hong Kong International Airport plays a vital “linchpin role” to fulfil the SAR’s unique mandate as a super-connector and a super value-adder that bridges the country and the world. Enhancing connectivity between the world’s second-largest economy and the rest of the world, she said, also unlocks tremendous opportunities for trade and aviation. To facilitate this goal, Chan noted that Hong Kong had also set a target of expanding its global aviation network from the existing 220 destinations to 240 under its recently unveiled five-year plan. Edited by Tony Sabine

- HK blueprint 'gives investors the certainty they seek' (2026-11-03 04:12)

Hong Kong can offer certainty, clarity and confidence to global investors at a time when structural forces are rewriting the rules of global finance, Chief Executive John Lee said on Tuesday. He was speaking in Central at the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit, which gathered some 280 of the sector's leaders from around the world. While blockchain and tokenisation were rebuilding the world's financial infrastructure, and AI was reshaping productivity, labour markets and competition, Lee noted that Hong Kong’s first five-year blueprint had set out clear developmental directions. “The plan delivers what markets value most: certainty,” he said. “In an era of ever-shifting terrain, it lays out a transparent roadmap, showing where Hong Kong is heading and how we intend to get there. I invite you to consider that roadmap yours as well. “And to be clear, as we rethink the playbook, as we create strategic blueprints for Hong Kong's development, we ensure the value proposition of our city remains intact – that is our competitive edge under the ‘One Country, Two Systems’ principle.” Lee added that he would be attending the Apec Economic Leaders’ Meeting in

Shenzhen this month with the goal of advancing regional economic cooperation. Meanwhile,Vice Premier He Lifeng said Hong Kong’s development had always been in sync with thenation, adding that ensuring the sound development of the SAR had been a key strategicconsideration of the central government. Delivering a speech to summit through video, heurged the SAR to leverage its advantages under "One Country, Two Systems". " Furtherdemonstrating its international characteristics, Hong Kong will continuously deepen and expandexchanges and cooperation with the world in areas such as the economy, technology, andculture," He said. "It will provide greater convenience and better opportunities for moreinternational capital, institutions, and talent to come to Hong Kong for entrepreneurship anddevelopment. "We will, as always, fully support Hong Kong in maintaining its unique status andadvantages over the long term, build a higher-level, more competitive free and open economicenvironment, and create broader space for future development." He also expressed the centralgovernment’s confidence in the SAR’s five-year blueprint to develop Hong Kong. Edited byTony Sabine

- Parking meters down, emergency repairs under way (2026-11-03 02:31)

The Transport Department on Tuesday said that the parking meter system had broken down, with emergency repairs under way. The department said it received a report from the operator at about 8.20am that the system had malfunctioned. It said it instructed the operator to carry out the necessary repairs as soon as possible to minimise the impact on motorists, and to conduct a thorough investigation into the cause of the incident and submit a report. Motorists with enquiries can call the service hotline at 2332 3700. Later, Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan said several parking metres had returned to normal following the repairs. She added that no parking tickets would be issued until the system was fully restored. "The Transport Department immediately contacted the police. While the system is being repaired, police will not carry out enforcement on roadside parking spots. People can be sure of that," Chan said. "I want to reiterate that we attach huge importance to this incident and the system malfunction. I have instructed the Transport Department to require the system operator, Hong Kong Telecom, to submit a report as soon as possible. I hope an initial report can be submitted within the next 24 hours." _____ Last updated: 2026-11-03 HKT 12:17 Edited by Tony Sabine

- Man arrested over suspected spiked drink (2026-11-03 01:29)

Police have arrested a 61-year-old man suspected of adding an unknown substance to a 33-year-old woman's drink at a bar in Tsim Sha Tsui. Police received a report just before 5am on Sunday that a woman had fallen ill after drinking a beverage at a bar on Mody Road, with suspicions that the drink had been spiked. She was conscious and taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment. The Yau Tsim Criminal Investigation Support Team took up the case and made the arrest in Central on Monday. The man is being held for further questioning on suspicion of administering poison with intent to harm. Japanese former adult film star turned DJ, Mao Hamasaki, has said she fell ill after having a drink that she said had been tampered with

during a Halloween event. Edited by Tony Sabine

• Driver arrested over Tuen Mun fatal accident (2026-11-03 01:26)

A 54-year-old woman died early on Tuesday after reportedly being knocked down by a private car in Tuen Mun, with the driver arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving causing death. The accident happened at about 11.09pm on Monday along Castle Peak Road in Hung Shui Kiu, as the car was travelling towards Yuen Long. The woman suffered serious head injuries and was rushed to Tuen Mun Hospital in an unconscious state, where she was certified dead at 0.17am on Tuesday. The 53-year-old male driver was arrested and is being detained for further enquiries. The case is being investigated by the Special Investigation Team of Traffic, New Territories North. Edited by Tony Sabine

• Three-vehicle crash in Tsuen Wan injures nine (2026-11-02 14:18)

Nine people sustained light injuries in a car crash involving three vehicles in Tsuen Wan on Monday night. Police said they were alerted at 7.30pm that a minibus collided with a private vehicle and a light goods vehicle on Tsuen Wan Road. The collision shattered the minibus' windshield. All of those hurt were conscious. A part of Tsuen Wan Road was temporarily closed due to the incident. Edited by Aaron Tam

• Foreign firms debut in HK to access mainland market (2026-11-02 14:04)

A number of foreign companies have made their debut at the annual Hong Kong Fintech Week and StartmeupHK that commenced on Monday, hoping to use the SAR as a springboard to tap into the mainland market. They include a Canadian company that produces renewable fuels. Jag Singh from SBI BioEnergy noted that his firm can contribute to the SAR’s green aviation development, and hopes to also explore opportunities in the mainland market. “Everyone in the world has a shortage of sustainable aviation fuel and a target to blend sustainable aviation fuel,” he said. “So we are helping to achieve that and we can do it globally because it's our own process modular, and we have all the control of the technology because we have the hydrogen production as well as the conversion system in them.” Singh went on to say that the firm’s next goal is to expand even further in Asia through Hong Kong. "We hear a lot about the great agreements and structures here and IP protection, and that's very important to us because these are our babies – these are our patented processes – we spent a lot of time and blood, sweat and tears to make this happen," he said. "So I think it’s a perfect gateway or potential base as a springboard to the rest of Asia and China." Canadian firm Deep Sky, which specialises in carbon removal, is also taking part in the event. “What I’ve noticed is there's an incredible density of companies that are developing energy infrastructure in [the] mainland and internationally, financiers financing those projects and trading firms who are trading the products,” the firm's Charlie Renzoni said. “So I see an incredibly important connection between Hong Kong, [the] mainland and the rest of the world.” For Korean firm MoneyStation, which focuses on AI-powered investment intelligence, they decided to make the SAR their first stop to go overseas. “Hong Kong is like a pioneer in adapting the new financial business

models like cryptos or stock markets and asset management," its founder James Lee said. Headded that the city's annual event also offered them a chance to look for strategic businesspartners. Edited by Aaron Tam

• 'HK crucial for mainland firms' global expansion' (2026-11-02 13:17)

Mainland companies have hailed the city's annual flagship finance and technology event, saying it offers an opportunity for them to carry out exchanges with potential overseas partners. Speaking on the sidelines of the Hong Kong Fintech Week and StartmeupHK on Monday, Liu Yong from the Zhongguancun Fintech Industry Development said this year was their third time participating in the event. He said that the SAR's role as a super connector was crucial for the mainland in setting up shop overseas. "Hong Kong can fully leverage its strength in international talent. Because in the international aspects, such as accounting standards, Hong Kong itself is an international financial centre – it has a very good foundation and conditions," he said. Mu Rong from the Greater Bay Area fintech delegation noted that some firms focusing on securities and asset management, which used to adopt a wait-and-see approach, have gradually set up shop in Hong Kong to start doing business overseas. "Some of these tech companies have started making profits. The orders that they received from overseas customers were even larger than those from the mainland," she said. "This shows that Hong Kong fully recognised their technical capabilities." Mu went on to say that firms that wish to expand to international markets will now team up, rather than go it alone. Wang Yu, who represented a delegation led by the Union of Finance Alumni of Peking University said that more than 30 percent of the firms in their group – particularly those focusing on AI – are determined to expand globally via the SAR. Wang highlighted how Hong Kong's convenience across various aspects, including culture and language, makes it an ideal platform to go global. Edited by Aaron Tam

• Evening News on TV32 - Nov 2 (2026-11-02 12:23)

Top stories for Monday, Nov 2, 2026 - John Lee says Hong Kong offers businesses long-term certainty. - The government says new building project liaison officers will provide one-stop handling of homeowners' enquiries. - Nine die as a plane crashes into a neighbourhood in Florida.

