



# CHINA SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

## AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: March 16, 2026 - March 23, 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.

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## Executive Summary

China's security posture during the period of March 16-23, 2026, was characterized by a continued emphasis on military modernization, assertive rhetoric regarding Taiwan, and active diplomatic engagement amidst global geopolitical shifts. Beijing announced a significant 7% increase in its 2026 defense budget, reaching US\$264 billion, underscoring its commitment to strengthening the People's Liberation Army (PLA) despite slowing economic growth. Diplomatic efforts saw US-China economic talks in Paris, though a high-profile summit between Presidents Trump and Xi was postponed due to the ongoing conflict in Iran. Concerns over Taiwan escalated with China's government work report adopting more bellicose language, while Taiwan moved to stiffen penalties for military personnel pledging allegiance to Beijing. China also played a complex role in the Middle East, advocating for de-escalation and energy security while reportedly providing material support to Iran.

## Key Security Developments

- Defense Budget Increase and Modernization Drive

China's Ministry of Finance proposed a 7% increase in its defense budget for 2026, reaching approximately US\$278 billion (or 1.91 trillion yuan, US\$264 billion by another source), as announced during the annual "Two Sessions" legislative meeting in early March. This marks the 11th consecutive year of single-digit growth and significantly exceeds the country's economic growth target of 4.5% to 5%, highlighting Beijing's prioritization of national security and military modernization amidst fiscal pressures and slowing economic growth.

- Escalated Rhetoric Towards Taiwan

The 2026 government work report, approved on March 12, notably changed the phrase "oppose Taiwan independence" to "crack down on Taiwan independence." This more combative phrasing reflects China's expanding coercive efforts against Taiwan, particularly since the election of Taiwanese President William Lai Ching-te, and signals a significant shift in policy direction.

- PLA Naval Modernization and Training

The PLA Navy (PLAN) has commissioned the Type 055 guided missile destroyers Dongguan (hull number 109) and Anqing (hull number 110), with CCTV releasing footage on March 8 of these vessels conducting training operations. These Type 055 destroyers are expected to improve the Eastern Theater Command (ETC) fleet's air

defense and anti-submarine warfare capabilities, enhancing support for potential amphibious operations in the Taiwan Strait.

- US-China Diplomatic Summit Postponement

US President Donald Trump announced on March 17, and confirmed on March 18, that he would delay his planned summit with CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping by "five or six weeks" to prioritize the ongoing conflict in Iran. The summit was originally scheduled for late March (March 31 to April 2). This delay extends the trade dispute between the two nations and underscores the impact of the Middle East conflict on global diplomacy.

- US-China Economic and Trade Talks

Despite the summit delay, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent and PRC Vice Premier He Lifeng held "candid, in-depth, and constructive" economic and trade discussions in Paris from March 15 to March 16. The talks covered issues such as tariff arrangements, promoting bilateral trade and investment, and maintaining existing consultation consensus, aiming to lay groundwork for future high-level engagements.

- Taiwanese Counter-Espionage and Defense Strengthening

Taiwan's Ministry of National Defense (MND) proposed amendments to the Criminal Code of the Armed Forces on March 22 to stiffen punishments for active-duty service members who pledge allegiance to China. This move follows a high-profile espionage case where a former army colonel was accused of signing a surrender document with the Chinese Communist Party. Additionally, a Taiwanese Coast Guard Administration (CGA) officer was sentenced in January for passing sensitive information to a PRC intelligence agency between 2022 and 2024.

- US Freedom of Navigation Operation in Taiwan Strait

A US Navy P-8A Poseidon aircraft transited the Taiwan Strait in international airspace on March 11, asserting freedom of navigation rights. This was the first publicly reported US aerial transit of the Taiwan Strait in 2026, with PRC media outlet Global Times reporting that PLA naval and air forces tracked and monitored the transit.

- China's Role in the Iran Conflict and Energy Security

China has been actively pushing for the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz and attempting to mediate the war in Iran through diplomatic engagements. China's ambassador to Australia, Xiao Qian, conceded on March 23 that Iran is using Chinese satellite and missile systems against US and Israeli forces. China also ordered an immediate ban on exports of refined fuel products in March to preempt potential domestic fuel shortages caused by the war, having stockpiled crude oil ahead of the conflict.

- Strategic Technological Development

The draft outline of China's 15th five-year plan (2026-2030), finalized on March 13, places heavy emphasis on technological development, including advanced computing, data infrastructure, and artificial intelligence (AI). This focus is seen as crucial for driving global economic growth and transforming the nature of warfighting, aligning economic and national security goals. The upcoming Boao Forum for Asia (March 24-27) will also highlight AI's role in China's ocean economy.

- China's Influence at the United Nations

A new investigation released by the US Select Committee on China on March 20 revealed that China is manipulating its position at the United Nations to advance its international ambitions. The report, "Inside China's Strategy to Reshape the United Nations," found that China uses monetary contributions, critical UN posts, and strategically deployed troops within UN peacekeeping forces to expand its authoritarian reach.

- Low PLAAF Activity Near Taiwan

The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) has maintained very low levels of activity near Taiwan since March 11, carrying out fewer than five daily incursions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) on most days. This contrasts with normalized near-daily aerial sorties in previous periods and may indicate a long-term shift in the PLA's training and coercive tactics against Taiwan.

## Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

China's recent security developments have significant implications for regional stability and its relationships with major global powers. The delay in the US-China summit and the ongoing trade disputes underscore persistent tensions between Washington and Beijing, with China closely observing the impact of the Iran conflict on US domestic politics to gain leverage in future negotiations. Despite these frictions, the "candid, in-depth, and constructive" economic talks in Paris on March 15-16 indicate a mutual desire to manage differences and maintain channels of communication, recognizing the global importance of a stable US-China economic relationship.

The Taiwan Strait remains a critical flashpoint, with China's escalated rhetoric to "crack down on Taiwan independence" signaling a more aggressive stance. This is further exacerbated by Taiwan's legislative efforts to deter military personnel from pledging allegiance to Beijing and the continued US freedom of navigation operations, such as the P-8A Poseidon transit on March 11. These actions contribute to a heightened sense of alert in the region, with the potential for miscalculation remaining a significant concern.

In the Middle East, China's dual role as a diplomatic mediator and a reported material supporter of Iran complicates regional dynamics. While Beijing publicly calls for de-escalation and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz to secure its vital energy supplies, the concession by China's ambassador to Australia that Iran is using Chinese satellite and missile systems highlights a more complex involvement. This strategic ambiguity allows China to protect its economic interests while subtly challenging US and Israeli influence in the region.

The strategic alignment between China and Russia continues to be a defining feature of the broader strategic landscape. This partnership, described as "as solid as a rock," provides Russia with a crucial external pillar to withstand Western pressure and expands its diplomatic maneuverability. Both nations promote narratives of multipolarity and sovereign equality, challenging Western dominance in global governance and fostering a more fragmented international order. This alignment complicates US global influence and presents a more complex multi-theater competition.

## Military and Defense Analysis

China's military and defense strategy is demonstrably focused on rapid modernization and capability development, as evidenced by the 7% increase in its 2026 defense budget to US\$264 billion, despite a backdrop of slowing economic growth. This sustained investment underscores a commitment to achieving major modernization targets by the 2027 centenary of the People's Liberation Army. The emphasis is not merely on increased spending but on integrating advanced technology into its forces.

The People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) is a key beneficiary of this modernization, with the recent commissioning of Type 055 guided missile destroyers Dongguan and Anqing. These advanced vessels enhance the Eastern Theater Command's ability to support amphibious operations in the Taiwan Strait, particularly through improved air defense and anti-submarine warfare capabilities. Earlier in January 2026, the PLA launched system-wide combat drills featuring J-20 fifth-generation stealth fighters and DF-17 hypersonic missiles, showcasing a focus on joint force warfare and next-generation strike power, designed to test rapid deployment and command coordination in realistic battlefield scenarios.

The 15th five-year plan (2026-2030) further solidifies China's strategic shift towards technological self-reliance and innovation in defense. Areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), advanced computing, and data infrastructure are highlighted as critical for transforming warfighting and gaining dominance in the 21st-century great power competition. This integration of economic and national security goals aims to develop a robust defense industry that can support both military modernization and

high-tech industrial development.

## Outlook and Forecast

**Short-term trends (1-3 months):** In the immediate future, China will likely continue its diplomatic efforts to manage the fallout from the delayed US-China summit, seeking to reschedule high-level engagements while navigating ongoing trade disputes. The focus on domestic economic stability and technological self-reliance will remain paramount, with the outcomes of the 15th Five-Year Plan beginning to shape policy implementation. China will also closely monitor the Iran conflict and its implications for global energy markets and maritime security, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, which is crucial for its crude oil imports.

**Critical flashpoints and risk areas:** The Taiwan Strait remains the most critical flashpoint. China's increasingly bellicose rhetoric, coupled with its ongoing military modernization and Taiwan's efforts to bolster its defenses, creates a volatile environment. Any significant increase in PLA military exercises or incursions into Taiwan's Air Defense Identification Zone could rapidly escalate tensions. The South China Sea also continues to be a risk area, with China's assertive territorial claims and military presence potentially leading to confrontations with other claimant states or external powers conducting freedom of navigation operations. The Strait of Hormuz is another critical area, where disruptions due to the Iran conflict could severely impact China's energy security and global trade.

**Indicators to monitor:** Key indicators to monitor include any resumption of high-intensity PLA Air Force activity near Taiwan, which could signal a shift in China's coercive strategies. The progress and tone of US-China trade negotiations and the eventual rescheduling of the Trump-Xi summit will provide insights into the trajectory of bilateral relations. Developments in the Iran conflict, particularly regarding the stability of the Strait of Hormuz and any further revelations about China's material support to Iran, will be crucial. Furthermore, tracking China's investment and deployment of advanced military technologies, especially in AI and naval capabilities, will offer insights into its long-term strategic ambitions.

**Strategic recommendations:** For international actors, it is crucial to maintain a unified and consistent approach to deterring aggression in the Taiwan Strait, while also keeping diplomatic channels open with Beijing to manage crises. Engaging China on global issues where cooperation is possible, such as climate change, while firmly addressing concerns regarding human rights, trade imbalances, and regional security, is essential. Diversifying supply chains and strengthening energy security measures can mitigate vulnerabilities to disruptions in critical maritime routes. Finally, closely analyzing China's defense spending and technological advancements, particularly in

dual-use technologies, will be vital for understanding its evolving military capabilities and strategic intentions.

## Structured Assessment

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## ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

### Source: BBC China

- [How a medieval English abbey became a Chinese wedding destination](#) (2026-03-22 09:27)

Today's brides say they are inspired by wedding of Taiwanese popstar Jay Chou at the abbey in 2015.

- [The Iran war is causing a global energy crisis - can China withstand it?](#) (2026-03-18 23:31)

With oil supply disrupted, Beijing's oil reserves and renewable energy push are being put to the test.

- [Chinese national charged for trying to smuggle 2,000 ants from Kenya](#) (2026-03-18 05:54)

Zhang Kequn was found with the large consignment of ants in his luggage at a Nairobi airport.

- [What have US allies and China said about sending ships to the Strait of Hormuz?](#) (2026-03-17 16:35)

US allies have either pushed back or remained cautious on Trump's initial request to send ships to the crucial oil route.

- [Trump seeks to delay China summit due to Iran war](#) (2026-03-16 23:51)

The escalating war in Iran has overshadowed much of the US' foreign policy objectives

- [Chinese retailer rivalling Amazon launches in UK](#) (2026-03-16 13:29)

Joybuy, which has distribution centres in Luton and Milton Keynes, is entering six European markets.

### Source: CGTN

- [Green pathways: Climate governance and Asia in action](#) (2026-03-23 03:55)

Green pathways: Climate governance and Asia in action

- [The Global Civilization Initiative: Why it matters for Africa](#) (2026-03-23 03:33)

The Global Civilization Initiative: Why it matters for Africa

- [China releases OpenClaw security guidance for different groups](#) (2026-03-23 02:34)

China on Sunday issued the security guidance for the use of the open-source AI agent OpenClaw, advising users, cloud service providers and developers to reduce risks during deployment and operation.

- [Graphics: Asia-Pacific powers global economic growth](#) (2026-03-23 02:20)

Graphics: Asia-Pacific powers global economic growth

- [China to inject certainty, momentum into global economy](#) (2026-03-23 02:14)

China will continue to deliver stable and high-quality growth and inject greater certainty and positive momentum into the global economy, a senior official said on Sunday.

- [Boao Forum 2026: AI unlocks new potential for China's ocean economy](#) (2026-03-23 01:09)

The technological innovation driven by artificial intelligence and low-carbon transformation is among the themes of this year's Boao Forum. Over the past year, AI has already helped to foster growth in China's emerging ocean economy.

- [Chinese commercial rocket launches new group of satellites from sea](#) (2026-03-23 01:00)

China on Sunday launched a Smart Dragon-3 (also known as Jielong-3) carrier rocket from waters near the eastern province of Shandong, sending a new group of satellites into a preset orbit.

- [Growing old with robots: How robots are reshaping elderly care](#) (2026-03-22 15:02)

Growing old with robots: How robots are reshaping elderly care

- [20-year manhunt shows rise of tech-driven anti-trafficking in China](#) (2026-03-22 14:02)

20-year manhunt shows rise of tech-driven anti-trafficking in China

- [Chasing Muqam – Episode 7: Facing the music](#) (2026-03-22 13:57)

Chasing Muqam – Episode 7: Facing the music

- [Chinese vice premier calls for stable China-US economic ties](#) (2026-03-22 13:13)

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng on Sunday met with a delegation from the US-China Business Council (USCBC) in Beijing.

- [Global companies see China as anchor of stability and innovation](#) (2026-03-22 12:36)

Apple CEO Tim Cook, serving as co-chair of the China Development Forum 2026, underscored global business confidence in China's innovation, manufacturing strength and long-term stability.

- [China Weekly News Quiz: March 16-22, 2026](#) (2026-03-22 12:13)

Do you know what happened in China last week? Take our weekly news quiz to test your knowledge and get up to speed on the latest developments in case you missed something.

- [Lancang-Mekong cooperation: From vision to a 'golden platform'](#) (2026-03-22 12:03)

Ten years on, six Lancang-Mekong Cooperation countries have translated a shared vision into tangible outcomes, building what is now widely regarded as a "golden platform" for regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific.

- [Mass Tai Chi gathering in China marks 1st International Taijiquan Day](#) (2026-03-22 09:14)

Wuyi Mountain, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, hosted a celebration on Saturday, drawing more than 1,200 Tai Chi enthusiasts from both China and abroad to mark the inaugural International Taijiquan Day.

- [Spring blossoms draw tourists, boost rural incomes in China](#) (2026-03-22 08:47)

As once-bare branches burst into bloom in the warm breeze of spring, China's countryside is awash with blossoms that are drawing tourists and boosting rural incomes.

- [The Datong Code: Intangible cultural heritage micro-drama series EP.3](#) (2026-03-22 08:20)

The Hanging Temple, where wooden beams cling to cliffs and prayer bells echo above the void, floats between earth and sky.

- [PAGE X: Seeing the world through a new lens](#) (2026-03-22 07:11)

PAGE X: Seeing the world through a new lens

- [From stage to factory: How AI is moving into real-world use in China](#) (2026-03-22 05:12)

From stage to factory: How AI is moving into real-world use in China

- [China's first 550 MW F-class gas turbine unit commences operation](#) (2026-03-22 03:08)

China's first 550 MW F-class gas turbine unit commences operation

- [President Xi sends congratulatory message to 10th CELAC summit](#) (2026-03-22 03:04)

President Xi sends congratulatory message to 10th CELAC summit

- [Foreign envoys commend Xinjiang's development, openness](#) (2026-03-22 02:40)

Dozens of foreign diplomats from 40 countries and representatives of international organizations attended an exchange meeting held in Beijing on Friday, to share views on the robust economic and social progress, continued improvements in human rights protection, and expanding opening-up in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

- [Chinese premier delivers keynote speech at China Development Forum 2026](#) (2026-03-22 02:22)

Chinese premier delivers keynote speech at China Development Forum 2026

- [China shares first Fengyun-4C satellite observation images](#) (2026-03-22 02:19)

China shares first Fengyun-4C satellite observation images

- [China releases high-quality journal list for medicine, life sciences](#) (2026-03-22 02:12)

China releases high-quality journal list for medicine, life sciences

- [World Day for Glaciers: Global action to protect Earth's water towers](#) (2026-03-21 23:18)

World Day for Glaciers: Global action to protect Earth's water towers

- [Lab explosion at Chongqing University kills one, injures three](#) (2026-03-21 14:27)

Lab explosion at Chongqing University kills one, injures three

- [He Lifeng: China's 15th FYP to expand opportunities for multinationals](#) (2026-03-21 14:14)

During the 15th Five-Year Plan period (2026-2030), China will unswervingly expand high-level opening up and promote high-quality development, which will create wider market opportunities for multinational corporations, Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng said in Beijing on Saturday.

- [How technology is shaping a new era for a Healthy China](#) (2026-03-21 13:41)

China has set an ambitious goal: to build a "Healthy China" by 2035. During the 14th Five-Year Plan period, the country has already delivered a track record of remarkable achievements. Life expectancy has risen to 79 years, while coverage of basic medical insurance has achieved more than 95%. A tiered healthcare system is steadily taking shape, extending services from disease prevention to rehabilitation and long-term care.

- [Bird strike rips 'nose' off plane in China, forcing emergency return](#) (2026-03-21 13:22)

A China Southern Airlines flight bound for Shenzhen was forced to return to Shanghai shortly after takeoff on Saturday after suffering a bird strike that left visible damage to the aircraft's nose cone, according to passengers and the airline.

- [World's 2nd-largest rare earth mine expands China's resource advantage](#) (2026-03-21 12:42)

China has made major discoveries of rare earth elements and other key minerals in Sichuan and Gansu provinces in a new round of mineral exploration, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources, which made the announcement on Wednesday.

- [Boao Forum 2026 to spotlight four key themes amid global uncertainty](#) (2026-03-21 12:20)

The Boao Forum for Asia (BFA) Annual Conference 2026 will be held from March 24 to 27 in Boao, south China's Hainan Province, marking the forum's 25th anniversary. Against a backdrop

of rising geopolitical tensions, economic fragmentation and technological transformation, the event is widely expected to provide forward-looking insights and "Boao solutions" for a world in search of certainty.

- [From 'honor roll' to 'food roll': Shunde's Jinbang Street](#) (2026-03-21 09:01)

Join Absalom Absalom from Namibia as he explores a historic street in Shunde, Guangdong.

- [Cast of 'Peng Hu' presents at 1st CMG Chinese Film Gala](#) (2026-03-21 08:59)

The main cast of the film Peng Hu made a striking appearance on the red carpet of the inaugural China Media Group's Chinese Film Gala in Beijing on Friday, March 20.

- [World Sleep Day: China promotes healthy sleep with diverse initiatives](#) (2026-03-21 08:44)

The China Sleep Research Society is spearheading a series of nationwide science-popularization activities, as World Sleep Day is observed in the country on Saturday.

- [The Datong Code: Intangible cultural heritage micro-drama series Ep. 2](#) (2026-03-21 07:10)

Presented by Peking University, this five-episode micro drama unfolds like a portal, inviting you on a fantastical journey through Datong's living heritage and intangible traditions. If you love games and long for stories carved in stone and fire, come step inside.

- [Chinamaxxing in Yunnan](#) (2026-03-21 07:05)

CGTN's Wang Yangyang invites Netherlands' Julia and Germany's Mladen to join him in dancing to the viral Midu Echoing remix in Yunnan.

- [Boao Forum 2026: Humanoid robots shape Asia's next growth phase](#) (2026-03-21 06:50)

Boao Forum 2026: Humanoid robots shape Asia's next growth phase

- [China's green development fuels ecological and economic prosperity](#) (2026-03-21 06:47)

March 21 marks the International Day of Forests. The theme for 2026, Forests and Economies, highlights the essential roles of forests in driving economic prosperity.

- [O'Sullivan rolls in historic 153 break to reach World Open semifinals](#) (2026-03-21 05:20)

O'Sullivan rolls in historic 153 break to reach World Open semifinals

- [2026 CDF to spotlight 15th FYP, global cooperation opportunities](#) (2026-03-21 05:19)

The annual China Development Forum is expected to reinforce China's role as a key engine of global development while highlighting avenues for global shared growth in a fragmented world.

- [McEvoy breaks men's 50m freestyle world record at swimming China Open](#) (2026-03-21 05:18)

McEvoy breaks men's 50m freestyle world record at swimming China Open

- [Our Long March: Revolutionary Ideals on Stone Tablets](#) (2026-03-21 04:30)

The Cangxi Red Army Stone Slogan Forest, located within the Red Army Crossing Memorial Park, is a precious remnant of the red culture of the Sichuan-Shaanxi Soviet Area.

- [China expresses serious concerns over Mexico's possible review](#) (2026-03-21 03:02)

China on Friday expressed serious concerns over Mexico's possible "economic security review" of Chinese investment, according to the Ministry of Commerce.

- [Chinese FM: Middle East situation threatening global energy supply](#) (2026-03-20 14:44)

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Friday that the current situation in the Middle East is still deteriorating, affecting global energy supply stability and triggering a severe humanitarian crisis.

- [China sees sustained progress in land greening and forest growth](#) (2026-03-20 13:59)

China has seen solid progress in land greening, with its forest area and stock volume both expanding for 40 consecutive years, the National Forestry and Grassland Administration said on Friday.

- [Poll on the 2026 Boao Forum for Asia](#) (2026-03-20 13:35)

Poll on the 2026 Boao Forum for Asia

- [China's commerce minister meets Apple CEO Tim Cook](#) (2026-03-20 13:34)

China's commerce minister meets Apple CEO Tim Cook

- [China-Russia dialogue highlights shared development opportunities](#) (2026-03-20 13:18)

China-Russia dialogue highlights shared development opportunities

- [China's west-to-east power project tops 1 trillion kWh to Jiangsu](#) (2026-03-20 13:16)

China's west-to-east power project tops 1 trillion kWh to Jiangsu

- [CMG holds 'China in Springtime' event in Brazil](#) (2026-03-20 12:38)

CMG holds 'China in Springtime' event in Brazil

- ['Benefiting the people': Understanding China's governance logic](#) (2026-03-20 12:33)

At a time when global governance is in deep trouble, China's building path of governance validity that is different from Western electoral politics is showing its unique value in the East. China's recent Party-wide study and education activities have established "benefiting the people" as the greatest achievement, and the people's satisfaction is the fundamental yardstick for measuring the effectiveness of governance. This renewed emphasis on governance logic not only provides new ideas for dealing with the global "affordability crisis," but also contributes to

China's solution to solve the widespread "governance deficit."

- [China's Middle East envoy holds talks with Iran's ambassador](#) (2026-03-20 12:05)

China's special envoy on the Middle East issue, Zhai Jun, met with Iran's ambassador to China, Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, on Friday to exchange views on current tensions in the Middle East.

- [Poll: Top US allies pivot toward China amid policy shifts](#) (2026-03-20 11:49)

Poll: Top US allies pivot toward China amid policy shifts

- [The Beijing dispatch: A global pulse in the heart of China](#) (2026-03-20 10:08)

Reporting on the Two Sessions in Beijing has been a marathon—one fueled by adrenaline, endless "live hits," and more coffee than I'd like to admit.

- [New TV drama 'Beidou' draws attention at FILMART 2026](#) (2026-03-20 08:45)

A realist drama series chronicling China's Beidou Navigation Satellite System has drawn wide attention for its ambitious portrayal of scientific innovation during a promotional event at FILMART 2026.

- [Spring crowds fill Nanxun's canals and old streets](#) (2026-03-20 08:42)

Spring has arrived in Nanxun Ancient Town of Huzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, bringing one of the busiest travel periods of the season. Boats slide through the canals as visitors fill the narrow streets, adding to a lively atmosphere.

- [China's second homegrown large cruise ship undocked in Shanghai](#) (2026-03-20 08:31)

China's second domestically built large cruise ship was undocked in Shanghai on Friday, moving a step closer to trial voyages and final delivery as the country expands its push into the cruise tourism market.

- [How China's AI Plus initiative drives for a systemic industrial leap](#) (2026-03-20 06:59)

How China's AI Plus initiative drives for a systemic industrial leap

- [Magnolias come into bloom at Temple of Heaven](#) (2026-03-20 06:42)

As spring sets in, magnolia flowers bloom at Beijing's Temple of Heaven.

- [The Datong Code: Intangible cultural heritage micro-drama series Ep. 1](#) (2026-03-20 06:34)

After clearing Black Myth: Wukong, Abdelquodousse Kailil from Morocco, a student at Peking University's School of Chinese as a Second Language, travels to Datong, Shanxi Province only to find himself transported into a mysterious game called The Datong Code.

- [China calls for actions to promote and protect human rights at UNHCR](#) (2026-03-20 05:53)

A Chinese envoy called on the international community to revisit the original purpose of promoting and protecting human rights as the Human Rights Council marks the 20th anniversary of its establishment, urging concrete action over politicization.

- [Chinese scientists unlock ancient genes to develop longevity rice](#) (2026-03-20 04:13)

Chinese scientists unlock ancient genes to develop longevity rice

- [AI Influence: Pet and fruit microdramas take the internet by storm](#) (2026-03-20 01:33)

AI Influence: Pet and fruit microdramas take the internet by storm

- [China, Turkmenistan double down on a steady partnership](#) (2026-03-19 15:41)

China and Turkmenistan are reinforcing a relationship defined by consistency and strategic trust since 1992, when the two nations established diplomatic ties.

- [Independent committee starts Tai Po fire probe with 1st hearing](#) (2026-03-19 15:04)

The independent committee set up to investigate the deadly residential fire at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po, China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), held its first public hearing on Thursday, taking evidence on matters outlined in its terms of reference.

- [Chinese, British FMs hold phone talks on Middle East situation](#) (2026-03-19 14:04)

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held a phone conversation with British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper upon the latter's request on Thursday, exchanging views on the Middle East situation.

- [China's commerce minister to attend WTO's 14th ministerial conference](#) (2026-03-19 14:03)

China's Minister of Commerce Wang Wentao will lead a delegation to attend the 14th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon, from March 26 to 29, a ministry spokesperson said on Thursday.

- [China issues pilot work guideline for rural land contracts extension](#) (2026-03-19 14:03)

China issued a guideline outlining arrangements for pilot work to extend rural land contracts by an additional 30 years upon the expiration of the second-round contracts.

- [Foreign trade of China's Xizang rises 15.4% in Jan-Feb](#) (2026-03-19 12:53)

The total import and export value of southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region reached nearly 1.83 billion yuan (\$264.7 million) in the first two months of 2026, up 15.4% year on year, according to Lhasa Customs on Thursday.

- [Macao SAR legislative body passes bill for national security committee](#) (2026-03-19 12:45)

The Legislative Assembly of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) held a plenary session on Thursday, during which it unanimously passed the bill for the Committee for Safeguarding National Security of the Macao SAR.

- [How Chinese cinema is reshaping global perceptions of China](#) (2026-03-19 12:18)

How Chinese cinema is reshaping global perceptions of China

- [China's central bank pledges to safeguard financial market stability](#) (2026-03-19 12:11)

China will firmly safeguard the stable operation of its financial markets, including stocks, bonds and foreign exchange, according to a meeting held by the country's central bank on Wednesday.

- [Tackling the TB epidemic: From local innovation to global cooperation](#) (2026-03-19 11:57)

Peng Liyuan, wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping and also the World Health Organization (WHO) goodwill ambassador for tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS, called for global solidarity to combat the TB epidemic, highlighting China's transition to a moderate-to-low prevalence country. By combining AI-driven "smart" screening in provinces like Jiangsu with international medical aid, China is sharing a practical blueprint to turn the vision of a TB-free world into a reality.

- [China calls for political solution to Syria issue: envoy](#) (2026-03-19 10:22)

China supports a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process to resolve the Syria issue, and encourages all parties to engage in inclusive dialogue and advance political reconciliation, Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the United Nations, said Wednesday.

- [China to boost dialogue via Sino-US economic consultation mechanism](#) (2026-03-19 10:17)

China and the United States have agreed to continue making good use of their economic and trade consultation mechanism to strengthen dialogue and communication, the Ministry of Commerce said on Thursday.

- [Tech innovation turns Xinjiang's saline land into high-value fruit hub](#) (2026-03-19 09:50)

Tech innovation turns Xinjiang's saline land into high-value fruit hub

- [China condemns killing of Iranian leaders, civilian attacks](#) (2026-03-19 09:11)

The killing of Iranian leaders and attacks on civilian targets are by no means acceptable, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Thursday in response to a related query.

- [Spring beauty at the Summer Palace](#) (2026-03-19 09:09)

Hundreds of mountain peach trees at the Summer Palace in Beijing began to bloom one after another.

- [Our Long March: The Red Army's Ingenious Tactics](#) (2026-03-19 07:36)

From March 21 to 22, 1935, the Central Red Army crossed the Chishui River for the fourth time at crossing points such as Taipingdu and Erlangtan. The previous three crossings had drawn a large enemy force into southern Sichuan Province, allowing the Red Army to secretly retreat to Guizhou Province while the enemy was off guard.

- [From sweet treats to wearable art: Revival of Jingzhou carved fruit](#) (2026-03-19 07:27)

A millennium-old craft is getting a fresh glow-up in Jingzhou Miao and Dong Autonomous County, Hunan Province.

- [Ice cracks, and the first swimmers are already back](#) (2026-03-19 07:22)

As winter loosens its grip in northeast China, signs of spring are beginning to show along the Manjiang River in Baishan, Jilin Province. Patches of ice are breaking apart, revealing open water that's quickly coming back to life.

- [Gubei Water Town: A national tourism gem linking ancient Beijing](#) (2026-03-19 07:03)

Located in Beijing's Miyun District, this carefully designed town of "six zones and three valleys" evokes the rustic elegance of northern China's ancient settlements.

- [China switches on world's largest line for electronic-grade fiberglass](#) (2026-03-19 06:54)

China switches on world's largest line for electronic-grade fiberglass

- [China-Europe Railway Express fuels an open world economy](#) (2026-03-19 03:33)

China-Europe Railway Express fuels an open world economy

- [Chinese envoy: Middle East is being pushed toward a dangerous abyss](#) (2026-03-19 03:00)

A senior Chinese diplomat said on Wednesday that China is deeply concerned that the entire Middle East is being pushed toward a dangerous abyss.

- [US Senator: Allies no longer believe US is a 'dependable partner'](#) (2026-03-18 22:25)

U.S. Democratic Senator from Virginia Mark Warner is raising alarms over what he describes as a major shift in global alliances, warning that traditional partners like Canada and the United Kingdom are now pursuing trade deals with China amid growing doubts about U.S. reliability.

- [Kenya explores Juncao technology to boost resilient food systems](#) (2026-03-18 16:33)

A national capacity-building workshop, themed Promoting Juncao Technology for Resilient Food Systems, Poverty Eradication, and Climate Adaptation in Kenya, kicked off in Nairobi from March 17 to 19, bringing together agricultural experts, government officials, and local farmers to explore how the Chinese-developed Juncao technology can address Kenya's pressing agricultural challenges and enhance climate resilience.

- [German session of 'China in Springtime' event held in Düsseldorf](#) (2026-03-18 15:54)

German session of 'China in Springtime' event held in Düsseldorf

- [Peng Liyuan calls for global action against TB](#) (2026-03-18 15:44)

Peng Liyuan, wife of Chinese President Xi Jinping and also the World Health Organization (WHO) goodwill ambassador for tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/AIDS, on Wednesday called for international support and participation in global TB prevention and treatment.

- [China's tech trial links space computing with OpenClaw, humanoid robot](#) (2026-03-18 15:05)

In a milestone fusion of three frontier technologies, a Chinese lab has recently successfully demonstrated remote, intelligent control of ground-based humanoid robots using OpenClaw and computing power from orbit.

- [Tencent says AI bet pays off as core businesses outpace industry](#) (2026-03-18 14:46)

Chinese tech giant Tencent reported a 14% year-on-year increase of revenue, with AI beginning to deliver measurable gains.

- [Chinese mainland outlines 5-year cross-Strait integration measures](#) (2026-03-18 14:45)

A Chinese mainland spokesperson on Wednesday detailed steps to implement the Taiwan-related section of the country's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), pledging to advance cross-Strait peaceful development and integration while expanding opportunities for Taiwan residents and businesses.

- [Interventional combination therapy: New hope for liver cancer patients](#) (2026-03-18 14:32)

New clinical evidence confirms that combining interventional procedures with targeted therapies can effectively control large, complex liver tumors, as demonstrated by patients maintaining a high quality of life for over eight years. This "bench-to-bedside" model integrates AI-guided robotics and original medical devices to redefine standards of care for unresectable liver cancer.

- [China's Fuxing high-speed train gets an automated bath](#) (2026-03-18 14:15)

China's Fuxing high-speed train gets an automated bath

- ['Flower-viewing+' tourism boosts rural consumption across China](#) (2026-03-18 13:49)

'Flower-viewing+' tourism boosts rural consumption across China

- [Lai's bid to reverse process of China's reunification doomed to fail](#) (2026-03-18 12:38)

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said on Wednesday that the Taiwan authorities led by Lai Ching-te brazenly used the false narrative of Japanese aggressors to whitewash Japan's aggression and colonial rule, which constitutes a grave affront to history and despicable betrayal to the nation.

- [China to maintain communication with US on Trump's visit](#) (2026-03-18 12:38)

China will continue to maintain communication with the US side regarding President Donald Trump's China visit, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday.

- [Japan 'crying thief' over China's defense budget, spokesperson says](#) (2026-03-18 12:31)

China has released information regarding the specifics of the country's 2026 defense budget, making public its size, composition, and allocation and leaving no room for doubt, a Chinese defense ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday.

- ['Peach blossom flood' paints spring spectacle at Hukou Waterfall](#) (2026-03-18 12:25)

'Peach blossom flood' paints spring spectacle at Hukou Waterfall

- [China Coast Guard patrols territorial waters of China's Diaoyu Dao](#) (2026-03-18 11:22)

China Coast Guard patrols territorial waters of China's Diaoyu Dao

- [Wang Yi urges end to casualties, losses in Middle East conflict](#) (2026-03-18 11:09)

China's top diplomat Wang Yi on Wednesday called for an end to casualties and losses in the conflict in the Middle East, pledging China's mediation efforts toward a ceasefire.

- [Xi's books on economy, student interactions debut in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-18 10:43)

The first volume of Selected Works of Xi Jinping on Economy, along with two volumes of Xi Jinping and University Students, made their debut in China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on Wednesday.

- [Xi calls for enhanced cooperation with Turkmenistan in multiple fields](#) (2026-03-18 10:19)

China and Turkmenistan should expand the scale of cooperation in the natural gas sector, and elevate trade and investment levels, Chinese President Xi Jinping said in Beijing on Wednesday.

- [Boao mandate: How China is weaving a shared future for Asia-Pacific](#) (2026-03-18 09:45)

Boao mandate: How China is weaving a shared future for Asia-Pacific

- [China, Turkmenistan should carry forward friendship, deepen ties: FM](#) (2026-03-18 09:23)

China and Turkmenistan should carry forward friendly tradition, firmly support each other, and deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Tuesday.

- [Philippine actions won't shake China's resolve to safeguard its rights](#) (2026-03-18 09:21)

Philippine actions won't shake China's resolve to safeguard its rights

- [Queens of the battlefield: Female warriors of the Shang](#) (2026-03-18 08:13)

Queens of the battlefield: Female warriors of the Shang

- [Number of registered Nanjing Massacre survivors falls to 21](#) (2026-03-18 07:56)

Guan Shunhua, a survivor of the Nanjing Massacre, passed away on Wednesday at the age of 101, according to the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders in east China's Jiangsu Province. Her passing leaves only 21 registered survivors of the atrocity still living.

- [Scientists discover exotic proton-like particle](#) (2026-03-18 07:21)

Scientists announced the discovery of a new heavy, proton-like particle in experiments with the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's most powerful particle accelerator, at the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) on Tuesday.

- [The hidden 'crown jewel' of Hainan desserts: Mango rice rolls](#) (2026-03-18 07:19)

When Cantonese rice rolls meet tropical mango, something magical happens. You get this clever dessert from Qionghai, Hainan.

- [Birds of prey spotted more often in Beijing as ecology improves](#) (2026-03-18 07:18)

Golden eagles and white-tailed eagles have been spotted more frequently on the outskirts of Beijing this past winter and spring, drawing crowds of photographers hoping to capture rare images of the majestic raptors.

- [Kiribati ambassador on China's 15th Five-Year plan](#) (2026-03-18 07:17)

CGTN's Ioana Gomoi sat down in Beijing with David Teaabo, ambassador of Kiribati to China, to discuss China's 15th Five-Year plan and the growing partnership between Kiribati and China.

- [Frontline engineers put the correct performance outlook into practice](#) (2026-03-18 07:14)

Frontline engineers put the correct performance outlook into practice

- [Spring ice melts into a sea of pink and gold](#) (2026-03-18 07:14)

As night falls on Xinjiang's Tekes County, melting spring ice transforms Kelatuohai Lake into a canvas of pink, red and gold.

- [Short, fast, addictive: China's micro-drama takeover](#) (2026-03-18 07:11)

Chinese micro-dramas are taking the world by storm — but there's more to them than meets the eye. From time-travel epics to 25-day shoots, we go behind the scenes with the creators redefining storytelling.

- [Tree-planting drive boosts island ecology in South China Sea](#) (2026-03-18 06:48)

Tree-planting drive boosts island ecology in South China Sea

- [China's space probe uncovers new solar effect on cosmic rays](#) (2026-03-18 06:16)

China's space probe uncovers new solar effect on cosmic rays

- [Zhao Xintong edges Long Zehuang to reach third round at World Open](#) (2026-03-18 05:02)

Zhao Xintong edges Long Zehuang to reach third round at World Open

- [Underground UHV link turns construction site into future farmland](#) (2026-03-18 04:29)

Underground UHV link turns construction site into future farmland

- [China to hold Zhongguancun Forum from March 25 to 29](#) (2026-03-18 04:27)

China to hold Zhongguancun Forum from March 25 to 29

- [A city's kindness: Passers-by halt traffic to help old man in distress](#) (2026-03-17 15:06)

A city's kindness: Passers-by halt traffic to help old man in distress

- [Wang Yi: Broad consensus reached at China-Vietnam '3+3' dialogue](#) (2026-03-17 14:57)

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Tuesday that China and Vietnam reached a broad consensus at the first ministerial meeting of the China-Vietnam "3+3" strategic dialogue on diplomacy, defense and public security.