• Apple iPhone pre-sales linked to 1,700 fraud cases (2026-11-02 10:35)

Police have received more than 1,700 reports of suspected credit-card fraud cases linked to Apple's recent iPhone pre-sales in September and October. At a Southern District Council meeting on Monday, Police Commissioner Joe Chow said the force received 1,589 reports of unauthorised credit card transactions involving the purchases of various Apple iPhone 18 models. Pre-orders for the smartphone began on September 12 in Hong Kong. Another 138 reports were filed in October, when the iPhone Duo began accepting orders. According to Chow, Apple opted against extra security measures for credit card transactions. An example would be the "3D Secure" protocol, which asks customers to enter a one-time password or verify their

identity on the bank's mobile app. "During this period, we contacted Apple, credit cardcompanies and banks, and cancelled all problematic purchase records. As a result, the victimsdid not suffer any losses," Chow said. The police chief said officers had reached out to Apple onmultiple occasions to express hope that the company would implement effective securitymeasures and strengthen verification in future product launches. Chow also briefed districtcouncillors on Hong Kong's law-and-order situation. He said fraud remained the dominantcrime category, with 34,679 cases in the first nine months of the year, making up 51 percent ofall crimes. Victims reported losses of HK$6.02 billion, a 6.7 per cent increase year on year.Phone scams were now the most common type of fraud, followed by online shoppingdeception. Edited by Raymond Yeung

- Govt pledges 'one-stop liaison service' for homeowners (2026-11-02 09:25)

Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong on Monday said liaison officers would be assigned to handle homeowners' enquiries and complaints regarding future building renovation projects. The government announced last week comprehensive reforms to the building maintenance industry to prevent a repeat of the Wang Fuk Court fire that killed 168 people last year. A report detailing the shortcomings by contractors and government departments in relation to the tragedy was released on the same day. Among the measures proposed by the government, the Housing Bureau's Independent Checking Unit (ICU) would be decommissioned and replaced by a Public Housing Building Control Section this month. Project-specific teams would be set up to assist housing estates undertaking major maintenance and renovation works. A liaison officer would act as the point of contact for the owners' corporation and homeowners. Wong, who attended a Legislative Council housing panel meeting as Acting Secretary for Housing, said the liaison officers will keep homeowners informed of developments. "Currently, the ICU has different professional functions. It may not be practical for homeowners to find the person in charge of each field," he said. "We have internal referrals now, but it's neither direct nor fast enough. In the future, the one-stop liaison officer would handle all these issues, as well as complaints concerning maintenance matters." Wong added that authorities also planned to use artificial intelligence to speed things up, such as auditing and analysing documents. "It's impractical for one person to go through 1,000 documents, while artificial intelligence can finish that in 0.1 seconds," he said. "It will flag anomalies and anything improper, but will not make the final judgment. We will always have people to make the judgment." Wong said any potential issue flagged by AI will be followed up manually. Edited by Raymond Yeung

- 30pc of financial firms now employ agentic AI: survey (2026-11-02 08:05)

The Securities and Futures Commission has released its first-ever AI readiness survey, showing that most large financial firms in Hong Kong already use artificial intelligence across their operations, with adoption expected to accelerate over the coming year. The survey, conducted between July and August this year, covered 20 large financial firms with 78 affiliated licensed corporations in Hong Kong. Together they accounted for over 75 per cent of securities transactions reported by licensed corporations in the six months ended June. The survey found

that 95 per cent of surveyed firms expected AI usage to accelerate over the next 12 months,with 90 per cent already connecting AI tools to internal systems. AI use now spans front-,middle- and back-office activities. "AI adoption in Hong Kong in the capital market is growingrapidly in speed and in scale," SFC chief executive officer Julia Leung said during the Hong KongFintech Week. Notably, agentic AI – which can autonomously determine and execute steps toachieve an objective – is gaining traction, the survey showed. Thirty per cent of surveyed firmsalready use it in their business operations, and 25 per cent are piloting it with varying degreesof autonomy and human involvement. However, Leung struck a note of caution. "Just think ofagentic AI [as] your kids at home. They define the boundaries we set for them. They can gorogue, they can collude with their siblings, and disrupt your neighbour," she said. Leung alsoacknowledged that the development of frontier AI models and agents has outpacedgovernments' and regulators' ability to set rules. The SFC said the findings will inform itssupervisory approach to AI, with priorities including protecting investors, strengtheningcybersecurity and operational resilience, and ensuring effective AI governance. Edited byRaymond Yeung

- HSBC to set up AI institute in race to train staff (2026-11-02 06:21)

Banking giant HSBC says an artificial intelligence and emerging technology institute being set up in Hong Kong is due to become operational in the first quarter of 2027. Announcing the update at Hong Kong Fintech Week on Monday, chief executive Georges Elhedery said the city's biggest lender aims to move the institute to the Northern Metropolis once a suitable location has been identified. For now, he said the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology will be the institute’s first anchor academic partner. "We bring their skills and know-how and capabilities as well as our domain expertise and financial services to find and work on solutions that make our clients' lives much easier in the age of AI, but also other emerging technologies such as blockchain, quantum, etc," Elhedery said. He framed the institute's establishment as part of HSBC's broader AI strategy to give its roughly 200,000 employees – including about 28,000 in Hong Kong – an efficiency boost. "AI is going to be disruptive. It’s going to transform jobs. It’s going to eliminate some. It’s going to create new ones," Elhedery said. "The first mission for us is to bring all our colleagues ⋯ on the journey with us as opposed to creating an environment where uncertainty actually prevails." HSBC is already testing how client agents could interact with the bank’s agents to handle basic tasks, he said, though security remains a major workstream. On AI security, Elhedery said, HSBC is constantly working to identify vulnerabilities and build more resilient systems. Edited by Raymond Yeung

- HKMA eyes next level for Fintech 2030 with AI push (2026-11-02 04:14)

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority has set out the next phase of its Fintech 2030 strategy, which will pair new technology initiatives with a renewed emphasis on governance and risk management. Speaking at Hong Kong Fintech Week on Monday, authority chief executive Eddie Yue said the HKMA is launching Project Sage to examine the application and governance of " agentic finance" – artificial intelligence systems that can execute tasks on behalf of users. "The main purpose of the Sage project is to hope that, under agentic finance, we can both promote

application and pay attention to governance," he said. Yue said a cross-sector expert panelwould bring together finance, payments, professional services, technology and academicrepresentatives to explore use cases, sandbox testing, interoperability standards andgovernance safeguards. The HKMA is also issuing a discussion paper on banks' use of agenticAI, seeking views on governance models, responsibility arrangements and a possible centralregister of trusted agents. Yue said the aim is to set rules that allow innovation while managingrisks. He also said the authority would launch a post-quantum cryptography toolbox with theHong Kong University of Science and Technology to help banks prepare for the challengesstemming from breakthroughs in quantum computing. On tokenisation, Yue said the HKMA isintroducing tokenised central bank money to enable 24/7 settlement of interbank tokeniseddeposits and would expand the number of participating banks to support cross-lender transfersaround the clock. "The benefit is that, for example, quite a number of enterprises with globalliquidity to manage can, if round-the-clock tokenised deposit transfers are achieved, makepayments at any time and anywhere, across different accounts and even cross-border," he said. "And for retail investors, if in the future they want to invest in different retail tokenised financialproducts, they can also more flexibly do their investments 24/7, strengthening the flexibility andsecurity of their asset allocation." Yue said the HKMA would further pilot tokenised ExchangeFund Bills in the secondary market and explore whether regulated stablecoins could serve as apayment channel. He stressed that innovation must be matched by governance and riskmanagement so it can go further, land better and benefit more people. Edited by Tony Sabine

- HK 'an ideal home for international private law body' (2026-11-02 03:54)

Chief Executive John Lee on Monday said Hong Kong strives to attract global organisations and promote international legal cooperation. He made the remarks in an opening ceremony by the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law – also known as Institut International Pour L'unification du Droit Prive (Unidroit) – of its Asia-Pacific liaison office in the city. At the ceremony, which also marks the beginning of this year's Hong Kong Legal Week, Lee said the establishment of the office would deepen collaboration, facilitating the implementation of private law. "It is a decision of profound significance – for Unidroit, for Hong Kong and for the entire Asia-Pacific region," he said. "The liaison office will serve as a focal point for enhanced engagement with member states and stakeholders in the region. And it will play a crucial role in the legislative and institutional work of Unidroit. "Hong Kong, strategically located at the heart of Asia, is an ideal home for the Asia-Pacific liaison office." Lee said the establishment of the liaison office would strengthen the collaborative relationship between Hong Kong and the institute. The office would also be able to benefit from cooperation with other legal organisations in the city, he added. Hong Kong, Lee pointed out, is a renowned international legal, trade and financial hub and serves as a host to many international organisations. The city's laws and dispute resolution framework also align with international standards and have been recognised globally, he stressed. The nation's 15th Five-Year Plan supports Hong Kong's development as an international legal and dispute resolution services centre, Lee said, while the

city’s own five-year blueprint sets out a series of measures for leveraging the strengths of theSAR’s common law system. Edited by Tony Sabine

- John Lee says HK offers businesses long-term certainty (2026-11-02 03:11)

Chief Executive John Lee said Hong Kong offers businesses the "certainty" they need to innovate, invest and flourish over the long term, even as global uncertainty persists. That assurance came in opening remarks that he made on the first day of the region's annual flagship finance and technology event, Hong Kong Fintech Week and StartmeupHK, on Monday. The conference brings together some 1,000 government leaders and fintech, finance and technology professionals from more than 100 countries and economies, along with around 800 exhibitors and startups and more than 30 delegations from the mainland and abroad. Lee framed the event against a fast-changing global backdrop, saying technology is advancing at a remarkable speed, with artificial intelligence transforming industries and forcing businesses worldwide to adjust to shifting market conditions and unprecedented technological changes. "In such an ever-changing, all-encompassing environment, one quality is becoming even more valuable — I'm talking about certainty," he said. "Certainty about direction, certainty about opportunities, certainty about where businesses can invest, innovate and flourish in the long term." Lee pointed to Hong Kong’s first-ever five-year plan, saying the strategic blueprint reinforces the city’s status as an international financial, maritime and trade centre and aviation hub, while accelerating its development as an international innovation and technology centre and a hub for high-calibre talent. He also cited Hong Kong’s ranking as the world’s freest economy, its more than 1,400 fintech companies and InvestHK’s support for more than 550 overseas and mainland companies in the first nine months of the year, generating about US$9 billion in foreign direct investment and some 11,100 jobs. He also pointed to the Northern Metropolis as a long-term source of opportunity, saying the mega project would create an innovation "through-train" that connects talent and research with commercialisation, capital and global markets. Lee expressed confidence that Hong Kong’s future would be one for everyone – in business, finance, technology and beyond. "If you believe that technology will define the future, if you believe that Asia will continue to drive global economic growth, and if you believe in the transformation taking place across China, then you must believe in Hong Kong's pivotal place in making it happen," he said. "After all, it's in Hong Kong that you access global capital while remaining close to one of the world's most dynamic engines of innovation and growth." He added that Hong Kong is a place where ideas can move from research to commercialisation and then into global markets – an East-meets-West city built on multilateralism, free trade and mutual opportunity. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ICAC charges two ex-cleaning firm executives (2026-11-02 03:04)

Two former senior executives of a cleaning company have been charged by the ICAC for allegedly accepting bribes totalling more than HK$75 million in connection with the procurement of cleaning vehicles and maintenance services, with the case expected to be mentioned at Kwun Tong Magistrates' Courts on Monday. William Fung, 54, former director of

Johnson Cleaning Services Company Limited and chief executive officer of its parent company,and Jimmy Lee, 57, former general manager of Johnson, were both charged on October 30 withone count of conspiracy for an agent to accept advantages under the Prevention of BriberyOrdinance and the Crimes Ordinance. At the time of the alleged offences, Fung oversawJohnson's business including subcontracts, purchase orders and the release of payments. Leewas under his direct supervision. Between November 2024 and January 2026, Johnson procuredmultiple fleets of cleaning vehicles from a supplier and regularly used the supplier's vehiclemaintenance services, with total expenses exceeding HK$160 million. The charge alleges thatFung and Lee conspired to accept bribes totalling over HK$75 million from individuals includingthe supplier's proprietor, as a reward for showing favour to the supplier in the company'sbusiness dealings. The ICAC said Johnson had rendered full assistance during its investigation.As the corruption investigation is ongoing, the commission said it would not rule out furtherprosecution. Edited by Tony Sabine

- Evening News on TV32 - Nov 1 (2026-11-01 12:22)

Top stories for Sunday, Nov 1, 2026 - The justice secretary says "bad actors" are going to be driven out of the building maintenance sector. - Thousands join the first ever Northern Metropolis Marathon. - Hong Kong has its warmest October on record.

- Hong Kong records warmest October since records begin (2026-11-01 10:27)

The Observatory on Sunday said Hong Kong recorded its warmest October since records began in 1884. The forecaster said the average temperature last month stood at 27.6 degrees Celsius. The mean maximum and minimum temperatures also set records, at 30.5 degrees and 25.8 degrees respectively. The Observatory attributed the unusually warm conditions to the ongoing El Niño and a weak northeast monsoon, while noting that climate change also played a role. A fresh to strong northeast monsoon is expected to reach the city in the coming days, bringing a slight drop in temperatures early next week. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Bar Association backs criminalising bid-rigging (2026-11-01 09:45)

The Bar Association on Sunday said it supports the criminalisation of bid-rigging activities through amendments to the Competition Ordinance. This came as its task force on law review proposed about 50 legislative amendments following the deadly Wang Fuk Court fire. It covered bid-rigging, tender specifications, declaration of interests, as well as project safety and risks. Jose-Antonio Maurellet, chairman of the association, expressed support of criminalising bid-rigging in parallel to the existing civil regime. “The existence of the dual-track system, of course, does not mean that civil and criminal proceedings would be taken forward at the same time for the same case – this would contravene the principle against double jeopardy,” he said. “The enforcement authorities concerned will therefore need to coordinate with one another and to decide whether a case is to be dealt with by civil enforcement or by criminal prosecution.” He went on to say that under the new criminal offence, the elements of crime, such as the definition of bid-rigging and the burden of proof, must be clearly defined. The

association also proposed to amend the Building Management Ordinance, saying if a projectexceeds a certain value, tenders must be submitted in “two envelopes” – one for thetechnical proposal and the other for price. The price proposal may only be opened after thetechnical proposal has met a minimum score specified in the evaluation to encourage a focuson quality, it said. Edited by Aaron Tam

• Lan Kwai Fong welcomes record 105k Halloween revellers (2026-11-01 09:35)

Lan Kwai Fong Group on Sunday said it welcomed a record 105,000 revellers on Halloween, up from 80,000 a year earlier, as bars and restaurants saw business nearly double. The group's chairman, Allan Zeman said the size of the crowd on Saturday – also the final day of Hong Kong's inaugural month-long programme for the spooky festival – was the busiest Halloween the entertainment district had ever seen. "The first Saturday that it came out, it was busy, the second Saturday, more people came, and then the third Saturday was really quite busy but not as busy as last Saturday night," he said. “It was a record because last year we had 80,000 people and never expected to break the record.” He lauded the Tourism Board’s Halloween Month, saying it was a draw for visitors from across Hong Kong, the mainland and overseas. " The beauty was there was people from all over," Zeman said. Locals made up roughly 50 to 60 percent of the crowd and mainland visitors stood at about 20 to 30 percent, with Zeman saying there were more tourists from around the world as well. "In the past we never had so many international people," he said, adding that visitors told him they had come from Canada and the United States specifically to experience Lan Kwai Fong. Zeman also said bars and restaurants did 90 to 100 percent more business than on a normal Saturday, while other businesses reported gains of 40 to 50 percent. "It was just the best Halloween that Lan Kwai Fong has ever seen," he said. The Lan Kwai Fong Group chairman also said the opening of the round-the-clock Huanggang Port and extended clearance hours at Shenzhen Bay control point made a difference. It’s a "game changer for Hong Kong – not just for Halloween", he said, citing facial recognition that can clear travellers in about two minutes. Edited by Aaron Tam

• HK Q3 growth set to beat forecasts: FS (2026-11-01 08:18)

Hong Kong’s economy is expected to grow faster than market forecasts in Q3, extending its positive growth streak to 15 consecutive quarters, according to Financial Secretary Paul Chan. In his weekly blog on Sunday, Chan said the government will release advance estimates for third-quarter GDP on Tuesday. Preliminary indications suggest that faster export growth and solid domestic demand will push year-on-year growth above market expectations and accelerate from the second quarter. "For the first three quarters combined, real GDP growth year-on-year will be the highest for the same period in five years," he said. "With the economy maintaining good momentum, the full-year economic growth forecast is expected to be revised upward again." Chan attributed part of the growth to technological innovation, noting that the global artificial intelligence investment boom continues to drive strong demand for high-end electronic components and AI-related goods. "The value of Hong Kong’s merchandise exports surged by 64.9 percent year-on-year in September, recording double-digit growth for the 20th

consecutive month, with the monthly increase hitting a more than 40-year high," he said. " Among these, exports of 'office machines and automatic data processing machines' soared by183.7 percent." Private investment expenditure has also grown by double digits for threestraight quarters and maintained that momentum into the third quarter, Chan said, reflectingcorporate confidence in the outlook. Service exports have benefited from continued growth ininbound tourism, buoyant cross-boundary transport and an active financial market. Chan saidupcoming retail and catering receipts figures are expected to continue showing moderategrowth. He also noted that two major international financial events – Hong Kong Fintech Weekand the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit – will begin on Monday. Fintech industryplayers and investors from more than 100 economies, as well as heads of top internationalfinancial institutions, will gather in Hong Kong to discuss key issues in global financial marketsand technological development and to identify and create new investment opportunitiesthrough high-level exchanges. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Runners unfazed by heat in first-ever NM marathon (2026-11-01 08:06)