- [Chinese premier signs decree to revise social organization regulations](#) (2026-03-17 14:18)

Chinese premier signs decree to revise social organization regulations

- [China trains 'tech matchmakers' to turn innovation into economic power](#) (2026-03-17 14:17)

China is accelerating efforts to cultivate a new generation of "tech matchmakers" to speed up the commercialization of scientific breakthroughs, as it seeks to turn its expanding research strength into a more powerful driver of economic growth.

- [China issues guidelines to advance child-friendly development](#) (2026-03-17 14:05)

China has rolled out guidelines to advance child-friendly development across society, aiming to better protect minors' lawful rights and interests and promote children's healthy, all-round growth, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said on Tuesday.

- [China, Vietnam hold meeting to advance cooperation](#) (2026-03-17 12:51)

The 17th meeting of the China-Vietnam Steering Committee for Bilateral Cooperation was held in Hanoi on Tuesday.

- [CCG says it expels Japanese boat for intrusion into Diaoyu Dao waters](#) (2026-03-17 12:28)

The China Coast Guard (CCG) said on Tuesday that its vessels lawfully expelled a Japanese fishing boat that intruded into the territorial waters of China's Diaoyu Dao on Monday.

- [Turkmenistan's Berdimuhamedov arrives in Beijing for goodwill visit](#) (2026-03-17 11:14)

Turkmenistan's Berdimuhamedov arrives in Beijing for goodwill visit

- [Alibaba launches AI agent platform for firms after OpenClaw craze](#) (2026-03-17 10:49)

Alibaba on Tuesday launched an artificial intelligence platform for enterprises targeting automation, intensifying competition in China's rapidly evolving AI agent market following the OpenClaw craze that has gripped the country's tech sector.

- [Health Talk | Dai medicine: Healing power from the rainforest](#) (2026-03-17 09:35)

In this episode of CGTN's Health Talk, we explore this gift from the rainforest, speak with Dai medicine healers and discover how traditional ethnic healing shines with vitality in the new era as the wisdom of Dai medicine meets modern medicine in Xishuangbanna, southwest China's Yunnan Province.

- [China expands cross-border trade facilitation pilot cities](#) (2026-03-17 09:25)

China will expand its pilot cities for a cross-border trade facilitation campaign to 45 in 2026, up from 25 in 2025, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) said on Monday.

- [Shoushan stone carving shines at jewelry and jade craft culture event](#) (2026-03-17 08:47)

A stall dedicated to promoting Shoushan stone carving culture stole the spotlight at a recently concluded jewelry and jade craft culture festival in Beijing, drawing visitors from all walks of life.

- [Mount Kailash in the Year of the Horse](#) (2026-03-17 08:19)

Located in Burang (Pulan) County of Ngari Prefecture in southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region, Mount Kailash, the main peak of the Kailas Range, remains snow-capped throughout the year.

- [Beijing: US clarifies a Trump visit to China not linked to Hormuz](#) (2026-03-17 08:18)

The Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday that the United States has clarified that a visit to China by US President Donald Trump is not linked to the issue of shipping lanes in the Strait of Hormuz, reiterating that both sides are in communication on the date of the visit.

- [Melodies across the Wall: A US musician's first day in Beijing](#) (2026-03-17 08:11)

From a boat ride on the Liangma River to a spontaneous concert on the Great Wall, American musician Aron turned his first day in Beijing into a musical journey.

- [China opposes EU's unilateral sanctions against Chinese entities](#) (2026-03-17 08:06)

A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Tuesday that China firmly opposes illegal unilateral sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) against Chinese entities.

- [Experts discuss right to development at UN Human Rights Council](#) (2026-03-17 07:59)

Chinese and international experts discussed strategies for inclusive development and advancing the right to development at a recent side event held during the 61st session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Switzerland.

- [China to offer humanitarian assistance to Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq](#) (2026-03-17 07:37)

China has decided to offer emergency humanitarian assistance to Iran, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq in the hope of easing the humanitarian plight faced by local people.

- [Bessent denies reports Trump delayed China visit over Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-17 07:32)

Bessent denies reports Trump delayed China visit over Strait of Hormuz

- [Dongyu Island: Hainan's dreamy river-and sea oasis](#) (2026-03-17 07:25)

Since 2002, Dongyu Island has been the permanent venue for the Boao Forum for Asia. In 2023, it earned the title of National Tourist Resort and went 100% green with its energy use, officially running on near-zero carbon.

- [A stronghold for snow leopards emerges in Xinjiang](#) (2026-03-17 07:24)

Snow leopards are quietly thriving in northwest China. A recent survey estimates that about 205 snow leopards live in and around the Tomur Peak National Nature Reserve, including roughly 130 individuals within the reserve itself.

- [Fan Zhendong to join Borussia Düsseldorf in German league next season](#) (2026-03-17 06:20)

Fan Zhendong to join Borussia Düsseldorf in German league next season

- [Zhao Xintong beats Han Fuyuan 5-0 to reach main draw at WST World Open](#) (2026-03-17 06:18)

Zhao Xintong beats Han Fuyuan 5-0 to reach main draw at WST World Open

- [China brushes aside Italy 10-3 at World Women's Curling Championship](#) (2026-03-17 06:17)

China brushes aside Italy 10-3 at World Women's Curling Championship

- [Hong Kong to host 2026 WIC Asia-Pacific Summit in April](#) (2026-03-17 05:54)

The 2026 World Internet Conference (WIC) Asia-Pacific Summit is set to take place in China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region from April 13 to 14, it was announced at a press conference on Tuesday.

- [Bessent denies reports Trump delayed China visit over Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-17 05:49)

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Monday that media reports suggesting any delay in US President Donald Trump visiting China was due to the president's demand that China help

reopen the Strait of Hormuz were "completely false."

- [John Lee: Hong Kong formulating 1st five-year plan at full speed](#) (2026-03-17 05:31)

Hong Kong is formulating its first five-year development plan at full speed, John Lee, chief executive of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), said on Monday.

- [Chinese scientists discover 'zero-pollution' microbial herbicide](#) (2026-03-17 04:58)

Chinese scientists discover 'zero-pollution' microbial herbicide

- [China boosts natural resource support for major projects](#) (2026-03-17 04:55)

China boosts natural resource support for major projects

- [How China-US medical synergy is outrunning the 'biological clock'](#) (2026-03-17 02:22)

How China-US medical synergy is outrunning the 'biological clock'

- [China urges joint efforts for Afghanistan's stability, development](#) (2026-03-17 01:45)

It is imperative that the Afghan government and the international community maintain communication, work in the same direction, gradually address each other's legitimate concerns, and help Afghanistan achieve lasting stability, development and prosperity, a Chinese envoy said on Monday.

- [Vietnam's Party chief meets with senior Chinese officials](#) (2026-03-17 01:06)

General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) Central Committee To Lam on Monday met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong and Minister of National Defense Dong Jun, who were in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi to attend the first ministerial meeting of the China-Vietnam "3+3" strategic dialogue on diplomacy, defense and public security.

- [The Paris talks: A new dynamic in China-US economic diplomacy](#) (2026-03-17 01:00)

The most significant outcome of the Paris talks was not any single deliverable, but rather a shared commitment to maintaining stable bilateral tariff levels and avoiding the tit-for-tat escalation that had defined much of the past several years.

- [Ministerial meeting of China-Vietnam '3+3' strategic dialogue held](#) (2026-03-17 00:53)

The first ministerial meeting of the China-Vietnam "3+3" strategic dialogue on diplomacy, defense and public security was held in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi on Monday.

- [Vietnamese PM meets with senior Chinese officials](#) (2026-03-17 00:46)

Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Minister of Public Security Wang Xiaohong and Minister of National Defense Dong Jun in Hanoi on Monday.

- [He Lifeng meets with French Finance Minister Roland Lescure](#) (2026-03-16 17:59)

Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng met with French Finance Minister Roland Lescure on Monday after China-US economic and trade talks concluded in Paris.

- [China, US hold in-depth talks on economic, trade issues](#) (2026-03-16 16:06)

China, US hold in-depth talks on economic, trade issues

- [Senior Chinese official briefs media after economic and trade talks with US](#) (2026-03-16 15:09)

Senior Chinese official briefs media after economic and trade talks with US

- [Shenzhou-21 crew completes second series of extravehicular activities](#) (2026-03-16 15:03)

Shenzhou-21 crew completes second series of extravehicular activities

- [Li Chenggang: China expresses opposition over US Section 301 investigations](#) (2026-03-16 14:48)

Li Chenggang: China expresses opposition over US Section 301 investigations

- [Li Chenggang: Both sides agree to keep tariff levels stable](#) (2026-03-16 14:34)

Li Chenggang: Both sides agree to keep tariff levels stable

- [Chinese trade representative Li Chenggang speaks to media after talks with US negotiators in Paris](#) (2026-03-16 14:27)

Chinese trade representative Li Chenggang speaks to media after talks with US negotiators in Paris

- ['Panda of birds' returns to central China reserve after 9 years](#) (2026-03-16 14:21)

'Panda of birds' returns to central China reserve after 9 years

- [China mediates between Afghanistan, Pakistan to ease border tensions](#) (2026-03-16 13:39)

China's Special Envoy on Afghan Affairs Yue Xiaoyong shuttled between Afghanistan and Pakistan from March 7 to 14 to mediate recent conflicts between the two neighbors.

- [China builds comprehensive groundwater monitoring system](#) (2026-03-16 13:22)

China builds comprehensive groundwater monitoring system

- [China, US discuss establishing bilateral working mechanism](#) (2026-03-16 13:14)

China, US discuss establishing bilateral working mechanism

- [China says Paris trade talks with US in-depth, candid, constructive](#) (2026-03-16 12:41)

The trade and economic delegations of China and the United States held in-depth, candid and constructive exchanges over the past day and a half, a senior Chinese official said on Monday.

- [CGTN poll on China-Europe Railway Express](#) (2026-03-16 12:28)

CGTN poll on China-Europe Railway Express

- [China's special envoy on Middle East issue meets with Kuwait's FM](#) (2026-03-16 12:27)

China's special envoy on the Middle East issue, Zhai Jun, met with Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah in Kuwait City on Sunday.

- [China-US economic and trade talks underway in Paris](#) (2026-03-16 09:21)

China-US economic and trade talks underway in Paris

- [CMG's consumer gala warns of AI manipulation in search results](#) (2026-03-16 09:08)

CMG's consumer gala warns of AI manipulation in search results

- [Oracle Red Bull Racing eyes business potential in Chinese market](#) (2026-03-16 09:05)

Oracle Red Bull Racing eyes business potential in Chinese market

- [China urges halt to military actions in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-16 08:59)

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian on Monday addressed the escalating tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and nearby waters, noting they have disrupted international cargo and energy trade routes while undermining regional and global peace and stability.

- [China, US 'in communication' with each other regarding Trump's visit](#) (2026-03-16 08:00)

China and the United States are in communication with each other regarding US President Donald Trump's China visit, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Monday.

- [Shaping Spring: Creative Qingming Guo delight eyes and plates](#) (2026-03-16 07:21)

As the Qingming Festival approaches, a beloved seasonal snack is returning to the table – this time shaped by creative hands into delicate, eye-catching works that are almost too beautiful to eat.

- [How China's opening up creates global growth opportunities](#) (2026-03-16 07:13)

China's commitment to expanding its institutional opening up is garnering significant international attention, with highlights in both the 2026 Government Work Report and the 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030).

- [How seawater desalination strengthens China's blue economy](#) (2026-03-16 06:54)

How seawater desalination strengthens China's blue economy

- [China-US agricultural cooperation: From soy to sustainability](#) (2026-03-16 06:48)

China and the US have shared long-standing practical cooperation in agriculture, with soybean as a cornerstone of this partnership across research, production and trade.

- [China's Kuaizhou-11 Y7 rocket launches eight new satellites](#) (2026-03-16 06:45)

China's Kuaizhou-11 Y7 carrier rocket on Monday launched eight new satellites from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.

- [China's trade-in policy drives 323 bln yuan in consumer sales in 2026](#) (2026-03-16 06:18)

China's consumer goods trade-in program has generated more than 300 billion yuan (about \$43.5 billion) in sales so far this year.

- [Antonelli claims first win in Shanghai, extends hot start for Mercedes](#) (2026-03-16 05:35)

Antonelli claims first win in Shanghai, extends hot start for Mercedes

- [China qualifies for 2026 FIBA Women's World Cup in advance in Wuhan](#) (2026-03-16 05:28)

China qualifies for 2026 FIBA Women's World Cup in advance in Wuhan

- [China Crafted | Sacred Shang: Fu Hao and vessels of ritual and power](#) (2026-03-16 02:38)

Sacred Shang is an immersive virtual exhibition that introduces crafts from China's Shang Dynasty (c. 1600 BC-1046 BC) through the story of Fu Hao – Shang queen, military general, high priestess and beloved wife of King Wu Ding.

- [China's retail sales up 2.8% in first two months, NBS says](#) (2026-03-16 02:01)

China's retail sales up 2.8% in first two months, NBS says

- [National leader of the Turkmen people to visit China from March 17 to 19](#) (2026-03-16 01:25)

National leader of the Turkmen people to visit China from March 17 to 19

- [China says US Section 301 probe severely disrupts global trade order](#) (2026-03-16 01:01)

China's Ministry of Commerce on Monday criticized the United States for launching a Section 301 investigation targeting China and dozens of other economies over alleged failures to ban imports made with "forced labor," calling the move a typical act of protectionism that seriously disrupts the international trade order.

- [Chinese FM meets with Vietnamese counterpart](#) (2026-03-16 00:10)

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Le Hoai Trung in Hanoi on Sunday.

## Source: China | The Guardian

- [China has been preparing for a global energy crisis for years. It is paying off now](#) (2026-03-20 01:14)

As other Asian economies race to conserve energy, China has huge reserves of oil and gas as well as alternative energy sources like wind and solar. Middle East crisis – live updates Xi Jinping has been preparing for a crisis like this for years. China must secure its energy supply “in its own hands”, its president was reported to have said during a visit to one of its vast oilfields in 2021. The US-Israel war on Iran plunged the Middle East into a deep conflict, with the strait of Hormuz – one of the most important waterways in global trade – all but closed and key energy facilities across the region under attack. Continue reading...

- [Inside China’s robotics revolution](#) (2026-03-19 05:01)

How close are we to the sci-fi vision of autonomous humanoid robots? I visited 11 companies in five Chinese cities to find out. Chen Liang, the founder of Guchi Robotics, an automation company headquartered in Shanghai, is a tall, heavy-set man in his mid-40s with square-rimmed glasses. His everyday manner is calm and understated, but when he is in his element – up close with the technology he builds, or in business meetings discussing the imminent replacement of human workers by robots – he wears an exuberant smile that brings to mind an intern on his first day at his dream job. Guchi makes the machines that install wheels, dashboards and windows for many of the top Chinese car brands, including BYD and Nio. He took the name from the Chinese word *guzhi*, “steadfast intelligence”, though the fact that it sounded like an Italian luxury brand was not entirely unwelcome. For the better part of two decades, Chen has tried to solve what, to him, is an engineering problem: how to eliminate – or, in his view, liberate – as many workers in car factories as technologically possible. Late last year, I visited him at Guchi headquarters on the western outskirts of Shanghai. Next to the head office are several warehouses where Guchi’s engineers tinker with robots to fit the specifications of their customers. Chen, an engineer by training, founded Guchi in 2019 with the aim of tackling the hardest automation task in the car factory: “final assembly”, the last leg of production, when all the composite pieces – the dashboard, windows, wheels and seat cushions – come together. At present, his robots can mount wheels, dashboards and windows on to a car without any human intervention, but 80% of the final assembly, he estimates, has yet to be automated. That is what Chen has set his sights on. Continue reading...

- [Looking for leverage: China keeps close eye on US politics after summit delay](#) (2026-03-18 15:25)

Beijing seeks to decipher effect of Iran war on US midterms and best way to apply pressure when Trump meets Xi. The White House said on Wednesday that China had agreed to postpone Donald Trump’s visit to Beijing, as war in the Middle East rages on, complicating the US president’s position at home and abroad. China has not yet commented on the delay to the highly anticipated trip, in which Trump and the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, will meet in person.

for the first time since October. Trump previously said he hoped to delay the trip, originally scheduled to run from 31 March to 2 April, for “five or six weeks” . Continue reading...

- [Trump is being schooled on the limits of US power – but he is a slow learner | Rafael Behr](#) (2026-03-18 07:00)

Last year it was China’ s answer to tariffs, now it’ s Iran’ s retaliation to airstrikes – ‘America First’ keeps foundering on global economicsDonald Trump is teaching the world a lesson, but not the one he thinks. The attack on Iran was meant to be a dazzling display of military supremacy. It has instead illuminated chinks in the US’ s armour.The US president’ s formidable arsenal cannot summon up an insurrection from Iran’ s tyrannised and leaderless opposition. It cannot force merchant ships to run a gauntlet of missile and drone attacks in the strait of Hormuz. The government in Tehran and the facts of geography that give it leverage over global trade are unchanged. Trump’ s exasperation is showing. He urges tanker crews to “show some guts” by sailing into harm’ s way. He calls on Nato members to provide naval chaperones and accuses them of cowardice and ingratitude for refusing. He comes across as peevish and flustered. Impotence is not a good look in a potentate. Continue reading...

- [Rise and fall of Prince Group raises awkward questions for Cambodia](#) (2026-03-17 22:00)

Indictment and arrest of Prince Group founder Chen Zhi has sparked questions about scam industry’ s alleged ties to political elite, and integrity of government crackdownA giant golden clam shell, illuminated by lurid neon lights and filled with playing cards and red dice, once glowed nightly on the facade of Sihanoukville’ s Jin Bei casino. Today, the casino’ s gaudy signage is covered by sheets, and its doorway blocked by a Chinese sign that reads “under renovation” .The casino in the Cambodian resort city was once emblazoned with the name Jin Bei, a company US prosecutors have accused of running scam compounds on behalf Prince Group, which an October indictment alleged was one of Asia’ s largest transnational criminal organisations. Continue reading...

- [Trump seeks to delay China summit as Vance denies ‘wedge’ over Iran war](#) (2026-03-16 23:52)

Pair attempt to strike united front amid reports vice-president skeptical over US-Israeli attack on IranDonald Trump revealed that he had asked China to delay his forthcoming visit to Beijing while the war with Iran was continuing, as he attempted to strike a united front on Monday with his vice-president JD Vance, who is believed to have been skeptical over attacking Tehran’ s regime.Appearing together with Vance for the first time in two weeks, Trump said he did not think the conflict – which started on 28 February after the US and Israel opened hostilities – would be over this week but predicted victory would be achieved soon. Continue reading...

- [Trump’ s threats to Nato reveal glaring absence of any strategy on Iran](#) (2026-03-16 18:04)

White House seems to have failed to anticipate that Tehran would fight back by trying to impose costs on the westMiddle East crisis – live updatesIf there was a moment when the absence of a

US strategy on Iran was exposed, then this was it. Donald Trump demanded on Saturday that the UK, China, France, Japan and others participate in a naval escort for oil tankers through the strait of Hormuz. Despite launching the attack on Iran, with Israel, the White House does not seem to have fully anticipated what was likely to follow. Iran had few good military options for fighting back, but attacking US bases, US allies and merchant shipping in the Gulf was the most obvious response – to try to impose costs on the west. Continue reading...

- [Iran’ s Hormuz blockade is its most powerful card against Trump and Israel. It won’ t back down easily | Jack Watling \(2026-03-16 15:49\)](#)

By imposing massive costs on the global economy, the Iranian government hopes to cause the US to back down. The US and Israeli decision to attack Iran has sent economic shockwaves around the world. About 20% of global oil supplies have been effectively blocked from transiting the strait of Hormuz since Iran began attacking ships, resulting in a huge jump in oil prices. Militarily, while the United States has the firepower to significantly reduce Iran’ s capacity to strike ships in the strait, it is unlikely to be able to eliminate the threat entirely. Reopening the strait, therefore, is not only a question of military capabilities but of diplomacy, and to negotiate it is necessary to understand what each party to the conflict is trying to achieve. Continue reading...

- [China ‘still communicating’ with US over Trump visit despite talk of delay \(2026-03-16 15:25\)](#)

US president hinted that his trip could be put on hold if Beijing failed to help secure the strait of Hormuz. Middle East crisis – live updates. China says it is in communication with the US about Donald Trump’ s planned visit to Beijing, despite hints from the US president that he might delay the trip if his prospective hosts do not help to unblock the strait of Hormuz. China’ s foreign ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said: “Head-of-state diplomacy plays an irreplaceable strategic guiding role in China-US relations. The two sides are maintaining communication regarding President Trump’ s visit to China.” Continue reading...

- [Trump claims he has ‘absolute right’ to impose new tariffs after supreme court blow \(2026-03-16 05:09\)](#)

US supreme court has ‘ransacked’ the country, president argues, in wake of its ruling against his trade agenda. Donald Trump has claimed he has “the absolute right” to impose new tariffs after the US supreme court ruled many of the import duties he imposed last year were illegal. The president attacked the court in a late night broadside on Sunday, accusing it of having “unnecessarily RANSACKED” the US – and failing to show him sufficient loyalty. Continue reading...

## Source: China - Foreign Policy

- [The Follies of Predicting War](#) (2026-03-20 19:00)

A new book debates who wins wars and why.

- [It's Official: Trump's Tariffs Have Failed](#) (2026-03-19 10:21)

Americans are paying, reindustrialization isn't happening, and China profits.

- [Japan Should Help Sink China's Invasion Fleet](#) (2026-03-18 20:12)

Sanae Takaichi committing to Taiwan's defense would help keep the peace.

- [Iran Isn't Trump's Only War](#) (2026-03-18 20:00)

Even as Trump wages war on Tehran, he's reigniting his economic war against U.S. trading partners.

- [BRICS Is Divided on Iran. So Are NATO and the G-7.](#) (2026-03-18 18:10)

The bloc isn't a geopolitical alliance, and it shouldn't be expected to function like one.

- [China's Hormuz Problem](#) (2026-03-17 19:47)

Beijing must navigate an oil crunch and fragile diplomacy with Washington.

- [Trump Seeks Help to Reopen Hormuz. Europe Says No.](#) (2026-03-16 21:47)

After months of bashing allies, the White House finds itself fighting largely alone.

- [BRICS Meets Reality in the Middle East War](#) (2026-03-16 16:21)

It's the latest case study in the persistent failure of transnational solidarity.

- ['Made in America' Should Accept Chinese Investment](#) (2026-03-16 11:00)

Private Chinese capital is being locked out of mutually beneficial opportunities.

## Source: Financial Times China

- [China battery trio gain \\$70bn as Iran war sparks 'paradigm shift'](#) (2026-03-23 05:59)

Share price rises for clean energy companies outstrip oil majors as investors bet on switch to renewables

- [China touts itself as 'harbour of stability' to global CEOs](#) (2026-03-22 06:23)

Premier Li Qiang paints contrast to US at business gathering in Beijing as Donald Trump gets bogged down in Iran

- [Chinese IPOs in US falter amid scrutiny of manipulation schemes](#) (2026-03-22 05:00)

Regulators crack down after trading in ‘toxic’ small-cap stocks from China inflicted losses on US investors

- [Britain must be more vigilant to the risk of sabotage by hostile states](#) (2026-03-21 05:00)

If Moscow and Beijing are determined to destabilise the west then new strategies are needed

- [The new old world](#) (2026-03-21 05:00)

A Gulf war, an oil spike, a tense Europe: the 20th century is back

- [Taiwan concerned by depletion of US missile stocks during Iran war](#) (2026-03-21 01:00)

Some weapons used in Gulf would be crucial in early phases of any conflict with China

- [Can a surge of new arrivals rescue Hong Kong’ s property sales market?](#) (2026-03-20 12:00)

A surge of residents, many of them mainlanders, have settled in the city since 2023, driving rents to record levels. Hopes are riding high for a sales market bounceback

- [Six shows to see during Art Basel Hong Kong 2026](#) (2026-03-20 12:00)

From exquisite horse paintings to Lee Bul’ s failed utopias, here are the local artistic highlights away from HKCEC

- [China cracks down on fuel and fertiliser exports](#) (2026-03-20 03:45)

Beijing is trying to preserve its own stockpiles by limiting sales

- [Supermicro co-founder charged in conspiracy to export Nvidia chips to China](#) (2026-03-20 00:43)

US prosecutors allege two employees and a contractor smuggled servers through south-east Asia

- [SEC urged to restrict Chinese companies’ access to US capital markets](#) (2026-03-19 21:04)

Fear of national security risks and investor protections spurs rare bipartisan call for action from financial regulator

- [China curbs ‘low-quality’ listings to cool Hong Kong IPO boom](#) (2026-03-19 21:00)

Regulator targets some opaque ‘red-chip’ structures but signals the market for new issues is still open

- [How to dress like an emperor — according to a connoisseur of rare Chinese textiles](#) (2026-03-19 12:00)

Hong Kong collector Chris Hall has amassed thousands of pieces, from dragon robes to rank badges — he explains what catches his eye

- [What happened to China's fake Van Goghs?](#) (2026-03-19 05:00)

Dafen once produced 60 per cent of the world's new oil paintings — now this village of copyists is under threat

- [AI is moving from answering questions to taking action](#) (2026-03-19 00:01)

China is likely to be both the testing ground and a leader in the use of agents

- [A guide to Hong Kong's best under-the-radar art spaces](#) (2026-03-18 12:00)

From pop-ups and residencies to cross-gallery 'knots', an alternative scene thrives alongside the city's blue-chip galleries

- [Suspensions grow that China is exploiting FOI laws to gather UK security data](#) (2026-03-18 05:00)

Government figures believe Beijing may be behind a significant proportion of recent requests

- [Shahzia Sikander: 'I've carried the erasure of feminine narratives'](#) (2026-03-18 05:00)

The Pakistani-American artist earned accolades for her boundary-pushing reinvention of miniature painting — then rightwing protesters came for her art

- [EU small parcels tax will not halt flood of Chinese goods, top official warns](#) (2026-03-18 05:00)

Brussels will impose a €3 duty per type of item bought online and shipped into the bloc from July

- [The AI craze that has its claws into China](#) (2026-03-18 03:04)

OpenClaw takes China by storm as local governments encourage creation of AI agents for productivity gains

- [Li Ka-shing builds cash pile as Hong Kong family empire looks to its next deal](#) (2026-03-18 02:59)

CK Hutchison has been selling assets across its portfolio but is unlikely to return capital to shareholders

- [Nvidia restarts manufacturing of AI chips for China](#) (2026-03-17 20:38)

Chief executive Jensen Huang says company received flood of orders and American licences over past two weeks

- [The era of US dominance in economic warfare is over](#) (2026-03-17 15:22)

America has long used sanctions to coerce adversaries, but Iran and China can wield powerful economic weapons too

- [Philip Tinari on growing China's museum audience: 'It's about bringing things in from the outside'](#) (2026-03-17 13:00)

The new head of art at Tai Kwun on Hong Kong's resilience, bringing Matisse to Beijing — and what gets past the censors

- [China is not going to bail Trump out](#) (2026-03-17 11:52)

The US president has a better chance of cajoling help from Nato partners

- [Who ate all the Chinese stock market returns?](#) (2026-03-17 06:00)

China got rich. Less so equity punters.

- [Iran war tests China's oil stockpile](#) (2026-03-17 04:00)

Beijing has driven big increase in reserves of strategic commodities but their scale remains secret

- [FirstFT: Donald Trump asks to postpone Beijing summit with Xi Jinping](#) (2026-03-16 22:23)

Also in today's newsletter: China's JD.com launches European ecommerce service, and Macquarie takes on Australia's retail lenders

- [Trump asks to postpone summit with China's Xi due to Iran war](#) (2026-03-16 22:07)

US president says he needs to remain in Washington because of the conflict in the Middle East

- [Is Hong Kong's art market \(slowly\) bouncing back?](#) (2026-03-16 12:00)

As Art Basel returns to the city, gallerists are adapting to more conservative tastes in straitened times

- [Can the last bamboo artisans of Hong Kong survive the modern age?](#) (2026-03-16 05:00)

The material is an inescapable part of the city's landscape and heritage — but its future is precarious

- [China's economy rebounded ahead of Iran crisis](#) (2026-03-16 04:25)

Beijing warns of geopolitical risks even as key indicators show growth

- [Trump throws US-China reboot off course by saying he could delay Xi summit](#) (2026-03-16 01:37)

President casts doubt on visit with Chinese leader as officials from both countries lay groundwork for improved relations

- [China's answer to Amazon launches rival European ecommerce service](#) (2026-03-16 00:01)

JD.com will launch service under its Joybuy brand after previously trying to crack the market in 2022

## Source: New York Times China

- [Why More U.S. Officials Should Go to China](#) (2026-03-22 11:00)

Seeing China firsthand can sharpen U.S. policy, reveal Chinese strengths and weaknesses and reduce costly miscalculations.

- [Laid Off in Midlife, China's Reform Generation Braces for Downward Mobility](#) (2026-03-21 04:00)

The future once seemed boundless for those who grew up during China's reform era. Now in middle age, they are pinned between economic stagnation and institutional age discrimination.

- [How Geopolitics Threaten K-Pop's Ambitions in China](#) (2026-03-20 09:00)

Japanese members of some K-pop bands have been absent from recent concerts in China. Experts say that's linked to tension between Tokyo and Beijing.

- [Using Charm and Restraint, Japan's Leader Mostly Avoids Trump's Wrath](#) (2026-03-20 04:01)

During her first visit to the White House, Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi drew praise from President Trump. But the war in the Middle East will test their relationship.

- [Scramble for Jet Fuel Shows How Energy Shortages Are Rippling Across Asia](#) (2026-03-20 04:00)

As China and other major suppliers of refined oil in the region restrict exports, import-dependent countries are desperate to secure fuel supplies.

- [U.S. Says 3 Tied to Silicon Valley Server Maker Broke Export Laws](#) (2026-03-20 00:50)

Prosecutors said the men, including a co-founder of the company, Super Micro, had diverted servers containing Nvidia A.I. chips to China.

- [Ozempic Is About to Go Generic in India, China and Canada](#) (2026-03-19 04:00)

In India, China and several other nations, Novo Nordisk is on the verge of losing patent protection for its blockbuster weight loss drug, opening the door for cheaper competing versions.

- [American TikTok Users Are Fantasizing About 'Being Chinese'](#) (2026-03-18 09:00)

While "Chinamaxxing," users seem to be processing anxieties about the decline of their own country.

- [China Ramps Up Scrutiny of Meta’s Acquisition of Manus](#) (2026-03-17 20:45)

The country appears to be cracking down on people linked to the acquisition of Manus, a Singapore company with Chinese roots, as President Trump prepares to visit Beijing.

- [China Is Embracing OpenClaw, a New A.I. Agent, and the Government Is Wary](#) (2026-03-17 16:20)

Excitement about A.I. assistant tools is running into growing concerns about the security risks of software that operates autonomously on user’s devices.

- [What the Iran War Means for the U.S.-China Relationship](#) (2026-03-17 05:15)

With the Xi-Trump summit now almost certainly delayed, and tensions rising over the war in Iran, vital issues for both the U.S. and China are also being cast into uncertainty.

- [Trump Officials Look to More Managed Approach to Trade With China](#) (2026-03-16 21:03)

The administration has begun discussing a new “Board of Trade” with China to try to balance what U.S. officials see as an unequal economic relationship.

- [Why Trump’s Strait of Hormuz Problem Is Going Global](#) (2026-03-16 14:50)

President Trump is getting little to no support so far for his call that other countries do their part to try to ease an energy crisis prompted by U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran.

- [Trump’s Threat to Delay Summit With Xi Casts New Shadow Over China Relations](#) (2026-03-16 11:29)

President Trump warned that he could postpone a meeting set to begin in just over two weeks if China refuses to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

## Source: South China Morning Post

- [Man injured after being caught between fighting cows on Hong Kong hiking trail](#) (2026-03-23 06:02)

A man has been injured by two fighting cows while hiking near a Hong Kong reservoir. The 67-year-old reported the incident to police at about 7.30am on Monday after seeing two animals fighting on the MacLehose Trail, near the main dam of Shing Mun Reservoir in the New Territories. He said he was ‘caught in the crossfire’ during the chaos and was struck by one of the animals. The man sustained injuries to his fingers and knees and was taken to Yan Chai Hospital in Tsuen Wan. Meanwhile, at around...

- [Chinese man, 82, travels 12 hours daily for 105 days to visit wife in ICU; devotion touches hearts](#) (2026-03-23 06:00)

In a heart-wrenching display of devotion, an elderly man from eastern China spent 12 hours every day for 105 days travelling to visit his wife in hospital. Chen Achong, 82, a farmer from Zhoushan in Zhejiang province, and his wife, Xue, have been married for more than 50 years, according to the mainland media outlet Xinwenfang. A year ago, Xue suffered a stroke and soon after developed severe pneumonia, leading to her hospitalisation in the intensive care unit (ICU) at Li Huili Hospital in...

- [Most Japanese oppose helping Trump fight his war on Iran, polls show](#) (2026-03-23 05:52)

Most Japanese people oppose sending warships to the Middle East in response to the war on Iran, according to two polls conducted over the weekend amid continued US pressure on allies to help secure the Strait of Hormuz. In a Yomiuri newspaper survey, 67 per cent voiced opposition to sending the nation's Self-Defence Forces to the region, while an ANN poll showed 52 per cent against their deployment. The polls also showed elevated approval ratings for Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's cabinet, at...

- [Air Canada Express jet hits ground vehicle at New York's LaGuardia airport](#) (2026-03-23 05:20)

An Air Canada Express regional jet collided with a ground vehicle upon landing at New York's LaGuardia airport on Sunday evening, according to flight tracking website Flightradar24, in an incident that closed the airport. The CRJ-900 plane, which was coming from Montreal, struck the vehicle at a speed of about 39km/h (24mph), Flightradar24 said. The jet was operated by Jazz Aviation, Air Canada's regional partner. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) issued a ground stop for all...

- [South Korea's 'pali-pali' spirit keeps killing its workers](#) (2026-03-23 05:19)

South Korea builds fast. It always has. The pali-pali (hurry, hurry) spirit turned a war-ravaged nation into an industrial titan in a single generation. It also has a habit of killing factory workers, safety experts say. Those deadly consequences were on full display in Friday's fire at Anjun Industrial, a car parts supplier in Daejeon. The warning signs were impossible to miss. Oil vapour so thick it coated the lenses of workers' glasses with a greasy film. Grease caking the ceilings, the...

- ['Flashing red' : UN alarmed as heat trapped by Earth hits record high](#) (2026-03-23 05:03)

The amount of heat trapped by the Earth reached record levels in 2025, with the consequences of such warming feared to last for thousands of years, the UN warned on Monday. The 11 hottest years ever recorded were all between 2015 and 2025, the United Nations' WMO weather and climate agency confirmed in its flagship State of the Global Climate annual report. Last year was the second or third hottest year on record, at about 1.43 degrees Celsius above the 1850-1900 average, the World...

- [Hong Kong to raise postage rates from April 13 amid surging oil prices](#) (2026-03-23 04:58)

Hong Kong will raise its postage rates next month amid surging oil prices triggered by the conflict in the Middle East, with the cost of posting local letters increasing by 9 per cent to HK\$2.40 (31 US cents). Hongkong Post on Monday said that the new rates would come into effect from April 13, highlighting the need to adjust postage rates to offset escalating operating costs, particularly increases in major cost components such as conveyance costs and terminal dues payments. “Overall, the...

- [Changes to Hong Kong’ s HK\\$2 transport subsidy scheme to kick in on April 3](#) (2026-03-23 04:09)

Hong Kong will implement the revised HK\$2 (26 US cents) transport fare scheme next Friday, under which elderly and disabled residents will only enjoy the flat rate for journeys costing HK\$10 or less. Authorities said on Monday that the new “HK\$2 flat rate or 80 per cent discount” model would be implemented on April 3. Beneficiaries under the revised scheme will only enjoy the HK\$2 rate for journeys where the adult fare is HK\$10 or less, and will have to pay 20 per cent of fares that exceed that...

- [Chinese surgery robot outperforms humans, cuts brain imaging time by 29%](#) (2026-03-23 04:00)

Chinese researchers have developed a surgical robot that can perform complex brain imaging nearly 30 per cent faster than traditional manual methods, according to a study published earlier this year. The feat marks a milestone for the world’ s first approved cerebrovascular intervention system. In a head-to-head at the prestigious Peking Union Medical College Hospital (PUMCH), a young surgeon using the robotic system shaved nine minutes off the time required for a standard manual...

- [How Hong Kong can prepare to bring its transport blueprint to life](#) (2026-03-23 03:30)

Feel strongly about these letters, or any other aspects of the news? Share your views by emailing us your Letter to the Editor at [letters@scmp.com](mailto:letters@scmp.com) or filling in this [Google form](#). Submissions should not exceed 400 words The government’ s Transport Strategy Blueprint sets a welcome long-term vision for Hong Kong’ s transport network, emphasising a “dual-innovation” approach across three themes, six strategies and 25 recommendations. The plan is promising, but successful delivery hinges on concrete...

- [BTS’ South Korea comeback crowd disappoints, triggering Hybe stock sell-off](#) (2026-03-23 02:50)

Shares in BTS’ agency have plunged as much as 15 per cent after a heavily promoted comeback concert by the K-pop megastars in South Korea drew a smaller crowd than authorities initially expected. Hybe’ s stock later recorded its biggest intraday decline since June 2022. The group’ s event at Gwanghwamun Square in Seoul attracted 104,000 fans vs the 260,000 initially estimated by police, according to the Chosun Ilbo newspaper. Stringent crowd control measures, reflecting in part the authorities’ ...

- [Luxury brands bet on growth as well-heeled tourists flock to Hong Kong events](#)

(2026-03-23 02:30)

More than 60 new brands, mostly luxury labels, will move into K11 Musea as part of a revamp to boost the shopping centre's offerings, but an analyst has warned of a complicated external environment weighing on the retail sector's prospects. These brands are set to join the Tsim Sha Tsui mall in a tenant overhaul covering about 30 per cent of its retail space, with operators expecting rents for the revamped stores to rise by double digits. New or expanded flagship stores include Audemars Piguet,...

- [Malaysia, Indonesia top global poll on 'obedient' wives](#) (2026-03-23 02:30)

Steps to narrow the gender gap in Malaysia and Indonesia appear to be falling short, after a major global study found that most people surveyed in both nations remain tethered to traditional views on the roles of women. The study by research firm Ipsos and the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London found that 66 and 60 per cent of respondents from Indonesia and Malaysia, respectively, agreed with the statement that "a wife should always obey her husband", the highest...

- [China developing first tourist submersible for trips 1,000 metres under the sea](#)

(2026-03-23 02:00)

Chinese engineers have designed the country's first tourist submersible equipped to venture as deep as 1,000 metres (3,280 feet) below the ocean surface, giving eventual new momentum to the luxury travel industry. Engineers at the China Ship Scientific Research Centre in Wuxi, a city west of Shanghai, plan to build a prototype before the end of the year and enter commercial operation by 2030 for as many as four passengers per trip, state-run media outlets said this week. Key components including...

- [Malaysia's fuel subsidy bill jumps to US\\$811 million amid Iran war](#) (2026-03-23 01:45)

Malaysia's fuel subsidy bill has surged more than fourfold in under a week due to the sharp spike in global oil prices triggered by the US-Israel war on Iran. The national monthly RON95 petrol and diesel subsidies have risen from 700 million ringgit to 3.2 billion ringgit (US\$177.4 million to US\$810.9 million), Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said on Sunday in an explainer video shared on social media. The disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 per cent of the world's oil supply...

- [To realise Hong Kong's cultural potential, a global vision is essential](#) (2026-03-23 01:30)

The power of arts and culture should not be underestimated. They educate, inform, inspire and bring joy. They open doors to discovery, unite communities and break down barriers between cultures and people. In a broader context, the arts help to define our cities, offering a point of focus for the community and an opportunity to develop a clear cultural identity. Hong Kong has been successful in defining itself as a financial centre, but culture can play as big a role as

capital in determining...

- [Iran awaits Trump threat to ‘obliterate’ power plants, readies response](#) (2026-03-23 01:10)

Iran on Monday faces a deadline by US President Donald Trump to open up the crucial Strait of Hormuz or face a major US assault on power plants, as Israel warned of weeks more of war. Israel also gave the clearest signs yet it intends a ground campaign into Lebanon, destroying a key bridge as it vows to crush Hezbollah, the Shia Muslim movement backed by Iran. Trump, after enthusiastically backing Israel in the war the two countries launched on February 28, is under political pressure as fuel...

- [Hong Kong bracing for a hot, damp spell with humidity reaching 95% by midweek](#) (2026-03-23 01:07)

This story has been made freely available as a public service to our readers. Please consider supporting SCMP’s journalism by subscribing. Hong Kong is set for a hot and damp week ahead, with the city’s forecaster predicting relative humidity to reach as high as 95 per cent from Wednesday as seasonal coastal mist moves in. The Observatory said on Monday that daytime temperatures would rise to 28 degrees Celsius (82 Fahrenheit) later this week as a band of cloud affected the Guangdong coast and...

- [North Korea reappoints Kim Jong-un as supreme leader](#) (2026-03-23 01:01)

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un was reappointed as president of state affairs, state media reported on Monday, after the isolated nation convened the first session of its Supreme People’s Assembly a day earlier. North Korea’s constitution explicitly states that the president of state affairs is the “supreme leader of the DPRK” who represents the state, which is officially known as the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. Kim’s reappointment as head of the authoritarian nation’s highest...

- [How China influencer achieves monthly sales of US\\$14 million by selling US\\$10 beauty products](#) (2026-03-23 01:00)

An online influencer in China with three million followers who projects a filial piety persona has deleted her social media account in the wake of a pricing controversy. The deletion came in the wake of a media report that she sold two bottles of face cream for 69.9 yuan (US\$10) when its original price was 3,999 yuan (US\$580). As the influencer boasted the cosmetic product was imported from Australia, an investigative report by Lanjing News found that it was actually produced by an OEM factory...

- [Hong Kong developer banks on arts and finance synergy in West Kowloon cultural hub](#) (2026-03-23 00:30)

Hong Kong developer Sun Hung Kai Properties is betting big on arts and commercial projects at the West Kowloon Cultural District, banking on the city’s designated role as a cross-border

asset and wealth management hub – even as the office rental market remains subdued. SunHung Kai Properties is positioning its projects to stand out within its 8 million sq ft portfolio of office and commercial space in West Kowloon, where it is also the sole developer in the arts hub building the Artist Square...

- [JPMorgan to expand Asia-Pacific team 10% this year, undeterred by Middle East conflict](#) (2026-03-23 00:30)

JPMorgan Chase plans to expand its corporate banking team by about 10 per cent across Asia-Pacific this year, as its plans in the region will not be slowed down by uncertainties arising from the US-Israel war on Iran, according to a senior executive. The hiring campaign was part of the lender's longer-term plan, which aimed to increase its headcount in the region by 40 per cent between 2023 and 2026, said James Roddy, head of global corporate banking. The corporate banking business in...

- [Japan woos Indonesia with stealth frigates ahead of Prabowo-Takaichi talks](#) (2026-03-23 00:00)

Indonesia's president is heading to Tokyo – and Japan has eight stealth frigates, a mineral deal and a seat at the emperor's lunch table waiting for him. Prabowo Subianto is due to arrive on March 29 for a three-day state visit, his first trip to Japan since taking office in October 2024. He will hold talks with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and dine with Emperor Naruhito, according to a statement published by Tokyo's Foreign Ministry on March 13. Analysts say the agenda will be...

- [UK's Starmer calls emergency meeting on economy as Iran war risks mount](#) (2026-03-22 23:43)

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is set to chair an emergency meeting on the economic fallout from the war in Iran on Monday, with Finance Minister Rachel Reeves and Bank of England Governor Andrew Bailey, the government said. Investors are bracing for another stormy week in financial markets after Iran said it would strike the energy and water systems of Gulf neighbours if US President Donald Trump follows through with a threat to hit Iran's electricity grid. Britain is watching with...

- [Hong Kong's first MRI-guided ultrasound offers relief for Parkinson's tremors](#) (2026-03-22 23:30)

Tuen Mun Hospital has, for the first time in Hong Kong, used a non-invasive, MRI-guided ultrasound procedure to treat a Parkinson's disease patient suffering from uncontrollable tremors, offering an alternative option for those affected by the condition. The hospital said it expected to provide the procedure to 40 patients within two years as part of further research into the new treatment. Magnetic resonance-guided focused ultrasound (MRgFUS) is a non-invasive, incisionless procedure that uses...

- [Potential rate cut pause, geopolitical tensions may cloud Hong Kong property recovery](#) (2026-03-22 23:30)

Hongkonger Katie Chan was hoping to buy a flat to live in, and although the 37-year-old accountant was in no rush, the potential longer pause in interest rate cuts could delay her decision. For Chan, the ideal mortgage would be if the one-month Hong Kong interbank offered rate (Hibor) fell below 1.95 per cent, but this year the key driver for local mortgage costs and corporate borrowing rates had only dropped to as low as 2.02 per cent, according to data tracked by the Hong Kong Association of...

- [Emmanuel Gregoire becomes new mayor of Paris, succeeding fellow Socialist Anne Hidalgo](#) (2026-03-22 23:16)

Socialist candidate Emmanuel Gregoire won the Paris mayoral race on Sunday, succeeding fellow party member Anne Hidalgo as the French capital's mayor, as results of the final round of municipal elections showed clear gains for the traditional left and right, and one major win for the far-right in the French Riviera city of Nice. The vote is a test of the balance of power on France's local political map before the 2027 presidential race begins to take shape. Definitive results were still pending...

- [Trump administration touts plan for ICE at airports amid criticism from union, Democrats](#) (2026-03-22 22:19)

US President Donald Trump's border tsar said on Sunday that having immigration agents bolster short-staffed Transportation Security Administration (TSA) teams will speed up airport queues but the union for TSA workers said that does not solve what they see as the underlying problem of pay. In appearances on Sunday news shows, US border tsar Tom Homan and Transport Secretary Sean Duffy argued that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) staff can help with airport security screening, starting...

- [Trump-Xi summits: an inside view with US ex-diplomat William Klein](#) (2026-03-22 22:00)

William Klein worked for more than two decades as a US diplomat, including in several senior roles at the United States' embassy in Beijing from 2016 to 2021. He worked at the American Institute in Taiwan and on the US State Department's China desk in Washington, and occupied US diplomatic posts in South Asia, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. He is based in the Berlin office of FGS Global, a strategic advisory and communications firm. SCMP Plus readers get early access to articles in...

- [As mainland China charts a new course, Hong Kong writes its next chapter](#) (2026-03-22 21:30)

With the conclusion of China's parliamentary "two sessions", the approval of the 2026 government work report and 15th five-year plan – together with the foreign minister's press conference – has sent a clear signal of China pursuing steady and quality-driven growth while projecting a firm and timely voice on the world stage. In the work report, Premier Li Qiang

noted that China's gross domestic product grew by 5 per cent last year, surpassing 140 trillion yuan (US\$20.3 trillion). This year's...

- [Ukraine and US teams conclude talks as Zelensky says new prisoner exchange possible](#) (2026-03-22 21:11)

Ukrainian and US delegations concluded a second day of talks in Florida on finding ways to end the four-year war with Russia, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday. Russian representatives were not present at the talks, which opened in Florida on Saturday. They were originally expected to attend the negotiations, which were expected to take place in Abu Dhabi. The US team is led by special envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law. "It is clear that the...

- [Trump reposts Saturday Night Live video mocking Starmer on Truth Social](#) (2026-03-22 20:19)

US President Donald Trump shared a video on his Truth Social network on Sunday of a television comedy skit portraying a terrified British Prime Minister Keir Starmer hoping to dodge a phone call with the American leader. The skit, broadcast on the premiere of the new British version of Saturday Night Live – adapted from the long-running US show – shows Starmer, played by George Fouracres, panicking inside 10 Downing Street at the prospect of a call with Trump. Starmer turns to a fake David...

- [Cuba is ready for a potential attack from US amid oil blockade: deputy foreign minister](#) (2026-03-22 19:30)

Cuba is prepared for the unlikely possibility of a military engagement with the United States, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernandez de Cossio said over the weekend in response to US President Donald Trump's threats to take over the Caribbean island nation. Havana and Washington entered talks earlier this month as an oil blockade imposed by Trump pushes the Communist-run nation deeper into economic crisis. Trump last week escalated his rhetoric against Cuba, saying he expected to...

- [New Dutch PM Rob Jetten to dine with Trump in Washington next month, aides confirm](#) (2026-03-22 18:56)

The Netherlands' new prime minister, Rob Jetten, will take part in a dinner with the Dutch king and queen hosted by US President Donald Trump in Washington next month, his aides said on Sunday. Jetten's presence was confirmed despite criticisms that the centrist made against Trump before he was sworn in as premier on February 23. Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima will visit the United States between April 13 and 15 and during a stop in Washington, Trump invited them to a private...

- [Thousands rally against online sexual violence, pornographic deepfakes in Berlin](#) (2026-03-22 18:34)

Thousands of demonstrators gathered in Berlin on Sunday to protest against online sexual violence and express solidarity with victims, amid heightened attention after a German celebrity came forward with allegations against a former partner. A newly formed group named Feminist Fight Club! called for protesters to assemble at the Brandenburg Gate amid a controversy over pornographic deepfakes in Germany. People held banners that read “Human rights online too” and “Turn the shame...

- [Syrians protest against alcohol sale limits, personal freedom curbs](#) (2026-03-22 17:10)

Hundreds of Syrians protested in central Damascus on Sunday against new restrictions on alcohol sales, reflecting wider fears that the Islamist authorities may tighten curbs on personal freedoms. The Syrian capital last week banned the sale of alcoholic beverages in restaurants and bars, only allowing shops in three Christian neighbourhoods to sell bottles. In one of them, Bab Tuma, demonstrators gathered in a silent protest following calls by civil society groups to condemn what they say...

- [US may ‘escalate to de-escalate’ attacks against Iran, says Scott Bessent](#) (2026-03-22 16:42)

The United States may need to “escalate” its attacks against Iran to be able to wind down the war, US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Sunday, after US President Donald Trump gave seemingly contradictory trajectories for the US military campaign. Trump on Saturday threatened to “obliterate” Iranian energy plants if Tehran did not fully open the pivotal Strait of Hormuz, just a day after saying US objectives were “very close” and that he was considering “winding down” the war. Asked on...

- [Israel says investigating whether own soldiers shot civilian on Lebanon border](#) (2026-03-22 14:54)

Israel’s military said it was investigating whether its own fire killed an Israeli civilian near the Lebanese border on Sunday, after Hezbollah claimed an attack in the same area. Israeli emergency workers said earlier on Sunday that a man was killed in a “direct hit” on his car by a rocket from Lebanon. Lebanon’s Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group said after the incident that its fighters had attacked Israeli soldiers in the same area. But the Israeli army later said it was “conducting a...

- [High-speed rail tickets selling fast as Hongkongers opt for short-haul trips amid Iran war](#) (2026-03-22 14:27)

Tickets from Hong Kong to many mainland Chinese destinations connected by cross-border high-speed rail services are nearly sold out for the first two days of the five-day holiday over Easter and the Ching Ming Festival. The mainland cities have become an alternative for travellers, with the escalating war in the Middle East triggering a global oil crisis and significantly disrupting airspace, prompting airlines to increase ticket prices and fuel surcharges. Steven Huen Kwok-chuen, executive...

- [Why is China's ASN-301 suicide drone more deadly than its Iranian counterpart?](#) (2026-03-22 14:00)

While Iranian Shahed-136 suicide drones recently drew attention for destroying key US radars and striking targets as far away as Cyprus in the US-Israel war on Iran, their distant “cousins” in China may pose an even higher risk in a future conflict. China's ASN-301 shares the Iranian drone's aerodynamic delta-wing design that is rooted in a common technological origin. The Chinese drone and its variants have evolved into either a highly sophisticated SEAD (suppression of enemy air defences)...

- [As global yuan use expands, questions resurface about China's world-leading forex reserves](#) (2026-03-22 14:00)

A report from a leading Beijing university has revived discussions about the “optimal size” of China's foreign exchange reserves – with a focus on US Treasuries – calling for its world-leading forex holdings to be trimmed to a “moderately ample” level amid the drive to promote further international use of the yuan. The report, written by Sun Jiaqi from Renmin University's International Monetary Institute and issued on Friday, examined possible ways forward and their implications for China, which...

- [Hong Kong arts hub strengthens global links with 12 new partnerships](#) (2026-03-22 13:51)

Hong Kong's West Kowloon arts hub has signed agreements with 12 international institutions from Australia, the UK, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, paving the way for future collaborations as the city seeks to strengthen its role as an East-meets-West cultural hub. The memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed on Sunday by the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority will help bring more international performances to the city, showcase Hong Kong productions to global audiences, support the exchange...

- [Vietnam PM visits Russia to sign energy deal amid Iran war disruption](#) (2026-03-22 13:26)

Vietnam's prime minister left on Sunday for an official visit to Russia during which the two nations will sign several agreements, including on oil and gas cooperation, Hanoi said. Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's trip to the major oil-producing nation from Sunday to Wednesday comes as Vietnam seeks to shore up its fuel reserves amid global supply disruptions due to the war in the Middle East. His visit will focus on deepening ties with Russia and expanding cooperation in trade, investment and...

- [Game over for Hong Kong shop selling hand-carved mahjong tiles for 47 years](#) (2026-03-22 13:24)

A shop selling hand-carved mahjong tiles will close for good this week after nearly half a century, marking the demise of one of Hong Kong's few remaining traditional handicraft stores. Kung Yau Cheung Mahjong, founded 47 years ago, announced it would close on March 28. Owner and artisan carver Ko Yun-kan, who entered the trade aged 18, said the closure of

the Mong Kok shop was not due to poor business but because the landlord had decided to takeback the street-corner premises earlier this...

- [Hormuz crisis underlines vulnerability of global trade chokepoints](#) (2026-03-22 12:30)

War in Iran disrupting established trade flows raises an important question: how serious could the consequences be, and for whom will they be most severe? To answer this, it is useful to look at history. During the fifth and fourth centuries BC, Athens, a major centre, depended heavily on grain imports. Whenever routes were blocked during wars, Athens almost immediately faced the threat of a food crisis. In the Middle Ages, Venice became one of Europe's richest cities and a crucial hub linking...

- [2 women climb out of window to flee Hong Kong building fire that injured 3 others](#) (2026-03-22 12:29)

Two women climbed out of a window of a residential building in Hong Kong to escape a fire that sent three people to hospital on Sunday, police said. Police received multiple reports at 5.28pm of a blaze at Yen Dack Building on Chun Yeung Street in North Point. Thick smoke billowed from a high-floor unit as firefighters arrived, deploying a water jet and a breathing apparatus team. The fire was extinguished at 6.19pm. Two women and a man, aged 58 to 78, were taken conscious to Pamela Youde...

- [US hub in Iraq targeted overnight by Iranian drones, rockets](#) (2026-03-22 12:25)

Eight overnight attacks targeted a US diplomatic and logistics centre at Baghdad's International Airport, an Iraqi security official said on Sunday. Several waves of departures from the US facility occurred on Saturday from the airport, according to another Iraqi security source, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter. "Eight separate attacks, carried out until dawn with rockets and drones, targeted the US centre," the senior security official said, adding that...

- [1,200 musicians set Guinness World Record at concert in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-22 12:03)

More than 1,200 musicians set a Guinness World Record for the largest reed ensemble featuring the sheng – a traditional Chinese free-reed instrument – at a Hong Kong concert on Sunday. The "Endless Sheng, Thousand Reeds in Harmony" marathon opened the International Sheng and Reeds Festival of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, marking one of the first major cultural performances at the newly opened Kai Tak Sports Park. Players of all ages, from professional soloists to students, including...

- [Chinese social media is awash with criticisms of the US, but is it possible to go too far?](#) (2026-03-22 12:00)

As the US-Israeli military campaign against Iran continues, Chinese social media is buzzing with condemnations of Washington, expressions of sympathy for Tehran and an outpouring of unsolicited strategic advice. The conflict, which began with the February 28 air strikes that killed

Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has dominated the list of trending topics on the country's main platforms, such as WeChat, Weibo and Douyin. Social media is tightly controlled and most of the comments...

- [Alibaba chairman Joe Tsai credits China's AI edge to power grid, open-source models](#) (2026-03-22 11:46)

China's artificial intelligence breakthroughs in recent years stemmed from the country's strategic strengthening of its power grid, commitment to open-source models and complete manufacturing supply chain, according to Joe Tsai, chairman of Alibaba Group Holding.

"Currently, geopolitical complexities are deeply affecting supply chain security and the sharing of technological achievements," Tsai said in a speech on Sunday at the China Development Forum 2026 in Beijing. "In this era and..."

- [Philippines will allow use of dirtier, cheaper fuel amid US-Iran war](#) (2026-03-22 11:13)

The Philippines has allowed the temporary and limited use of a cheaper but dirtier type of fuel to ensure supply as it finds ways to cope with the impact of the Middle East crisis. The Department of Energy (DOE) said only vehicles from model year 2015 and earlier, traditional jeepneys, power plants and generators, and the marine and shipping sectors would be allowed to use Euro-II compliant petroleum products. "The measure is intended to help maintain a continuous, adequate and accessible..."

- [Veteran of 'iPhone City' tapped as party boss of China's Silicon Valley](#) (2026-03-22 11:01)

China's southern tech hub of Shenzhen has a new Communist Party chief, nearly six months after the city's former party boss was promoted to provincial governor. State media announced on Sunday that Jin Lei, 56, had been appointed Shenzhen's party chief as well as a member of the Guangdong provincial party committee and its standing committee. Jin, an economist and former official in the southwestern province of Sichuan, takes over from Meng Fanli, who had been in the position since April...

- [Hong Kong vows to boost green finance and innovation role for sustainable growth](#) (2026-03-22 10:58)

Hong Kong's finance chief has pledged to support the regional and global transition to a green economy by leveraging the city's role as an international financial centre and a developing innovation and technology hub. Speaking at the China Development Forum in Beijing on Sunday, Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said Hong Kong could contribute to the irreversible trend of green and low-carbon development, as China demonstrated its determination and leadership in the process. "Hong Kong is a..."

- [Hong Kong mum charged with abuse after son, 12, calls police over cane beating](#) (2026-03-22 10:20)

A 41-year-old mother in Hong Kong has been charged with child abuse after her 12-year-old son reported her to police for beating him with a rattan cane, the South China Morning Post has learned. The woman was arrested on Saturday in a flat at Kam Fung House in Wong Tai Sin after her son called police at 2.48pm and complained he had been beaten. A source said on Sunday that the woman, surnamed Guo and holding a Hong Kong identity card, allegedly beat the child on his left shoulder and thigh with...

- [OpenClaw, government support fuel rise of 1-person companies in China](#) (2026-03-22 10:00)

Steven Li sells cosmetics to overseas customers from the eastern Chinese province of Jiangsu. This month, amid the popularity of the OpenClaw AI agent framework, he expanded the business by “hiring” four “AI employees” . On the front lines, the AI customer service manages real-time inquiries 24/7 on WhatsApp, while a “digital sales” agent provides price quotes. Behind the scenes, a third role ensures operational transparency by providing tracking status for every order, while an “operations...

- [Ex-China university lecturer sets up luxury lingerie brand, earning US\\$770 million fortune](#) (2026-03-22 10:00)

From a former lecturer to the mastermind behind a lingerie empire, Zhang Rongming’ s journey reshaped China’ s intimate apparel industry with innovation and a keen eye for market trends. Zhang, 64, from Suzhou in Jiangsu province, eastern China, is the founder and chairman of Aimer, a leading lingerie brand. He excelled in metallurgy and chemistry during his university years, later pursuing graduate studies. In the late 1980s, while teaching at Shougang Institute of Technology in Beijing, he...

- [Hong Kong firms face profit squeeze as US importers cut orders amid oil crisis](#) (2026-03-22 09:53)

Some United States importers have cut orders and shifted to short-term contracts after the Middle East conflict triggered a global oil crisis, according to Hong Kong business leaders, who warned of eroding profit margins and strained liquidity. Jeffrey Lam Kin-fung, an Executive Council member and businessman, said on Sunday that the US-Israel war on Iran had driven up fuel costs, which in turn raised operating expenses for local enterprises. He urged the Hong Kong government to bolster ties...

- [Rodent trip: hamster hitches ride on bus to Sha Tin](#) (2026-03-22 09:43)

A hamster was caught hitching a ride on a bus from Central to Sha Tin on Sunday morning, ending up in the custody of a Hong Kong animal welfare group. The golden brown Syrian hamster was spotted by a passenger and is now being looked after by the Hong Kong Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). Photos and videos circulating online show the tiny passenger tucked into a corner on the KMB bus, seemingly overwhelmed by its surroundings. It was later placed in a translucent plastic...

- [Slovenians vote in race between pro-Trump nationalist and liberal incumbent](#) (2026-03-22 09:25)

Polls opened on Sunday in Slovenia's election pitting incumbent liberal Prime Minister Robert Golob against right-wing populist Janez Janša, with victory and a parliamentary majority out of reach for both in a vote that could be decided by smaller coalition partners. Nearly 1.7 million Slovenians will be able to cast votes at polling stations that opened at 7am across the Alpine country and will close at 7pm. The election commission is expected to announce the preliminary results after...

- [Gold slides as hawkish Fed and strong US dollar override geopolitical fears](#) (2026-03-22 09:00)

Gold prices have continued to weaken despite escalating tensions in the US-Israel conflict with Iran, breaking from the metal's traditional role as a geopolitical hedge, as fading expectations of interest rate cuts and a stronger US dollar weigh on sentiment, analysts said. The metal has declined about 15 per cent since a brief surge on March 2, when prices climbed to around US\$5,300 per ounce following US and Israeli strikes on Iran. A modest rebound driven by technical buying on Friday did...

- [Trump's biggest cheerleader? Why Japan's Takaichi is making waves in China](#) (2026-03-22 09:00)

A White House photo of Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi appearing to break into a dance at an official function ignited a wave of mockery across Chinese social media on the weekend, with commenters framing her as Washington's biggest cheerleader. The photograph, the first in an official White House gallery from her summit with US President Donald Trump on Thursday, captures Takaichi in a moment of unbridled exuberance during a welcome reception. Making her first trip to Washington since...

- [International capital flowing to China as investors seek certainty during Iranian conflict](#) (2026-03-22 08:24)

Amid growing geopolitical turbulence, international capital is increasingly seeking certainty – which China offers – a leading Chinese government adviser highlighted on Sunday, as the country's central bank governor reiterated commitment to rolling out the welcome mat for foreign investors. Speaking on the sidelines of the China Development Forum, Zheng Yongnian, dean of the school of public policy at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, noted that capital had been flowing to Hong...

- [Why India faces dilemma over Iran war while seeking 'diplomatic flexibility'](#) (2026-03-22 08:00)

As the world reels from the fallout of the Iran war, India is seeking to manage its risks and interests in the Middle East and beyond while maintaining its neutrality in the widening conflict.

This can be seen in New Delhi engaging with combatants US and Iran, as well as other nations caught in the crossfire of the war, according to political analysts. In the past two weeks, Indian Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar has spoken four times with his Iranian counterpart Abbas Araghchi, while Prime...

- [What the 4,000km Diego Garcia missile launch reveals about Iran's intentions](#) (2026-03-22 07:30)

By firing ballistic missiles at the UK-US Diego Garcia base nearly 4,000km (2,485 miles) from its shores, Iran is sending a message that it still has cards to play after three weeks of war, according to experts. A UK official source said Iran was “unsuccessful” in targeting the Indian Ocean military facility, one of two bases that London has allowed the US to use for certain missions in its war against Iran. Until now, most had believed Iran – under US-Israeli bombardment since February 28 – was...

- [‘Upstairs’ moves downstairs: Hong Kong outlets head to street level as landlords cut rents](#) (2026-03-22 07:30)

Retailers and restaurant operators in Hong Kong are rethinking how they use space as rents fall and demand weakens by moving back to street-level shops and experimenting with short-term “pop-up” leases. Hing Kee Java Edible Bird's Nest (JEBN), known locally as “Lau Soeng” – Cantonese for “upstairs” – built its business by avoiding expensive street-front rents and operating from higher floors. It is now doing the opposite. “After the pandemic, the retail market has been weak,” said Wallace Chong,...

- [Vietnam protests as China's Paracels build-up escalates at Antelope Reef](#) (2026-03-22 07:00)

Hanoi has protested to Beijing over Chinese land-reclamation activities in the disputed Paracel Islands, following reports of accelerated dredging and landfill operations at Antelope Reef in the South China Sea. “Vietnam resolutely opposes such activities, makes representations and affirms its position on this matter,” Vietnamese foreign ministry spokeswoman Pham Thu Hang said on Saturday. She said Hanoi had “ample historical evidence and legal grounds” to assert sovereignty over the Paracel...

- [Finance chief urges Hong Kong to enhance global standing amid shifting geopolitics](#) (2026-03-22 06:22)

Hong Kong will step up efforts to bolster its global standing and strengthen links between mainland China and the West, enabling the city to better serve as a ‘superconnector’ and ‘super value adder’ for the nation amid growing geopolitical complexities, the financial chief has said. Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po wrote in his weekly blog on Sunday that the international community was seeking to foster bilateral and regional cooperation to ensure flexibility in trade and resilience in...

- [Hospital Authority investigates privacy concerns over doctor's social media post](#) (2026-03-22 06:18)

Hong Kong's Hospital Authority has launched an investigation into the controversy over a social media image posted by a doctor showing him performing a resuscitation procedure inside a public hospital, sparking outcry over patient privacy and professional ethics. Jensen So, a doctor from the Kowloon West Cluster and a former contestant on ViuTV's popular reality talent show King Maker III, posted the image on his Instagram account last Thursday. It has since been widely circulated on another...

- [Can China massively reduce food imports with super-efficient unmanned rice farms?](#) (2026-03-22 06:00)

China's drive to grow 90 per cent of its own grain by 2032 just gained a critical weapon: an unmanned ratoon rice farm that produces 50 per cent higher yields. By harnessing smart seedling care, sowing, growing and harvesting, a Chinese biotechnology company and scientists from several institutes have built the world's first smart farm for regenerated rice. Located in the Datong Lake District in China's central Hunan province, the smart rice farm has enabled an ancient but technically...

- [China bosses use smart seats, Wi-fi to track staff activities, leads to anti-monitoring gadgets](#) (2026-03-22 06:00)

In some Chinese workplaces, employers use office Wi-fi, surveillance cameras and even smart seats to monitor what staff do, say and search online. Workers' Daily reported that a woman working at a technology company in Guangzhou, southern China, discovered that a camera had been installed above her desk after she declined to go on a business trip because she was ill. In January, she said a manager warned her not to use private group chats during office hours. After checking the camera's storage...

- [Israeli towns reel from 'terrifying' Iranian missile strikes](#) (2026-03-22 05:59)

Sheltering from an Iranian missile attack on his town in southern Israel on Saturday, 17-year-old Ido Franky heard "terrifying" blasts like nothing he had experienced before. An Iranian missile hit Franky's town of Arad, hours after another struck Dimona – home to a nuclear facility – wounding dozens and leaving entire residential blocks with heavy damage. Franky rushed to shelter with his family as air raid sirens sounded, warning of an incoming attack. "There was a 'boom, boom!', my mother was...

- [Philippine military uncovers alleged new Beijing spy tactics in South China Sea row](#) (2026-03-22 05:15)

At least three Filipinos with ties to the country's military have been arrested on suspicion of spying for Beijing, allegedly leaking information that sparked maritime confrontations in the disputed South China Sea. The case, which came to light last year during an ongoing multi-agency counter-intelligence effort, marks a new strategy of recruiting Filipinos for

espionage instead of planting individuals with fake local identities in the country, according to Philippine Navy Rear Admiral Roy...

- [Japan may send minesweepers to Hormuz after Iran war ceasefire](#) (2026-03-22 04:08)

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi on Sunday hinted at the possibility of sending the country's Self-Defence Forces for minesweeping operations in the Strait of Hormuz, provided that a ceasefire is realised in the conflict between Iran and the United States and Israel.

"Japan's minesweeping technology is at the top level in the world," Motegi said during a television programme. "Let's say [the parties have entered into a] ceasefire, and in the event that mines pose an obstacle, we may..."

- [Hongkongers in UAE urge rethink of home city's 120-day quarantine for cats, dogs](#) (2026-03-22 04:00)

Some Hong Kong residents planning to flee the United Arab Emirates (UAE) with their pets because of conflict in the Middle East are considering flying to other countries rather than returning home due to the city's 120-day quarantine requirement for cats and dogs. The pet owners called on authorities to relax the "excessive" quarantine rules for Dubai, saying the requirement had made returning to Hong Kong unfeasible. In a reply to the South China Morning Post, the Agriculture, Fisheries and...

- ['Super-aged' Singapore's secret to growing old well? Stay busy](#) (2026-03-22 04:00)

The clack of mahjong tiles, the soft rattle of exercise bikes and the slow thrum of sewing machines are the soundtrack to Monday afternoons at the Yong-en Active Hub: a senior centre with the vibe of a social club, where new skills and friendships are the antidote to old age. At the Bukit Merah estate in central Singapore, Agnes Chen, 74, strolls through the swinging doors, declines entreaties to join a game of Rummikub – a tile-based hybrid of mahjong and rummy – and fixes herself a...

- [China to stockpile critical resources and strengthen energy security to avoid trade shocks](#) (2026-03-22 04:00)

Beijing is prioritising "strategic material security" under its new 15th five-year plan that elevates the supply and domestic stockpiling of critical resources to a matter of national security. Under the blueprint, Beijing is positioning "key commodities" on the same strategic footing as food and energy security, saying China will take a more active role in strengthening "energy and resource supply security" by "preventing and mitigating major risks in systemically important areas". To achieve...

- [Indonesia's new aircraft carrier is more vanity project than war machine](#) (2026-03-22 02:00)

If everything goes according to plan, Indonesia will be in possession of an aircraft carrier come Armed Forces Day on October 5. When that happens, it will become only the second country in

Southeast Asia, after Thailand, to operate such a vessel. But this does not mean Indonesia's maritime power will increase significantly. The issue here is prestige, not combat power. The warship in question is the Italian navy's Giuseppe Garibaldi. The 14,000-tonne flat-top was commissioned in 1985 and...

- [Could ultra-precise harvest forecast give China an advantage in Iran war fallout?](#)

(2026-03-22 02:00)

As tensions around Iran intensify, a potential disruption to global fertiliser supply chains is raising concerns about food production worldwide. But for China, an unusual advantage is coming into focus: the ability to predict grain output more than six months in advance with striking accuracy. That capability – refined over decades – could allow Beijing to move early, reshaping risk into strategic leverage. The Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery for global energy and commodity flows, has emerged...

- [Premier Li Qiang calls for a global pledge to open up, while 'power politics' runs rampant](#) (2026-03-22 01:36)

Beijing has urged global commitment to opening up, while pledging to create more blue ocean markets in a world engulfed by protectionism. Delivering the opening address to the China Development Forum on Sunday, Chinese Premier Li Qiang said, “protectionism is by no means a panacea for solving problems”, instead calling for opening up and technological progress to drive new market growth. “[Now,] power politics is running rampant, acting with impunity; at the same time, calls to uphold fairness...

- [Hong Kong's border tourism push must not put Mai Po at risk](#) (2026-03-22 01:30)

For decades, parts of Hong Kong's border like the Frontier Closed Area have been shrouded in mystery, their natural landscapes preserved as much by policy as by their remote geography. Recent plans to relax restrictions – including discussions around the Mai Po closed area – and the establishment of the Robin's Nest Country Park signal a new era of accessibility. Having co-managed the Mai Po nature reserve for decades, the World Wide Fund for Nature Hong Kong (WWF) views this shift with both...

- [HSBC asks victim of credit card theft to pay HK\\$126,580 racked up by criminals](#)

(2026-03-22 01:00)

A Hong Kong mother has been asked to pay more than HK\$126,000 (US\$16,100) in charges racked up by thieves who stole her credit card last November after HSBC said she failed to report the loss immediately. But 42-year-old Janice Choi\* accused the bank of double standards, saying a friend who also had her credit card stolen on the same day reported the case to HSBC the next day and had the fraudulent charges waived. Choi told the South China Morning Post that she was notified in February that her...

- [China food scandals: factories use smelly insoles, chemically bleached chicken feet to make snacks](#) (2026-03-22 01:00)

A food factory in China has been exposed for making popular chicken feet snacks using chemicals in unhygienic conditions. The factory soaked the chicken in harmful hydrogen peroxide, sparking public outrage and thrusting the country's food safety record back under the spotlight. In the annual Consumers' Right Day Show broadcast by state media CCTV on March 15, the Mingyang Food Company in Chengdu, in southwestern Sichuan province, was revealed to have serious food safety problems. According to...

- [Trump issues Hormuz ultimatum, threatens to 'obliterate' Iran's power plants](#) (2026-03-22 00:32)

US President Donald Trump on Saturday threatened to "obliterate" Iran's power plants if Tehran does not fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz within 48 hours, a significant escalation that came barely a day after he talked about "winding down" the war. "If Iran doesn't FULLY OPEN, WITHOUT THREAT, the Strait of Hormuz, within 48 HOURS from this exact point in time, the United States of America will hit and obliterate their various POWER PLANTS, STARTING WITH THE BIGGEST ONE FIRST!" Trump said on...

- [Visit Malaysia 2026 meets an Iran war crisis it never planned for](#) (2026-03-22 00:00)

Julia had a plan: spring break, Kuala Lumpur's skyline, then a long-overdue reunion in the jungles of Sarawak. What she got instead was a travel booking screen showing €3,000 (US\$3,440) flights and a cascade of cancellation alerts. "I just can't afford that," the 22-year-old Romanian told This Week in Asia. Her original Emirates itinerary had her transiting through Dubai or Abu Dhabi, but the US-Israel war on Iran upended her plans after the carrier warned of disruptions and two-week...

- [Cuba rejects 'shameless' US request for diesel amid Trump oil blockade](#) (2026-03-21 23:39)

Cuba has refused to allow the US embassy in Havana to import diesel to power its generators during the island's ongoing energy crisis, according to a media report. The Cuban foreign ministry denied the request, The Washington Post reported on Friday, citing a protest note in which Havana described the embassy's claim to such privileges as "shameless" and unavailable to the Cuban people. The move comes as the Caribbean island grapples with severe fuel shortages and widespread power outages. The...

- [64 killed – including 13 children – in attack on Sudan hospital, WHO says](#) (2026-03-21 23:03)

A strike on a healthcare facility in Sudan has killed 64 people and wounded 89 more, the World Health Organization reported on Saturday. The deceased included 13 children, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said on social media. The UN's humanitarian office in Sudan had earlier said it was "appalled by the attack on a hospital in East Darfur

yesterday, reportedly killing dozens, including children, and injuring more” . Sudanese rightsgroup the Emergency Lawyers, who document...

- [In Kunshan, China’ s Foxconn nerve centre, old tech tries to learn new tricks](#) (2026-03-21 22:00)

As China undergoes a sweeping economic transition, its regions are also in the process of embracing change. The powerhouses of yesteryear must adapt or risk falling behind, as traditional industries become less reliable growth drivers and new sectors take prominence. In this series, we explore three representative areas of the country as they attempt to navigate this rapidly changing environment. After a 900km (559-mile) journey at the end of last month’ s Chinese New Year holiday, 24-year-old Ma...

- [F1 could be Hong Kong’ s fast lane for economic reinvention](#) (2026-03-21 21:30)

In October last year, Singapore’ s three-day Formula One (F1) Grand Prix showcased the tremendous economic impact that world-class sporting events can bring to a city. The event attracted more than 300,000 attendees, the second highest in its history. Since Singapore began hosting F1, the races have drawn more than 720,000 international visitors and generated about S\$2.2 billion (US\$1.7 billion) in tourism revenue, underscoring their significant contribution to the local tourism industry. In...

- [Iran hits Dimona, Israeli town with nuclear facility, despite air defence interceptors](#) (2026-03-21 20:50)

Israel’ s military said an Iranian missile on Saturday struck the southern town of Dimona, home to a nuclear facility. A second town in the area, Arad, was hit hours later. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to continue striking Iran after what he called a “very difficult evening” , as the two direct missile hits left scores wounded. “This is a very difficult evening in the battle for our future,” Netanyahu said in a statement. “We are determined to continue striking our enemies on...

- [Robert Mueller, special counsel who investigated Russia-Trump campaign ties, dies at 81](#) (2026-03-21 17:59)

Robert S. Mueller III, the FBI director who transformed the nation’ s premier law enforcement agency into a terrorism-fighting force after the September 11 attacks and who later became special counsel in charge of investigating ties between Russia and Donald Trump’ s presidential campaign, has died. He was 81. “With deep sadness, we are sharing the news that Bob passed away” on Friday night, his family said in a statement on Saturday. “His family asks that their privacy be respected.” At the FBI,...

- [Trump threatens to put ICE agents in US airports amid TSA funding clash](#) (2026-03-21 17:27)

US President Donald Trump on Saturday threatened to deploy Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to US airports if congressional Democrats do not immediately agree to fund airport safety. “I will move our brilliant and patriotic ICE Agents to the Airports where they will do Security like no one has ever seen before,” Trump wrote in a social media post. Transportation Security Administration personnel are set to miss a second full pay cheque on March 27 amid a partial government shutdown...