Around 15,000 people took part in the inaugural Northern Metropolis Marathon on Sunday morning, with the organiser saying it will try to hold future races in cooler months and extend the route to Shenzhen. At the sound of the horn, eager runners began their 42.1km journey at 6:30am in Shek Mun, where the Heung Yee Kuk – which organised the event – is headquartered. Full marathoners then headed north via the Science Park, Tolo Highway, Lam Tsuen River in Tai Po and the Lung Shan Tunnel before crossing the line at the recently commissioned Fanling Bypass. Half-marathon runners had a similar route, starting at the Science Park and finishing in Fanling. Most participants said the arrangements were smooth. But depending on their luck, some might have had to briefly stop at the traffic lights at a crossing to let cars pass. A certain section of the route also saw runners sharing a bike path with cyclists. Lai, a marathon finisher, said he was not pleased with his time of three hours and 11 minutes. "I kind of expected it, because of the heat," he said. "To me the route didn't matter. Running in 28 degrees [Celsius] was really tough, and there was a lack of water stations. There should be one station every 2.5 kilometres, compared to every three to four kilometres right now." Former SAR representative Chan Ka-ho, meanwhile, came fourth overall in the men's marathon. "There aren't that many full marathon courses in Hong Kong, perhaps only three or four. So this new course offers a fresh experience," he said. "If you ask me if the route is fast, I would say no. But for recreational runners who wish to step onto the Fanling Bypass and Lung Shan Tunnel, then it's quite nice." To promote local produce and delicacies, each finisher was given a hydroponic cabbage as well as pastries. Heung Yee Kuk chairman Kenneth Lau said he was surprised by the turnout. He hoped that the route allowed participants to experience the charm of the New Territories, and thanked authorities for providing help to overcome various challenges. "Many people have asked, if they can run all the way to Shenzhen... We can see that infrastructure development in Yuen Long and the rest of the Northern Metropolis is in full swing, with numerous construction sites and projects under way," he said. "I believe that in the future, the route will surely extend to San Tin, the Lok Ma Chau Loop, or even all the way into the Shenzhen area." Lau admitted the

day's temperature of 25 degrees Celsius or so was not the most ideal for running, and hoped tohold future races in December if possible. Edited by Aaron Tam

• 'Revolutionary change aimed for building maintenance' (2026-11-01 05:15)

Secretary for Justice Paul Lam on Sunday said the government’s efforts to amend the law following the deadly Wang Fuk Court inferno aim to make a "revolutionary change" to the entire building maintenance ecosystem in Hong Kong. His remarks came as authorities plan to submit legislative amendments to the Legislative Council within this year to reform the building maintenance and renovation system, as well as combat bid-rigging activities. Speaking on a Commercial Radio programme, Lam said dishonest contractors should be driven out of the market. “In today’s large-scale building maintenance, there is an objective fact – an unfortunate and unacceptable fact – that the 'fat of the meat' is too rich, and the market was almost monopolised by bad actors,” he said. "A friend of mine in law enforcement put it very well: bad money drives out good. Genuinely decent maintenance workers and professionals were not willing to take part in the market. People have no choice – it’s all bad actors. "So the first step is to drive the bad actors out of the market, so that the highly professional and honest people will be willing to re-enter the market." Lam said authorities should also assist home owners in finding suitable contractors and professionals, and ensure that construction works are carried out in a safe and lawful manner. Speaking on the same show, Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Algernon Yau said bid-rigging involves complex issues including price-fixing and market sharing. He believes criminalising such activities would enable greater powers to combat bid-rigging, expressing hope that the amendments could be passed by April next year. Edited by Tony Sabine

• Evening News on TV32 - Oct 31 (2026-10-31 12:47)

Top stories for Saturday, Oct 31, 2026 - Finance chief Paul Chan says Hong Kong could record its strongest full-year economic growth in five years. - Police arrest 58 people, including minors, in an anti-triad operation. - Halloween celebrations are in full swing, here and around the world.

• Vaccination calls as flu season 'not over' (2026-10-31 10:30)

A seven-year-old girl with an underlying illness is critically ill with influenza A as authorities urge vaccination. The girl developed a runny nose, diarrhoea and abdominal pain on Thursday, followed by fever and convulsions on Friday, according to the Department of Health. She was admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital. She was transferred to the hospital’s paediatric intensive care unit after her condition deteriorated and remains there for further treatment. Health authorities warn that the city’s flu season is not over. Hong Kong's current flu season has already dragged on for four months after beginning in late June, according to health officials. Dr. Edwin Tsui, Controller of the Centre for Health Protection, noted that while the latest surveillance data shows signs of decline, overall influenza activity "remained above the baseline level." "A cumulative total of 28 cases of severe paediatric influenza infection have been recorded in the current influenza season. Among these cases, 20 patients have recovered and

been discharged from hospital, two are in stable condition, four are in critical condition and twohave passed away," Tsui said. The CHP has urged residents to get vaccinated to reduce the riskof potential illness. Its analysis of the previous year’s data showed that unvaccinated childrenwho contracted flu had approximately five times the rate of severe complications or deathcompared with vaccinated children. Edited by Azam Khan

- 58 arrested in triad crackdown as youth crimes spike (2026-10-31 09:28)

Police on Saturday arrested 58 people in a city-wide, anti-triad operation, disrupting gang networks exploiting the youth. The suspects rounded up include core gang members as well as those aged below 18. They are alleged to have committed a series of offenses, including claiming to be triad members, inviting another person to become a triad member, false imprisonment and money laundering. Chief inspector Chan Pak-ki said the arrests came after undercover officers infiltrated two triad groups amid a rise in youth crimes early this year. “We found that these triad groups would obtain the youths' trust first. They might carry out simple initiation ceremonies," she said. "After obtaining their trust, they lured them, through false promises that there was quick money to be made, into carrying out a lot of illegal acts.” The force also busted a number of illegal gambling and drug dens. Chan did not rule out further arrests, adding that the operation was still ongoing. Edited by Azam Khan

- Lan Kwai Fong expects monster finish to Halloween (2026-10-31 08:38)

Hong Kong's premier nightlife and party district Lan Kwai Fong is expecting business to jump about 50 percent this Halloween. Turnover is already up at least 30 to 40 percent over the past two weekends, according to Anthea Cheung, Lan Kwai Fong Association director. She credited this growth to the Tourism Board's inaugural Hong Kong Halloween Month, which generated significant festive buzz ahead of this weekend's finale and attracted higher-than-expected interest. Cheung said locals still made up around 70 percent of visitors to the district around which Halloween celebrations traditionally centre, with the rest coming from overseas and the mainland. The number of arrivals from the Greater Bay Area have spiked with cross-boundary travel made easier, she added, with many of them dressing up for a night out. Bars and restaurants, she pointed out, have kept some seats in reserve for walk-in customers since bookings for tables are already full. “We expect about a 50 percent increase tonight – it’s Halloween proper, and it’s a weekend too," Cheung said. "Our merchants are ready, they’ve stocked enough drinks and food for tonight’s celebrations.” Looking ahead, the association wants more hotel, dining and transport package deals to draw visitors into staying longer and spending more. As Lan Kwai Fong gears up to cope with crowds of revellers, immigration officers inspected Huanggang Port and Shenzhen Bay Control Point ahead of an expected late-night outbound peak on Saturday and Sunday by mainlanders here for Halloween night. The Immigration Department urged travellers seeking a quicker crossing to avoid peak hours where possible, adding that it is coordinating with public transport operators to step up their service frequency. Edited by Azam Khan

- More experts 'applying to join building-repairs lists' (2026-10-31 07:33)

Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn said government has received an encouraging response from consultants and contractors seeking inclusion in three pre-qualified lists under a new council that will soon be offering full-cycle building repairs. The non-statutory Building Maintenance Support and Services Council – to be established by year-end – will gradually take over the Urban Renewal Authority's building-upkeep subsidy schemes under its Smart Tender system. Taking to the airwaves on Saturday, Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn said the government had received about 150 applications from inspection and supervision consultants as well as 350 applications from contractors. "Why do I say it's encouraging? Because the URA's Smart Tender platform also had a pre-qualified list – now it has been taken down as we have this new one," she said. "The number of applications this time, compared to the one that was taken down, saw an increase of two to three times. "This means that there are more consultants and contractors who did not participate in the past. I took it as a vote of confidence in the future system." While the council will prioritise around 1,800 maintenance projects that are already in the Smart Tender system, Linn said it would first focus on the 600 or so projects that had yet to undergo building inspections. "As inspections have not been carried out on these buildings, we can – when the new service is rolled out – deploy an inspection consultant for them," she said. Most of the remaining buildings, she pointed out, have already recruited supervision consultants. Initially, the government had been planning to put the URA or its subsidiaries in charge of the new support service. However, Linn said, following through on that plan would have significantly increased the URA's burden as it was already handling many building maintenance-related works as well as redevelopment projects. As for the new Public Housing Building Control Section that will replace the Housing Bureau's Independent Checking Unit within a month, Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong said he was confident that it would bring about more fundamental changes. About 300 staff from the unit, which has been found by an independent inquiry to be primarily responsible for failed supervision of major renovations at Wang Fuk Court in the runup to the fire, will move to the new section. "We have held more than 10 training classes [for staff] so as to raise vigilance and awareness," said Wong, who is also acting secretary for housing. A dedicated team will oversee each major maintenance project, while a project liaison officer will handle all enquiries from owners' corporations, he added. Edited by Azam Khan

- HK may see strongest growth in five years: Paul Chan (2026-10-31 06:54)

Hong Kong could record its strongest full-year economic growth figure in five years in 2026, according to Financial Secretary Paul Chan. Speaking on a radio programme on Saturday, he said the economy grew by 5.1 percent in the first half of the year and that strong export performance and investment growth continued into the third quarter. "What I'm most pleased to see is that in terms of investment, the growth momentum in the first half of the year carried through into the third quarter," Chan said. "Visitor numbers to Hong Kong are high, the streets are busy, and we're holding many mega events – such as the Wine and Dine Festival – plus many other big events and concerts. "We have FinTech Week coming up. There's a chance that 2026 will be the strongest full-year economic growth in the past five years." On next year's

budget, Chan said any relief measures would depend on economic performance. He said thegovernment would do its best but substantial infrastructure spending ahead meant authoritieswould need to manage public finances closely. He also flagged external risks. If geopoliticaltensions and the Middle East conflict persist, oil prices could rise and feed into inflationarypressures, Chan stressed. He expects interest rates to stay relatively high next year, which couldaffect the property market and the wider economy, and said the authorities would remain alertto financial risks. Edited by Azam Khan

- Buildings-repair body 'to operate on user-pays basis' (2026-10-31 04:21)

The new Building Maintenance Support and Services Council will operate on a non-profit basis but must recover costs on a user-pays basis, Financial Secretary Paul Chan said on Saturday, as the government moves to set it up in response to the independent committee report on the Wang Fuk Court fire. The council will guide owners through the full cycle of building repairs – handling tendering and evaluation on their behalf – for a fee. Chan told a Commercial Radio programme that the non-statutory company, wholly owned by Financial Secretary Incorporated, must recover costs, as owners are responsible for maintaining private residential properties. He said the fees would depend on the scope of the works and would cost roughly several thousand dollars per flat. "We understand that Hong Kong has many old districts, and some buildings are quite old," Chan said. "Many elderly people live there, and they may not be able to fully afford the fees. So in these areas, the government can provide some subsidies." For better-off owners, professional guidance matters more than cash subsidies, so a one-size-fits-all subsidy ratio would not be appropriate, Chan pointed out. He said a pre-screened list of professionals and contractors would be published for owners to choose from, describing it as government-checked to give owners greater peace of mind. The government has earmarked HK$300 million for the plan, including HK$100 million as start-up capital and HK$200 million to subsidise owners. The new body is expected to start operating by the end of the year, with recruitment for a chief executive already underway. Edited by Robert Kemp

- HKEAA reports international exam data leak (2026-10-31 02:17)

The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority said on Friday that the personal data of 16,900 mainland residents applying for two international exams had been leaked. The data included names, dates of birth, and email addresses. The authority said it had discovered the incident on Thursday and reported it to the police and to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data. It said there was so far no evidence that DSE or other exams had been affected. The authority apologised and said it would take all feasible measures to mitigate the incident's impact. It said relevant examination organisers had been notified, and it was following up on arrangements to notify those affected. Edited by Robert Kemp

- HK$160k worth of sculptures stolen at City Hall (2026-10-30 13:17)

Police said a batch of sculptures was believed to be stolen from the City Hall in Central ahead of the opening of an arts festival there. Officers said they were alerted at around 2.30pm that the

sculptures worth about HK$160,000 went missing. The case has been classified as theft. TheCentral district's criminal investigation team is following up on the case. The opening of theMicrowave International New Media Arts Festival was scheduled for Friday evening. Edited byEdmond Fong

• Nominations of 1,115 EC poll candidates deemed valid (2026-10-30 12:47)

The Registration and Electoral Affairs said on Friday that the nominations of 1,115 candidates running for the Election Committee Subsector Ordinary Elections next month are deemed valid. Of those, 856 will compete for 723 seats across 31 subsectors. The remaining 259 candidates are returned uncontested in five other subsectors. The Electoral Affairs Commission will hold a briefing session for candidates on Tuesday to familiarise them with the electoral arrangements and various regulations. On the day of the polls on November 22, five ordinary polling stations will open from 9am to 6pm. Edited by Edmond Fong

• Evening News on TV32 - Oct 30 (2026-10-30 12:31)

Top stories for Friday, Oct 30, 2026 - A new council will be launched to help homeowners with building repairs. - Supervision of building renovation is to be tightened up after the Wang Fuk Court blaze. - Movie lovers are mourning the death of British actor Patrick Stewart.

• Eight applicants in race for ride-hailing licences (2026-10-30 10:18)

The Transport Department said eight applications had been lodged for ride-hailing service licences by the deadline at noon on Friday. The department said the number of applications reflected a positive response from the sector. Representatives from the Transport and Logistics Bureau, the Digital Policy Office and the Transport Department will assess the applications and make recommendations to the transport commissioner, with the aim of announcing the qualified platforms before the year ends. “We will carefully assess each application to ensure that licensed platforms have the necessary operational and financial capabilities to provide safe, reliable and efficient ride-hailing services sustainably,” a spokesman said. The department, he added, will unveil details for vehicle-driving as well as vehicle permits in due course. Edited by Edmond Fong

• Race to make bid-rigging criminal offence by April (2026-10-30 09:38)

Officials said on Friday they aim to criminalise bid-rigging by April as well as enhance enforcement through the establishment of an inter-departmental task force. Competition Commission chief executive Rasul Butt said the watchdog would be consulting lawmakers over the proposed amendments “very soon” before seeking opinions from stakeholders. “The government and, of course, the relevant authorities like the Competition Commission... will need to engage with some stakeholders,” he said. “In terms of going to Legco to seek Legco's approval to pass the new amendments, the aim right now is April next year.” The task force – comprised of representatives from the commission, the police force and the Independent Commission Against Corruption – will be led by Secretary for Security Chris Tang. Tang said the

fight against bid-rigging, currently only a civil offence, would be efficient and enhanced throughthe sharing of intelligence and databases by the task force. “In fact in the past, our threedifferent departments, namely police, ICAC and Competition Commission, we are all separately,vigorously investigating bid-rigging-related offences,” he said. “But now we have a joint taskforce – we can share our intelligence, we can conduct more precise joint operations, and we canhave more proactive elements in cracking bid-rigging activities.” While Tang did not reveal howmany members there would be in the task force, he stressed that setting it up would notrequire any additional resources. He noted that under the coordination of the Home AffairsDepartment, task force members would attend owners' corporations meetings at high-riskbuildings – meaning those with high project costs and a significant number of flats involved – tolook for indications that bid-rigging might be involved. However, Tang warned, the task forcewill also rely on intelligence, undercover operations and informers to crack down onmalpractices. Edited by Edmond Fong

- 'Huanggang port ready for increased traffic flows' (2026-10-30 08:01)

The Transport Department has warned that traffic around the Huanggang control point and San Tin Road will be very heavy on Friday night and over the next two nights, as Halloween celebrations and other events in Hong Kong and Kowloon are expected to end around midnight. In a post on its social media page, the department said the Huanggang checkpoint provides dedicated public transport lanes, allowing franchised buses, cross-boundary coaches and green minibuses to travel via San Sham Road directly to the port. It said road markings have been strengthened and the dedicated lanes extended to improve effectiveness. During peak traffic periods, four franchised bus routes heading to the Huanggang port via the San Tin Public Transport Interchange will enter the interchange directly from a junction of the San Tin section of Castle Peak Road helping to divert traffic away from the busy San Tin roundabout. The department said it has instructed public transport operators to reserve sufficient vehicles and manpower, and to increase service frequency according to passenger flow. Its Emergency Transport Co-ordination Centre will monitor traffic conditions around the clock and take appropriate measures as needed, it said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- Tip-offs 'helping stub out construction-site smoking' (2026-10-30 07:41)

Secretary for Labour and Welfare Chris Sun called on the public on Friday to continue to provide information to help enforce the full smoking ban on construction sites and buildings undergoing major renovations. The call came as he revealed that citizen tip-offs had led to a disproportionately high number of successful prosecutions since the new rules took effect three months ago. Sun said the Labour Department has issued 87 fixed-penalty notices since the ban was introduced, of which 27 – about one third – were based on information provided by citizens. There are currently, he pointed out, four contractor cases involving five summonses going through prosecution proceedings. The department has conducted more than 6,900 inspections over the past three months, he said, of which about 430 were triggered by complaints or tip-offs. "The proportion of inspections is certainly not large, but the success rate

is very high, because you see, among our fixed-penalty notices, approximately one third ofthem were issued because some citizens kindly provided us with photos, videos andinformation, enabling us to conduct inspections promptly," said Sun. He also apologised againover the deadly Wang Fuk Court fire, whose independent report was released by thegovernment on Thursday. Sun pointed out that he had to, as a politically appointed official,support the chief executive and be accountable to him. The chief executive, he said, had madeclear his requirements and he would follow them, stay on the job and strive to implement thegovernment's reform agenda. Edited by Tony Sabine

- Major renovations to get dedicated checks by new unit (2026-10-30 06:20)

A Housing Bureau unit found to have been primarily responsible for failed supervision of major renovations at Wang Fuk Court in the runup to the fire will be replaced within about a month by a new body, Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong said on Friday. About 300 staff at the bureau's Independent Checking Unit will move over to the new Public Housing Building Control Unit, which will have a project-based workflow. Making the announcement, Wong, the acting secretary for housing, said under the new workflow system, each major maintenance job would get a dedicated team and a project liaison officer as a one-stop contact for owners' corporations, instead of splitting inspection, structural checks, minor works and site monitoring across different desks. A directorate-grade officer, he added, would shortly be seconded from the Buildings Department to the new unit to guide day-to-day work and keep enforcement standards aligned. "We believe there are several things that will bring a substantial improvement in the quality of our future services," Wong said. "First, we're changing our basic regulatory model to a project-based approach. "Also, communication with the Buildings Department – which was originally set at once every 12 months – has recently been changed to once a quarter." Wong added the authorities would, through training, make relevant personnel more vigilant and give them a deeper understanding of the relevant guidelines. He said he believes this can help greatly improve the quality of future work. Edited by Altis Wong

- New council to take over URA's role in building upkeep (2026-10-30 05:34)

Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn on Friday said the government would set up a new council by the end of the year to help homeowners through the full cycle of building repairs – offering a paid service to handle tendering and evaluation on their behalf. Her announcement came after the independent committee investigating the Wang Fuk Court fire called, in its report, for enhanced support services that would be run by a new operator with a clearer, more interventionist mandate. Speaking a day after the report's release, Linn said the new Building Maintenance Support and Services Council would be a non-statutory body and take over, in phases, building-upkeep subsidy schemes presently being run by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). Unlike the URA's Smart Tender platform, which helps owners solicit bids but does not assess them, the council will arrange for tenders and evaluate them for owners and recommend up to three suitable bids. Owners using government maintenance subsidies must choose from those recommended bids. The council will also assign pre-engaged inspection

consultants instead of requiring a fresh tender for each inspection, help appoint supervisionconsultants and contractors, monitor the supervision consultant during works, and give ownersindependent advice if contractors propose major scope or cost changes. Linn said the fullerservice could cost several thousand dollars per flat, versus the few hundred being chargedunder the Smart Tender platform. Commenting on the charges for the fuller service, Linnpointed out that the new council would provide a paid service to help owners meet their duty toinspect and maintain private property. Owners, she stressed, remain responsible for majorrepairs and the government is only stepping in because many of them lack the technicalknow-how. Linn was also asked whether the council should take responsibility if trouble cameup. "Now that we have a new council recommending the consultants and contractors, it also hasa role overseeing their performance. In case the council is being lax in its monitoring duty, thenthe council will have liability," she said. "Likewise, if turn of events show that the council hasoverlooked some important matters when recommending certain consultants or contractors,then I'm sure the council will also have to take on civil liabilities under the service contract theyhave signed with the owners." The council is expected to operate on a self-financing basis. Thegovernment has reserved HK$300 million, Linn said, adding that the figure is made up ofHK$100 million in seed funding and HK$200 million to ease fees for needy owners. She said thecouncil's priority would be the around 1,800 maintenance projects already in the Smart Tendersystem that had yet to appoint a contractor and were waiting for the new service. At the newsconference, Linn was also asked whether she had considered resigning over the fire. She saidshe had thought about it but added that the decision was not simply down to her personalpreference; as a senior member of the administration, she also had a duty to continue in herjob to carry out the chief executive's directions. Edited by Tony Sabine

- 'Wang Fuk recommendations will be carried out swiftly' (2026-10-30 01:41)

Most of the 120 recommendations from the independent committee report on the deadly Wang Fuk Court fire could be implemented within a few months, Chief Secretary Eric Chan said on Friday. "To implement the 120 recommendations as soon as possible, I believe, will help to quickly reduce the possibility of similar problems occurring again in the future. This is very important," he said during an RTHK programme. Chan said the recommendations are very comprehensive and the government must draw lessons from the incident to reform and improve existing systems. The chief secretary will lead a steering committee to review each of the 120 proposals, and drive and monitor the implementation of measures. Chan said the committee would meet soon and assign each recommendation to the relevant departments. Where a recommendation involves multiple departments, he said, the lead department responsible for overseeing implementation would be identified. Each department would be required to submit a report to him on how the recommendation would be implemented or improved, and he would oversee the timeline for implementation "There are several principles. First, it must be done very rigorously; second, it must be done very promptly; third, it must be effective — effectively achieving the goal," he said. The chief secretary said some recommendations are already being rolled out. He expressed hope that six bills, including

amendments to the Fire Services Ordinance and the Competition Ordinance, could besubmitted to the Legislative Council within the year. Once enacted, he said, these laws wouldgive enforcement and regulatory bodies sufficient powers to carry out their work. On theproposal to set up a central database to share information, such as underperformingcontractors, among government departments, Chan said preparation work may take a fewmonths due to the need for data conversion and platform design. He expects the system couldbe initially launched around May or June next year, and that the government would then beable to better serve the public. Edited by Tony Sabine

• Shenzhen Bay port to open longer on Fri and Sat (2026-10-29 14:22)

The Shenzhen Bay control point will extend its opening hours on Friday and Saturday to help facilitate cross-boundary traffic. Clearance time at the crossing will be extended to 2am from midnight, as the number of travellers is expected to surge due to a series of events staged in Hong Kong including Halloween festivities, the Wine and Dine Festival and mega concerts. The government said on Thursday that it reached a consensus with Shenzhen authorities for the arrangement, so as to alleviate the expected surge in passenger and vehicular flows at the round-the-clock Huanggang port and San Tin Highway. SAR authorities have also coordinated with cross-boundary coach operators to extend their service hours serving Shenzhen Bay. Franchised bus operators, for their part, will arrange two special overnight bus routes to ply between the port and Yuen Long/Tin Shui Wai and Tuen Mun respectively. “The implementation of the special arrangement to extend the clearance hours at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point helps divert late-night cross-boundary passenger and vehicular flows and facilitates travel for residents of both places and visitors,” a government spokesman said. Edited by Edmond Fong

• Govt not proceeding with Peak lighting show (2026-10-29 13:52)