- [Mother arrested after boy, 12, told police she beat him with a rattan cane](#) (2026-03-21 15:34)

Police have arrested a woman on suspicion of child abuse after she allegedly hit her 12-year-old son with a rattan cane in a Hong Kong flat. The police force said it received a report at 2.48pm on Saturday from a boy in Wong Tai Sin who complained he had been beaten by his mother. The boy, whose shoulder was red and swollen, was later taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Yau Ma Tei for treatment after police arrived at the public housing flat on Tsui Fung Street. Officers conducted an initial...

- [King Harold’ s 200-mile UK march to Battle of Hastings in 1066 is a ‘myth’ , says research](#) (2026-03-21 15:33)

King Harold’ s legendary 200-mile march across England to the Battle of Hastings in 1066 is a “myth” that likely never happened, according to research published on Saturday. In arguably the most famous battle in English history, the Anglo-Saxon leader was defeated by William the Conqueror, who became the first Franco-Norman king of England, at Hastings on October 14, 1066. The decisive clash, which marked the start of the Norman conquest of England, is depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, set to be...

- [China reports ‘stunning’ critical minerals finds as hi-tech race with US heats up](#) (2026-03-21 15:00)

China has announced major discoveries of various critical minerals, including rare earths and fluorite, bolstering its reserves of the resources essential for the hi-tech, new energy and defence industries. At the Maoniuping mine in Sichuan province’ s Mianning county, authorities announced the discovery of 9.7 million tonnes of rare earth oxides, bringing the site’ s total proven reserves to 10.4 million tonnes, state news agency Xinhua reported on Friday. Surveys also revealed 27.1 million...

- [Hawaii suffers worst flooding in 20 years, with more rain expected](#) (2026-03-21 14:41)

Hawaii suffered its worst flooding in more than 20 years as heavy rains fell on soil already saturated by downpours from a winter storm a week ago, officials said on Friday, while warning that more rain was expected during the weekend. Muddy floodwaters smothered vast stretches of Oahu’ s North Shore, a community world renowned for its big-wave surfing. Raging waters lifted homes and cars and prompted evacuation orders for 5,500 people north of Honolulu. Authorities cautioned that a 120-year-old...

- [Does the USS Tripoli's deployment to the Middle East create a strategic opening for China?](#) (2026-03-21 14:00)

Washington's deployment of an amphibious assault ship from Japan to the Middle East could signal a temporary reduction in US military capacity in the Indo-Pacific region but will not necessarily diminish its deterrence of China, according to analysts. According to American media reports, the amphibious assault ship USS Tripoli has left its home port in Japan and is making its way to the Middle East, carrying 2,500 marines on board. According to Marinetraffic.com, which monitors ships based on...

- [China, India and why Jeffrey Sachs says the US needs to make the UN great again](#) (2026-03-21 13:00)

China should support India's bid for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, a prominent US economist has suggested, saying the two Asian powers could overcome historical grievances and political distrust to inject stability into the world. "China's real interest is true, stable multipolarity," Columbia University professor Jeffrey Sachs told a seminar in Beijing on Friday, urging India not to become a pawn in a US game to hold China back. "I believe that China should, after..."

- [Plan for full taxi access to Discovery Bay sparks anger among residents](#) (2026-03-21 12:50)

Some Discovery Bay residents have expressed frustration over a proposal to allow unrestricted taxi access to the seaside resort-like neighbourhood in Hong Kong, with a petition calling for greater public consultation garnering more than 1,100 signatures. In a reply to the South China Morning Post on Saturday, the Transport Department also confirmed it had received a taxi proposal from Discovery Bay's management company, as well as "different views" from residents. Taxis have had limited access...

- [Most of Ukraine's Chernihiv region has no power after Russian attack](#) (2026-03-21 12:15)

Most of Ukraine's northern Chernihiv region was left without power on Saturday after a Russian drone attack, local governor Viacheslav Chaus said. He said repair works were under way to fix the damage. The region, which borders Russia and Belarus, had a pre-war population of nearly a million. The regional capital, also called Chernihiv, was fully without power, the city administration there said. Russia has conducted a vast bombardment campaign against Ukrainian energy facilities...

- [Could Taiwan's military continue to fight after an Iran-like decapitation?](#) (2026-03-21 12:00)

The survival of Iran's political and military apparatus following a massive US-Israeli decapitation strike has ignited a strategic debate in Taiwan, with experts weighing the island's ability to withstand a similar "surgical" opening to an attack from the mainland. Military analysts and officials in Taipei are closely studying the February 28 strikes that killed Ali

Khamenei, the Iranian supreme leader, and Iran's ability to sustain organised resistance in the weeks that have followed. Iran's...

- [Hong Kong police arrest 5, recover nearly HK\\$100 million in stolen gold bars](#) (2026-03-21 11:39)

Hong Kong police have arrested five people and recovered nearly HK\$100 million (US\$12.7 million) in gold stolen in a suspected deception case, in which a buyer allegedly worked as an accomplice of a group that seized the haul before fleeing. The incident took place at about 2.45pm on Friday at an office in Peninsula Square on Sung On Street in Hung Hom, where a staff member was conducting a gold handover to an alleged buyer. The South China Morning Post had earlier reported that the case was...

- [Iran fires missiles at UK-US base on Diego Garcia in Indian Ocean: US media](#) (2026-03-21 11:19)

Iran launched a missile attack on a military base in the Indian Ocean jointly used by the United Kingdom and the United States, according to US media reports. The Islamic Republic fired ballistic missiles at the base on the island of Diego Garcia, part of the Chagos Islands, on Friday morning, the Wall Street Journal and CNN reported, citing senior US officials. According to the reports, two medium-range missiles were launched but failed to hit the facility. There was no immediate public...

- [China decries 'unjust war' on Iran as it calls for immediate ceasefire](#) (2026-03-21 11:00)

China called for a halt to the "unjust war" in Iran in a phone call between top diplomats on Friday and expressed willingness to work with France to prevent other nations from being drawn into the conflict. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi told Emmanuel Bonne, diplomatic adviser to the French president, that as members of the UN Security Council, the two countries should work together to firmly uphold international law and prevent the world from reverting to the "law of the jungle". "The urgent...

- [At least 14 die in South Korea fire at car parts factory](#) (2026-03-21 10:44)

Fourteen people died and 25 were seriously injured in a fire at a car parts factory in the South Korean city of Daejeon, fire authorities said on Saturday. The fire broke out around lunchtime on Friday and was contained by 11.48pm, the safety ministry said. Another 35 people suffered minor injuries, the fire authorities added. As of Saturday morning, 28 people were sent to hospital, and four of them had surgery for broken bones and other injuries. Fire officials said the factory was owned by...

- [Nvidia's Huang calls China 'formidable' in robotics as company bets on physical AI](#) (2026-03-21 10:18)

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang says the US robotics industry will have to rely on China's supply chain despite the US pioneering the market, as the company bets on physical AI and looks to

return to the Chinese market. “I think China is formidable,” Huang said when asked about the country’s rise in the robotics industry during a podcast hosted by Silicon Valley tech executives. “The reason for that is because their microelectronics, motors, rare earth and magnets – which are foundational to robotics –...

- [China’s infamous ‘Aunt Mei’ arrested after decade-long hunt for child trafficker](#) (2026-03-21 10:16)

A shadowy go-between known as “Aunt Mei” allegedly involved in a notorious child trafficking case has been arrested, according to police in southern China. Police in the city of Guangzhou said the woman, surnamed Xie, had been identified last year, and the case was still under investigation, state media reported on Saturday. The reports did not specify when the arrest was made. For years, police were aware an intermediary had been involved in the trafficking case, but Aunt Mei remained at large...

- [US man offered ‘national gift’ to settle in China after donating historical Japan invasion photos](#) (2026-03-21 10:00)

An American man who donated photographs of the Japanese invasion of China in World War II and received a national gift of porcelain from China has announced that he has settled in the country. On March 15, Evan Kail announced the news on social media, saying that he has chosen to live in Tianjin in the north of the country, according to a report by the Beijing News. Minnesota pawn shop owner Kail, 37, has enjoyed enormous popularity in China after he donated an album containing more than 30...

- [China and the Netherlands seek ‘pragmatic’ reset as Nexperia row rolls on](#) (2026-03-21 09:50)

The phone call between the Dutch and Chinese foreign ministers was a first on a series of fronts. For the new Dutch Foreign Minister Tom Berendsen, the call on March 13 was his first with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi since taking on the job a few weeks earlier. It was also the first between the two holders of the offices since China and the Netherlands became embroiled in a row over the control of Chinese-owned, Netherlands-based chipmaker Nexperia. Nexperia is a major component in the...

- [As Iran hangs 3 young men, rights groups raise alarm multiple executions could follow](#) (2026-03-21 09:40)

A 19-year-old star wrestler and two other young men were hanged in Iran this week, raising alarm among rights groups that a wave of executions may be under way as authorities facing relentless attacks from the US and Israel seek to squelch public dissent. The three men are the first to be executed from among the tens of thousands who were arrested during a January crackdown on nationwide protests. Rights groups say more than 100 others could face death sentences. The wrestler, Saleh Mohammadi,...

- [Flying start for low-altitude economy goals as 100 drone projects proposed](#) (2026-03-21 09:32)

Hong Kong authorities have received more than 100 applications for innovative drone usage to pioneer the city's "low-altitude economy", with some pilot projects set to launch as early as in three months, the transport minister has said. Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan also pledged to push more advanced transport technologies to transition from trials to everyday use in 2026. In a blog post on the Transport and Logistics Bureau's website on Saturday, Chan said "the industry...

- [Veteran activist warns of 'shrinking space' for green advocacy in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-21 09:00)

After decades at the front lines campaigning for environmental protection, The Green Earth founder Edwin Lau Che-feng is slowing down to focus on his health and hobbies. The 68-year-old has been one of the most vocal environmentalists championing a waste-charging scheme for more than two decades. Lau still remembers May 27, 2024, when the government abruptly paused the waste-charging bill, as if it were yesterday. The suspension was the biggest blow in his 36-year career. "It feels impossible....

- [Labubu, Blackpink's Jennie draw thousands to ComplexCon in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-21 08:37)

Popular doll Labubu and Blackpink's Jennie were among the headline names and brands from the city and abroad that drew thousands of fans to Hong Kong's third edition of pop culture festival ComplexCon on Saturday. Organisers said this year's edition had broken attendance records and would draw tens of thousands across the two-day event at AsiaWorld-Expo. On Saturday morning, attendees took selfies with sculptures of the figurine and queued for exclusive merchandise, while others explored local...

- [Trump's war is uniting the world, just not how he might have expected](#) (2026-03-21 08:30)

Before his first term as US president began in 2017, Donald Trump was probably best known for his book, *The Art of the Deal*. But by launching, together with Israel, a widely unpopular war on Iran, Trump has arguably dealt himself a very weak hand. There is little "art" in it. The headline splashed across the front page of the Financial Times on March 17 – "Allies reject Trump's call for warships" (to force open the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has partially closed after US and Israeli attacks) –...

- [Himalayas' glacier loss threatens 2 billion people in 'greatest problem of climate change'](#) (2026-03-21 07:00)

Accelerating glacial retreat in the Himalayas over the past decades is threatening over 2 billion people in the region who depend on meltwater from the "water tower of Asia" for their daily needs, according to climate scientists. Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region have

been losing ice at twice the rate since 2000, with smaller glaciers under 0.5 sq km shrinking more rapidly than larger ones, according to two landmark reports published on Saturday to coincide with the World Day for...

- [Iran ready to help Japan ships pass through Strait of Hormuz, Araghchi says](#) (2026-03-21 06:47)

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said Tehran is ready to facilitate the passage of Japanese vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, a key artery for global energy shipments, and that negotiations with Japan on the issue are ongoing. “We have not closed the strait. It is open,” Araghchi said in a telephone interview with Kyodo News on Friday. He also stressed that Iran, which was attacked by the United States and Israel in late February, was seeking “not a ceasefire, but a complete,...

- [Hong Kong to issue weekly updates on fuel price changes from April 1](#) (2026-03-21 06:25)

Hong Kong authorities will issue weekly announcements about the changes in international and local fuel costs from April, following mounting suspicion that businesses are prematurely raising prices because of the United States-Israeli war on Iran. The announcement on Saturday also came after the conflict’s impact on oil prices prompted Hong Kong’s transport sector to consider temporary surcharges to offset rising costs. “We are currently collecting and organising data. Starting from April 1, we...

- [How China’s tech transformation is putting the ‘world’s factory’ in a tough spot](#) (2026-03-21 06:00)

As China undergoes a sweeping economic transition, its regions are also in the process of embracing change. The powerhouses of yesteryear must adapt or risk falling behind, as traditional industries become less reliable growth drivers and new sectors take prominence. In this series, we explore three representative areas of the country as they attempt to navigate this rapidly changing environment. One morning in December, Zhang Li showed up for work as normal at Everwin Toys in Dongguan to find a...

- [Made-in-China clock loses a second in twice the age of the universe](#) (2026-03-21 06:00)

China has joined the global top-tier timekeeping club with a new optical clock that could help it play a leading role in redefining the second. A team, led by Pan Jianwei at the University of Science and Technology of China in Hefei, has built a strontium optical clock that would lose or gain less than one second over about 30 billion years – more than twice the age of the universe. The clock’s key parameters, known as stability and uncertainty, both surpassed the level of 10 to the power of...

- [Chinese pancakes trace back 5,000 years, with references appear in ancient paintings, poems](#) (2026-03-21 06:00)

Pancakes are a common breakfast in many parts of China today, but few people are aware that the popular meal has been around for 5,000 years. An ancient griddle unearthed from the Yangshao site in central China's Henan province reveals that the history of Chinese pancakes could date back to at least 50 centuries ago. As for their invention, legend has it that pancakes came into being when Nuwa mended the heavens. In primordial times, when the world fell apart, mother goddess Nuwa gathered...

- [Philippine fuel prices hit record highs as food inflation fears grow](#) (2026-03-21 05:30)

Mario Orain used to earn his living on the road. Now, the 51-year-old driver spends most of his time parked up, waiting for bookings that rarely come. “It’s really bad,” he told This Week in Asia. “There are very few bookings. And fuel prices have gone up a lot. It’s very expensive now.” With diesel prices in the Philippines shattering record highs amid the war on Iran, transport workers like Orain are being forced off the road as they face a stark choice between filling their tanks or feeding...

- [US government sues Harvard over anti-Israel protests, cites ‘hostile environment’](#) (2026-03-21 05:27)

The Trump administration filed a lawsuit on Friday against Harvard University, accusing the institution of allowing a “hostile environment” towards Jewish and Israeli students during pro-Palestinian demonstrations on campus from 2023 to 2025. President Donald Trump has launched an offensive against major American universities, accusing them of giving free rein on their campuses to pro-Palestinian movements in the face of the Israeli offensive in the Gaza Strip, action which he equates with...

- [Iran war nears 3-front tipping point as Gulf energy hubs burn](#) (2026-03-21 04:30)

Three weeks into the Iran war, tit-for-tat escalations on multiple fronts have dragged the Middle East to the brink of the region-wide conflict that its governments have repeatedly warned about – and tried to avert – since Hamas attacked Israel in October 2023. Israel has launched a ground invasion of southern Lebanon in recent days, after Hezbollah entered the conflict in response to the assassination of Iran’s Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Iraq has been turned into a shooting range, as...

- [Refugee in Hong Kong could win global award. So why does she have mixed feelings?](#) (2026-03-21 04:00)

When Uzma Naveed discovered she was a finalist for a global award in Paris, it should have been the proudest moment of her life. Instead, she met the news with what she described as “mixed feelings”. The 37-year-old refugee from Pakistan was chosen from a pool of 1,500 nominees from 97 different jurisdictions for the “national impact” category of the 2026 Women Changing the World Awards, an annual event meant to celebrate women’s achievements. Uzma, who first came to Hong Kong seeking asylum...

- [Malaysia's LGBTQ crackdowns aren't hypocrisy, they're politics](#) (2026-03-21 03:30)

Malaysia's recent enforcements and cancellations linked to LGBTQ-related activities have ignited debate about whether the government is backsliding on reform. Rather than reading these moves purely as contradicting past administrations' policies, these government actions may be better understood as an attempt to balance two political imperatives. For the political establishment, appearing conservative – and being conservative – remains central to political survival in a context where...

- [Ahead of BTS' first show in years, South Korean police lock down central Seoul](#) (2026-03-21 02:46)

South Korea shut down the heart of Seoul on Saturday for a comeback concert by K-pop supergroup BTS, as authorities prepare for an estimated 260,000 fans to flood the city's streets and millions more to watch the show live on Netflix. The one-hour-long concert, set to be held in the capital's historic Gwanghwamun Square, marks the release of the seven-member group's first new album in more than three years and the start of a global tour in April. BTS made their debut in 2013 and have since gone...

- [US woman charged with murder after taking abortion pill in Georgia](#) (2026-03-21 02:15)

A 31-year-old Georgia woman has been charged with murder after she took abortion medication and gave birth to a premature infant who died within hours, according to court documents and arrest records. Alexia Moore was arrested, charged and jailed by local police earlier this month in coastal Camden County, Georgia, near the Florida border over the episode on December 30. Nearly all abortions in Georgia are illegal after six weeks of pregnancy. Since the US Supreme Court overturned Roe vs Wade...

- [Japanese executives absent from China's key annual summit amid diplomatic tension: sources](#) (2026-03-21 02:00)

As diplomatic friction between China and Japan drags on, no Japanese business executives will attend a key forum in Beijing of multinational companies this coming week, according to an internal list seen by the South China Morning Post. Nearly 80 top executives from major foreign corporations, with those from the US making up the largest group, will attend the China Development Forum (CDF) from Sunday to Monday, according to the list. Meanwhile, some foreign CEOs – including a few from the...

- [In Iran war debut, South Korea's cut-price Patriot outshines US interceptors](#) (2026-03-21 02:00)

South Korea built the Cheongung-II to stop North Korean missiles. Now the system is stopping Iranian ones – and in doing so, has turned Seoul into one of the most sought-after defence suppliers on the planet. The medium-range surface-to-air missile system, also known as the KM-SAM Block II, has scored a reported interception rate of 96 per cent against Iranian missiles fired at the United Arab Emirates. It was a combat debut that rivalled, and in some cases

exceeded, the performance of the US...

- [Police officers fire 5 shots at charging assailant carrying serrated knife, metal rod](#) (2026-03-21 01:41)

Three Hong Kong police officers fired five shots at a man, suspected to be mentally ill, after he charged at them with a serrated knife and a metal rod in the early hours of Saturday morning. The assailant, a 43-year-old construction worker, was hit in his right chest and right thigh, police said. He was sent to Princess Margaret Hospital in Kwai Chung, where he underwent surgery. Senior Superintendent Iu Wing-kan said that police received a report at 12.17am of a man behaving abnormally and...

- [Should Hong Kong's stock exchange make all IPO applications confidential?](#) (2026-03-21 01:30)

Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing (HKEX) last week proposed its biggest set of listing reforms since 2018 for Asia's third-largest stock exchange. Delivered in a consultation paper, the reforms aim to further improve the competitiveness of the exchange that topped the world rankings for initial public offerings (IPOs) last year. The bourse operator will collect views on the proposals, which include broadening a special listing regime for innovative companies and opening the door for listings by...

- [How 'painful bag' becomes popular subculture, fashion trend, especially among China youth](#) (2026-03-21 01:00)

Chinese youth are enthusiastically adopting Japan's "ita bag" fashion accessory style to showcase their admiration for beloved anime and real-life idols, elevating the culture with their imaginative designs. On China's popular lifestyle-sharing platform, RedNote, the hashtag #tongbao, which means "painful bag" (the Chinese translation of ita bag), boasts 2.3 billion views. Originating in Japan around the 2010s, the "ita bag" refers to bags adorned with plushies, badges, or small cards...

- [US approves sale of Iranian oil at sea in move to ease crude supply crisis](#) (2026-03-21 00:55)

The US Treasury on Friday temporarily lifted sanctions on Iranian oil already loaded onto vessels, in Washington's latest step to stem a supply crisis over the Middle East war. The authorisation allows for the delivery and sale of Iranian crude oil and other petroleum products loaded onto ships before March 20, and will last through April 19, the Treasury said in a statement. The move by the Office of Foreign Assets Control, which Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Thursday was under...

- ['Ghost oil' stations earn 'HK\\$10,000 a day' in Hong Kong as petrol prices soar](#) (2026-03-21 00:00)

Operators of illicit fuel stations can earn as much as HK\$10,000 (US\$1,280) a day by smuggling untaxed petrol into Hong Kong using vehicles equipped with enlarged tanks and selling it to car club members via coded messages, the South China Morning Post has learned. A source said there had been more cases involving illicit fuel or “ghost oil” in the city since late February, when petrol prices began to soar following US-Israel strikes on Iran. The source said law enforcement raids usually...

- [Ageing Southeast Asia fights fears of death to brave the inevitable](#) (2026-03-21 00:00)

Death is the family business for Viroj Suriyasenee, a second-generation Thai funeral director. His bespoke coffins range from plain wooden boxes to ornate creations trimmed in gold with plush red velvet interiors, priced anywhere from US\$30 to US\$30,000 – each one representing a story of loss, grief and a life concluded. They also speak to the sheer scale of Asia’s ever-growing, multibillion-dollar death economy. All the coffins Viroj makes are destined for the cremation furnace, yet the...

- [Elon Musk misled Twitter shareholders, US jury finds](#) (2026-03-20 23:51)

A federal jury in California found on Friday that tech titan Elon Musk misled Twitter shareholders in an effort to drive down the company’s share price as he was poised to buy it in a US\$44 billion deal. The verdict in a class action securities lawsuit means the world’s richest person could be ordered to pay out as much as US\$2.6 billion, according to damages calculated by jurors. Giuseppe Pampena filed the suit against Musk on behalf of people who sold Twitter shares between mid-May of 2022 and...

- [US claims China manipulating its position at UN to undermine America’s interests](#) (2026-03-20 23:17)

The House Select Committee on China released a report on Friday asserting that China is manipulating its position at the United Nations to “undermine America’s interests and advance its international ambitions”. The 34-page report makes the case that China uses budget contributions, appointments to key UN executive positions and strategically deployed troops to expand its reach. The committee did not detail how these activities differed from how most countries operate at the UN, or the influence...

- [US judge rules restrictive Pentagon press access unconstitutional](#) (2026-03-20 23:09)

A US federal judge on Friday ruled as unconstitutional a Pentagon press access policy that withdrew accreditations from a host of prominent media organisations. Elements of the policy are “unlawful because they violate the First and Fifth Amendments of the United States Constitution”, a judge in Washington said in response to a lawsuit brought by The New York Times. US media and a host of international news outlets including Agence France-Presse, Associated Press and Fox News declined to sign...

- [Iran war: Trump says he' s considering 'winding down' US military operations](#)  
(2026-03-20 22:00)

US President Donald Trump said Friday he was considering “winding down” military operations against Iran three weeks into the war, but warned the Strait of Hormuz would need to be policed by other countries. Trump’ s comments were his strongest signal yet of an end to the conflict, but came despite the fact that the key oil passage effectively remains closed, and as thousands more Marines are headed to the Middle East. “We are getting very close to meeting our objectives as we consider winding...

- [What are the real reasons behind the change of date for Trump' s China visit?](#)  
(2026-03-20 22:00)

The official line is straightforward: US President Donald Trump asked for a delay to his long-anticipated summit in Beijing with Chinese leader Xi Jinping, and it has been pushed back by “a month or so” . According to the White House, moving the meeting allows Trump to remain in the US and manage the escalating war with Iran, including urgent efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz. But beneath the surface, a more complex story emerges: months of growing frustrations, mismatched expectations,...

- [As China struggles to boost demand, no one-size-fits-all solution will work](#) (2026-03-20 21:30)

During a press conference of the annual “two sessions” , National People’ s Congress spokesperson Lou Qinjian referenced the grass-roots football league Suchao or Su Super League, which drew millions of spectators in Chinese stadiums last year. At a time when boosting domestic demand tops Beijing’ s economic agenda, discussing an amateur sports tournament at the national podium goes beyond mere cultural commentary. It hints at something broader about how policymakers are approaching the consumption...

- [Trump administration moves to unify AI rules, bolster edge over China](#) (2026-03-20 19:43)

The administration of US President Donald Trump on Friday unveiled an artificial intelligence (AI) policy framework aimed at curbing state-level restrictions on innovation, as it urged Congress to address AI risks and reinforce the US edge in an intensifying technology race with China. Congress should pre-empt state AI laws that “impose undue burdens” , to ensure a national standard instead of “fifty discordant ones” , Trump said in a new legislative recommendation named the National AI...

- [Netanyahu compares Jesus and Genghis Khan in Iran war speech, drawing backlash](#)  
(2026-03-20 19:23)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected accusations on Friday that he had intended to offend Christians when he said the previous day that Jesus had “no advantage” over Genghis Khan. “More fake news about my attitude towards Christians, who are protected and flourish in Israel. Let me be clear: I did not denigrate Jesus Christ at my news conference,”

Netanyahu wrote in English on social media. “To the contrary, I cited the great American historian Will Durant. A fervent admirer of...

- [UK allows US to use its bases to strike Iran missile sites targeting Hormuz](#) (2026-03-20 19:07)

The UK government gave authorisation on Friday for the US to use military bases in Britain to carry out strikes on Iranian missile sites that are attacking ships in the Strait of Hormuz. British ministers met on Friday to discuss the war with Iran and Iran’s blocking of the Strait of Hormuz, according to a Downing Street statement. “They confirmed that the agreement for the US to use UK bases in the collective self-defence of the region includes US defensive operations to degrade the missile...

- [From Fulbright scholar to Xiangsheng comic: how Jesse Appell found his voice in China](#) (2026-03-20 18:56)

In 2012, American Jesse Appell stepped off a plane in China on a Fulbright scholarship to study an unusual subject: the art of Chinese comedy. Over the next few years, Appell, then in his 20s, found himself telling jokes in clubs across China, studying traditional comedy under a master, and even appearing on television. The country’s comedy scene and cultural footprint expanded in ways he could not have predicted – and Appell was along for the ride. “There were so many opportunities to be a part...

- [IRA bomb victims drop civil court claim against Gerry Adams](#) (2026-03-20 17:19)

Three victims of IRA bombings in England on Friday dropped their civil claim for damages against former Irish republican leader Gerry Adams, whom they had sought to hold personally responsible for orchestrating the blasts. The trio – who were injured in IRA bomb blasts in the 1970s and 1990s – had also sought to prove beyond reasonable doubt that Adams was a senior member of the Irish Republican Army. But on the very last day of the two-week trial, their lawyer Anne Studd told the High Court in...

- [Hong Kong police hunt 3 suspects over US\\$12 million gold theft](#) (2026-03-20 15:58)

Hong Kong police have launched a manhunt for three people involved in a suspected deception case in which a shop reportedly lost 73kg of gold bars worth an estimated US\$12 million, the South China Morning Post has learned. The force said on Friday that a woman in Hung Hom had made a report around 2.57pm that a nearby shop was suspected to have been “burgled”. The woman said the shop owner had told her someone had stolen the gold bars before fleeing in a private vehicle. A source said the case...

- [Pregnant woman and 5 kids die in container fire in Turkey](#) (2026-03-20 15:18)

A pregnant Syrian woman and her five young children died when a fire ripped through containers housing agricultural workers near the southwestern Antalya resort, the governor and media reports said on Friday. DHA news agency said the 27-year-old mother was seven months

pregnant, with her husband fighting for his life after the blaze. The tragedy occurred as Turkey began celebrating the three-day Bayram holiday to mark the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. Antalya Governor Hulusi Sahin...

- [Action movie star Chuck Norris dies at 86](#) (2026-03-20 15:09)

Chuck Norris, the US martial artist and Hollywood action star most famous for his role in Walker, Texas Ranger, has died, his family said on Friday. He was 86. The martial arts expert turned actor starred in a slew of action films since his acting debut with a cameo in a 1968 Dean Martin film The Wrecking Crew. Four years later, his epic fight with the kung fu superstar Bruce Lee in The Way of The Dragon helped turn Norris into an icon on big and small screens alike. “It is with heavy hearts...

- [China adds 12 banks to digital yuan system, expanding e-CNY’s economic presence](#) (2026-03-20 15:00)

China is set to include 12 more commercial banks under the umbrella of its central bank-backed digital currency, the latest move by Beijing to scale up adoption of the digital yuan, also known as the e-CNY, as it transitions from a cash alternative to an interest-bearing deposit instrument. The expansion comes after Beijing pledged to “steadily develop the digital yuan” in its latest five-year plan, the country’s blueprint document for socio-economic development. A draft Finance Law published on...

- [From years to a week: China unveils superfast software for hypersonic weapon design](#) (2026-03-20 15:00)

Chinese scientists have developed revolutionary software capable of fully simulating the extreme physics of supersonic fuel combustion in just one week. Previously, the same task could take a supercomputer years to complete, they said. Developed by a research team led by Yao Wei at the Institute of Mechanics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, the software was used to run an ultra-high-fidelity simulation of a scramjet engine in which combustion takes place in supersonic airflow. It modelled its...

- [Residents of Tai Po blaze building misled over renovation project, inquiry told](#) (2026-03-20 14:59)

Residents of a housing complex destroyed in one of Hong Kong’s deadliest fires were misled into picking a convicted contractor for the estate’s renovation project amid “widespread” bid-rigging and other corruption in the construction industry, a public hearing has been told. The judge-led independent committee also heard on Friday that an engineering consultant allegedly accepted a monthly stipend to “rubber stamp” tender evaluation reports, including one recommending Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po...

- [Trump calls Nato ‘cowards’ over lack of support in Iran war, sends more troops to Mideast](#) (2026-03-20 14:50)

President Donald Trump assailed Nato allies on Friday over their lack of support for the US-Israel war against Iran, calling the long-time US allies “cowards”. “Without the U.S.A., Nato IS A PAPER TIGER!” Trump said in a social media post. Trump has been calling for major US allies and others, none of whom were consulted or advised on the war, to help secure the safety of shipping through the Iran-controlled Strait of Hormuz. The conflict has roiled global markets, killed thousands and...

- [Iran detected and damaged a US F-35 stealth jet in combat. Chinese experts map out how](#) (2026-03-20 14:26)

The first known combat damage to an F-35 fifth-generation fighter aircraft from a likely Iranian attack suggests that stealth jets can be detected by electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) sensor systems, according to Chinese analysts. US Central Command reported that the stealth fighter was forced to make an emergency landing during a combat mission over Iran on Thursday.

“We are aware of reports that a US F-35 aircraft conducted an emergency landing at a regional US airbase after flying a combat...

- [Norway crown princess says she was ‘manipulated’ by Epstein](#) (2026-03-20 14:16)

Norway’s Crown Princess Mette-Marit said in an interview broadcast Friday that she was “manipulated” by convicted US sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, whom she accused of extorting others. A commoner who married Crown Prince Haakon in 2001, Mette-Marit’s name appears multiple times in Epstein documents released by the US Department of Justice earlier this year. The files revealed an unexpectedly close friendship between the pair and raised questions in Norway about whether Mette-Marit can become...

- [Swire Coca-Cola wins HK\\$32 million government deal after bottled water scandal](#) (2026-03-20 13:32)

Swire Coca-Cola has won a HK\$31.9 million (US\$4 million) contract to supply Bonaqua water to some Hong Kong government offices, following a HK\$52.9 million procurement scandal last year. According to a Government Logistics Department notice, Swire Coca-Cola was awarded the 27-month contract on Tuesday to supply more than 1.46 million bottles of drinking water to offices on Hong Kong Island and parts of the outlying islands. The selection followed an open tender launched in December. In its...

- [Hong Kong should use ‘safe haven’ status to draw capital from Gulf: agency chief](#) (2026-03-20 13:32)

Hong Kong should leverage its position as a “safe haven for investment” to attract foreign capital amid the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, the head of InvestHK has said, noting that more companies using Dubai as a hub have shifted to the city to diversify risk. The call came as finance chief Paul Chan Mo-po -on Friday continued his six-day visit to Beijing, where he met Li Yunze, minister of the National Financial Regulatory Administration. They discussed how Hong Kong could -support the...

- [China's rare earth magnet exports to the US keep falling as Europe gains](#) (2026-03-20 13:30)

China's exports of rare earth permanent magnets to the United States continue to fall, at a time when Washington and its allies are stepping up efforts to reduce reliance on the country's critical mineral supply chains. Shipments of permanent magnets to the US totalled 994 tonnes in January and February, down nearly 22.5 per cent year on year, according to data released on Friday by China's General Administration of Customs. This marked the seventh consecutive month of decline. Over the two...

- [Trump releases AI policy to pre-empt state rules](#) (2026-03-20 13:16)

The White House released an artificial intelligence policy on Friday that aims to pre-empt state rules, ensure protections for children and shield communities from prohibitive energy costs. The Trump administration has been pushing for a single legislative framework that can be applied uniformly across the country, rather than leaving states to form their own plans. US President Donald Trump in December said he would withhold federal broadband funding from states whose laws to regulate...

- [Former Shaolin Temple abbot indicted for bribery and embezzlement](#) (2026-03-20 13:14)

Prosecutors have formally indicted Shi Yongxin, the former abbot of the famed Shaolin Temple, four months after his arrest and following a string of financial and sexual scandals. Prosecutors in Xinxiang, Henan province, have formally charged Shi with embezzlement, misappropriation of funds, non-state official bribery and offering bribes, according to a Friday report from state news agency Xinhua. The 60-year-old former abbot led the Shaolin Temple for over 25 years and was ousted in July last...

- [Can the US reopen the Strait of Hormuz? Many military analysts are sceptical](#) (2026-03-20 13:00)

US air strikes may have weakened Iran's ability to blockade the Strait of Hormuz, but in the short term it is probably too risky to provide a military escort for oil tankers because of the threat from drones and mines, according to Chinese analysts. Multiple media reports have said the United States was considering the use of ground troops to open the waterway, but many military observers have argued this would not be enough without further protracted fighting. The strait is a vital shipping...

- [China's Unitree Robotics rides humanoid tide as it targets US\\$610m IPO](#) (2026-03-20 13:00)

Unitree Robotics, a Hangzhou-based maker of quadruped and humanoid robots, has filed for an initial public offering (IPO) on Shanghai's Star Market, seeking to raise 4.2 billion yuan (US\$610 million) as revenue and profits surge on the back of rising interest in embodied artificial intelligence. The listing application has been formally accepted by Shanghai's exchange

following a “preliminary review” on Friday. The 10-year-old company recorded revenue of 1.71 billion yuan last year, up 335 per...

- [China’s Russian oil imports spike in early 2026, but Iran war changes outlook](#) (2026-03-20 13:00)

China’s imports of discounted Russian crude oil surged in January and February, though analysts suggest volumes could moderate in the coming months as the war in Iran increases global competition for Russian oil. In the first two months of the year, Russia’s shipments of crude to China rose 40.9 per cent year on year to 21.8 million tonnes, according to Chinese customs data released on Friday. But the total import value rose just 5.8 per cent in US dollar terms. “China has been an opportunistic...

- [India steps up regional energy diplomacy, supplies Bangladesh with diesel](#) (2026-03-20 12:52)

India’s move to supply Bangladesh with diesel as fuel prices soar amid the Iran war reflects its “first responder” role in the region and clout through the use of its critical commodities to deepen ties with neighbouring states. If the fuel shortages were to persist, however, India would have to balance between its own energy demand and that of its neighbours, according to observers. Bangladesh will be importing 45,000 tonnes of diesel from India by April, with 5,000 tonnes having been delivered...

- [Why the world may now need an Iranian nuclear bomb](#) (2026-03-20 12:30)

If you think the Israeli-American war of aggression against Iran is bad, it could get a lot worse. For the first time, a senior American official has openly acknowledged that Israel possesses nuclear warheads and could deploy them in the war. “Israel is getting hit harder than they’ve ever been hit before in their history,” said David Sacks, the White House’s artificial intelligence and crypto tsar, on the All-In Podcast. “If this war continues for weeks or months, then Israel could just be...

- [Why Philippines struggles to tap its US\\$1 trillion mineral wealth](#) (2026-03-20 12:30)

As the Philippines forms partnerships with several countries to harness its potentially huge wealth of critical minerals, analysts have called for a coherent road map to develop the country’s mining industry to globally competitive standards. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr’s administration has signed multiple agreements over the past months, including a memorandum of understanding with the United States to cooperate on diversifying global critical mineral supply chains. The accord, signed during...

- [China offers US olive branch with fentanyl raids ahead of possible Trump visit](#) (2026-03-20 12:27)

China this week announced a major crackdown on fentanyl precursors, a move widely seen as a gesture of goodwill ahead of President Donald Trump’s planned visit. But analysts warned that

while this might address one major US grievance, it remained to be seen whether the United States would reciprocate and help the two sides move on to tackling other serious disputes, such as tariffs. The crackdown in the central province of Hubei started in December and included a raid on a company in the...

- [Taiwan's opposition parties join forces for local elections with eye on 2028 race](#)

(2026-03-20 12:14)

Taiwan's two main opposition parties are set to join forces in local elections, a midterm contest this autumn that analysts say could lay the groundwork for potential cooperation in the 2028 leadership race to challenge the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The elections, scheduled for November and commonly known as the "nine-in-one" elections, will determine local officials and councillors across nine categories, ranging from mayors and county magistrates to village chiefs, as well as...

- [Trump's Pearl Harbour 'joke' falls flat in Japan, Takaichi praised for response](#)

(2026-03-20 11:03)

People across Japan have recoiled in shock over US President Donald Trump's joke about the attack on Pearl Harbour in the presence of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in the White House, perceiving the incident as an insult to a long-time ally of Washington. On the other hand, Takaichi has received praise for her measured response even as she stiffened visibly over Trump's comments at the joint press conference in the Oval Office on Thursday. In response to a question from a Japanese reporter about...

- [Strait of Hormuz tensions flare as Iran tightens grip over shipping traffic](#)

(2026-03-20 11:00)

Global concerns are rising over the fate of ships and crews trapped in the Strait of Hormuz amid the intensifying Middle East conflict, as reports spread that Iran is rolling out screening processes and steep transit fees for vessels using the waterway. The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) called for the establishment of a "safe maritime framework" to ensure the swift evacuation of merchant ships confined within the Persian Gulf, after holding a special session on the Middle East...

- [Chongqing mayor under investigation as China's anti-corruption crackdown gathers pace](#)

(2026-03-20 10:52)

The mayor of the southwestern metropolis Chongqing has been put under investigation by China's top anti-corruption agency. The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) issued a statement on Friday saying that Hu Henghua, mayor of Chongqing and deputy secretary of its municipal committee of the Communist Party, was under investigation for "serious violations of discipline and law" – a term commonly used to refer to corruption. Chongqing is among China's four centrally administered...