The government said on Thursday it won't proceed with a lighting project on the Peak that drew opposition from residents. The Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) will remove the installations as soon as possible and restore the site to its original condition, according to a paper submitted by the board and the Tourism Commission to the Central and Western District Council. “As we have just started moving forward, we have only carried out part of the work. We haven’t started operating or doing maintenance and repair work. So the resources we have used are limited," tourism minister Rosanna Law told reporters. "These are resources that were allocated to the Tourism Board a long time ago.” Law also said the light fittings that are to be removed could be useful for other HKTB projects. According to the document, the project had been planned for the area around Lugard and Harlech roads on the Peak, where there would be small-scale lighting installations at designated spots along a walking trail. Upon learning the concerns from the public, the government and HKTB arranged site visits with both lawmakers and district councillors, and looked into various enhancement measures. For instance, the board considered reducing the number of scenic spots along the trail from 10 to seven and shortening the project’s duration from one year to the end of February. It also planned to

slash the number of trees used for hanging light fittings by more than half to 24. Still, thegovernment noted that the proposed amendments might not be able to fully ease concerns ofresidents and trail users. “On the other hand, following a significant reduction in theproject’s scale, even with efforts to retain the most distinctive design elements, we are warythat it could be difficult to fully realise the original design concept and lighting effect,” thedocument read. This would compromise the overall experience and appeal of the project, itadded, and might not meet its expected results of encouraging travellers to revisit the SAR andstay longer through infusing traditional attractions with new elements. Edited by Edmond Fong

- Evening News on TV32 - Oct 29 (2026-10-29 12:44)

Top stories for Thursday, Oct 29, 2026 - John Lee bows in apology and one of his ministers resigns over last year's Wang Fuk Court disaster. - Various reforms are announced to address shortcomings flagged up by the inquiry into the fire. - Spain begins three days of mourning after one of Europe's deadliest train crash in decades.

- Winnie Ho 'willing to take political responsibility' (2026-10-29 11:18)

Winnie Ho, who resigned as secretary for housing over the Wang Fuk Court fire, said she was willing to bear political responsibility for the deadly blaze. In a statement, Ho said she met with Chief Executive John Lee on Wednesday and tendered her resignation, which Lee accepted. Ho also said the government's reform measures, based on the independent committee's report, demonstrate a strong determination to confront the complex and longstanding problems exposed by the fire. "Since July 1, 2022, I have fought side by side with the Housing Bureau team, working hard to reverse the longstanding housing problems that have plagued Hong Kong for years," she said. Ho also listed achievements during her tenure, including the rapid construction of light public housing, shortening waiting times for public housing, tackling substandard subdivided units and clamping down on public housing abuse. She said she felt deeply honoured to have served Hong Kong over the past four years, and expressed gratitude to the central government, the chief executive and the entire government team for their trust and support. Ho also said she hopes those who were killed in the blaze can rest in peace and their families can move forward and recover from their grief. Edited by Edmond Fong

- 100 govt officers to be interviewed in Wang Fuk probe (2026-10-29 10:41)

Public Service Commission chairwoman Maisie Cheng said on Thursday that an inquiry team examining civil servants' accountability over the Wang Fuk Court fire will interview about 100 government officers across four departments, with 40 to 50 likely to be investigation targets. She was speaking after Chief Executive John Lee announced the two-tier administrative-accountability investigation covering the Housing Department's Independent Checking Unit, Buildings Department, Fire Services Department and Labour Department. Cheng said although the investigation will be challenging, the team will race against time and go all out to complete the work within three months as the CE requires. She said preparatory work has

been underway since August. The team will use the independent committee report andpublished materials as its starting point, then dig into shortfalls by individual civil servants –including possible breaches of the Civil Service Code – by seeking files and interviewing officers,she added. "This team has already put all their effort to familiarise themselves with theinformation, especially those abundant information, made public by the independentcommittee," she said. "With all this preparatory work and also the preparatory work done bythe two members and myself in the past few months, we are very confident that although theinvestigation team and the support office will be officially set up today, we can commence theinvestigation immediately." Civil Service Secretary Ingrid Yeung said after the probe, the teamwill decide which civil servants bear administrative responsibility and how serious it is – thenrecommend to the government whether to take disciplinary action or impose administrativesanctions. She said the government will study the recommendations quickly. Yeung added thatfor disciplinary cases, hearings will be held – and if charges are proven, the government candismiss the officer, order compulsory retirement, demote, issue a reprimand or impose a fine.Edited by Aaron Tam

- Govt officers overseeing Wang Fuk works to be probed (2026-10-29 09:20)

Chief Executive John Lee said government officers who oversaw renovation works at Wang Fuk Court before the fire will be investigated under a new accountability system, with results to be announced in three months. A report submitted by an independent committee tasked with probing the deadly inferno was released on Thursday. The report identified "deficiencies and failings" by four government bodies in relation to the oversight of fire risks associated with renovation works at the Tai Po estate. They are the Buildings Department, the Housing Bureau's Independent Checking Unit, the Fire Services Department, and the Labour Department. Lee said these departments will now be investigated under the second tier of the Heads of Department Accountability System. Under the system, a Tier II investigation is carried out "if a serious problem occurs in a department or the problem is widespread or a repetitive, systemic one", or " there are indications that the head of department concerned is implicated in the problem". The investigation will be commissioned by the Public Service Commission (PSC), an independent statutory advisory body which advises the chief executive on civil service appointments, promotions and discipline. "The investigation will gather evidence regarding the individual responsibilities of officers involved, and assess whether there has been any dereliction of duty, violations of departmental regulations, or breaches of the Civil Service Code and other relevant civil service management provisions," Lee said. "Based on the evidence and facts gathered, the investigation will provide recommendations on appropriate disciplinary actions and administrative sanctions to be considered against the individuals responsible for these shortcomings or deficiencies." Lee added he expected "40 to 50 officers" to be investigated, and with even more witnesses to summon, he believed the PSC would be under great pressure to complete the probe in three months. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Seven areas of reforms introduced after Wang Fuk blaze (2026-10-29 08:27)

Chief Executive John Lee said the government will roll out comprehensive reforms to address shortcomings exposed by the Wang Fuk Court fire. Speaking at a press conference on Thursday, Lee said the reforms will cover seven areas. "The reforms that we roll out now are comprehensive reforms. We are restructuring departments so that they will enforce both inspection and also take legal action seriously," he said. "And we see in this case a series of events that happened resulting in this tragedy, and the things that we are rolling out now address each and every one of them." First, authorities will crack down on bid-rigging activities in building maintenance projects by establishing specific criminal offences and incorporating them into the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance. "This will empower law enforcement agencies to exercise statutory authority against suspects, including summoning individuals for questioning, demanding the submission of documents or materials, freezing assets, and confiscating proceeds of crime," he said. The government will amend the law to empower the Competition Commission to combat bid-rigging through a mix of criminal and civil enforcement measures. The commission will also team up with police and the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) in the formation of an inter-departmental task force. The agencies will conduct joint investigations, strengthen intelligence gathering and information exchange. To assist homeowners, an authority will be established to provide independent, reliable, and professional advice on building maintenance. It will take up all related services currently provided by the Urban Renewal Authority (URA). Authorities will also review and reform the regulatory frameworks for building maintenance projects to better clarify roles and responsibilities, and to strengthen regulation of professionals and contractors by introducing stiffer penalties. The Buildings Department will be restructured to strengthen its leadership and supervisory roles, while improving collaboration with the Independent Checking Unit (ICU) under the Housing Bureau. A centralised database will be established to facilitate information sharing across government departments, such as past convictions and cases of professional misconduct in relation to building maintenance work. "The government will also reform the existing complaint mechanism concerning building maintenance. The system will be integrated into the centralised database, utilising artificial intelligence to analyse and monitor the progress and outcomes... to ensure that public complaints are addressed appropriately," Lee said. Finally, a steering committee, chaired by Chief Secretary Eric Chan, will be established to ensure the independent committee's 120 recommendations on the Wang Fuk Court inferno are implemented thoroughly and effectively. _____ Last updated: 2026-10-29 HKT 16:54 Edited by Aaron Tam

- Govt departments share blame for Wang Fuk fire (2026-10-29 08:11)