- [13 arrested over HK\\$113 million laundered using government's 'iAM Smart' app](#) (2026-03-20 10:06)

Hong Kong police have arrested 13 people on suspicion of laundering more than HK\$113 million (US\$14.4 million) using the government's "iAM Smart" app in scams run by a syndicate. The force said on Friday that nine men and four women, aged between 38 and 75, were suspected of using victims' "iAM Smart" accounts to launder money through "mule" bank accounts. "The syndicate placed fake job advertisements in newspapers, claiming to be hiring cleaners," said Wong Yuk-yan, acting superintendent from...

- [Red faces at bureau after anti-drug advert sends opposite message](#) (2026-03-20 10:03)

Hong Kong's Security Bureau has apologised for an advertising blunder in its anti-drug campaign, after a banner in a railway station appeared to encourage the use of illegal substances when viewed from certain angles. The bureau addressed the issue in a social media post on Friday, a day after an internet user circulated a photo of the poorly placed advert at Tsim Sha Tsui MTR station. The banner was part of the government's latest anti-drug campaign, featuring one of Hong Kong's "Four Heavenly...

- [China woman working away from home receives care package containing entire cow from parents](#) (2026-03-20 10:00)

An unwell Chinese woman working away from home has received a care package from her concerned parents which contained a whole cow. On March 7, a woman posted a video of herself receiving the heavy package at her home in Beijing. She says in the video that the package, sent from her hometown in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia, contains a whole cow. The 33-year-old woman, surnamed Chang, said her father bought the cow near the grasslands in her hometown, which is known for quality beef and...

- [China's Hainan free-trade hub reinvents itself as Hong Kong's rival – and partner](#) (2026-03-20 09:27)

As Hainan pushes ahead with its free-trade port, the tropical island is emerging as a potential rival to Hong Kong's long-standing role as a regional shopping and low-tax hub – even as both sides signal interest in closer cooperation. Since launching a separate customs regime three months ago, Hainan – now a gateway to the Chinese market – has positioned itself as a "super partner" to Hong Kong across industry chains, finance, tourism and other sectors, according to officials. "Hong Kong serves...

- [South Korean factory fire injures at least 55](#) (2026-03-20 09:09)

A fire at a car parts factory in South Korea's central city of Daejeon injured at least 55 people on Friday, with officials warning the toll could rise. The National Fire Agency said 24 were seriously hurt in a blaze likely caused by an explosion. Officials could not immediately confirm whether any of the injured were in life-threatening condition. Nam Deuk-woo, fire chief of the city's Daedeok district, said authorities were searching for at least 14 other people believed to

have been inside...

- [Trump to praise Japan in China, Xi summit delayed, PLA-Nato talks](#) (2026-03-20 09:00)

US President Donald Trump said he will be “speaking Japan’s praises” when he makes a delayed trip to China, even with the two Asian nations engaged in a long-running dispute over Taiwan. The Beijing visit, including a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, has been postponed “for about a month and a half”, Trump told reporters in the White House alongside Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi. The US president was due to arrive in China on March 31. Trump’s remarks underscore how China has...

- [Trump ally Steve Daines will be first sitting US senator to visit Hong Kong since 2019](#) (2026-03-20 09:00)

Republican Senator Steve Daines, a close ally of US President Donald Trump, is expected to visit Hong Kong at the end of this month, according to sources. It would mark the first trip to the city by a sitting US senator since the Covid-19 pandemic. Daines would meet American business leaders in Hong Kong on March 30, the sources said, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to comment publicly on the matter. The senator from Montana has played a prominent role in...

- [Gulf states again under fire as Iran says still building missiles](#) (2026-03-20 08:58)

Firefighters battled a blaze at a giant oil refinery in Kuwait on Friday after a fresh drone attack as Iran kept up a wave of strikes on its neighbours and vowed there was “no concern” about its missile production. Despite calls for an end to targeting Gulf energy infrastructure by European leaders on Thursday, Kuwait reported a fire at its Mina Al-Ahmadi refinery, a day after a direct hit on Qatar’s vital Ras Laffan facility. Iranian authorities had vowed to retaliate after an Israeli strike on...

- [US Section 301 tariffs set to trigger fresh wave of trade disruption](#) (2026-03-20 08:30)

If there is a thread that provides coherence to Donald Trump’s mad emperorship, it is the frenetic invention of new, evermore dramatic diversions: no week can be allowed to pass without new melodrama that erases the chaotic melodramas of weeks past. Nor can a week be allowed to pass without the seeds being sown for next week’s melodramas. This week it is Iran, and the computer-gaming unreality of a scorched-earth US-Israeli bombardment that has generated convulsions across economies in the...

- [Chinese stocks shake laggard image amid oil shock as green transition pays off](#) (2026-03-20 08:15)

Chinese stocks have emerged as outperformers in the latest oil shock, reversing their reputation as laggards, as crude takes a back seat to renewable fuels in the world’s second-largest economy. The CSI 300 Index of stocks trading on the mainland’s exchanges has dropped 3.1 per cent since the US and Israel began attacks on Iran on February 28, outperforming the S&P

500, the Euro Stoxx 50 and Japan's Nikkei 225, which have all slid at least 4 per cent during the period. This marked a turnaround...

- [NIH-awarded life scientist Shu Xiaokun abruptly shifts research from US to China](#)

(2026-03-20 07:11)

Eminent life scientist Shu Xiaokun has received numerous awards and significant funding from the US government over the past two decades. Earlier this year, he was appointed the prestigious Herfindahl Endowed Chair professor at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), capping a career that included pioneering fluorescent protein tools in Nobel laureate Roger Yonchien Tsien's laboratory. The motto of Shu's lab is a quote from the Nobel laureate physicist Richard Feynman: "If you're not..."

- [Preview of Alibaba's strongest AI model tops Chinese peers in ranking, lags US rivals](#)

(2026-03-20 07:00)

Alibaba Group Holding unveiled the preview version of its most powerful artificial intelligence model to date, solidifying its position as China's leader in the race to catch American giants like Anthropic, Google and OpenAI. Qwen3.5-Max-Preview, the flagship model of Alibaba's Qwen 3.5 family, is now available on Arena, formerly known as LMArena, a model performance community created by researchers from UC Berkeley. Alibaba, which owns the South China Morning Post, unveiled the model on...

- [5 jailed, 20 others arrested in Hong Kong crackdown on illegal employment](#)

(2026-03-20 06:51)

Five people have been jailed and another 20 arrested as part of a Hong Kong Immigration Department crackdown on illegal employment. The department said on Friday that it had raided 23 locations, including restaurants, cleaning companies and commercial buildings, during an operation carried out from Monday to Thursday. Those arrested comprised 19 people found or suspected to be working illegally and six employers who allegedly hired them. The larger group consisted of six men and 13 women, aged...

- [In Japan's ski hub, deep snow can't hide gripes, inflation and polarisation](#)

(2026-03-20 06:31)

Beneath the powder snow at internationally popular Japanese ski resort Niseko, anxiety is mounting among residents over soaring prices and a massive influx of overseas workers. At a time when Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi is talking tough on immigration, upscale Niseko has never been more popular with seasonal workers, investors and skiers from across the globe. The snow "is the best in the world", said Gideon Masters, a 29-year-old Australian tourist. "It's just soft, powder fluff. You can pick..."

- [Global drug giants double down on China amid trend to build self-reliant supply chains](#)

(2026-03-20 06:30)

AstraZeneca said it would establish drug manufacturing facilities in Guangzhou and Shanghai as well as a separate innovation centre in Shanghai, joining a group of foreign players building new plants in China amid geopolitical tensions. The moves are part of a US\$15 billion commitment the British firm pledged to make in the world's second-largest drug market through 2030, unveiled during UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer's visit to Beijing in January. China's manufacturing capabilities, integrated...

- [US military aircraft losses mount as Iran war approaches fourth week](#) (2026-03-20 06:26)

At least 16 US military aircraft have been lost since the start of the war with Iran, including 10 Reaper strike drones hit by enemy fire and a half-dozen other planes badly damaged in attacks or accidents. The most serious losses were because of accidents: three US F-15s downed by friendly fire in Kuwait, and a KC-135 tanker destroyed during a refuelling operation. All six crew members on the tanker were killed in the accident. Five other KC-135s were reportedly damaged by an Iranian missile...

- [China and Japan's complicated ties in a turbulent 2026](#) (2026-03-20 06:07)
- ['Intimate touch therapists' spark China debate for using sensory objects, hugs to help clients relax](#) (2026-03-20 06:00)

An emerging form of therapy in China has stirred controversy over blurred boundaries by using sensory tools, touch and hugging to ease clients' stress. Mainland media reports say workshops and services centred on "intimate touch" have spread across social media since late last year. In quiet, softly lit rooms, intimate touch therapists offer what they describe as emotional healing through light caresses, hugs and sensory tools such as feathers and velvet gloves. Customers typically remove some...

- [Hong Kong crane collapse signals need for metal fatigue testing: expert](#) (2026-03-20 05:47)

Hong Kong should review its crane safety guidelines to include mandatory testing for metal fatigue, an industry expert has said after the city recorded another fatal case involving a collapse. An operator was killed on Thursday afternoon when a tower crane fell at a construction site for the second phase of a public housing project on Tai Wo Hau Road, toppling onto a slope opposite Pik Kwai House at Kwai Chung Estate. The project's main contractor, Woon Lee Construction, was previously fined by...

- [Xiaomi's new-generation SU7 launch sparks fresh EV fight with Tesla in China](#) (2026-03-20 05:29)

Xiaomi's updated SU7 electric vehicle (EV) is expected to bite into the market share of Tesla and some domestic rivals in China, as demand weakens and regulators tighten oversight. Founder and CEO Lei Jun on Thursday announced official pricing for the new-generation smart sedan, with the standard edition starting at 219,900 yuan (US\$31,900) and the pro and max variants set at 249,900 yuan and 303,900 yuan, respectively. The figures are 10,000 yuan lower than pre-sale estimates, but 4,000 yuan...

- [Iran's parliament speaker emerges as key figure in war after assassinations](#) (2026-03-20 05:24)

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Iran's parliament speaker and a veteran of the Revolutionary Guards, has emerged as the highest-profile political figure in the Islamic Republic after the killing of its leaders. A pillar of the Iranian establishment for some three decades and one of the Islamic republic's most prominent non-clerical figures, Ghalibaf, 64, now appears to be playing a key role spearheading the war effort. Whereas the son and successor of slain Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, Mojtaba...

- ['Not easy' : Japan mulls building its own LNG carriers amid Iran energy crisis](#) (2026-03-20 05:00)

As the US-Israel war on Iran strains global energy supplies, Japan is discussing reviving domestic production of liquefied natural gas carriers for the first time in more than half a decade to bolster its national security. The move would see Japanese shipbuilders return to a market that is currently dominated by China and South Korea, as Tokyo looks to revitalise its maritime sector and shore up its energy security. Japan's shipbuilding working group – comprising industry experts and government...

- [Some tourists in Malaysia make most of Mideast flight mess as others scramble to get home](#) (2026-03-20 04:36)

Flights are cancelled, schedules are in chaos and scores of European tourists are still waiting to go home, three weeks after the United States and Israeli attack on Iran. Some of them, like retiree John Williams, 61, and his wife Gillian, 60, from the United Kingdom, are making good use of their “extended” time in Malaysia. “We’re sort of stranded, but frankly we are in no hurry. We are spending a few days in Penang and will explore other ways to get home later,” Williams said. “We saw that...

- [China, US end trade talks in Paris; chip self-sufficiency drive: SCMP's 7 highlights](#) (2026-03-20 04:34)

We have selected seven stories from this week's news across Hong Kong, mainland China, the wider Asia region and beyond that resonated with our readers and shed light on topical issues. If you would like to see more of our reporting, please consider subscribing. 1. Precision strike: China targets US, Japan stranglehold on photoresist supply China's push for semiconductor self-sufficiency is shifting from broad aspiration to a precision strike on chokepoint materials, with photoresist – the...

- [Inside look at Trump-Xi summits with ex-diplomat William Klein](#) (2026-03-20 04:30)

William Klein worked for more than two decades as a US diplomat, including in several senior roles at the United States' embassy in Beijing from 2016 to 2021. He worked at the American Institute in Taiwan and on the US State Department's China desk in Washington, and occupied

US diplomatic posts in South Asia, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. He is a consulting partner with FGS Global, a firm based in Berlin, with a focus on US-China and EU-China relationships. SCMP Plus readers get...

- [Panama president accuses CK Hutchison subsidiary of lying about arbitration response](#) (2026-03-20 04:29)

Panamanian President Jose Raul Mulino has accused a subsidiary of Hong Kong conglomerate CK Hutchison Holdings of lying about the country's response to an arbitration initiated by the company over the seizure of two strategic ports. Mulino's rebuttal on Thursday was in response to claims several days earlier by the Panama Ports Company (PPC) that his government had failed to file a response to the company's request for arbitration by the deadline of March 13. The company filed the request after...

- [Madagascar's leader orders lie detector tests for prospective ministers](#) (2026-03-20 04:13)

Anyone applying to become a minister in Madagascar's new government will be subjected to lie detector tests to root out those who are corrupt, the country's military leader said on Thursday. President Michael Randrianirina, who took power in a coup in the Indian Ocean island in October, said Madagascar had acquired a polygraph machine and a specialist to operate it to vet new government ministers. "We will know who is corrupt and who can help us," Randrianirina said. "We are not looking for..."

- [Can China broker peace for Iran again? 2023 was different, analysts say](#) (2026-03-20 04:00)

As Tehran signalled that Beijing could serve as a diplomatic broker in its intensifying war with the United States and Israel, analysts cautioned that the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement of 2023 could prove "hard to replicate". They also highlighted the difficulty of Washington accepting third-party mediation, after US President Donald Trump confirmed that a planned meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing would be delayed by "five or six weeks" because of the armed conflict. Beijing has...

- [Record-breaking heatwave grips western US at tail end of winter](#) (2026-03-20 03:28)

A punishing heatwave has been gripping the western United States, with parts of the region logging record temperatures - even though it was still winter. A desert community in southwestern Arizona reached 43.3 degrees Celsius (110 Fahrenheit) on Thursday, breaking a record for the highest March temperature recorded in the United States. The record-setting temperature was recorded just outside Martinez Lake, Arizona, in the Yuma Desert. The previous record of 42.2 degrees had been set in Rio...

- [Japan's Takaichi conveys to Trump her 'strong intent' to meet North Korea's Kim](#) (2026-03-20 03:13)

Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told US President Donald Trump on Thursday that she wants to hold talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un on Pyongyang's past abductions of Japanese nationals. Takaichi told reporters that she notified Trump during their meeting at the White House of her "strong intent to meet" Kim in person and that she has "received full support from the president towards an immediate solution." Takaichi said she even exchanged views with Trump on how she could meet...

- [Belarus frees 250 political prisoners, US removes more sanctions in latest signs of thaw](#) (2026-03-20 03:05)

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko freed 250 prisoners on Thursday - the biggest batch to be released so far - in return for a further easing of US sanctions, the US embassy in neighbouring Lithuania said. The releases were part of a bargaining process in which Lukashenko was seeking a normalisation of ties with Washington after years of isolation and sanctions, in exchange for easing repression in the former Soviet state he has led since 1994. Belarusian human rights group Viasna said...

- [EU leaders clash with Hungary's Orban for blocking Ukraine loan](#) (2026-03-20 02:27)

European Union leaders failed to convince Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban on Thursday to lift his blockade on a €90 billion (US\$103 billion) EU loan to help Ukraine keep up its fight against Russia's invasion. After a summit in Brussels, several leaders voiced deep frustration with Orban, who has cited a dispute over a war-damaged pipeline to justify blocking the implementation of the loan agreed back in December. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz accused Orban - who maintains cordial ties...

- [Is Pakistan building ICBMs? Non-proliferation experts dispute US warning](#) (2026-03-20 02:24)

A US intelligence assessment warning of a potential threat from Pakistan's prospective intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) has been challenged by nuclear non-proliferation experts, who say Islamabad's defence programme is focused on regional deterrence rather than targeting the American "homeland". Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard told the US Senate on Wednesday that Pakistan - along with China, Iran, North Korea and Russia - has been "researching and developing an array..."

- [US federal debt becoming 'alarmingly unsustainable' as Iran war fuels spending: analysts](#) (2026-03-20 02:00)

The United States' rapidly mounting sovereign debt pile - which reached an unprecedented US\$39 trillion on Wednesday - is becoming "alarmingly unsustainable" and a potential threat to the global economy, with spending likely to spiral even further amid the Iran war, analysts said. It remains unclear whether US President Donald Trump has the political will to rein in borrowing, despite promising to eliminate the national debt while campaigning for office in 2016, and other countries including...

- [Repeated complaints by residents ignored before deadly Tai Po fire, hearing told](#) (2026-03-20 01:59)

This story has been made freely available as a public service to our readers. Please consider supporting SCMP's journalism by subscribing. A public evidential hearing into a devastating fire that engulfed a residential complex in Hong Kong and killed 168 people enters its second day on Friday. Victor Dawes SC, lead barrister for an independent judge-led committee overseeing the hearing, will continue his opening speech, a day after he cited a preliminary investigation report that the tragedy was...

- [Iran war revives pandemic-era shocks – and may go further](#) (2026-03-20 01:30)

By the time this column appears, the world will feel very different from when my previous column appeared earlier this month. In just days, a conflict that some in Washington seemed to believe would quickly topple Iran's leadership has instead become a potentially long and uncertain war, with little clarity on how or when it will end. The front lines will have shifted, more oil tankers will have been stuck at sea and more flights cancelled, and there will almost certainly have been further...

- [Can China commercial satellite's 'octopus tentacle' pass low-orbit refuel test?](#) (2026-03-20 01:00)

China has followed last year's secretive high-orbit satellite-to-satellite refuelling test with another in-orbit servicing mission that is aimed at advancing docking and refuelling technologies, while also testing ways to speed up the disposal of satellites at the end of their usefulness. Hukeda-2, which lifted off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in the Gobi Desert on Monday, is China's first commercial test satellite equipped with a flexible robotic arm to capture other spacecraft, the...

- [China woman reunites with birth parents after being abandoned in toilet by grandad 28 years ago](#) (2026-03-20 01:00)

A Chinese woman who was abandoned in a toilet as a newborn by her grandfather has reunited with her biological parents 28 years after being adopted by a Dutch couple. Hong Yangli, 28, was born into a rural family in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, central China, as the third child, the mainland media outlet Daxiang News reported. Her mother, Yang Xiaoying, said that a day after giving birth, her father-in-law offered to take the baby home and look after her. Still weak after childbirth and with her...

- [Office vacancy rate in Hong Kong's Central falls to single digits after 2 years](#) (2026-03-20 00:30)

Prime office vacancy rates in Hong Kong's main business district dropped to single digits for the first time in 26 months, lifting overall rents in the city's struggling office property market, according to JLL. The vacancy rate in Central for premium offices fell to 9.9 per cent in February

from 10.1 per cent the previous month, the property consultancy said. The last time a single-digit rate was recorded for grade A offices in the district was in December 2023, when it also hit 9.9 per cent,...

- [‘Too slow’ : Hong Kong’ s new university town faces questions over plans](#) (2026-03-20 00:30)

Hong Kong’ s Baptist University placed a big bet when it told the government in 2023 that it was interested in moving its campus from the upmarket Kowloon Tong residential area to a proposed new academic town near the mainland Chinese border. The 70-year-old university’ s move to the Northern Metropolis megaproject will mean giving up a prime site for a spot where most of the land has yet to be prepared for construction, although its proximity to mainland tech hub Shenzhen and the Lok Ma Chau...

- [South Korea risks US rift over Iran’ s Hormuz Strait squeeze](#) (2026-03-20 00:00)

South Korea finds itself boxed in as Tehran moves to turn the Strait of Hormuz into a bargaining chip amid the US-Israeli war on Iran, leaving Seoul caught between its dependence on Middle East oil and its unwillingness to antagonise Washington. Economists note that South Korea relies on Washington’ s security umbrella to deter threats from nuclear-armed North Korea and that its oil trade is settled in US dollars – two realities that sit awkwardly alongside Iran’ s push for yuan-based energy...

- [How long will US-Israel war on Iran last? Chinese analysts offer clues](#) (2026-03-19 22:00)

Iran’ s missile and drone stockpiles will last another two or three months as US-Israeli strikes continue, while the US military is also depleting its interceptors, Chinese analysts have noted. However, how long the war lasts would depend less on stockpiles alone than on the effectiveness of new US deployments and President Donald Trump’ s political calculus, one of them cautioned. Iran has continued its attacks on Israel and on US assets across the Middle East since the conflict was triggered on...

- [China’ s high household savings reflect old values and new anxieties](#) (2026-03-19 21:30)

My grandmother kept her banknotes under the mattress. Even after savings accounts became common and the money my siblings and I gave her began to accumulate, she still preferred to hide cash away at home. She loved saving and hated spending. I thought of her when China’ s leaders again emphasised the need to boost domestic consumption at this year’ s “two sessions” meetings. With exports facing geopolitical headwinds and the property sector struggling, policymakers hope households will become a...

- [Trump-picked panel approves gold coin with his image: ‘the larger the better’](#) (2026-03-19 21:12)

A federal arts panel comprised of members appointed by Donald Trump unanimously approved a commemorative gold coin featuring his image on Thursday, in the latest effort by

the administration to celebrate the US president. Critics, including Democrats and members of another federal arts committee, said minting a coin with a sitting president's image went against American values, especially as the nation celebrates its 250th birthday this year and the end of British monarchical rule. During a...

- [The peacock throne's gambit: Iran's Reza Pahlavi plans to flip the script on Beijing](#) (2026-03-19 19:33)

Allies of exiled Iranian royal Reza Pahlavi are signalling a potential reset in Tehran's ties with China and Russia, even as the 65-year-old increasingly positions himself as a central figure in Iran's political future – a claim that contrasts with Washington's more cautious stance. Speaking at a media briefing in Washington on Thursday, Pahlavi's chief of staff, Cameron Khansarinia, dismissed Beijing's mediation efforts in the ongoing conflict, arguing that the current Iranian leadership is...

- [Israel PM says Iran can no longer enrich uranium, hints at 'ground component' to war](#) (2026-03-19 19:31)

Iran no longer has the capacity to enrich uranium or make ballistic missiles after 20 days of US-Israeli air attacks, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told a news conference on Thursday. "We are winning, and Iran is being decimated," Netanyahu said, noting that Iran's missile and drone arsenal is being massively degraded and will be destroyed. "What we're destroying now are the factories that produce the components to make these missiles and to make the nuclear weapons that they're..."

- [TP-Link's Chinese founder Jeffrey Chao seeks US\\$1 million Trump Gold Card visa](#) (2026-03-19 17:59)

The Chinese founder of the massive router maker facing national security probes by the Trump administration has applied for an expedited visa under the Trump Gold Card programme, according to people familiar with the matter. California-based TP-Link Systems told the federal agencies scrutinising its operations that founder and Chief Executive Officer Jeffrey Chao had applied for permanent residency under the programme, the people said. Successful Gold Card applicants must give a US\$1 million...

- [US-China split on digital money deepens as stablecoin debate stalls Clarity Act](#) (2026-03-19 17:22)

US crypto advocates have increasingly pointed to competition with China's new interest-bearing e-CNY to demand legislative clarity on stablecoin yields, but China is charting a completely different course for the future of digital money, experts said. "The world's two largest economies are not so much competing in digital assets as they are pursuing very different strategies," said Andrew Fei, a partner at law firm King & Wood Mallesons in Hong Kong. Winston Ma, adjunct professor and executive...

- [Trump talks with Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi off to positive start](#) (2026-03-19 17:21)

A high-stakes summit between US President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Thursday appeared to get off to a good start as the two touted the bilateral relationship and pledged to work cooperatively on trade, stabilising the global energy market and regional security. Takaichi was the first US ally to meet face to face with the mercurial president, amid concern that he would take out his anger on her for the large number of security partners who have declined to help...

- [US F-35 hit by suspected Iranian fire, forced to make emergency landing](#) (2026-03-19 16:25)

A US F-35 fighter aircraft was hit by suspected Iranian fire and had to make an emergency landing on Thursday. This would be the first time Iran has hit one of the US\$100 million planes since the US and Israel launched their attack on the country on February 28, according to CNN, which first reported the incident. The F-35 was “flying a combat mission over Iran”, a spokesman for US Central Command said. “The aircraft landed safely, and the pilot is in stable condition,” Captain Tim Hawkins said....

- [US has no end date for Iran war, strikes ‘very much on track’ : Hegseth](#) (2026-03-19 15:52)

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said Thursday there was no “time frame” for ending the US-Israeli war against Iran, which was launched three weeks ago. “We wouldn’t want to set a definitive time frame,” Hegseth told a news conference, adding that “we’re very much on track” and that President Donald Trump would be the one to decide when to stop. “It will be at the president’s choosing, ultimately, where we say, ‘Hey, we’ve achieved what we need to.’ ” American objectives in the war had not...

- [Deadly Tai Po fire revealed ‘unacceptable systemic failings’ , inquiry hears](#) (2026-03-19 15:35)

Contractors for a renovation project at the site of Hong Kong’s deadliest fire in decades got away with covering up the use of substandard material because of systemic defects in government supervision, a public inquiry into the blaze that claimed 168 lives has heard. In the first of a series of evidential hearings, a judge-led independent committee was told on Thursday that six “human factors” led to the almost complete failure of fire safety measures at Tai Po’s Wang Fuk Court before seven of...

- [Survey shows China’s professionals have high expectations – for low pay](#) (2026-03-19 15:00)

About two out of every five professionals in China expect no pay rise this year after more than half missed out on one last year, with both figures higher than the Asian average, according to survey data gathered by a recruiting firm – a trend suggesting further pessimism among an

already dissatisfied workforce. London-based recruitment firm Hays found that 44 per cent of professionals in China – the highest share anywhere in Asia – anticipate no salary increase in 2026. Six per cent expect a...

- [Pro-Kremlin Russian blogger who turned on Putin sent to psychiatric unit](#) (2026-03-19 14:46)

A pro-Kremlin figure who unexpectedly denounced Russian President Vladimir Putin and the war in Ukraine in a social media post this week that went viral has been placed in a psychiatric facility, Russian media reported on Thursday. Ilya Remeslo made a career denouncing Putin's critics until he became one himself, posting a manifesto late on Tuesday to his 90,000 followers on Telegram entitled: "Five reasons why I stopped supporting Vladimir Putin." He said Putin had prosecuted a "failing war" ...

- [Hong Kong finance chief stresses flexibility in pitch for Northern Metropolis](#) (2026-03-19 14:31)

Hong Kong is ready to discuss land, tax incentives and financial support for businesses setting up in the Northern Metropolis, the finance chief has told a trade seminar in Beijing, stressing a "flexible and innovative" approach will be taken with developing the megaproject. Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po on Thursday also met Xia Baolong, Beijing's point man on Hong Kong affairs, who underscored the central government's support for the city's efforts to bolster its competitiveness through...

- [Firefighter killed in Tai Po blaze may have entered wrong building, inquiry told](#) (2026-03-19 14:09)

A firefighter killed in Hong Kong's deadliest blaze in decades may have entered the wrong building amid the initial chaos at the scene and fallen from a height, the first day of a public hearing into the inferno has heard. More details surrounding the death of 37-year-old Ho Wai-ho, among the first batch of firefighters sent to tackle the blaze, emerged as the independent committee set up by the government to investigate the fire at the Wang Fuk Court residential complex in Tai Po held its first...

- [CK Hutchison vows to pursue 'all legal remedies' over seized Panama ports](#) (2026-03-19 14:02)

Hong Kong conglomerate CK Hutchison has said it will pursue "all available legal remedies" through both national and international proceedings to resolve a dispute over its two Panama Canal ports seized by authorities in February. Amid the widening conflict in the Middle East which could further complicate its multibillion-dollar global ports sale, the company downplayed the possible impact of a Strait of Hormuz blockade on its business, saying its diversified network could even benefit from...

- [‘Severely damaged’ : how the US-Israel war on Iran is decoupling Gulf security](#) (2026-03-19 14:00)

For decades, the US security umbrella was the bedrock underpinning the Gulf states’ prosperity and stability. Today, Iranian missiles and drones have paralysed the Strait of Hormuz and hit civilian airports, ports, hotels and refineries across every Gulf country, despite thousands of American troops and advanced interceptors on the ground. The armed conflict has forced the region to confront a stark new reality. A Chinese scholar argued that the US-Israel war on Iran and ensuing Hormuz crisis...

- [2 men charged with spying for Iran on UK Jewish targets](#) (2026-03-19 13:52)

Two men appeared in a London court on Thursday accused of being tasked by Iran to carry out hostile surveillance on the Israeli embassy, Britain’ s oldest synagogue and other Jewish targets. Nematollah Shahsavani, 40, a dual Iranian-British national, and Alireza Farasati, an Iranian national, 22, are accused of being involved in gathering information and undertaking reconnaissance of targets given to them by Iranian spy services over five weeks last summer. As such, the alleged activities...

- [Hong Kong customs arrests 5 people, seizes HK\\$2.2 million in counterfeit eyewear](#) (2026-03-19 13:42)

Hong Kong customs officers have arrested five people and seized 2,500 pairs of suspected counterfeit eyewear worth about HK\$2.2 million (US\$280,680) in a citywide operation. Officers from the Customs and Excise Department carried out the special enforcement action on Tuesday and Wednesday, targeting the sale of counterfeit goods. Officers raided five retail shops in Cheung Sha Wan, Kwai Shing, Tsuen Wan and Fanling, as well as a supplier in Kwun Tong, seizing the items with the assistance of...

- [China’ s central bank pledges stability in capital markets amid global sell-off](#) (2026-03-19 13:30)

China’ s central bank named the continued stability of the country’ s capital markets as a priority for 2026, a goal taking on greater significance as global markets are tested by the reverberations of the escalating US-Israel war on Iran. The People’ s Bank of China designated the stability of stock, bond and foreign exchange markets as one of its “major tasks” for the year, according to a readout from a high-level meeting hosted by bank governor Pan Gongsheng on Wednesday. The bank also vowed to...

- [Liu Guozhi, former top PLA scientist and nuclear test commander, delisted from CAS website](#) (2026-03-19 12:58)

A former top-ranking scientist in the Chinese military and one-time nuclear test site commander, Liu Guozhi, has been removed from the website of the country’ s top national research institute. In 2016, Liu was named head of the science and technology commission of the Central Military Commission – China’ s top military decision-making and command body –

a position he is believed to have held until the early 2020s. Liu, 65, was elected to the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) in 2009. Some Chinese...

- [As war in Iran roils energy markets, Europe pays price of ‘dependency’](#) (2026-03-19 12:30)

Europe woke on Thursday to another energy shock, as military attacks on critical infrastructure in Qatar and Iran sent oil and gas prices across the continent soaring to levels unseen since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The continent’s benchmark natural gas price, the Dutch TTF, climbed above €70 (US\$80) per megawatt hour in Thursday morning trading – its highest level since December 2022, though still well below the more than €300 peak reached in the summer of 2022. Brent crude surged...

- [US war on Iran presents a complex strategic challenge for China](#) (2026-03-19 12:30)

The US military strike against Iran is, by most accounts, a war of choice. Most policy analysts believe Iran poses no imminent threat to the United States. President Donald Trump’s decision appears partly intended to offset the political fallout from setbacks in his tariff policies and reinforce his image as a strongman president. Trump is believed to have been encouraged by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to wage war. US military preparations for the operation appear limited and there...

- [China offers to help Southeast Asia counter impact of Middle East war on energy supplies](#) (2026-03-19 12:25)

China has pledged to work with Southeast Asian countries on energy security as the war in the Middle East continued to take its toll on global oil and gas supplies. “China stands ready to strengthen cooperation and coordination with Southeast Asian countries and jointly address energy security issues,” Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a regular press conference on Thursday. Lin also called for an end to the conflict, saying: “Relevant countries need to stop military operations at...

- [India’s weight-loss price war begins as semaglutide patent expires](#) (2026-03-19 12:19)

Namita Joshi made a New Year’s resolution in January to tackle one of her long-standing problems: being overweight. A key part of her slimming journey is her weekly weight-loss injections. While the 29-year-old interior designer has made changes to her diet and increased her workouts, she said the medication has helped her lose up to 6kg (13 pounds) in the past two months. With her weight at 85kg before her treatment and height at 1.65 metres (5.4 feet), Joshi was considered obese. “My mental...

- [Paralegals among 16 people arrested over ‘crash-for-cash’ scams in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-19 12:15)

Hong Kong police have arrested 16 more people, including paralegals, over traffic accident compensation claims worth more than HK\$3.6 million (US\$459,290) tied to a wave of

“crash-for-cash” scams. The suspects, 11 men and five women aged 28 to 65, included three paralegals at a law firm in Mong Kok that was raided last month, the force said on Thursday. The other suspects were the claimants and worked in a variety of jobs, including IT technician, beautician, logistics worker, tutor, property...

- [US rapper Afroman celebrates after court protects his right to mock police](#) (2026-03-19 12:04)

Grammy-nominated rapper Afroman won a defamation lawsuit filed by seven Ohio sheriff's deputies who sued him over music videos in which he used home security footage to mock their raid of his home. “We did it, America! Yeah, we did it! Freedom of speech! Right on! Right on!” the 51-year-old rapper, born Joseph Foreman, shouted outside the courthouse after the Wednesday evening verdict. He later posted the clip to social media. The case tested the limits of parody and the license artists can take...

- [‘Uncompromising’ : Takaichi’s meeting with Trump seen as key to China-Japan ties](#) (2026-03-19 12:00)

China and Japan's long-standing rivalry has deep historic roots, and relations between the two have taken a significant turn for the worse in recent months. This article, the third in a three-part series, looks at how US President Donald Trump, Taiwan and war in the Middle East factor into their relationship. Read the second part here. As Chinese President Xi Jinping is set to host regional leaders for the Apec summit later this year, observers are closely watching whether the summit could...

- [If the Iran war takes oil above US\\$120 a barrel, how bad could the shock get?](#) (2026-03-19 12:00)

With the US-Israel war on Iran entering its third week, the world faces the risk of a more severe oil shock as military strikes expand to major energy infrastructure, heightening fears of a prolonged conflict. In this explainer, the South China Morning Post examines the latest developments and factors driving oil price volatility and assesses the potential impact on the global economy. Energy infrastructure: what is the latest? An Israeli air strike hit energy facilities on Wednesday at Iran's...

- [Recession fears grip markets as energy facilities come under fire in Middle East](#) (2026-03-19 11:30)

A recession mindset took hold among global investors after strikes on energy infrastructure in the Middle East heightened fears that disruption to production and distribution would keep oil prices elevated for longer, darkening the global economic outlook. Crude prices staged a comeback on Thursday after Iran attacked a liquefied petroleum gas site in Qatar in retaliation for Israel's strikes on its South Pars gas field. Brent futures surged 5.5 per cent to US\$113.53 a barrel in London, and...

- [Filipino jeepney drivers struggle as oil prices surge: ‘what we earn goes to diesel’](#)

(2026-03-19 11:24)

The ripple effects of the war in the Middle East are hitting home hard for Filipino jeepney driver Toni Prado, whose daily earnings have been gutted by soaring fuel prices. He was one of thousands of jeepney drivers who took to the streets across the country on Thursday to protest a more than doubling of local diesel prices after global oil prices surged because of the US-Israel war on Iran. “We are losing our income. What we earn just goes to paying for diesel,” said Prado. “Before I could...

- [SFC prepares to inspect Hong Kong IPO listing sponsors amid quality concerns](#)

(2026-03-19 11:00)

Hong Kong’s market regulator will soon begin inspection of investment banks to assess their roles as sponsors of listing candidates, in its latest effort to uphold the quality of new listings amid a booming market. The Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) said the inspection would focus on whether banks had complied with its January circular, which outlined expectations on staffing and quality controls when handling initial public offerings (IPOs) in Hong Kong. For example, the SFC expected...

- [Gen Z Filipinos lead collapse in support for Duterte ICC case](#) (2026-03-19 10:30)

Growing disinformation in the Philippines and distrust in authorities could have led to a sharp drop in public support, particularly among Gen Z Filipinos, for the International Criminal Court’s (ICC) proceedings against former president Rodrigo Duterte and his deadly war on drugs. Only 32 per cent of Filipino respondents of different age groups approved the ICC’s move to prosecute Duterte in April last year, a month after he was arrested and flown to The Hague, according to a survey by WR...

- [Shanghai certifies 30 overseas offices amid China’s investment sales pitch](#) (2026-03-19 10:30)

Shanghai certified 30 new regional headquarters of multinational corporations and 15 research and development centres funded by overseas entities on Wednesday – a sign of continued interest in the Chinese financial hub despite an overall decline in the country’s foreign direct investment (FDI). Of the companies whose headquarters and R&D centres were certified this week in a ceremony hosted by the city’s mayor, Gong Zheng, eight are on the Fortune 500 list, according to a statement from the...

- [EU inspects Druzhba pipeline in bid to unclog Hungary’s block on Ukraine aid](#)

(2026-03-19 10:26)

European Union experts have arrived in Ukraine to assess the condition of the Druzhba oil pipeline, state energy firm Naftogaz said, after its closure in January caused a row with Hungary that is blocking an EU loan to Kyiv. The EU last week proposed sending a mission to inspect the pipeline. Ukraine later said it had accepted the EU offer of technical support and funding to

restore oil flows through the damaged pipeline. Hungary and Slovakia have been cut off from Russian oil deliveries via...

- [A troubled US aircraft carrier is moving away from Iran. Does it reflect bigger problems?](#) (2026-03-19 10:00)

Recent mishaps involving the USS Gerald R. Ford suggest America's military is overstretched and its industrial base has been weakened, according to Chinese analysts. The warship – the world's most advanced nuclear-powered aircraft carrier – has been supporting the US operation against Iran in the Red Sea. But US media reported this week that it would head to Greece for repairs after a 30-hour fire last Thursday destroyed more than 600 sailors' berths. That followed reports in January of plumbing...

- [Swallowing pieces of silk, eating cacti or just 1 meal a day – all in pursuit of thinness in ancient China](#) (2026-03-19 10:00)

Long before calorie counting and healthy diets, women in ancient China were already under intense pressure to stay slim, even swallowing cacti or silk in pursuit of what was perceived as perfection. Many assume ancient Chinese women prized fuller figures, but the reality was more nuanced. The Tang dynasty (618–907) is often cited as the classic example, thanks in part to figures such as the female sovereign Wu Zetian and the consort Yang Yuhuan. Yet plumpness was never the sole ideal. In most...

- [Tribute to towering jurist: how the late Sir Anthony Mason shaped Hong Kong courts](#) (2026-03-19 09:49)

Sir Anthony Mason, one of Hong Kong's first and greatest justices to sit on our Court of Final Appeal, passed away on Tuesday at the age of 100. Not only was he a towering jurist in the common law world, but his contribution to Hong Kong's legal system, particularly in its formative post-1997 years, was both profound and enduring. Sir Anthony served on the High Court of Australia for 23 years, with the final eight years (1987 to 1995) as its chief justice. He was perhaps best known to the Hong...

- [Blooming marvellous: Tokyo's cherry blossom season officially begins](#) (2026-03-19 09:46)

Tokyo's meteorologists declared the start of the much-loved cherry blossom season in the Japanese capital on Thursday, as residents prepare to host outdoor picnics under dazzling floral displays. The cherry season for Tokyo starts when the official sample tree at Yasukuni Shrine opens at least five flowers. "Today, the blooming of the Somei Yoshino cherry blossoms was observed," the Tokyo Regional Headquarters of the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said in an eagerly awaited statement,...

- [Hong Kong's CK Hutchison reports 7% gain in underlying profit amid 'unforeseen challenges'](#) (2026-03-19 09:32)

CK Hutchison Holdings, one of the flagship companies owned by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing's family, reported a 7 per cent increase in underlying profit for 2025, as the company predicted its businesses would face “new and perhaps unforeseen challenges” in 2026. The ports-to-telecoms conglomerate said on Thursday that underlying profit reached HK\$22.3 billion (US\$2.85 billion) last year, compared with HK\$20.8 billion a year earlier. Including a one-time accounting loss, net profit fell...

- [Iran war prompts global energy rethink that favours China](#) (2026-03-19 09:19)

Oil prices surged about 10 per cent and Chinese stocks fell on Thursday as widening conflict in the Middle East created new concerns about global energy supplies. Brent crude, the global benchmark, touched US\$117 a barrel, having risen 60 per cent since the US and Israel first attacked Iran on February 28. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index and the mainland CSI 300 both fell about 2 per cent. Prices of crude oil and gas jumped after Israel bombed Iran's huge South Pars gas field and Iran responded by...

- [Taiwan leader William Lai 'glorifying Japanese colonial rule', Beijing says](#) (2026-03-19 09:17)

Beijing has accused Taiwanese leader William Lai Ching-te of “glorifying Japanese colonial rule” in a recent speech. The People's Liberation Army also stepped up the number of sorties by aircraft around the island after Lai made the comments on Saturday at an event to mark the 30th anniversary of Taiwan's first direct elections. Lai, from the independence-leaning Democratic Progressive Party, told the event that the early days of Kuomintang (KMT) rule over Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek were...

- [Philippines urged to 'seriously' address defence gaps to counter aerial threats](#) (2026-03-19 09:17)

As war rages in the Middle East thousands of miles from the Philippines, a senior military official has urged Manila to reflect on its own vulnerabilities, stressing that military modernisation should not be mere “lip service”. Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr earlier this week called on the country to strengthen its air defences, particularly systems capable of intercepting missiles from hostile states, stressing that Manila should ensure its security suppliers meet demand in the...

- [Operator killed as tower crane collapses at Hong Kong construction site](#) (2026-03-19 09:15)

A tower crane collapsed at a construction site for a public housing project in Hong Kong's Kwai Chung on Thursday afternoon, killing the operator and damaging a truck. The contractor involved, Woon Lee Construction, was previously fined by authorities over two fatal incidents at its sites in 2009 and 2011. The accident occurred at 4.27pm at the construction site for the public housing project Tai Wo Hau Road phases 1 and 2 near Pik Kwai House at Kwai Chung Estate. The 62-year-old male operator,...

- [Singapore-headquartered GLP eyes 50% rent surge as China demand fuels logistics growth](#) (2026-03-19 09:00)

GLP, a global operator and investor in logistics, digital infrastructure, renewable energy and finance, is deepening its commitment to China's growth, projecting as much as a 50 per cent rise in logistics rental rates, supported by stronger domestic consumption and wider adoption of alternative energies. Angela Zhao, CEO of GLP China, said the country's 15th five-year development plan for 2026 to 2030 would further cement the company's role as a global thematic investor in "new economy" ...

- [China is weathering the Iran war oil shock better than others in Asia](#) (2026-03-19 08:30)

As the war in Iran rages and the consequences of the shock to commodity markets become clearer, the vulnerability of Asia's economies tops the list of concerns in the research reports of investment banks. The region's reliance on energy imports from the Gulf has come under scrutiny. The facts speak for themselves. Three-quarters of the oil supplies that passed through the Strait of Hormuz before Iran effectively closed the waterway were destined for China, India, Japan and South Korea. While...

- [Kremlin says Ukraine peace talks on 'situational pause' amid Iran war](#) (2026-03-19 08:27)

Peace talks between the United States, Russia and Ukraine on ending the Ukraine war, the deadliest European conflict since World War II, were on a "situational pause", the Kremlin said on Thursday. Moscow's statement followed a report by Russia's Izvestia newspaper that the Iran war had temporarily halted negotiations between Moscow, Washington and Kyiv. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia hoped the pause would end and another round of negotiations can be held. US President...

- [China's youth unemployment falls for sixth consecutive month in February](#) (2026-03-19 07:57)

China's urban youth unemployment rate fell in February for the sixth consecutive month, though the marginal improvement provides little reprieve for jobseekers in a challenging post-holiday labour market. The jobless rate for the 16-to-24 age group, excluding students, edged down to 16.1 per cent in February from 16.3 per cent in January, according to data released by the National Bureau of Statistics on Thursday. The figure has been gradually declining since August, when a record 12.2 million...

- [China presses EV makers to end price war and focus on innovation as demand cools](#) (2026-03-19 07:50)

Chinese authorities have renewed their push for stricter oversight of the electric vehicle (EV) market, urging carmakers to move away from aggressive discounting and focus instead on technological innovation. The directive comes as domestic manufacturers struggle with cooling demand and the phasing out of long-standing government subsidies. At a high-level meeting on

March 17, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, the National Development and Reform Commission and the State...

- [Hongkongers on BN\(O\) pathway won't face tougher English test, UK confirms](#) (2026-03-19 07:21)

The UK government has confirmed that stricter English language requirements for immigrants announced earlier this month will not apply to Hongkongers using the British National (Overseas) visa pathway. The clarification from Minister for Migration and Citizenship Mike Tapp came after more than 30 members of parliament sent a letter to the Home Office last month urging it to maintain the existing English threshold for BN(O) applicants. “The increase in the English language requirement in the...

- [BTS' comeback concert, Jean-Claude Van Damme talks art: 7 Lifestyle highlights](#) (2026-03-19 07:15)

We have selected seven Lifestyle stories from the past seven days that resonated with our readers. If you would like to see more of our reporting, please consider subscribing. 1. Are you ready, Army? Free BTS concert to mark a K-pop comeback like no other The seven-member group – made up of members RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V and Jung Kook – will stage a free comeback performance in front of 22,000 fans, marking their first full show as a collective in nearly three and a half years, after...

- [Hundreds die crossing Mediterranean as 2026 already smashes records](#) (2026-03-19 07:07)

The first two months of 2026 saw a record number of migrant deaths in the Mediterranean, despite fewer crossing attempts towards Europe, according to data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). At least 655 people died or went missing in January and February - more than double the 287 recorded for the same period last year. NGOs and researchers said the reasons were multiple: storms, complications for rescue operations and border closures. Frontex, the EU's border control...

- [PM Anutin takes charge in Thailand as Mideast chaos pressures economy](#) (2026-03-19 06:16)

Anutin Charnvirakul sailed through a lower house vote on Thursday to become Thailand's new prime minister, as the conservative establishment emerges on top after years of bitter struggle with pro-democrats. But Anutin's vow to reset from years of slumping growth and political crisis has been complicated by the US-Israeli war on Iran, which is costing Thailand tens of millions of dollars each day to prop up fuel prices, with ominous queues forming at petrol stations. Addressing lawmakers before...

- [Funeral urns stolen for ransom in Malaysia trigger police hunt for cross-border gang](#) (2026-03-19 06:10)

Malaysian police are on a hunt for thieves who stole 30 urns from a funeral home in the southern state of Negeri Sembilan, in a bizarre case with possible links to a cross-border criminal group holding the ashes of deceased for ransom. The Xiao En memorial park reported the incident in late February, when it discovered that at least 15 urns had gone missing from a columbarium. Police later revised the figure to 30. The cemetery groundsmen received a WhatsApp call from a foreign-registered number...

- [South Korean cafe' s US\\$1.35 'toilet without ordering' menu flush with criticism](#) (2026-03-19 06:00)

A social media post showing a cafe charging 2,000 won (US\$1.35) for restroom use without a purchase has sparked heated debate online in South Korea. The image featured a screenshot of a self-order kiosk displaying a menu item reading “restroom use without ordering”, priced at 2,000 won per person per visit. The post also drew mixed reactions in an online community for small business owners. One user said the fee was understandable, writing that many people come in just to use the restroom...

- [Leading Chinese remote-sensing scientist Zhang Jinshui dies at 47](#) (2026-03-19 06:00)

Zhang Jinshui, a pioneering scientist in remote sensing who led major R&D programmes in China and was instrumental in enhancing the country' s food security with satellite technologies, has died at the age of 47. Zhang, a professor and doctoral supervisor in the faculty of geographical science at Beijing Normal University, died in Beijing on March 9 following “unsuccessful medical treatment”, according to multiple mainland media reports. Last Wednesday the research institute where he had been...

- [China café offers coffee made with eggs brewed in child urine; considered nutritious delicacy](#) (2026-03-19 06:00)

A coffee shop in China is offering a new type of Americano which includes eggs brewed in child urine, a drink believed to be of nutritional value. The shop in Dongyang city in eastern China' s Zhejiang province recently began to offer the special brew, claiming it was popular. Costing 28 yuan (US\$4) per cup, the outlet sold more than 100 cups a day at weekends. Eggs brewed in child urine are a speciality in Dongyang. Locals believe that child urine, or urine from boys under the age of 10, can...

- [Prolonged Iran war could have 'serious' impact on food prices, says UN' s FAO](#) (2026-03-19 06:00)

The United Nations has warned the conflict in the Middle East is sending shock waves from the fertiliser industry to food prices, as countries across the northern hemisphere – including China – enter their spring planting seasons. If the conflict lasts longer than three months, the impact would become “significantly more serious”, affecting input costs in agriculture and disrupting the next planting season with longer-term consequences, chief economist of the Food and Agriculture Organization of...

- [Cambodia boosts fuel imports from Singapore, Malaysia amid petrol station closures](#) (2026-03-19 04:55)

Cambodia is importing more fuel from suppliers in Singapore and Malaysia to make up for supply shortfalls from Vietnam and China, its energy minister said on Wednesday, as the US-Israeli war on Iran squeezes fuel availability globally. About a third of the 6,300 petrol stations in the country of nearly 18 million people closed last week due to uncertainty over the impact of the conflict on fuel prices, but only 5.77 per cent are closed currently, Energy Minister Keo Rottanak said. Vietnam and...

- [Hong Kong businessman Jason Poon, 5 others arrested in HK\\$6 million fraud case](#) (2026-03-19 04:28)

Hong Kong businessman Jason Poon Cheuk-hung, his wife and four others have been arrested on suspicion of defrauding an enterprise financing scheme out of HK\$6 million (US\$765,500) during the Covid-19 pandemic, the South China Morning Post has learned. A source confirmed to the SCMP on Thursday that construction businessman Poon, 56, and his 54-year-old wife were among six people arrested the day before for conspiracy to defraud. Police intelligence suggested a surgical mask manufacturer had...

- [Philippine police thwart Roblox-linked school shooting plot by 7 teens](#) (2026-03-19 04:22)

Philippine police have foiled a school shooting and rescued seven students radicalised by “foreigners” online to stage an attack in Laguna province near Manila, as calls grow to enhance parental safeguards against digital threats. Officers rounded up the suspects – five boys and two girls, aged 12 to 17 – on February 2 after receiving a tip-off about the alleged plot they intended to carry out a fortnight later, the Philippine Star reported. The teens, who were turned over to social workers,...

- [Why tiny atomic clocks may hold the key to China mass-producing cheap swarm drones](#) (2026-03-19 04:00)

Timing is everything in modern warfare, where even a nanosecond’s delay can make the difference between hitting or missing a target in a coordinated drone or missile attack. China may now have taken a major step forward in this field with the mass production of the world’s smallest atomic clock – something the researchers behind it say could transform drone warfare, underwater navigation and battlefield communication. Developed by a research team led by Professor Chen Jiehua from Wuhan...

- [AI version of late actor Val Kilmer to co-star in new movie](#) (2026-03-19 03:30)

Actor Val Kilmer will posthumously appear in what First Line Films calls a first-ever performance enabled by generative artificial intelligence in the upcoming film *As Deep as the Grave*, the production company announced on Wednesday. Kilmer, best known for roles in *Top Gun*, *The Doors* and *Batman Forever*, had originally been cast as Father Fintan - a Catholic priest

and Native American spiritualist - but was unable to work on set due to complications stemming from throat cancer. He was 65 when...

- [FBI ‘investigating’ top US security official who resigned over Iran war](#) (2026-03-19 03:04)

The FBI is investigating whether Joe Kent, who resigned his position as a top counterterrorism official this week in protest of the Iran war, improperly shared classified information, a person familiar with the matter said Wednesday. The investigation precedes Kent’s resignation Tuesday from his role as director of the US government’s National Counterterrorism Centre, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing FBI inquiry. But it comes as the Justice Department...

- [Japan gets tough against teachers’ sexual misconduct, voyeurism after arrests](#) (2026-03-19 03:00)

Japan’s education ministry has launched a campaign to fight sexual misconduct involving teachers and revised regulations against voyeurism in the wake of seven male educators arrested last year for taking inappropriate videos of students and sharing them on social media. A law aimed at preventing sexual misconduct in the nation’s schools went into effect in 2022, but revisions were introduced as a result of the offences. The ministry intends to update teachers on the rules, including dismissal...

- [China’s global tech push](#) (2026-03-19 02:40)

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- [‘Unprecedented in spread’ : UK races to contain deadly meningitis outbreak](#) (2026-03-19 02:38)

Britain will roll out meningitis vaccines to students at a university in southeast England after an “unprecedented” outbreak of the disease killed two people while the number of new cases jumped to 20. The UK Health Security Agency said all those affected were young people. A 21-year-old student at the University of Kent and a teenage student at a school in the town of Faversham have died. Six of the nine confirmed cases are group B (MenB), the agency added. It was also aware of a baby with a...

- [World’s ‘happiest’ places revealed as social media weighs on us](#) (2026-03-19 02:17)

Heavy social media use contributes to a stark decline in well-being among young people, with the effects particularly worrying in teenage girls in English-speaking countries and western Europe according to the World Happiness Report 2026 published on Thursday. The annual report, published by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, also found that Finland is the happiest land in the world for the ninth year in a row, with other Nordic countries such as Iceland, Denmark, Sweden...

- [How China opened the door to creating a direct rival to US payment systems](#) (2026-03-19 02:00)

China's recent changes to the rules governing its global payment system could pave the way for turning it into a genuine alternative to Western networks, according to a new report. Beijing now appears to be moving towards building the Cross-border Interbank Payment System (CIPS) into a global platform compliant with multicurrency settlements and other foreign payment channels, said the study led by Ju Jiandong, a chair professor at Tsinghua University's PBC School of Finance. Beijing recently...

- [Middle East banks eye Hong Kong as 'safe haven' amid Iran threats, InvestHK head says](#) (2026-03-19 01:30)

Middle East banks and wealthy investors are poised to increase their investments in Hong Kong amid geopolitical tensions to diversify their risk and capture growing opportunities in Asia, according to the head of InvestHK, the government agency tasked with attracting foreign investment. A couple of Middle East banks were in the process of setting up offices in Hong Kong with the help of InvestHK, said Alpha Lau Hai-suen, its director general. These additions would strengthen the city's ties with...

- [Why North Korea's Kim expects the US to come 'cap in hand' for Trump talks](#) (2026-03-19 01:30)

North Korea fired a volley of ballistic missiles on Saturday, just as US officials were in Seoul exploring ways to reopen talks with the regime that launched them. But Kim Jong-un is not waiting by the phone. Instead, analysts say North Korea's supreme leader has set terms that leave little room for negotiation, with a calendar that leaves even less room for a summit. US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Michael DeSombre touched down in Seoul last week and met Jeong...

- [Here's what an executive-led government really means in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-19 01:30)

In my experience, most people misunderstand the concept of "separation of powers", and so I would not be at all surprised if most people also misunderstand the term "executive-led government". In the case of separation of powers, the confusion usually arises from the use of the word "separation". It connotes a meaning of absolute independence or alienation. A better word would have been "division". The concept of separation of powers focuses on the division of power in a government and how that...

- [Video evidence shows Tai Po fire spread from ground to top in just 90 seconds](#) (2026-03-19 01:24)

This story has been made freely available as a public service to our readers. Please consider supporting SCMP's journalism by subscribing. The first of a series of public evidential hearings into a fire that engulfed a residential complex in Hong Kong and killed at least 168 people begins on Thursday, nearly four months after the disaster. Ordered by the city's leader and

overseen by a judge-led independent committee, the hearings are meant to “clarify therelevant facts through oral evidence,...

- [China’ s PLA reveals AI-assisted aerial refuelling tech days after US military tanker crash](#) (2026-03-19 01:00)

The People’ s Liberation Army has announced a new AI-assisted task dispatch system for China’ s aerial refuelling tankers, days after a US military tanker crashed in the Middle East. According to the official PLA Daily, the Chinese air force has streamlined its aerial refuelling operations with a smart artificial intelligence (AI) system to improve efficiency and safety. The report on Monday came just days after a US Air Force Boeing KC-135 “Stratotanker” aerial refuelling tanker crashed in...

- [Chinese man lives for 8 years with chopstick stuck in throat, resisting surgery due to fear](#) (2026-03-19 01:00)

A man in China who had a 12cm-long metal chopstick lodged in his throat for eight years recently had surgery to remove the object. The man, surnamed Wang, underwent the surgery at Dalian Municipal Central Hospital in northeastern Liaoning province in early March. His experience has shocked internet users, the Daxiang News reported. Eight years ago, Wang swallowed the chopstick by accident while eating and drinking alcohol. At the time he felt pain but did not have any breathing problems. When...

- [Call for review over how Hong Kong manages wild boars and buffaloes](#) (2026-03-19 00:30)

Animal rights groups have urged Hong Kong authorities to review their culling strategy for wild boars and to install animal bridges and other measures to reduce human-wildlife conflict in urban areas after incidents involving wild boars and a buffalo. They warned that as urban expansion, particularly the Northern Metropolis project, cleared large tracts of land and further eroded wildlife habitat, poor city planning would worsen the situation, endangering more animals. On Tuesday, authorities...

- [Russian hypersonic jets buzz Japan’ s coast in ‘thinly veiled threat’](#) (2026-03-19 00:00)

Russia’ s defence ministry has released footage of its fighter jets carrying Kinzhal hypersonic missiles conducting exercises over the Sea of Japan, or East Sea, with the move interpreted as a message to Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi ahead of her talks with US President Donald Trump in Washington. The video shows a MiG-31 with a Kinzhal missile slung beneath its fuselage, with the ministry saying the aircraft was one of several that carried out manoeuvres off Japan’ s northern coast....

- [Pop Mart’ s Labubu headed to big screen in collaboration with Sony Pictures](#) (2026-03-19 00:00)

Chinese toymaker Pop Mart and Sony Pictures Entertainment announced on Thursday a feature film starring Labubu, the company’ s most popular character. Analysts said the film was a

strategic move to extend Labubu's intellectual property (IP) value and support medium-term growth, following the trajectory of global icons like Barbie and Hello Kitty. The film, still in early development, would be a mix of live action and computer-generated imagery, Pop Mart said in a statement. Lung Ka-sing, the...

- [Mexico invites Spain's king to World Cup in sign of thaw](#) (2026-03-18 23:34)

Spain's King Felipe VI has been invited to the 2026 World Cup in Mexico by President Claudia Sheinbaum, the royal palace said on Wednesday, signalling a thaw in relations between the two countries. Diplomatic relations have been strained since 2019, when the Mexican government demanded that the Spanish crown apologise for the abuses committed during the conquest and subsequent colonisation of the Americas in the 16th century. Sheinbaum excluded the king from her inauguration in October 2024...

- [Hong Kong follows Federal Reserve to keep base rate unchanged amid Middle East war](#) (2026-03-18 23:16)

Hong Kong's monetary authority kept its base rate unchanged after a similar move by the US Federal Reserve, as analysts said that the Middle East conflict has added to the uncertainty over the pace of rate cuts this year. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) maintained the city's base rate at 4 per cent on Thursday. Hours earlier, the Fed also kept its target rate in the range of 3.5 per cent to 3.75 per cent, after the second meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) this...

- [Why Beijing has struggled to rally Asia against Japan over Takaichi's Taiwan remarks](#) (2026-03-18 22:00)

China and Japan's long-standing rivalry has deep historic roots, and relations between the two have taken a significant turn for the worse in recent months. This, the second in a three-part series, looks at whether Beijing overplayed its hand on the Taiwan issue in the face of what is a 'strategic reality' for Japan and how it may leverage its history of Japanese aggression. Find the first part here. More than four months into the bitter chill that has settled over China-Japan relations, the...

- [Fears grow over US drug supply's rising dependence on Chinese ingredients](#) (2026-03-18 21:33)

Beijing's global pharmaceutical push is following a playbook seen in rare earths, semiconductors and electric vehicles, US lawmakers said on Wednesday, as concerns grow over the United States' reliance on Chinese drug ingredients. "China is cornering the market on our medicines – from the supply of generic drugs that Americans depend on every day, to the cutting-edge biotech pipeline that will determine who leads medicine in the years and decades ahead," said John Moolenaar, the chair of the...

- [Europe says no to Trump's Iran demands: 'not our war'](#) (2026-03-18 20:12)

When US President Donald Trump asked countries to join a global effort against Iran and deploy ships to prise open the Strait of Hormuz, whose near closure has held the global economy in a vice, he was rebuffed by some of America's closest allies. Using unusually blunt language, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz told his country's lawmakers on Wednesday that he agreed Iran must not be allowed to pose a threat to its neighbours but expressed doubts about the rationale behind the US-Israeli...

- [Iran can still attack US interests, government appears intact, spy chief Gabbard says](#)  
(2026-03-18 19:34)

Iran's government has been degraded since the war began on February 28, but it appears to be intact and Tehran and its proxies remain capable of attacking US and allies' interests in the Middle East, US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard said on Wednesday. "The regime in Iran appears to be intact but largely degraded by Operation Epic Fury," Gabbard said, referring to the US-Israel military campaign against Iran, in her opening statement to the Senate Intelligence Committee's...

- [US Fed defies Trump to keep interest rates unchanged amid Iran war concerns](#)  
(2026-03-18 18:52)

The US Federal Reserve kept interest rates unchanged on Wednesday as expected, in defiance of President Donald Trump as the world's largest economy battles stubborn inflation, weak labour demand and an "uncertain" outlook due to the war in Iran. The Fed's 11-1 vote kept rates steady at a range between 3.50 per cent and 3.75 per cent, with officials flagging one expected rate cut by the end of the year. "The implications of developments in the Middle East for the US economy are uncertain," the...

- [US says mainland China not planning to attack Taiwan in 2027 after threat assessment](#)  
(2026-03-18 18:12)

Beijing is unlikely to attack Taiwan next year, given security and economic deterrents, including its belief that an amphibious assault could fail and that the technological, supply chain and investor costs would be huge, according to a US threat assessment released on Wednesday. The intelligence overview appeared to walk back a projection by the Pentagon last year that Beijing wanted to take the self-governing island by force as early as 2027 and comes as US President Donald Trump takes a more...

- [Iran threatens Gulf energy targets after Pars gas field struck, sending oil prices higher](#)  
(2026-03-18 17:03)

Iran's huge Pars gas field was hit on Wednesday in the first reported strikes on Iran's Gulf energy infrastructure of the US-Israeli war, prompting Tehran to announce it would respond with attacks on oil and gas targets throughout the Gulf. Oil prices shot up after the attack, a major escalation in a war that has already halted shipping from the world's most important energy-producing region and could now bring lasting damage to its infrastructure. Benchmark

Brent crude prices rose around 5...

- [Trump allows foreign ships between domestic ports to stabilise petrol costs amid Iran war](#) (2026-03-18 16:25)

US President Donald Trump has announced a temporary 60-day suspension of the Jones Act, the century-old law that mandates cargo moving between domestic ports be transported on vessels built, operated and staffed by American citizens or permanent residents. The move comes in response to the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz – a key chokepoint – amid the escalating US-Israeli war against Iran, which has triggered the most severe global oil supply disruption in recent history. The waiver allows...

- [Pakistan to pause Afghan strikes for Eid at request of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey](#) (2026-03-18 15:39)

Pakistan announced on Wednesday a pause in strikes against Afghanistan, saying the decision was made ahead of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr at the request of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey. In a statement, Pakistan's information minister Attaullah Tarar said the pause in strikes on “terrorists and their support infrastructure in Afghanistan” would take effect at midnight on Wednesday and remain in place until midnight on Monday. “Pakistan offers this gesture in good faith and in keeping with...

- [2 Hongkongers held after raids on 3 illegal fuel stations amid oil price spike](#) (2026-03-18 15:19)

Hong Kong authorities have raided three illegal fuelling stations and arrested two men, seizing more than 1,800 litres (475.5 gallons) of petrol with an estimated market value of HK\$54,000 (US\$6,891) as oil prices continue to spike amid the widening conflict in the Middle East. The joint crackdown by the Fire Services Department and the Customs and Excise Department in the past week also led to the detention of three vehicles and the arrest of a suspected station operator and...

- [Chaos over Donald Trump's China trip likely to further test Beijing's patience with US](#) (2026-03-18 15:00)

Visits to China by foreign leaders are tightly choreographed and meticulously planned affairs, even by the usual standards of international diplomacy. But the chaotic nature of Donald Trump's White House and his request to delay a planned visit to China in the wake of his decision to attack Iran are widely believed to be causing increasing frustration in Beijing. The South China Morning Post has previously reported that preparations for the visit had been dogged by problems, with the Chinese...

- [Hong Kong securities watchdog urges stock exchange to tighten listing, compliance rules](#) (2026-03-18 14:50)

Hong Kong's securities regulator on Wednesday recommended strengthening the stock exchange's regulations to better protect investors following a review of 2024 compliance and enforcement cases. The Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) submitted its findings after vetting listed companies' internal control reviews, their handling of late auditor resignations and the processes of the Hong Kong stock exchange's listing division. The regulator noted that while the stock exchange "had taken steps...

- [Zelensky urges EU to bypass Hungary's 'blackmail' veto on vital US\\$103 billion loan](#) (2026-03-18 14:35)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday urged the European Union to overcome a veto by Hungary on a €90 billion (US\$103 billion) loan vital for his country. Zelensky, during a visit to Madrid to meet Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, said he considered that the "main issue" of an EU summit to be held Thursday and Friday in Brussels. "We are really counting on the countries and the EU to find ways to resolve this issue," he said. Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban – Russian...

- [Why tariffs aren't the biggest factor holding back US-Asean trade](#) (2026-03-18 14:30)

When the Trump administration rolled out sweeping tariffs on "Liberation Day" in April 2025, the reaction across Southeast Asia was swift: markets dipped, supply chains scrambled and governments went into damage control. Governments had a choice: retaliate or negotiate. They negotiated. Southeast Asian countries including Indonesia, Malaysia and Cambodia have signed Agreements on Reciprocal Trade with the United States. Those deals lowered tariffs from their peak levels and opened market access...

- [Red Sea fix? China-bound oil tankers tap Saudi plan to bypass Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-18 14:00)

Saudi Arabia is activating its Red Sea "Plan B" to divert crude via the port of Yanbu, allowing tankers – including Chinese very large crude carriers (VLCCs) – to bypass the Strait of Hormuz, though analysts warn the route has limited capacity. The move comes after Iran effectively closed the strait in response to United States and Israeli military strikes, a conflict now in its third week that has rattled global energy markets. New Vista, a VLCC owned by China Merchants Energy Shipping, had...

- [Iranian women footballers return home after withdrawing Australia asylum bids](#) (2026-03-18 13:47)

The Iranian women's soccer team crossed the Turkish border into Iran on Wednesday to complete a fraught return journey from Australia, after five members withdrew asylum claims they had lodged there. Australia had granted humanitarian visas to six players and one support staff member after they sought asylum, saying they feared possible persecution if they returned to Iran. Concerns over their safety surfaced when several players failed to sing the national anthem at a women's Asian Cup match...

- [Chinese experts assess military decapitation in Iran, Venezuela for lessons closer to home](#) (2026-03-18 13:37)

Iran's power structure, succession mechanism and geographic conditions are all factors in its military resilience, despite the decapitation of its leadership by the US and Israel, according to Chinese experts. They also said the United States was unlikely to achieve regime change in Iran without deploying ground forces, a lesson one expert argued Beijing would take into account for any operation on Taiwan. Beginning on February 28, the US and Israel have killed a string of senior Iranian...

- [Hong Kong campsite operator who murdered 'alien' girlfriend jailed for life](#) (2026-03-18 13:20)

A Hong Kong campsite operator has been convicted of murdering his live-in girlfriend and sentenced to life imprisonment after telling police he believed she was an alien, with the judge describing the killing as a "vicious, brutal and savage attack and murder". A High Court jury of four men and three women on Wednesday unanimously found Tang Lung-fai, 56, guilty of causing the death of Fok Sin-ye, 38, who was also known as Maggie, on or about April 14, 2022. Madam Justice Susana D'Almada...

- [Hong Kong to establish global version of university entrance exam on pilot basis](#) (2026-03-18 12:47)

Hong Kong's education authorities plan to establish an "internationally benchmarked" version of the city's university entrance exam on a pilot basis to allow foreign students to apply for admission to higher education institutions both locally and in mainland China. They revealed that technical explorations and studies with relevant bodies on developing the international version of the Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE) exam were under way. Secretary for Education Christine Choi Yuk-lin said...

- [Pakistan's fuel smugglers squeezed by rising costs as Iran war hits supply](#) (2026-03-18 12:45)

In Pakistan's southwestern mountains, pickup trucks loaded with plastic cans of fuel smuggled from Iran line dusty roads as youngsters unload the containers, fill smaller cans and strap them onto motorbikes to supply nearby markets. The illicit trade has long thrived in the region but is feeling the knock-on effects of the war which has engulfed the Middle East following US-Israeli strikes on Iran. Supplies coming across the 900km (560-mile) border between Pakistan and Iran have dropped by...

- [China-based Cosco Shipping Ports expects 'limited' impact from Iran conflict](#) (2026-03-18 12:31)

Cosco Shipping Ports, a unit of state-owned giant Cosco Shipping, reported modest earnings growth for 2025, as management expects to expand in emerging markets amid rising

geopolitical risks to global trade. Net profit rose 1.1 per cent to US\$312.1 million, and revenue increased 11 per cent to US\$1.67 billion, according to its 2025 results. Total container throughput climbed 6.2 per cent to 153 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs). The company's overseas terminals saw strong growth, with...

- [US hawks are wrong: China's rise in science benefits America too](#) (2026-03-18 12:30)

As Chinese science makes great strides, some US China hawks have been sounding the alarm. In their view, Chinese scientific progress is a significant national security threat to the United States, as it signals the relative decline of US scientific dominance and potentially creates dependence on China. In one extreme case of this view, Leland Miller, a senior consultant for the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, declared in a recent interview that China discovering a cure for...

- [Hong Kong more attractive to talent amid Middle East tensions, labour chief says](#) (2026-03-18 12:24)

Hong Kong's labour chief has said geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have made the city, with its relative security and stability, "a more attractive place" for global talent, including those from Gulf countries. Secretary for Labour and Welfare Chris Sun Yuk-han also highlighted the government's efforts in recent years to attract talent, dismissing concerns that most successful applicants under its schemes were from mainland China. He said that about a fourth of imported workers from...

- [Chinese military set for EU and Nato talks as Iran war reshapes global security picture](#) (2026-03-18 12:22)

A delegation from China's People's Liberation Army will travel to Brussels next week for talks with the European Union and Nato amid heightened concerns over global security caused by the war in Iran. The EU-China Security and Defence Consultations will take place next Tuesday, official sources confirmed, with the talks between Nato and the PLA's Office for International Military Cooperation scheduled for the same week. On the EU side, the talks will be chaired by Benedikta von Seherr-Thoss,...

- [Former Hong Kong lawmaker denies abetting criminal activity in mainland China](#) (2026-03-18 12:00)

A former Hong Kong lawmaker on trial for allegedly inciting subversion has denied abetting criminal activity by supporting mainland Chinese dissidents, accusing Beijing of levelling false charges against them. Prosecutors on Wednesday challenged Lee Cheuk-yan's claim that he had no intention to incite others to overthrow the mainland's communist rule when he called for an end to "one-party dictatorship" as former chairman of the now-disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic...

- [As Trump ramps up pressure on Cuba, China has ‘very limited options’](#) (2026-03-18 12:00)

As Washington steps up rhetoric and pressure on Cuba after its campaign in Iran, Beijing finds itself torn between geopolitical reality and ideological affinity. According to analysts, Beijing has few good options to counter US hegemony in Washington’s own backyard, and its response is likely to be constrained to diplomatic opposition and modest humanitarian aid. They said any disruption to global stability ultimately harmed Beijing’s interests and did not see prolonged US military action...

- [Hong Kong customs seizes nearly 1,000 smuggled turtles worth HK\\$1 million](#) (2026-03-18 11:45)

Hong Kong customs officers have seized 986 smuggled live turtles worth about HK\$1 million (US\$127,620) from a private car attempting to leave the city, arresting the driver and a passenger. Officers discovered the turtles hidden in seven black plastic bags in the vehicle’s boot at the Hong Kong–Zhuhai–Macau Bridge control point on Tuesday. A 42-year-old driver and a 50-year-old passenger were arrested, a spokesman of Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department said on Wednesday. Both men were...

- [Hong Kong’s Airport Authority to develop HK\\$300 million art storage facility](#) (2026-03-18 11:39)

Hong Kong’s Airport Authority is partnering with a private company to develop a HK\$300 million (US\$38.28 million) art storage facility set to open next year, as the city looks to cement its position as a global hub for trading valuable works. Speaking at a contract signing ceremony on Wednesday, authority CEO Vivian Cheung Kar-fay said Hong Kong was the world’s second-largest primary art trading market and a leading gateway connecting mainland China with the rest of the world. “By leveraging...

- [China to help Cuba with solar energy amid US oil blockade and total power outage](#) (2026-03-18 11:30)

China is offering solar energy to Cuba, an old ally left without power amid the US oil embargo, in a show of strength for Chinese renewable-energy credentials and a sign of Beijing’s economic footprint in Latin America. Beijing’s ambassador to Cuba, Hua Xin, on Monday outlined joint energy projects in progress as part of an effort to ease a “complex power situation” in the Caribbean nation, the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. “China has always maintained that Latin America and the...

- [Hong Kong Tourism Board to woo overnight big spenders, diversify visitor mix](#) (2026-03-18 11:08)

The Hong Kong Tourism Board will allocate three-quarters of its resources to overseas markets this year in a strategic shift aimed at diversifying visitor demographics and attracting more overnight high spenders to the city. The board also revealed on Wednesday that it would launch

a new global campaign by the end of April to promote Hong Kong as a unique world city through social media, advertisements on regional broadcasters and billboards in selected countries. “It is not an easy task to...

- [Iranian intelligence minister Esmail Khatib ‘eliminated’ : Israel’s Katz](#) (2026-03-18 10:50)

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday that the country’s forces had killed Iran’s intelligence minister Esmail Khatib, adding that the military was authorised to kill any high-ranking Iranian official in its sights without seeking further approval. “Last night, Iran’s Intelligence Minister Khatib was also eliminated,” Katz said in a statement. The killing of Khatib comes soon after Israel killed Iran’s security chief Ali Larijani, and another powerful figure, Gholam Reza...

- [Hong Kong’s jobless rate falls by 0.1 percentage point](#) (2026-03-18 10:34)

Hong Kong’s jobless rate dipped by 0.1 percentage point over the past three months to 3.8 per cent, with unemployment dropping in the retail, accommodation, and foundation and superstructure sectors. “The sustained growth momentum of the Hong Kong economy should continue to support the overall labour market, though employment situations in some local sectors may still face challenges due to their business performances,” Secretary for Labour and Welfare Chris Sun Yuk-han said on Wednesday. The...

- [Global EV uptake expected to accelerate as Iran war causes worldwide petrol price hikes](#) (2026-03-18 10:31)

Turbulence in the global oil market caused by the war in Iran revealed a quiet shift that could reshape global energy security: the rapid rise of electric vehicles. Global uptake of electric vehicle fleets has led to avoided oil consumption rising to the equivalent of 70 per cent of Iran’s exports in 2025, according to a new report. Last year, EVs worldwide saved 1.7 million barrels of oil consumption per day. During the same timeframe, Iran exported 2.4 million barrels of oil through the Strait...

- [US trade probes risk alienating Asean, casting doubt on future of deals](#) (2026-03-18 10:28)

The United States’ inclusion of Southeast Asian countries among economic partners it intends to investigate for unfair trade practices is expected to push the region further from Washington’s orbit. The probes, announced last week, could lead to new levies imposed on countries, based on allegations of forced labour and trade surpluses, even as the Donald Trump administration rails against a Supreme Court ruling that shot down sweeping tariffs imposed earlier. Seven countries from the Association...

- [Iran announces first spy execution since war with Israel, US began](#) (2026-03-18 10:16)

Iranian authorities executed a man convicted of spying for Israel, the judiciary said on Wednesday, in the first such execution announced since the war with Israel and the United

States broke out. “The death sentence of a spy for the Zionist regime, who had been providing images and information about the country’s sensitive locations to Mossad officers, was carried out this morning,” the judiciary’s Mizan Online website said. Mizan identified the man as Kouroush Keyvani and said he was arrested...

- [Malaysian medical tourism set to benefit from Iran war’s impact](#) (2026-03-18 10:13)

Malaysia’s medical tourism sector could receive a boost amid the widening conflict in the Middle East as potential patients look for safer alternatives in Asia, according to a private healthcare company. Dubai, the main medical hub in the region, has been under Iranian missile and drone retaliatory attacks since the US and Israel began air strikes on the Islamic Republic on February 28. This could prompt Middle Easterners who are seeking medical treatment to travel to Southeast Asian countries...

- [Ancient Chinese people sentenced to flogging could hire substitutes to endure punishment for a fee](#) (2026-03-18 10:00)

In ancient China there was a unique and quirky profession: if someone committed a crime and was sentenced to flogging, they could hire another person to take the punishment on their behalf. During the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), flogging was a form of punishment in which court officials were publicly beaten with heavy rods. The striking end of the rod was carved into a hammer-like shape and wrapped in iron and sometimes even fitted with barbs, making the punishment extremely brutal. There were...