An independent committee looking into the Wang Fuk Court fire on Thursday concluded that government regulators must share responsibility for the high death toll in the Wang Fuk Court fire, finding that private-sector misconduct was compounded by decades of official failure, regulatory loopholes and “slack enforcement”. The committee concluded that had officials handled residents’ complaints properly and worked with a sense of crisis about facade fires on occupied renovation sites, private wrongdoing and site hazards “could have been rectified

or removed before the fire.” Lax enforcement, it said, “inevitably” breeds lax private-sectorperformance. The government bodies identified “should bear part of the responsibility for thehigh casualties”. "Had the staff of the various government bodies handled the complaintsproperly and done their works seriously given the possible tragic consequences of fire in thebuilding maintenance and repair sites, there was a real possibility that the misconduct of theprivate-sector parties and the fire hazards in Wang Fuk Court could have been rectified orremoved before the fire," it said. It found the Buildings Department (BD) and the IndependentChecking Unit (ICU) primarily responsible for failed supervision of the Wang Fuk Court works.The failings were “systemic and multi-layered,” spanning policy design and day-to-dayoperations. It listed six core failures: over-reliance on the integrity of building professionals;failing to design supervision around the tragic risk of fires at building maintenance andrenovation sites; inadequate control of temporary materials such as scaffolding nets, canvas,foam boards and toe-boards; poor complaint handling; slack operational enforcement; andpoor BD-ICU coordination, including the BD’s failure to audit the ICU. Despite a contract worthmore than HK$330 million covering the external walls of eight high-rise occupied blocks, theworks were classified as “lower-risk” minor works under the Minor Works Control Systemrather than high-risk major works. The committee said the Fire Services Department (FSD) failedits supervisory duty to assess and remove fire hazards at Wang Fuk Court and to superviseshutdowns of fire service installations and the contractors who certify them. Despite 26 visits,FSD crews never inspected escape staircases and never detected access openings. Complaintsabout foam boards, smoking and blocked escapes were met with referrals and “merry-go-round” replies rather than effective action. It also identified four LabourDepartment (LD) operational failures: smoking on site; foam-board fire hazards; verifying netfire-retardancy; and access openings. After 16 visits, smoking complaints were marked “notjustified”. The committee said that finding was “simply contrary to the reality”, givenresidents’ photographs, videos and WhatsApp messages. Compared with the BD, ICU and FSD,the LD should bear “lesser” responsibility, the committee said – but still criticised a“just-following-the-books” attitude and departments that “passed the ball” until hazardsfell through the cracks. "There are already strong indications that persons with dubious or triadbackground are active in the building maintenance and repair industry. Given the probablepresence of black sheep in the industry, it is regrettable that there was practicably no control orsupervision over the actual execution of the building maintenance and repair works," the reportsays. "As a matter of good governance, the services provided by the civil servants should be 'people-centred'", the committee said. In the case that the complainant has raised a matter ofgenuine concern, they should “take an extra step to help” and should avoid saying “this isnot our responsibility and go look elsewhere”, it added. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Contractor, consultant, inspector blamed for fire (2026-10-29 07:53)

The main contractor and project consultant for Wang Fuk Court’s renovation project, and a registered inspector must bear the most significant accountability for a disastrous fire that took 168 lives nearly a year ago, an independent inquiry into the tragedy has concluded. In a

16-chapter report spanning nearly 1,200 pages submitted to the government, the committee stated that Prestige Construction & Engineering and consultancy firm Will Power Architects were fully aware of the fire risks but ignored repeated complaints and safety concerns raised by residents of the Tai Po housing estate during maintenance works. “They put the lives of all residents in Wang Fuk Court at serious risk, apparently with a view to maximising their financial gains,” the report read. The committee slammed the two firms' conduct as going far beyond oversight or negligence, noting that they used substandard building materials and unsafe working procedures, such as non-fire-retardant scaffolding nets and flammable foam boards covering building windows. The report also stated that Will Power and Prestige Construction should be held responsible for fire service installations that did not function properly on the day of the fire. The committee found that Prestige Construction and its management, including Hau Wa-kin and Gordon Ho; as well as Will Power and its management Jason Wong; alongside Wilson Ng, a registered inspector employed by Will Power to oversee the renovation project, " deserve the most severe criticisms". The committee also named other firms as culpable for the disaster to varying degrees. These include Gain Profit Shed Industry, which was aware of and took part in a plot to temporarily replace non-fire-retardant scaffolding nets with fire-retardant ones just for site inspections by authorities. The property management company for Wang Fuk Court at the time of the fire, ISS EastPoint Properties, was also slammed for allowing its staff to switch off the power supply to the fire alarm systems despite lacking the professional qualifications to do so. Meanwhile, Victory Fire Engineering, the registered fire services contractor responsible for annual inspections and related works, was criticised for being passive in dealing with fire safety issues. And the committee described China Status Development and Engineering Company as a "dummy" fire services contractor, saying the firm filed documents simply to feign compliance and satisfy regulators. Edited by Aaron Tam

- Housing chief Winnie Ho resigns over Wang Fuk fire (2026-10-29 07:06)

Chief Executive John Lee on Thursday said he accepted the resignation of Winnie Ho as secretary for housing, saying she took political responsibility for last year's Wang Fuk Court fire that killed 168 people. At a press conference on Thursday, Lee and other principal officials also apologised and bowed. "As chief executive and head of the government, I am deeply saddened. On behalf of the SAR government, I offer my apologies to the victims and the public at large," Lee said in his opening remarks. He added that while Ho committed no personal wrongdoing, she must bear political responsibility as secretary for housing. "I have considered a wide range of factors, including the official's role in the matter, the official's policy portfolio and its relation with the incident, whether the problem relates to policy or execution, the performance of the subordinates, the large amount of work the political team will have to do in the time ahead," Lee said. "Considering that the fire took place in Wang Fuk Court and it falls within the purview of the Housing Department's [Independent Checking Unit], which is under the Housing Bureau, the secretary for housing should take political accountability," he added. Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong will serve as acting secretary for housing. _____ Last updated: 2026-10-29 HKT 16:48 Edited by Aaron Tam

• Bus-only lanes 'just the ticket to cut Huanggang jams' (2026-10-29 04:06)

The chairman of the Non-Franchised Public Bus Association of Hong Kong, Eddie Choi, said on Thursday he believed that dedicated transport lanes at Huanggang checkpoint could effectively reduce traffic congestion during peak hours this weekend. Authorities announced on Wednesday that priority would be given to public transport to manage vehicular traffic peaks at the crossing between 11pm and 2am on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Late-night outbound passenger flow surged last weekend as scores of visitors left the city after attending a concert in Kai Tak and Halloween festivities elsewhere. "The reason there was traffic congestion last Saturday is because many cars and taxis used the lanes before they reached the control zone," Choi told an RTHK radio programme. "With the dedicated lanes extended, I think traffic police officers need to be stationed at the scene to prevent cars or taxis at the border crossing from driving onto the lanes and creating traffic congestion on San Tin Highway. “Improvements also need to be made to the holding area for vehicles waiting to enter the new Huanggang Port.” With proper arrangements made to separate the flow of cars from that of buses, Choi said he believed the journey time for cross-border buses from urban areas to the port could be kept within 40 minutes. Legislative Council transport panel chairman Ben Chan also welcomed the government's move to give priority to public transport during vehicular traffic peaks at the crossing, saying it gives travellers an extra incentive to take buses. "I think in Hong Kong the most successful measure is public transport [prioritisation]. This time, the government will arrange more bus lines to service during peak hours, and also the police will facilitate public transport to use the [dedicated lanes] to avoid them from getting trapped on the roads. So I think people will try to use public transport this week," he said. In a Facebook post, the Transport Department said public transport operators have reserved sufficient vehicles and manpower to cope with the expected travel surge over the weekend. It said five cross-border bus routes connecting urban areas to Huanggang Port will step up their services during late-night periods on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Special cross-border buses will also head for Huanggang and Shenzhen Bay ports from Kai Tak after concerts on Friday and Saturday, and passengers are reminded to purchase bus tickets in advance. Edited by Aaron Tam

• Firefighters douse Jordan kitchen blaze (2026-10-29 03:14)

A fire broke out in the kitchen of a restaurant in Jordan on Thursday morning, with firefighters called to the scene. Police received multiple reports at around 9.30am that thick smoke was coming from a restaurant near the junction of Nathan Road and Austin Road. Customers were able to leave the premises themselves and the fire was put out later. Preliminary investigations suggest the blaze started from a kitchen exhaust hood. No injuries were reported. Edited by Aaron Tam

• HKMA warns of interest rate risks as Fed holds steady (2026-10-29 03:01)

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) on Thursday reminded the public to carefully manage interest rate risks when making property, investment or borrowing decisions, after the US Federal Reserve kept its benchmark rate unchanged. The Fed's Federal Open Market

Committee decided to hold the target range for the federal funds rate at 3.75 to four percent, amove in line with market expectations. "Hong Kong's monetary and financial markets havecontinued to operate in an orderly manner," the HKMA said in a statement. It noted that withthe persistent interest rate differential between the Hong Kong and US dollars, trade activitiesmay cause the local currency to gradually ease. However, the HKMA said the outlook for theHong Kong dollar and interbank rates could vary depending on factors such as market riskappetite for carry trades and the supply-demand conditions for the local currency, which are inturn influenced by capital market activities and other seasonal factors. It added that US interestrate adjustments remain subject to considerable uncertainty and will depend on developmentsin inflation, the labour market and other economic data, which may in turn affect the interestrate environment in Hong Kong. The HKMA said it will continue to closely monitor marketdevelopments to maintain monetary and financial stability. Edited by Aaron Tam