- [Mystery projectile hits Iran nuclear power complex, highlighting war risks](#) (2026-03-18 09:34)

The UN nuclear watchdog said on Wednesday that Iranian authorities had reported projectile impact on the grounds of the country’s only operational nuclear power plant that caused no damage. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) “has been informed by Iran that a projectile hit the premises of the Bushehr NPP on Tuesday evening”, the Vienna-based agency posted on social media using an acronym for nuclear power plant. “No damage to the plant or injuries to staff reported”. Agency head...

- [Southeast Asia’s AI data centre gold rush tests power grids in the tropical heat](#) (2026-03-18 09:00)

Singapore sits just one degree north of the equator, where the air rarely drops below 25 degrees Celsius (77 degrees Fahrenheit) and humidity clings year round. It is, by most measures, one of the worst places on Earth to cool a data centre. Yet the city state crams more into its small footprint than almost anywhere else. Home to more than 70 facilities and over 1.4 gigawatts of capacity, Singapore has one of the highest densities of data-centre infrastructure per capita on the planet – a...

- [J-20 fighter jet designer scrubbed from Chinese Academy of Sciences website](#) (2026-03-18 09:00)

The chief designer on the J-20 stealth fighter jet has been removed from the website of China's national research institute, amid a sweeping campaign to stamp out corruption in the defence sector. Yang Wei, 62, had been listed as a member of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the top academic body for science and technology. But as of Monday, his name was no longer on the site, according to a snapshot from Internet Archive, which seeks to preserve online content. Yang has not appeared in public...

- [Hong Kong to test new campsite booking system amid overcrowding, litter concerns](#) (2026-03-18 08:54)

Hong Kong could introduce pilot schemes for booking campsites in the city before the National Day holiday in October, as authorities revealed that 32 people were prosecuted for offences in Sai Kung's country parks over the Chinese New Year holiday. Secretary for Environment and Ecology Tse Chin-wan told the Legislative Council on Wednesday that most of those prosecuted were non-locals charged with littering. Authorities had earlier said they were looking at implementing a booking system and...

- [China's Tencent pledges new wave of AI investment to build on 2025 profit jump](#) (2026-03-18 08:52)

Tencent Holdings pledged to double its investment in artificial intelligence products and models in 2026, a bigger bet from the tech giant as it gains greater confidence in the technology's capability to drive future growth across its businesses. The Shenzhen-based company dedicated 18 billion yuan (US\$2.6 billion) to the development of new AI products in 2025, including 7 billion yuan in the fourth quarter alone, said Tencent president Martin Lau Chi-ping at a media briefing on Wednesday. "We...

- [Australian police officer's 'perverts' remark against Indian driver sparks outrage](#) (2026-03-18 08:50)

Distrust in Australian police among Queensland's Indian diaspora is set to deepen after an officer was caught on body camera hurling expletives at an Uber driver, leading the victim to sue the force in federal court. The officer said, "f\*\*\*\*\*g Indians, mate, they are a bunch of f\*\*\*\*\*g perverts" to a colleague in 2023, before they charged the man with committing an indecent act for allegedly masturbating in public, court records showed. A court later quashed the charges because two witnesses...

- [Mainland China says Taiwan can ease Iran energy supply anxiety with peaceful reunification](#) (2026-03-18 08:34)

Authorities in Beijing say peaceful reunification will solve Taiwan's energy supply fears sparked by the hostilities in the Middle East, emphasising that "the removal of barriers between the two sides of the [Taiwan] strait will ensure the smooth flow of resources". Chen

Binhua, spokesman for Beijing's Taiwan Affairs Office, said on Wednesday that peaceful reunification would create enormous opportunities for the island's economic and social development and bring tangible benefits to the people...

- [India's reopening to Chinese investment reflects strategic pragmatism](#) (2026-03-18 08:30)

In April 2020, as the world struggled with the Covid-19 pandemic and soldiers from India and China moved towards a large-scale border stand-off, New Delhi amended its foreign direct investment (FDI) policy to require prior government approval for all investments from countries sharing a land border with India – a measure directed at China. Nearly six years on, India has changed its FDI policy again. It is a significant move for India-China relations. During the pandemic, the FDI regulation...

- [Bus driver union slams KMB policy to turn off air con when no patrons on board](#) (2026-03-18 08:15)

A Hong Kong bus driver union has hit out at a company's guidelines asking drivers to save fuel amid surging oil prices by switching off air conditioning when they are not carrying passengers, arguing that such policies pose safety risks. In a statement on Wednesday, the Motor Transport Workers General Union also called on public bus firm KMB to allow for lower air-conditioning temperatures inside compartments to improve the working environment of drivers. "The union believes that the company's...

- [China's Geely beats BYD in sales, CATL's profit surges 42%: 7 EV reads](#) (2026-03-18 07:30)

We have put together stories from our coverage on electric and new energy vehicles from the past two weeks to help you stay informed. If you would like to see more of our reporting, please consider subscribing. 1. Geely beats BYD sales in first 2 months of 2026 to become China's top carmaker Geely Auto has gained the upper hand in mainland China's intensifying automotive sector, as its diverse product line-up pays off after electric vehicle (EV) king BYD suffered a setback following partial...

- [Japanese atomic bomb survivor who hugged Obama in Hiroshima dies at 88](#) (2026-03-18 07:12)

Shigeaki Mori, the Japanese atomic bomb survivor whose hug with then US president Barack Obama at a 2016 remembrance event in Hiroshima went viral globally, has died at the age of 88, just days after warning that the world seems on the brink of another nuclear catastrophe. Tributes have been coming in since Mori died in Hiroshima on Saturday, with many pointing out that as well as being a survivor of the world's first atomic weapon, he was also a keen amateur historian who attracted attention in...

- [Anthony Mason, who helped put top Hong Kong court on the map, dies at age 100](#) (2026-03-18 07:09)

Former Australian chief justice Anthony Mason, who was one of the first non-permanent judges to join the Hong Kong Court of Final Appeal and oversaw many of its early key constitutional cases, has died at the age of 100. Tributes from current and former city officials poured in for the late jurist on Wednesday, just a day after he died. Mason is widely considered to have been pivotal in establishing the court's role under Hong Kong's new constitutional order following the city's return to...

- [Investors eye Xi-Trump summit for direction as Hong Kong, China stocks shaken by conflict](#) (2026-03-18 06:59)

The prospect of a meeting between President Xi Jinping and US counterpart Donald Trump has become a focal point for investors seeking some reassurance on growth and stability as the conflict in the Middle East dampens appetite for risk. Investors are awaiting clarity on the summit, viewing it as a potential sign of cooperation that could steady mainland China and Hong Kong equities. The meeting had been scheduled for the end of the month, but the White House said it would be postponed by five or...

- [As 'lobster fever' grips China, Tencent makes OpenClaw-based tool available on WeChat](#) (2026-03-18 06:58)

Chinese tech giant Tencent Holdings has integrated its QClaw AI agent as a mini-program in its flagship WeChat app as it pushes to expand adoption of its OpenClaw-based tool. It said QClaw was now accessible as a mini-program inside WeChat after an upgrade on Wednesday that allowed users to transfer files to their personal computers. QClaw was launched last week as an OpenClaw-based artificial intelligence agent for personal computers that users could control remotely from WeChat on their...

- [Envoy slams Australian radio show for calling Singapore an 'autocracy'](#) (2026-03-18 06:34)

A recent radio programme by Australia's national broadcaster made several "baseless claims" about Singapore's political system, Singapore's High Commissioner to Australia, Anil Nayar, said on Tuesday. Nayar noted in his response that the programme's host and several of his commentators called Singapore a "one-party state", an "autocracy" and "verging now on a flawed democracy". "They portrayed Singapore's group representation constituencies (GRCs) – introduced to guarantee minority...

- [Satellite images reveal damage of the widening Middle East war](#) (2026-03-18 06:15)

Satellite images are beginning to be released, giving a glimpse into the toll of the Iran war, with ships ablaze in an Iranian port and destroyed buildings at an American base. Information has so far been scarce about the damage being done across the Middle East, particularly when it's inside closed military facilities, since the start of the war on February 28. The images come from Planet Labs PBC, a San Francisco-based firm used by media outlets, including Associated Press. Planet Labs has put...

- [Chinese scientists use E coli to fight breast tumours from within in mice study](#) (2026-03-18 06:00)

Chinese scientists have engineered E coli bacteria into a novel cancer therapy that colonises tumours, produces an existing drug on-site and delivers it directly – reducing the toxic side effects of traditional chemotherapy. The research, performed on mice with breast cancer, paves the way for targeted cancer treatments in future, according to the scientists from Shandong University in Qingdao, eastern China. Escherichia coli (E coli) is a group of bacteria commonly found in the gut. While most...

- [Jar burials: a glimpse into ancient China's compassion, funeral practices for infant deaths](#) (2026-03-18 06:00)

One of the profound tragedies in life is the burial of the youngest among us. In Neolithic China (9,000–1,500 BC), urn burials were often designated for the deceased children and infants. While urn burials for older babies have been extensively studied, there remains little understanding of burial customs surrounding stillbirths, miscarriages, or newborns who passed shortly after birth. A new 2026 study in China revealed that by examining 16 urn burials associated with perinatal deaths from over...

- [West Kowloon Cultural District to host second international cultural summit during Art Week](#) (2026-03-18 05:54)

[The content of this article has been produced by our advertising partner.] The second Hong Kong International Cultural Summit will take place from 22 to 23 March at the West Kowloon Cultural District (WestK), with museum directors, arts administrators and cultural leaders from around the world expected to attend as the city prepares for its annual Art Week. The two-day event will take place at venues across WestK, including the Xiqu Centre, M+ and the Hong Kong Palace Museum. Organised by the...

- [Nepal voted for change. Can its rapper-engineer PM deliver?](#) (2026-03-18 05:40)

Nepal's prime minister-in-waiting came to power on a promise of change. Now he faces the monumental challenge of taking on a system weighed down by corruption and poor governance while meeting the towering expectations of the millions who backed him and his anti-establishment party. Balendra Shah – a rapper, engineer and former mayor of Kathmandu popularly known as Balen – handily defeated former prime minister K.P. Sharma Oli in the election on March 5, with his Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP)...

- [Hong Kong actor Gregory Wong loses appeal against 2019 Legco storming conviction](#) (2026-03-18 05:40)

Hong Kong actor Gregory Wong Chung-yiu has lost an appeal against his conviction and jail sentence of six years and two months for abetting a riot at the Legislative Council Complex during the 2019 anti-government protests. In a written judgment delivered on Wednesday, the

Court of Appeal also dismissed the complaints by six others convicted in the high-profile case. The appellants had argued their jail terms of at least four years and 7½ months were manifestly excessive. Wong was among 14...

- [Closing struggling Hong Kong schools ‘spares parents from future problems’](#)  
(2026-03-18 05:19)

Closing struggling Hong Kong schools in the short term will prevent future problems for parents, the education minister has said, warning that the city has already exhausted all mitigation measures to reduce the impact of the shrinking pupil population. Secretary for Education Christine Choi Yuk-lin said on Wednesday that the problem of under-enrolment remained unresolved despite authorities resorting to different “soft-landing” means to support the sector in response to the structural...

- [Cuba’s leader vows ‘unbreakable resistance’ if US tries to take over island](#)  
(2026-03-18 05:01)

Cuba’s leader on Tuesday said the US would face “unbreakable resistance” if it tries to take over the impoverished island nation, as communist authorities scrambled to fix a nationwide electricity blackout. Cuba’s government has been under increasingly crushing pressure, with Washington enforcing an oil blockade and openly stating it wants to end the nearly seven-decade-old US stand-off with the one-party communist state. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said Cuba’s decision announced this week...

- [Delayed US-China summit raises stakes for Takaichi ahead of White House visit](#)  
(2026-03-18 04:59)

Thursday’s summit between US President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi was supposed to see the two leaders sit down in advance of Trump’s meeting with Chinese leader Xi Jinping to ensure the allies were on the same page. Instead, with the US-China summit postponed and the Israel-US war on Iran going full blast, their meeting is likely to find Japan more on the defensive, according to analysts and former government officials. Takaichi will be trying to finesse shifting...

- [The US\\$460 cake testing Malaysia’s sweet tooth and wallet: ‘even sultan would think twice’](#) (2026-03-18 04:34)

A bakery in Malaysia’s Sarawak state has set tongues wagging with its premium cake offerings sold at eye-watering prices, as Muslims countrywide this week stock up on sweets and delectable treats to celebrate Eid ul-Fitr, marking the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. Cakes, chocolates and sweet biscuits are must-haves in the homes of the nation’s 20 million Muslims to host family and friends during the festival. Among the favoured snacks are the colourful kek lapis or layered cake, a...

- [HSBC launches US\\$2.5 billion AT1 bond issue in Hong Kong after market standstill](#)

(2026-03-18 04:29)

HSBC Holdings plans to raise US\$2.5 billion by issuing two tranches of additional tier-1 (AT1) bonds, marking the reopening of such offerings after the US and Israel war on Iran rattled global financial markets. The biggest lender in Hong Kong and Europe by assets said in a stock exchange filing before the market opened on Wednesday that it intended to issue the AT1 bonds, officially named perpetual subordinated contingent convertible securities, on March 24 to strengthen its capital. The...

- [Can China still maintain good relations with Gulf states and Iran as fighting escalates?](#)

(2026-03-18 04:00)

Iran's air strikes on the Gulf states have turned the spotlight onto China's dilemma in trying to develop long-term relations with those nations but also with their arch-rival Iran. Strikes on all six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members in retaliation for US and Israeli attacks on Iran have hit both American military assets stationed in those countries and civilian infrastructure, including oil refineries. As oil and gas producers, they are also bearing the brunt of the effective closure of...

- [How education develops a pathway for students' lifelong growth](#) (2026-03-18 04:00)

The teachings of philosopher and psychologist John Dewey, who was a major 20th-century education reformer, still resonate with teachers around the world today. He believed that learning is a social, communal process – requiring students to build their own understanding based on personal experience – and involves a continuous, lifelong journey, rather than merely a means to an end for gaining knowledge for one's future career. He wrote: “The aim of education is growth: the aim of growth is more...”

- [Cathay extends Hong Kong to Middle East flight suspension until end of April](#) (2026-03-18 03:37)

Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific Airways has further extended its suspension of all flights to and from the Middle East until the end of April amid the ongoing conflict in the region. Cathay Pacific said on Wednesday that flights between Hong Kong and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, and between the city and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia, will remain suspended until the end of the month. All services between Hong Kong and the Middle East were first suspended on February 28 following a joint...

- [From studio to market: Hong Kong Design Institute's transdisciplinary path to global design impact](#) (2026-03-18 02:59)

[The content of this article has been produced by our advertising partner.] Hong Kong is rapidly consolidating its role as Asia's premier design and creative hub. By aligning strategic policy with both local and national development plans, the city is attracting investment, fostering cross border collaboration, and scaling creative enterprises. Anchored by institutions such as the

HKDI, Hong Kong is cultivating a robust, tech-savvy design workforce that blends rigorous education, industry...

- [Scammers impersonate Hong Kong lawmaker to defraud woman of HK\\$38,000](#) (2026-03-18 02:51)

Hong Kong lawmaker Gary Chan Hak-kan has been impersonated in a scam that defrauded a victim of HK\$38,000 (US\$4,849), with the legislator calling the act despicable. Police said on Wednesday that they received a report from a woman the previous day, stating that she had received a call from a man who allegedly impersonated another person and persuaded her to send money under false pretences. The woman transferred HK\$38,000 to an account specified by the caller but subsequently lost contact with...

- [Plead, hoard, steal: the desperate scramble for cooking gas in India](#) (2026-03-18 02:34)

The smoke rising from Babitha Sivasadan's kitchen in rural Kerala carries a scent that belongs to her grandmother's era. "I have started cooking with firewood," said Babitha, who began rationing her half-empty cooking gas cylinder after failing to secure a refill from her Indian Oil distributor. "The agency hasn't taken bookings in a week." As the Iran war enters the third week and cooking gas becomes scarce amid a conflict-driven supply shock, some Indian homemakers are turning to practices of...

- [Asean bets on new framework to remedy 'uneven' disaster response](#) (2026-03-18 02:30)

A framework proposed at an Asean ministers' meeting is set to propel disaster management to the top of the agenda for the bloc, further easing cooperation and decision-making in a region facing nearly US\$18 trillion in disaster risk exposure. Analysts say the proposal, if implemented, would help strengthen anticipatory action that could enable the bloc to act even before a formal request from a member state. At the 35th Asean Socio-Cultural Community Council Meeting in Manila on March 5, bloc...

- [China adapts C909 jet operations in Laos – a blueprint for Southeast Asia and beyond?](#) (2026-03-18 02:00)

China's leading planemaker is seeking to replicate the C909 regional airliner's success in Laos, drawing on the experience as it steps up its sales pitch in Southeast Asia – a vital step in its effort to eventually rival Boeing and Airbus. The Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (Comac) has ambitious plans in the region and beyond and is laying the groundwork through technical adjustments and regulatory adaptations, according to a company document seen by the South China Morning Post. To...

- [Injured buffalo brings rush-hour traffic to a standstill on Hong Kong highway](#) (2026-03-18 01:33)

A buffalo was hit by a car on a Yuen Long highway on Wednesday morning, leaving the injured animal wandering into traffic and bringing rush-hour traffic in northwestern Hong Kong to a standstill. Dashcam footage circulating online captured the moment the buffalo emerged from roadside shrubbery into the fast lane, where an oncoming vehicle was unable to brake in time. The animal rolled over after hitting the ground and tried to stand up slowly but failed. Following the heavy impact, the buffalo...

- [Hong Kong women' s group condemns entry of Tates amid safety and equality concerns](#) (2026-03-18 01:30)

A Hong Kong women' s rights group has criticised authorities for allowing controversial British-American influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate, who are facing rape and human trafficking charges abroad, to enter the city, saying the decision contradicts the government' s commitment to women' s safety. As the brothers continued to publicise their activities in the city, the Rosewood Hong Kong – reported to be hosting them – told the South China Morning Post on Tuesday that it “does not condone...

- [Rescuing a key Confucian text from centuries of ignominy](#) (2026-03-18 01:30)

From around the turn of the century, a revived Confucianism was all the rage. Mainland Chinese academia heavily promoted it. Beijing politicised it as compatible with communist ideology. For state propaganda departments, Confucianism was repackaged as a cultural product for foreign consumption. That wave of interest subsequently died down, along with the closure of many Confucian Institutes around the world. So why study Confucius today? Well, why read any great philosopher? But there is a more...

- [Malaysian police hunt man who punched pregnant wife, rammed her with motorbike](#) (2026-03-18 01:27)

Malaysian police in Melaka are tracking a 22-year-old man after a video showing him attacking his pregnant wife outside a karaoke centre in Kota Shahbandar went viral on social media. State police chief Deputy Commissioner Dzulkhairi Mukhtar said a report on the incident was lodged by the victim' s mother at 1.17am on Monday. He said preliminary investigations showed that the 20-year-old victim was attacked by her husband in front of a family karaoke centre in Kota Shahbandar at about 4am on...

- [Iran vows revenge for security chief Larijani' s killing as Israel hunts supreme leader](#) (2026-03-18 01:20)

Iranian army chief Amir Hatami threatened on Wednesday to launch a “decisive and regrettable” retaliation for the killing of security chief Ali Larijani in an Israeli air strike. “Iran' s response to the assassination of the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council will be decisive and regrettable,” Hatami said in a statement. The Revolutionary Guards, Iran' s powerful military force that is separate from the army, said in a statement that it had launched missiles at central Israel “in...

- [Controversy haunts likely death of China’ s hypersonic weapons expert Fang Daining](#) (2026-03-18 01:00)

Fang Daining, a key scientist in China’ s hypersonic weapons programme, has died at the age of 68, according to an image of an obituary notice that began circulating on Chinese social media last week. Early online discussions included claims that Fang, who was also a Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) member, the country’ s highest academic title in science and technology, suffered an unexpected medical episode during a work trip to South Africa. The South China Morning Post could not confirm the...

- [‘Fat for beef’ : China local drive rewards residents with 0.5kg of meat for same amount of weight lost](#) (2026-03-18 01:00)

The authorities in a grass-roots community in eastern China have trended on social media for its “redundant flesh in exchange for beef” weight-loss initiative targeting local residents. Since the Shanbei Community in Liangxi District, Wuxi, Jiangsu province, launched the creative health campaign on social media on March 9, more than 2,400 people applied to take part within three days, according to the news website The Paper. Internet users have shown immense interest in the move, with many...

- [US aircraft carrier attacking Iran heads back to port after fire incident](#) (2026-03-18 00:33)

The USS Gerald R. Ford aircraft carrier is leaving the fight with Iran and heading back to port, a US official familiar with the matter said, after a fire broke out in its laundry area and left at least two sailors with non-life-threatening injuries. The Ford will travel from its current location in the Red Sea to Souda Bay, on the Greek island of Crete, according to the official, who asked not to be identified discussing movements that were not public. The ship had stopped in Souda Bay in late...

- [Northern Metropolis land-use laws won’ t undermine board’ s authority: experts](#) (2026-03-18 00:30)

Proposed designated laws to streamline land-use approval procedures for the Northern Metropolis megaproject will not undermine the authority of Hong Kong’ s town planning body, some experts have argued, while urging the government to establish clear key performance indicators (KPIs) to strengthen market confidence. Observers were responding to a package of six subsidiary laws unveiled on Tuesday by the Development Bureau, designed to remove bottlenecks in the large-scale New Territories scheme. A...

- [Will Japan follow Australia’ s lead and ban children from social media?](#) (2026-03-18 00:00)

A Japanese government agency has opened discussions on imposing a ban on children accessing social media sites, potentially following Australia’ s lead in prohibiting under-16s from the most popular online platforms. Experts say it is far too early to determine whether the Australian experiment is a success and can be replicated in Japan, although there is a widely

held belief that more is needed to limit the negative consequences of unfettered internet access to youth. In January, Japan' s...

- [Chinese national and Kenyan associate charged with illegally smuggling ants](#) (2026-03-17 23:31)

A Chinese national and a Kenyan man were charged Tuesday with unlawfully dealing in wildlife species after they were found in possession of hundreds of live ants stored in specialised tubes. The case was the latest focused on the alleged smuggling of ants in the East African country, where authorities last year described a growing trend in the trafficking of ants to markets in Europe and Asia. Officials have not said if the ants are sought after as pets or for other purposes. The suspects,...

- [Chinese banks outpace rivals in Hong Kong wealth growth on IPO boom, capital flows](#) (2026-03-17 23:30)

The wealth management businesses of Chinese investment banks in Hong Kong are growing faster than those of international rivals, as a buoyant initial public offering (IPO) market and rising cross-border flows strengthen their competitive edge. “Chinese investment banks are seeing accelerated growth ... because [their] base is smaller and the current market environment favours them,” said Wang Lei, CEO of Huatai Financial Holdings (Hong Kong), in an interview with the South China Morning Post,...

- [Scottish lawmakers reject bill to let terminally ill people end their lives](#) (2026-03-17 23:03)

Lawmakers in the Scottish Parliament on Tuesday rejected legislation that would have made Scotland the first part of the United Kingdom to allow terminally ill adults to end their lives. Members of the Edinburgh-based legislature voted 69 to 57 against a bill that would have let people in Scotland with six months or less to live seek help to end their life. There was one abstention. It came after an emotional debate that lasted around three hours and saw lawmakers tear up and applaud as they...

- [Nvidia is restarting production of China AI chip variant, says CEO Jensen Huang](#) (2026-03-17 22:31)

Nvidia is restarting the production of one of the company' s chips that is designed to comply with US export restrictions on China, CEO Jensen Huang said at a press conference on Tuesday. The company had halted manufacturing last year of its H200 chip, which is based on its ageing Hopper technology, because of increasing regulatory hurdles in the US and China, according to a report at the time. Since then, Nvidia has received licences to export the H200 from the US government and has taken...

- [US sounds alarm over China' s humanoid robots amid security concerns](#) (2026-03-17 22:00)

US artificial intelligence and robotics firms have urged lawmakers to take action against Chinese robot manufacturers – singling out Unitree Robotics – citing increased competition and national security risks, in a sign that humanoid robots may emerge as a new battleground in the widening US-China tech rivalry. China’s speed of advancement in humanoid robots is alarming, and the US government should formulate coordinated policies and strategies to counter Chinese firms’ dominance in the...

- [Why Japan thinks China’s growing cultural clout is something it needs to counter](#)  
(2026-03-17 22:00)

China and Japan’s long-standing rivalry has deep historic roots, and relations between the two have taken a significant turn for the worse in recent months. This article, the first in a three-part series, looks at how both countries are trying to turn soft power to their advantage in the battle to shape international opinion. The rise of China’s soft power has been fuelled by global successes in fields ranging from gaming and films to consumer brands and technology. Success stories range from...

- [Zelensky, Starmer urge continued support for Ukraine as Iran conflict steals focus](#)  
(2026-03-17 21:43)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called Russia and Iran “brothers in hatred” on Tuesday as he sought support from UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer at a time when the Iran conflict has robbed momentum from US-brokered talks to end Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. During talks with Starmer at 10 Downing Street, Zelensky urged Ukraine’s allies not to forget about his country and suggested the US and others should make use of Ukraine’s anti-drone technology during a Middle East war that has also...

- [Frenzy over AI agent OpenClaw shows the lobster has escaped the pot](#) (2026-03-17 21:30)

In China this month, people have been lining up on streets to install an AI programme on their computers. Some had travelled from other cities. Others had waited for hours for engineers to set it up for them. There were even “birth certificates” given out upon installation. The programme is OpenClaw. Its logo is a red lobster. Chinese internet users quickly coined a phrase for the phenomenon: raising lobsters. The scene looks quirky, even amusing. But beneath the spectacle lies a revealing...

- [US military tracks 23 Chinese port projects in Latin America, general tells Congress](#)  
(2026-03-17 21:08)

The US military is monitoring 23 Chinese port projects and 12 space-enabling facilities across Latin America and considers every one of them “a potential dual-use asset” that could support Chinese military operations, the top US commander for South America told Congress on Tuesday. General Francis Donovan, head of US Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), made the disclosure during a House Armed Services Committee hearing on US military posture in the western hemisphere. Asked by Lance Gooden, a...

- [US House panel subpoenas Pam Bondi to testify in Epstein investigation](#) (2026-03-17 19:29)

A US congressional committee said on Tuesday it has issued a subpoena to Attorney General Pam Bondi to testify behind closed doors in its probe of the late convicted sex criminal Jeffrey Epstein. Bondi faces accusations that the Justice Department has concealed the names of powerful associates of Epstein in its release of millions of documents related to the late financier. Under the subpoena, Bondi would give a sworn deposition to the House of Representatives Oversight Committee on April...

- [Trump confirms delay of Beijing meeting with Xi amid Iran conflict](#) (2026-03-17 19:19)

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said his planned trip to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing will be delayed by “five or six weeks,” as the US-Israel war against Iran continues. “We’re working with China. They were fine with it ... I look forward to seeing President Xi. He looks forward to seeing me, I think,” Trump told reporters at the White House. The Chinese embassy in Washington did not confirm Trump’s timeline and said “China and the US remain in communication on President...

- [Fire at US embassy in Baghdad as security official reports drone and rocket strikes](#) (2026-03-17 18:59)

Several loud explosions were heard on Tuesday evening in Iraq’s capital Baghdad, Agence France-Presse journalists reported, with a security official reporting a drone and rocket attack on the US embassy. In a restaurant in the city, where diners did not react to the initial sounds of the blasts, a witness said he saw detonations caused by the embassy’s air defences intercepting projectiles. Another witness saw a fire on the edge of the embassy grounds from her balcony, with the blaze also...

- [Northern Ireland’s Gerry Adams tells bombings trial he was never in IRA](#) (2026-03-17 17:55)

Gerry Adams, one of Northern Ireland’s most prominent political figures, told London’s High Court on Tuesday he had never been a member of the paramilitary Irish Republican Army but said he would not distance himself from the group. The ex-leader of Sinn Fein, formerly the IRA’s political wing and now the largest party in the Northern Irish Assembly, became the best-known face of the movement seeking to end British rule in Northern Ireland. He later reinvented himself as a peacemaker after...

- [Why US warships’ pit stop in Malaysia is raising eyebrows](#) (2026-03-17 15:45)

The apparent docking of two light US combat ships in Penang over the weekend has raised eyebrows among Malaysian government critics regarding the country’s position on the US-Israel war on Iran, and questions over the deployment of de-mining vessels thousands of miles from the conflict zone. The USS Tulsa and USS Santa Barbara were seen on Sunday at the North Butterworth Container Terminal, according to social media images and the Financial

Times, which cited a US Fifth Fleet spokesperson...

- [Measures to streamline Northern Metropolis land-use procedures unveiled](#) (2026-03-17 15:38)

Hong Kong authorities have proposed designated laws to streamline procedures for changing land use in the Northern Metropolis megaproject, cutting the process from typically nine months to just two. Unveiled by the Development Bureau on Tuesday, the proposed designated legislation comprises six main subsidiary laws designed to remove bottlenecks in the massive scheme near the border with mainland China. They include the establishment of statutory firms and measures to speed up land resumption...

- [Singapore' s Lawrence Wong seeks stronger ties with Japan amid global tensions](#) (2026-03-17 15:15)

Singapore' s Prime Minister Lawrence Wong has kicked off his visit to Japan, where he is expected to address strategies with counterpart Sanae Takaichi on enhancing cooperation against a backdrop of economic uncertainty brought on by the Iran war. Both leaders are likely to tread cautiously in discussions to avoid antagonising any superpower, analysts say. The three-day trip, which began on Tuesday, marks Wong' s first official visit to Japan since he became Singapore' s prime minister in May...

- [US counterterrorism chief quits, says Israel 'trapped' Trump into joining Iran war](#) (2026-03-17 15:10)

A senior US counterterrorism official resigned on Tuesday to protest against the US-Israeli war against Iran and said the Islamic Republic posed no imminent threat to the United States. "I cannot in good conscience support the ongoing war in Iran," Joseph Kent, the director of the National Counterterrorism Centre, said in his resignation letter to US President Donald Trump. Kent – a former member of the Green Beret special forces who served 11 combat tours – said: "Iran posed no imminent threat..."

- [Why Trump' s China trip delay could open the door for 'more substantive' results](#) (2026-03-17 15:00)

Beijing has confirmed it remains in communication with Washington about a landmark visit by US President Donald Trump, who has requested to delay the trip by a month due to the US-Israel war on Iran. Chinese analysts characterised the delay as a strategic opportunity to ensure more substantive results. They also suggested the shift in timing was unlikely to derail the momentum towards stabilising ties between the two global powers. The White House previously announced that the trip – the first...

- [Trump claims mystery ex-president backed his war on Iran but no one is owning up](#) (2026-03-17 14:15)

Twice on Monday, US President Donald Trump said he had wrangled a confession of sorts from an Oval Office predecessor who he said had expressed regret in a private conversation about not attacking Iran the way Trump has been doing for more than two weeks. But there's just a little problem: representatives for the four living former presidents – three Democrats and one Republican – said none had been in touch with Trump recently. Trump declined to name the former president when reporters asked...

- [15 Hong Kong schools risk closure as falling numbers trigger Primary One ban](#) (2026-03-17 14:10)

Fifteen Hong Kong public primary schools are at risk of closing after being banned from operating subsidised Primary One classes in the coming academic year due to insufficient enrolment, with authorities saying the figure is the highest in recent years. But Secretary for Education Christine Choi Yuk-lin also warned on Tuesday that more closures were expected if school operators refused to plan for mergers. The institutions at risk comprise one government and 14 subsidised schools, with Deputy...

- [China, Russia discuss boosting transport links as Middle East conflict disrupts shipping](#) (2026-03-17 14:00)

As heightened conflict in the Middle East disrupts global shipping, China and Russia are considering deeper cooperation on logistics – including use of the Arctic shipping route – to secure a more resilient supply chain. At the inaugural China-Russia Logistics Business Forum held in Moscow on Monday, officials and business leaders discussed bolstering transport and infrastructure ties, calling such cooperation essential as geopolitical tensions reshape global supply chains, Chinese state news...

- [How Nvidia's inference bet at GTC poses a challenge and opportunity for China](#) (2026-03-17 14:00)

Nvidia's latest language processing chip, unveiled at the company's annual artificial intelligence conference, has opened a new frontier in the AI inference arms race, as the booming market for AI agents like OpenClaw presents a complex new reality for China's semiconductor industry, according to analysts. The Nvidia Groq 3 Language Processing Unit (LPU), introduced on Monday at GTC 2026 in San Jose, California, was described by the company as an accelerator with fast memory and low latency...

- [Even the dead in Thailand cannot escape Iran war fuel shortages](#) (2026-03-17 13:33)

Worsening fuel shortages resulting from the war in the Middle East are threatening sacred funeral ceremonies in Thailand, where Buddhist temples are scrambling to obtain diesel for cremations. The abbot of Wat Saman Rattanaram in Chachoengsao province, about 80km (50 miles) east of Bangkok, warned that a suspension of cremation services was a real possibility. Some petrol stations have run out of fuel, while others allow sales only to vehicle operators. "In more than 50 years, I've never seen..."

- [With Trump's China trip in limbo, further trade talks loom: analysts](#) (2026-03-17 13:00)

With US President Donald Trump's trip to China postponed and the countries' recent trade negotiations in Paris ending with no apparent breakthroughs, analysts said the world's two largest economies are likely to hold another round of talks before Trump touches down in Beijing. "We can see this as more of a pause than a breakthrough overall. This resembles 'unfinished business' between both sides," said James Downes, director of the Europe-Asia programme at the Centre for Explanatory Research and...

- [China leads world in anti-drone patents with US and South Korea far behind, law firm finds](#) (2026-03-17 13:00)

China leads the world in patent applications for anti-drone technology, which has drawn heightened attention during the wars in Ukraine and Iran and a spate of suspicious sightings in the West, according to intellectual property law firm Mathys & Squire. Patent applications for anti-drone systems rose 27 per cent over the past year, with China submitting 82 compared with 22 from the US, the second-largest filer, the 115-year-old UK-based law firm said on Monday. South Korea ranked third with six...

- [94% of Hong Kong students are couch potatoes, 17.5% overweight, study shows](#) (2026-03-17 12:39)

About 94 per cent of Hong Kong's students do not get enough daily exercise and 17.5 per cent are overweight, authorities have warned, urging schools and parents to tackle the growing fitness crisis together. A government report released on Tuesday also flagged low fruit and vegetable intake, poor vision health and excessive recreational screen time among students. The findings were based on surveys and annual health assessments conducted by the Department of Health for the 2024-25 school year,...

- [Trump's Iran gamble won't advance his prospects at home or with China](#) (2026-03-17 12:30)

The eminent British military strategist Michael Howard famously said that the purpose of forecasting wars is not to get it right, but to avoid getting it terribly wrong. US President Donald Trump has already got it terribly wrong. No one knows why he launched a war with Israel against Iran. Trump may have been partly correct when he posted on Truth Social that, "Iran's Navy is gone, their Air Force is gone, missiles, drones and everything else are being decimated, and their leaders have been..."

- [India detains 6 Ukrainians, 1 American suspected of training Myanmar rebels](#) (2026-03-17 12:27)

Indian investigators have arrested seven foreigners – six Ukrainians and an American – on suspicion of illegally crossing into neighbouring Myanmar to train armed militia groups, the public radio broadcaster reported on Tuesday. Myanmar descended into civil war after a junta

seized power in a 2021 coup, with pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic-minority armed groups fighting for control of large parts of the country. India has long been suspicious of certain Myanmar factions that have the same...

- [Will the postponed Trump-Xi summit affect US arms sales to Taiwan?](#) (2026-03-17 12:01)

A delayed summit between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping has raised concerns over whether the postponement could affect a reported record US arms sales package to Taiwan, as officials insist the deal remains on track. A US\$14 billion arms package – possibly the largest ever for Taiwan – is ready for the American president’s approval and could be announced after his visit to Beijing, according to Reuters on Friday. The proposed sale is expected to include advanced air-defence systems such as Patriot...

- [China sailor creates ‘radio station’ to connect families with seamen stranded in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-17 12:00)

A Chinese man has used public maritime radio to create a “family’s voice station” on which sailors stranded in the Strait of Hormuz can relay safety messages to their families. Liu Yiwen, a native of Jilin province in northeastern China, is a second officer on a Singaporean commercial ship which is now anchored near the Khor Fakkan harbour administered by the United Arab Emirates, China’s state media CCTV reported. The ship had planned to head to the Persian Gulf to load liquid petroleum gas...

- [Thailand to build fence along parts of Cambodian border for ‘peace of mind’](#) (2026-03-17 11:55)

Thailand will start building fences along a portion of its border with Cambodia next month to boost security after deadly clashes between the countries erupted last year following long-standing tensions. The first barrier will cover 1.3km (0.8 miles) in Chanthaburi province along Thailand’s eastern border, according to Vithai Laithomya, spokesman of the Royal Thai Armed Forces. The fencing off of the area – a small part of the nearly 800km border between the two nations – was not part of...

- [US reshoring drive casts shadow over China’s contract drug makers: analyst](#) (2026-03-17 11:48)

Chinese contract drug makers – including WuXi AppTec, WuXi Biologics and WuXi XDC – face a less certain long-term revenue outlook as US pharmaceutical companies bring production in-house and reconfigure supply chains amid rising US-China tensions. While near-term earnings remained largely locked in, visibility beyond that was limited, according to Cui Cui, head of healthcare research for Asia at Jefferies. “Earnings visibility for 2026 and 2027 is still very strong – revenue momentum is largely...

- [China, Vietnam agree to live-fire drills in naval exercise boost](#) (2026-03-17 11:24)

The navies of China and Vietnam have added live-fire drills to future joint training – marking a deepening of military cooperation as Vietnamese Communist Party chief To Lam hailed relations with Beijing as a “top priority” . Naval commanders from both sides held a courtesy meeting on Monday at Fangcheng port in southern China’s Guangxi, as Vietnamese frigates Tran Hung Dao (hull number 015) and Ly Thai To (012) arrived to join PLA Navy vessels for their 40th joint patrol and training...

- [Asia ditches LNG for coal after Iran war sends prices soaring](#) (2026-03-17 10:44)

Asian utilities are boosting coal-fired power generation to cut costs and safeguard energy supply, industry officials say, as the US-Israeli war on Iran chokes liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments and soaring prices threaten to suppress LNG demand. Asia spot LNG prices have doubled to three-year highs in the second major supply shock in four years, as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has all but stopped and No 2 global exporter Qatar has halted shipments. In South Asia, Bangladesh is...

- [Tiananmen vigil activist on trial says one-party rule contradicts country’s constitution](#) (2026-03-17 10:36)

A former Hong Kong opposition politician has accused China’s one-party rule system of being incompatible with the country’s constitution and failing to safeguard people’s fundamental rights, as he defended his calls to end “dictatorship” in a high-profile subversion trial. Ex-lawmaker Lee Cheuk-yan, former chairman of the now-disbanded Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China, argued on Tuesday that calling for an end to “one-party dictatorship” on the mainland...

- [Oil price spike threatens to break Indonesia’s budget as 144 million hit the road for Eid](#) (2026-03-17 10:30)

Every year, roughly half of Indonesia’s 288 million people pack into trains, buses, ferries and cars and head home. The mudik, as the great Eid ul-Fitr exodus is known, is one of the largest annual human migrations on Earth and a ritual of return that defines the end of the holy fasting month of Ramadan. This year, the Ministry of Transportation estimates that 143.9 million journeys will be made. But it could hardly arrive at a worse time for the government’s finances. Oil prices have surged...

- [Iran’s Ali Larijani, Basij paramilitary head ‘eliminated’ in Tehran strike: Israel](#) (2026-03-17 10:03)

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Tuesday that Iran’s powerful national security chief Ali Larijani was “eliminated last night” , along with the commander of Tehran’s Basij paramilitary force, General Gholam Reza Soleimani. “I have just been updated by the Chief of Staff that Larijani, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, and the head of the Basij – Iran’s central repression apparatus – [Soleimani], were eliminated last night,” Katz said in a statement released by his...

- [Unlimited petrol? Chinese firm claims it can produce fuel from air and water](#) (2026-03-17 10:00)

A Shanghai-based start-up claims to have mastered a technique for producing synthetic petroleum at low cost from air and water, as China intensifies efforts to develop alternatives to traditional fossil fuels amid the US-Israel war against Iran. Carbonology announced it had created a process for converting carbon dioxide extracted from air and water into artificial fuel using solar and wind energy, Chinese media outlet Cailianshe reported on Tuesday. The company – co-founded by a former...

- [‘Real-life Cinderella’ : China stuntwoman transitions from playing body double to stardom](#) (2026-03-17 10:00)

Famous Chinese actress Li Yitong, who rose from being Zhao Liying’s stunt double to becoming a leading actress, has taken on 14 roles in a single year, earning her the name of a “real-life Cinderella”. Li, whose original name is Li Xue, was born in September 1990 in Jinan, Shandong province, northern China, and graduated from the Beijing Dance Academy with a major in folk dance. After graduation, she planned to open a teahouse that incorporated dance performances. However, while searching for a...

- [Authorities look for link to illegal fuel operations as truck goes up in flames](#) (2026-03-17 09:34)

Hong Kong authorities are investigating whether a fire at a Kwai Chung car park that sent thick black smoke high into the sky on Tuesday afternoon was linked to the operation of an illegal fuel station. The Fire Services Department received a report shortly after 2pm of a truck ablaze at a car park on Container Port Road South in Kwai Chung. Witnesses said explosions were heard as the vehicle was engulfed in flames, with smoke billowing high above the area and visible across western Kowloon. The...

- [21 Wang Fuk Court homeowners, residents to give evidence in fire probe](#) (2026-03-17 09:21)

Fourteen members of the former owners’ corporation of blaze-hit Wang Fuk Court along with seven residents have been named to give evidence at an independent probe into Hong Kong’s deadliest fire in decades. They are among 37 named in a list released on Tuesday by the independent committee investigating the deadly Tai Po blaze, ahead of the first of eight hearings into the tragedy. The first hearing will take place on Thursday, while the last is scheduled for April 2. “The committee will also...

- [Military escort for tankers in Strait of Hormuz not long-term fix: IMO head](#) (2026-03-17 09:17)

Military escorts to protect tankers in the Strait of Hormuz are not a sustainable solution, according to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). “It reduces the risk, but the risk is

still there,” IMO Secretary General Arsenio Dominguez told the Financial Times. He said that a military deployment was “not a long-term or sustainable solution” . US President Donald Trump has called for an international naval operation off the Iranian coast to secure oil shipments, saying at the weekend that...

- [Former banker and Hubei party boss indicted for accepting ‘especially huge’ bribes](#) (2026-03-17 09:15)

Jiang Chaoliang, Communist Party chief of Hubei when Covid-19 first hit the province and a former prominent banker, has been indicted for accepting “an especially huge amount” of bribes starting in the 1990s. The investigation into his case, first announced in February last year, has closed, and the Nanjing Municipal People’s Procuratorate has filed a public prosecution with the Nanjing Intermediate People’s Court, according to a statement on Tuesday from the Supreme People’s...

- [US military’s Iran war pivot forces Asia-Pacific security rethink](#) (2026-03-17 09:01)

The redeployment of US military assets from the Asia-Pacific to the Middle East has split security analysts, with some arguing that any strategic damage is largely “psychological” while others warn of a real and measurable gap opening in the region’s defences. More than 2,000 marines and at least one amphibious assault ship have begun moving from Japan towards the Gulf as the US-Israeli war on Iran grinds on. The assault ship USS Tripoli, docked at Sasebo in Nagasaki prefecture, is expected to...

- [Trump-Xi summit delay may suit China amid Iran war](#) (2026-03-17 09:00)

US President Donald Trump said he had asked China to postpone his planned trip to Beijing by “a month or so” due to the war in Iran. “I think it’s important that I be here,” Trump told reporters in the White House on Monday. “So it could be that we delay a little bit, not much.” The visit, including a summit with President Xi Jinping, is scheduled to take place from March 31 to April 2. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent dismissed suggestions that the potential delay was designed to pressure...

- [Malaysian mother furious after school punishes bullied son with caning, weeding](#) (2026-03-17 08:30)

Not only was he punched repeatedly by a peer, a Malaysian student at a secondary school in Kuching, Sarawak, was caned and forced to write a note admitting his mistake, China Press reported. Angered at how the case was handled, the boy’s mother shared the incident on social media and lodged a police report. The incident took place last Thursday when another student allegedly grabbed her son’s leg and caused him to fall. The victim’s mother said the aggressor then sat on top of her son before...

- [8 wild boars captured, put down after wandering into Hong Kong’s Wong Tai Sin](#) (2026-03-17 08:00)

Hong Kong's conservation authorities captured and put down eight wild boars in Wong Tai Sin on Tuesday following a report from residents. Police said staff from the Agricultural, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) tranquillised the animals – two large boars and six smaller ones – before removing them. The force received a report at 10.07am of several wild boars near Chuk Yuen (North) Estate in Wong Tai Sin, and officers were dispatched to assess the situation. The AFCD said it had...

- [Investors fleeing Mideast chaos find safe haven in 'sweet spot' Malaysia](#) (2026-03-17 07:20)

Even before the war in Iran sparked a surge in energy prices, Malaysia stood out from its Southeast Asian peers as the new-found darling of global investors. A rare stretch of political stability and investments in higher-value manufacturing and data centres lifted Malaysia's appeal as some of its neighbours grappled with leadership changes and financial strains. The conflict in the Middle East further burnished the country's advantage as investors looked for markets better placed to weather...

- [Chinese scientists create world's coldest alloy. It may surprise DARPA](#) (2026-03-17 07:13)

Chinese researchers have unveiled a new rare earth alloy so cold and efficient it could upend decades of reliance on helium-3 and send shock waves through the global race for quantum computers or ultra-sensitive detectors. A mini-fridge built with the alloy has achieved temperatures extremely close to absolute zero using no moving parts. And it comes at a time when the US Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is actively hunting for exactly such a technology. On January 27, DARPA...

- [Suicide attacks in Nigeria kill 23, wound more than 100](#) (2026-03-17 07:09)

Multiple explosions staged by suspected suicide bombers rocked the northeastern Nigerian city of Maiduguri, killing at least 23 people and wounding more than 100 others, police said Tuesday, . The three blasts, which struck on Monday evening, came after an attack on a military post overnight Sunday to Monday, which authorities blamed on suspected jihadists. Combined with the attack on the military position the evening prior and a mosque bombing in December, the assaults have wrecked a peaceful...

- [Hong Kong to press ahead with expanding Middle East ties despite regional unrest](#) (2026-03-17 07:00)

Hong Kong will continue its efforts to expand business opportunities in the Middle East despite recent geopolitical tensions, as the city remains a safe and stable investment hub amid global volatility, Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu has said. Despite his optimism, Lee conceded that the conflict in the Middle East had affected Hong Kong due to a surge in fuel prices, urging suppliers to increase transparency in pricing and warning of regulatory action in cases of commercial wrongdoing. “[The...

- [Chinese New Year boosts Hong Kong visitor numbers in first 2 months of 2026](#)

(2026-03-17 06:52)

Hong Kong welcomed 9.95 million visitors in the first two months of this year, 18 per cent more than the same period last year, with the increase driven primarily by mainland travellers visiting the city over the Chinese New Year period. Provisional figures released by the Hong Kong Tourism Board on Tuesday showed that 7.89 million mainland Chinese visitors travelled to the city in January and February, representing a 22 per cent year-on-year rise. They also accounted for 79.3 per cent of the...

- [Hong Kong' s ICAC charges ex-professor over alleged bribe to admit master' s student](#)

(2026-03-17 06:44)

Hong Kong' s anti-corruption agency has charged a former university professor with allegedly accepting a HK\$40,000 (US\$5,100) bribe from a friend and offering red packets to colleagues to facilitate a student' s admission into a master' s degree programme. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on Monday revealed that Liu Hongbin, 63, a former chair professor at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology' s (HKUST) department of ocean science, and his friend Priscilla Lam Pui-ling,...

- [Indian man charged with molesting flight attendant on Singapore Airlines plane](#)

(2026-03-17 06:19)

A man was charged on Tuesday with molesting and harassing an air stewardess on a Singapore Airlines flight on February 9. Akash Tiwari, a 36-year-old Indian national, is accused of using criminal force on the woman by using his body to make contact with the area around her buttocks. He is also accused of using threatening behaviour by following her to the galley area, cornering her in the confined space and continuing to pursue her, causing her to be distressed. A gag order was imposed on the...

- [Hong Kong' s Ocean Park euthanises 17-year-old red panda Rou Rou](#) (2026-03-17 06:09)

Hong Kong' s Ocean Park has euthanised red panda Rou Rou after the 17-year-old endangered animal experienced degenerative joint problems and stopped responding to palliative care. Ocean Park said on Tuesday that its animal care and veterinary teams had provided Rou Rou with comprehensive care and monitored her geriatric conditions for five years, but could not prevent age-related ailments, including degenerative joint issues. The park added that Rou Rou showed “increasing signs of discomfort” in...

- [China backs wider hydrogen adoption as Strait of Hormuz crisis jolts energy markets](#)

(2026-03-17 06:03)

Beijing is launching a pilot programme to expand industrial use of hydrogen energy, at a time when war in the Middle East is exposing the risks of global reliance on fossil fuels. Iran' s effective blockade of the Strait of Hormuz amid its war with the United States and Israel – now in its third week – has disrupted oil and gas supplies, prompting some nations to re-examine

their energy mix, with renewables emerging as a potential hedge against volatility. In a Mondaynotice, the Ministry of...

- [Taiwan singer ignites debate by showing popular ‘vacuum belly’ technique to lose weight](#) (2026-03-17 06:00)

A Taiwanese singer has sparked controversy for performing a “vacuum belly” workout routine at a concert in northwestern China. Videos of Ella Chen Jiahua showing her contracted belly, with her ribs prominently protruding, at her concert in Xian, Shaanxi province on March 7 have gone viral on social media, China Youth Daily reported. Chen, 44, tells her audiences: “I would like to perform a stunt for you. Please look at me carefully. Cameramen, please zoom in on me.” She begins the movement while...

- [Malaysia tackles religious, racial tensions as 2 charged over provocative posts](#) (2026-03-17 05:45)

Malaysia charged two men on Tuesday and moved to bring back another from Thailand as authorities sought to contain a wave of religiously charged provocations that has sharpened tensions in the multicultural country. Controversial preacher Zamri Vinoth, 41, and activist Arun Dorasamy, 56, both pleaded not guilty in separate magistrates’ courts to charges linked to social media posts that prosecutors said were capable of “causing public alarm” . The cases come as conservative groups push for the...

- [Suspected wartime mortar round detonated safely at Hong Kong construction site](#) (2026-03-17 05:25)

A suspected wartime mortar round has been safely detonated by bomb disposal officers at a Hong Kong construction site, with no evacuations needed. A source familiar with the matter confirmed to the South China Morning Post that the suspicious object workers discovered at 9.32am on Tuesday at a construction site at Kwu Tung North Multi-Welfare Services Complex was an unexploded wartime mortar round. “Since the mortar round was inside the construction site, officers on site confirmed that the...

- [Hong Kong to unveil plans this month for Tai Po fire victims to retrieve belongings](#) (2026-03-17 05:18)

Hong Kong authorities will announce arrangements this month for residents displaced by the deadly Tai Po blaze to return to their fire-damaged flats and collect personal belongings by the end of April, the city’ s leader has said. Chief Executive John Lee Ka chiu on Tuesday also said the government would fully cooperate with an independent committee investigating the inferno, when asked if any officials would testify before the body as it begins hearings on Thursday. Speaking before the weekly...

- [CK Hutchison subsidiary slams Panama for missing arbitration deadline](#) (2026-03-17 05:10)

A subsidiary of Hong Kong conglomerate CK Hutchison has accused Panama of missing a deadline for international arbitration initiated by the company, as it confirmed its offices had earlier been raided by alleged “armed security forces”. Panama Ports Company (PPC) on Tuesday also accused authorities of silencing the country’s press and disregarding the rule of law, as it continued to paint the Central American nation as a risk to foreign investors following the seizure of its two terminals. The...

- [Fate of US-Malaysia trade pact rests on Washington’s next move](#) (2026-03-17 04:40)

Malaysia will wait for Washington to submit updated terms before deciding its next steps on their tariff deal, the country’s trade minister has said – just days after he declared the agreement had been rendered “null and void” by a US Supreme Court ruling. The government began the week on the back foot as allies and critics demanded clarity on the status of the multibillion-dollar deal with the United States, after Trade Minister Johari Abdul Ghani was reported on Sunday to have said it was no...

- [US ‘grief author’ convicted of murdering husband with lethal fentanyl dose](#) (2026-03-17 04:36)

A Utah woman was convicted on Monday of aggravated murder after poisoning her husband with fentanyl and self-publishing a children’s book about coping with grief. Prosecutors said Kouri Richins slipped five times the lethal dose of the synthetic opioid into a cocktail that her husband Eric Richins drank in March 2022 at their home outside the affluent ski town of Park City. They said she was US\$4.5 million in debt and falsely believed that when her husband died, she would inherit his estate...

- [Philippines’ missile question, Nepal’s new PM is a rapper: 7 Asia highlights](#) (2026-03-17 04:30)

We have selected seven stories from the SCMP’s coverage of Asia over the past week that resonated with our readers and shed light on topical issues. If you would like to see more of our reporting, please consider subscribing. 1. As US missiles leave South Korea, the Philippines asks: are we next? 2. Nepal just elected a rapper for PM. His foreign policy has a new beat 3. Why has the US-Israeli war on Iran left Brics speechless? 4. ‘He’s so handsome’: Japan’s youngest governor, 36, sets social...

- [Executive to work with Legco under new mechanism to craft Hong Kong’s 5-year plan](#) (2026-03-17 04:04)

Hong Kong authorities will set up a collaborative mechanism with the legislature to craft the city’s first five-year plan to align with national development, according to Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu, who says the blueprint will be released by the end of this year. Lee also stressed on Tuesday that the new platform would reflect the city’s executive-led governance model, adding a public consultation on the plan would be launched in the fourth quarter before its publication. “The plan will...

- [China and Chile wrap up Atacama Trench mission as US pressure mounts](#) (2026-03-17 04:00)

Chinese and Chilean scientists have reached the bottom of the Atacama Trench, where light does not penetrate, in what they called the “most ambitious” deep-sea expedition ever conducted in the eastern Pacific. The joint mission to one of the deepest ocean trenches – which runs parallel to the coasts of Peru and Chile – took place from January 19 to March 5. It comes as Chile’s expanding cooperation with China on science and technology has inflamed geopolitical tensions with the United...

- [Japan to raise residency fees by up to 2,900% despite deepening labour crisis](#) (2026-03-17 03:47)

Settling in Japan as a foreign national is about to become much more expensive after the government passed legislation to sharply increase visa application fees. Critics argue the policy is short-sighted amid a worsening labour shortage, but conservatives have dismissed such concerns, insisting that robots and artificial intelligence will soon replace workers in low-paid, service-sector roles. Detractors also contend the legislation is designed to deter less affluent migrants from developing...

- [South Korea on guard against possible ‘terror’ acts at BTS concert](#) (2026-03-17 03:42)

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung said on Tuesday security and safety must be a top priority for a concert by K-pop band BTS on Saturday in Seoul, including readiness for any possible acts of “terror”, according to a live TV broadcast of a cabinet meeting. The free comeback concert for the boy band in central Seoul is expected to draw up to 260,000 people, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety said last Wednesday, making it one of the largest public gatherings in the area...

- [Xi pushes Belt and Road Initiative port alliance amid Iran war, Panama Canal dispute](#) (2026-03-17 03:00)

President Xi Jinping has vowed to advance the creation of an international port alliance under the Belt and Road Initiative, at a time when the world’s top merchandise exporter confronts mounting challenges to global shipping routes – from the Strait of Hormuz to Panama. An excerpt of his speech, initially given at a closed-door meeting on July 1, 2025, was first published on Monday by Qiushi, the Communist Party’s top theoretical journal. “[China needs to] deeply participate in global ocean...

- [Spain’s king acknowledges ‘much abuse’ in conquest of the Americas](#) (2026-03-17 02:53)

Spain’s monarch said on Monday the Spanish conquest of the Americas included “much abuse” and “ethical controversies”, striking a conciliatory tone amid a years-long row between Spain and Mexico over colonial-era abuses committed by the Spanish crown centuries

ago. King Felipe made the remarks while speaking with Mexico's ambassador to Spain, Quirino Ordaz, during a visit to a museum exhibition in Madrid about the role of women in pre-Columbian Mexico. About the centuries-old Spanish conquest,...

- [Hong Kong travel agencies suspend Middle East tours over safety concerns](#) (2026-03-17 02:51)

Hong Kong travel agencies have suspended all tours to the Middle East this month, including those requiring flight transfers through the region, citing safety concerns amid the ongoing war. The announcement was issued on Monday evening, after renewed Iranian drone strikes targeted Dubai International Airport and other infrastructure in the United Arab Emirates, in retaliation for US-Israeli attacks which began in late February. Wing On Travel said it had cancelled all tour groups scheduled to...

- [US Section 301 trade investigations](#) (2026-03-17 02:51)

The Trump administration has initiated a series of sweeping trade investigations that could lead to the imposition of fresh tariffs after the US Supreme Court struck down its previous tariffs. The US trade representative (USTR) announced two new investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, including one targeting alleged excess manufacturing capacity, which opened for public comment today. Section 301 The USTR investigations cover at least 60 economies. US Trade Representative...

- [Hong Kong subway shootout in 2006 leaves 2 policemen dead – SCMP archive](#) (2026-03-17 02:45)

This article was first published on March 18, 2006 by Benjamin Wong and Clifford Lo Officers shot with stolen police gun An off-duty police-man shot two uni-formed con-stables, killing one of them, with a gun stolen from and used to kill an officer five years ago, police sources said yes-ter-day (March 17, 2006). The off-duty con-stable, Tsui Po-ko, 35, was also killed in the shootout in Tsim Sha Tsui in the early hours of yes-ter-day. Police sources said evid-ence at the scene sug-ges-ted that...

- [Channeling Trump, Chile's new president launches work on border barrier](#) (2026-03-17 02:32)

Chilean President Jose Antonio Kast wasted no time. Less than a week after his inauguration, Chile's arch-conservative president on Monday began overseeing preparations to build a border barrier - part of his flagship campaign promise to block immigrants from crossing illegally. From Chile's northern frontier area of Chacalluta, where legions of immigrants have slipped across the Peruvian border into one of the region's most prosperous nations, Kast vowed to implement what he calls his "Border...

- [Malaysian man allegedly chokes, threatens wife with knife over fried chicken craving](#) (2026-03-17 01:48)

A Malaysian woman has accused her husband of choking, slapping and threatening her with a knife in an alleged case of domestic violence after she asked him to buy ayam gepuk (pounded fried chicken). Cheras Assistant Commissioner Mohd Rosdi Daud said police received a report from a 33-year-old housewife about the incident at a flat in Sri Sabah, Cheras, last Wednesday.

“In the incident at 3.30pm, the victim had asked her husband to buy her ayam gepuk as she was craving for it,” he said in a...

- [Japan identifies 1,500 new missile shelters as fears grow over worsening East Asia security](#) (2026-03-17 01:30)

Japan has identified nearly 1,500 additional facilities that could serve as shelters in the event of missile or bomb attacks, amid mounting fears over the worsening security situation in northeast Asia. The government began a study in 2024 to expand the existing list of facilities where the population could take cover during an attack and has confirmed 1,489 sites – including subway stations and underground car parks – as being suitable for providing short-term protection. The aim, the Sankei...

- [How national security and ‘one country, two systems’ go hand in hand](#) (2026-03-17 01:30)

On February 10, China’s State Council Information Office released a white paper titled “Hong Kong: Safeguarding China’s National Security Under the Framework of One Country, Two Systems”. This is the third white paper issued by the Chinese central government on Hong Kong-related affairs since 2014. It reviews Hong Kong’s efforts in safeguarding national security, elaborates on the central government’s stance on Hong Kong’s role in maintaining national security and summarises the experience and...

- [China girl, 12, uses lai see money to buy shop, paying mum US\\$440 salary to run it for her](#) (2026-03-17 01:00)

A 12-year-old girl from central China showed her business acumen by using her savings to buy a stationery shop and hiring her mother for 3,000 yuan (US\$440) a month. Li Yue, who lived in Jiangxi province and received over 44,000 yuan (US\$6,400) in lai see during the Spring Festival, decided to invest the money in a business. She believed that depositing the money in the bank would offer an interest rate too low to keep up with inflation. While on her way to the bank, Li spotted a stationery...

- [Vietnam warns of April flight reductions as jet fuel shortage fears deepen](#) (2026-03-17 00:37)

Vietnamese authorities have warned the country’s aviation industry to prepare for potential flight reductions from April after China and Thailand halted exports of jet fuel due to the Iran war, increasing the likelihood of shortages. Vietnam imports more than two-thirds of its jet fuel needs, with 60 per cent coming from China and Thailand, according to documents from the aviation regulator and importers seen by Reuters. “There are risks of jet fuel shortages for

Vietnamese airlines from the...

- [Hong Kong cannot extradite Tates without UK or Romania requests, lawmakers say](#) (2026-03-17 00:30)

Hong Kong lawmakers have said Andrew and Tristan Tate cannot be extradited to the UK or Romania – where they face prosecution – without formal requests from those governments, as the infamous influencer brothers continued their visit to the city on Monday. The legislators also rejected claims that the city had become a haven for fugitives following the suspension of extradition treaties with several Western countries, including the United Kingdom, in 2020. The controversial influencers entered...

- [South Korea in ‘Catch-22 situation’ over Trump’s call for warships to secure Hormuz](#) (2026-03-17 00:00)

South Korea is expected to seek consensus through transparent procedures at its National Assembly before deciding on its next step, after US President Donald Trump bluntly called on various nations to help secure the Strait of Hormuz. Observers say Seoul is unlikely to move quickly, instead waiting for the outcome of the March 19 summit between Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, as well as a formal request from Washington through official diplomatic channels. The country is a key...

- [Drone strikes luxury hotel in Baghdad’s Green Zone, home to US embassy](#) (2026-03-16 23:36)

A drone sparked a fire on Monday at a luxury hotel frequented by foreign diplomats in Baghdad’s fortified Green Zone shortly before air defences foiled a rocket attack at the US embassy. The attacks came soon after the powerful Tehran-backed Kataeb Hezbollah group announced that its senior security commander Abu Ali al-Askari had been killed, without providing details on the circumstances of his death. Iraq’s interior ministry said initially that “a projectile fell on the roof of the al-Rasheed...

- [South Korea and Japan bear brunt of global stock sell-offs amid oil shock](#) (2026-03-16 23:30)

South Korea and Japan have led declines in global stock markets amid the oil shock, underscoring how supply disruptions in the Middle East are weighing on growth in economies heavily reliant on fuel imports. The Kospi index in Seoul has slumped 12 per cent since the US-Israel war with Iran broke out on February 28, while Tokyo’s Nikkei 225 has slid nearly 9 per cent. South Korea last week moved to cap oil price increases to limit inflation, while rising crude costs added to price pressures in...

- [Jean-Claude Van Damme talks art, Hong Kong filmmakers and ‘good friend’ Vladimir Putin](#) (2026-03-16 23:15)

If he had to pick one word, Jean-Claude Van Damme says he would describe his oil paintings as “simple”. The star of Bloodsport (1988) had swaggered into his art exhibition 40 minutes late, clad in full black, including the sunglasses he wore indoors. At 65 years old, the “Muscles from Brussels” still has a similar physique to the one at the height of his martial arts acting fame, though his hair is sparser and his gait less brazen. A long-time admirer of Sylvester Stallone, the Belgian-born...

- [Hong Kong to launch world’s first governed AI agent network amid OpenClaw frenzy](#) (2026-03-16 23:00)

Hong Kong is poised to launch the world’s first open-source human-AI agent collaboration network this week, along with a series of everyday artificial intelligence products to assist citizens with activities such as applying for schools and analysing horse racing. The Hong Kong Generative AI Research and Development Centre (HKGAI) said it would soon offer on an open-source basis a human-AI agent collaboration network named “ClawNet”, designed to ensure AI agents “only do things that are...

- [How China is beating the US in new weapons race with a fraction of the budget](#) (2026-03-16 22:00)

Large passenger jets and advanced chips, BeiDou satellites and the Tiangong space station: these large-scale science and technology projects could be part of China’s efforts to mobilise resources nationwide to speed up the development of new weapons, according to a study by researchers with China’s top defence university. China’s military modernisation has accelerated at a pace that unsettles many analysts in Washington. In the past decade alone, Beijing has rolled out a sequence of major...

- [Trump vows to ‘take’ Cuba as island reels from total power cut linked to oil embargo](#) (2026-03-16 21:40)

US President Donald Trump vowed on Monday to “take” Cuba as the communist island plunged into darkness under a total power blackout linked to a crippling oil embargo imposed by Washington. After nearly seven decades defying the United States, Havana’s communist authorities are under massive pressure from a Trump administration determined to make history. “You know, all my life I’ve been hearing about the United States and Cuba. When will the United States do it?” Trump told reporters at the...

- [Iran war shows urgency of Hong Kong’s green shipping transition](#) (2026-03-16 21:30)

The war in Iran, culminating in the de facto closure of the Strait of Hormuz, has again exposed the world’s energy and maritime sector to acute vulnerabilities. The spike in oil prices and surging freight rates may grab headlines, but beneath these shocks lie fundamental questions about Asia’s – and Hong Kong’s – energy security, the resilience of shipping risk management and the urgent need to transform our maritime industry for a greener future. The Strait of Hormuz is not just a geopolitical...

- [Trump says the US has requested that China delay Beijing summit by ‘a month or so’](#) (2026-03-16 20:30)

US President Donald Trump said on Monday that his planned trip to Beijing later this month may be postponed, adding uncertainty to a visit expected to include talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Speaking at a news conference at the White House, Trump said the timing of the visit was still under discussion, citing the need to remain in Washington as the US manages its ongoing military campaign against Iran. The trip had been scheduled for March 31 to April 2. “I don’ t know, we’ re working on...

- [400 killed after Pakistan strikes hit drug rehabilitation hospital in Kabul, Taliban says](#) (2026-03-16 20:27)

Afghanistan’ s deputy government spokesman said early on Tuesday the death toll from an air strike by Pakistan that hit a hospital treating drug users in the Afghan capital Kabul has increased to 400. In a post on X, Hamdullah Fitrat said the strike on Monday night had destroyed large sections of the hospital. He said the death toll so far stood at 400, while a further 250 people had been reported injured. Fitrat said rescue teams were trying to control the fire at the building and recover the...

- [Trump administration can resume ‘third-country’ deportations, appeal court rules](#) (2026-03-16 19:35)

A US federal appeal court allowed the Trump administration on Monday to temporarily resume summarily deporting undocumented migrants to countries that are not their own. The US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit, in a 2-1 vote, lifted a block on the so-called third-country deportations that had been imposed by a lower court. District Judge Brian Murphy ruled last month that third-country deportations were unlawful but put his ruling on hold to allow the government time to file an appeal. The...

- [Trump administration urges judge to revisit ruling blocking subpoenas to Jerome Powell](#) (2026-03-16 19:13)

US President Donald Trump’ s administration has asked a judge to reconsider his ruling that has effectively blocked a criminal investigation into US Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, according to court documents made public on Monday. Washington-based US District Judge James Boasberg in a ruling unsealed on Friday blocked subpoenas issued by federal prosecutors in January seeking information about cost overruns in renovations at the Fed’ s headquarters and Powell’ s testimony to Congress...

- [Washington signals it wants China kept out of Brazil’ s largest port auction](#) (2026-03-16 19:12)

A United States diplomat has told Brazilian port industry executives that Washington does not want a Chinese company to win the concession for a major container terminal in Santos, the

largest port in Latin America, in the latest sign that the race for one of Brazil's most prized infrastructure assets has become a front in the broader rivalry between Washington and Beijing. Kevin Murakami, the US consul-general in Sao Paulo, made the comments on March 5, at an event organised by Grupo A Tribuna,...

- [Zelensky to visit UK as Starmer says it is 'vital' to continue supporting Ukraine](#)

(2026-03-16 18:24)

The UK will "welcome" Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday, British Defence Secretary John Healey told parliament, with the Ukrainian leader expected to travel to Madrid, Spain the next day. "Our total determination to stand with Ukraine remains steadfast and we will welcome President Zelensky to this country tomorrow," Healey said on Monday. Healey's announcement came hours after UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said he would be meeting the Ukrainian leader "soon". Ukraine's European allies have vowed...

- [Oscar-winner Sean Penn skips Academy Awards ceremony to visit Zelensky in Kyiv](#)

(2026-03-16 17:32)

Sean Penn, who won a best supporting actor Oscar for One Battle After Another on Sunday, was in Ukraine on Monday where he met President Volodymyr Zelensky in a show of support for the war-torn country. An Agence France-Presse reporter saw the Mystic River star getting out of a black car in central Kyiv earlier on Monday, wearing sunglasses and carrying a box of cigarettes. Penn, a vocal advocate for Ukraine who has visited the country several times, on Sunday won his third acting Oscar but was...

- [BBC asks Florida court to dismiss Trump's US\\$10 billion lawsuit over January 6 speech edit](#)

(2026-03-16 17:01)

The BBC said on Monday it had asked a US federal court in Florida to dismiss a US\$10 billion lawsuit brought by US President Donald Trump against the British broadcaster. Trump launched a lawsuit last year over a BBC documentary that edited his 2021 speech ahead of the US Capitol riot. The documentary was "never aired in Florida – or the US" or available to stream there on any platform, a representative for the British Broadcasting Corporation said in a comment sent to Agence France-Presse. It...

- [Emirates flies full flights out of Dubai, near-empty ones back](#)

(2026-03-16 15:46)

Emirates is operating flights to Dubai that are near-empty in some cases as travellers avoid the Persian Gulf, highlighting the challenges for the world's largest international airline to restore its network amid a protracted war. Flights from destinations in the US and continental Europe have been hit the hardest, with planes returning from Prague or Budapest only about 5 to 10 per cent occupied, according to data compiled by the Dubai-based airline. Several aircraft returning from New York...

- [China under pressure as Trump ties high-stakes summit to Strait of Hormuz crisis](#)

(2026-03-16 15:00)

Trump's threat to postpone his Beijing trip unless China helps break Iran's blockade of the Strait of Hormuz has fused two crises Beijing had sought to keep apart: the unravelling of Middle East stability and the fragile thaw in US-China relations. China, the world's largest buyer of Gulf oil, is now being forced to weigh its economic reliance on stable energy routes against its tradition of non-interference in diplomacy, according to observers. While Beijing is eager to host Trump for a...

- [Nepal's LGBTQ community celebrates first transgender woman lawmaker](#)

(2026-03-16 15:00)

Draped in garlands, Bhumika Shrestha on Monday became Nepal's first transgender woman lawmaker, marking a proud milestone for the marginalised community in the Himalayan nation. Nepal's Election Commission confirmed the 37-year-old as a proportional representation MP from the centrist Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), which won a majority in parliament with 182 seats last week. "I am very excited but also feel the responsibility on my shoulders," said Shrestha, an LGBTQ rights advocate. "Our...

- ['Evil' UK nursery worker who raped toddlers in his care jailed for 24 years](#)

(2026-03-16 14:33)

An "evil" UK nursery worker who raped and abused two- and three-year-olds in his care was jailed for at least 24 years on Monday, weeks after another childcare worker was imprisoned in a similar case. Nathan Bennett, 30, was jailed at Bristol Crown Court in southwest England for the serial abuse of five boys at the nursery where he worked. He was described as an "incorrigible and dangerous paedophile" by Judge William Hart, handing down the sentence. "You prioritised your own sexual satisfaction..."

- [Beijing on Iran war, Trump's China trade plan, new AI arena: 7 US-China relations reads](#)

(2026-03-16 14:30)

We have selected seven of the most interesting and important news stories covering US-China relations from the past few weeks. If you would like to see more of our reporting, please consider subscribing. 1. Trump slams European allies, praises China and continues to justify Iran attack US President Donald Trump used a White House meeting with the German Chancellor on March 3 to blast European allies, praise China, waffle on tariffs and argue that the attack he had launched against Iran days...

- ['Super Rich' star David Yong hit with 12 new fraud charges in Singapore](#)

(2026-03-16 13:52)

Singaporean businessman David Yong was given 12 new charges on Monday for conspiring to make false entries in accounts and for his company's illegal issuing of loans amounting to more than S\$1 million (US\$780,000). The 38-year-old, whose name in court papers was

indicated as Yong Khung Lin, pleaded not guilty in court. The chief executive officer of multinational business and holding company Evergreen Group Holdings, who is on bail of S\$1million, said he would contest all charges. The new...

- [Northern Metropolis to streamline land approval process from 9 to 2 months: sources](#) (2026-03-16 13:39)

Hong Kong's Northern Metropolis megaproject near the border with mainland China will adopt laws to streamline land approval procedures from nine to two months in a move to speed up its development, the South China Morning Post has learned. Sources said that details of the dedicated legislation for the Northern Metropolis would be announced on Tuesday, with a major highlight being the shortening of land-use approval procedures. These measures align with the newly unveiled 15th national five-year...

- [What lessons does Taiwan see from Iran and Ukraine for its air-defence strategy?](#) (2026-03-16 13:30)

Lessons from the wars in Iran and Ukraine are pushing Taipei to rethink its air-defence strategy, with officials now warning that expensive missiles alone cannot stop large waves of rockets and drones. In a report submitted to Taiwan's lawmakers on Monday, the island's defence ministry said low-cost interceptor weapons were urgently needed to counter the mainland Chinese military's growing arsenal of long-range rockets and uncrewed aircraft. The new systems would form part of Taiwan's planned...

- [Alibaba reshuffles AI units into a new 'Token Hub' group, led by CEO Eddie Wu](#) (2026-03-16 13:19)

Alibaba Group Holding has reshuffled its artificial intelligence operations, creating a new top level business group and placing CEO Eddie Wu Yongming in charge as the AI and e-commerce powerhouse accelerates its push into the emerging token economy. The company said on Monday it had established the Alibaba Token Hub (ATH) Business Group, which brings all its core AI teams and products together under one umbrella. This includes Tongyi Laboratory – the developer of Alibaba's Qwen series of...

- [Frenchman jailed for 10 years in Azerbaijan: 'I'm not a spy'](#) (2026-03-16 12:54)

Azerbaijan on Monday sentenced a Frenchman to 10 years in prison in an espionage case launched during a period of diplomatic tensions between Paris and Baku that have now eased. Martin Ryan was arrested in December 2023 and went on trial in January last year, when relations between Azerbaijan and France had deteriorated to new lows over Paris' support for Armenia, Baku's long-time rival. The court found him guilty of spying against Azerbaijan and sentenced him to 10 years. Prosecutors had sought...

- [China and the US end trade talks in Paris as doubts form over Trump visit](#) (2026-03-16 12:48)

China and the US wrapped up their sixth round of trade talks in Paris on Monday, with the agenda ranging from a possible extension of bilateral tariff and non-tariff measures as well as bilateral investment. “China and the US conducted deep, frank and constructive consultations,” Chinese vice commerce minister Li Chenggang said. Both sides agreed to “continue to maintain the stability of tariffs” and discussed the possibility of establishing a mechanism for promoting bilateral investment, said...

- [Hong Kong in new push to get young people to register as voters](#) (2026-03-16 12:33)

Young people can opt to make self-declarations to be exempted from producing proof of address to register as electors under a new Hong Kong government drive to boost voter numbers, lawmakers have been told. A commissioner for oaths will be stationed at each Immigration Department registration of persons office, where young people replace their juvenile identity cards with adult ones upon turning 18. The initiative was outlined as officials presented the 2026 voter registration campaign at...

- [Malaysia’ s Petronas wins right to challenge Sarawak gas laws in court](#) (2026-03-16 12:32)

Malaysia’ s highest court on Monday allowed national energy firm Petronas to pursue a legal bid to challenge several laws passed by the state of Sarawak, amid a protracted dispute over gas distribution rights. Sarawak, on Borneo island, is home to more than 60 per cent of Malaysia’ s gas reserves and has long sought greater control over its natural resources. In recent years, it has passed laws and appointed its own firm Petros to procure, distribute, supply and sell all natural gas in the state,...

- [Why Trump's push for China to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz may hurt trade talks](#) (2026-03-16 12:30)

US President Donald Trump’ s reported threat that he may postpone a long-awaited visit to China – unless Beijing helps unblock the Iran-controlled Strait of Hormuz – may put the current trade talks in Paris at risk by sidelining earlier priorities and potential deals, analysts say. As the US-Israeli war in Iran enters its third week and disrupts global energy markets, Trump has reportedly urged Beijing to send warships to help reopen the strait and ease oil shipments. About 20 per cent of the...

- [Europe says it must rearm – but to what end?](#) (2026-03-16 12:30)

With the Middle East ablaze and war in Ukraine showing no sign of respite, a stark new consensus is hardening in Paris, London and Berlin that Europe must rearm. Recently, French President Emmanuel Macron signalled a pivotal shift in deterrence by announcing an increase in the nation’ s nuclear warheads and a “forward deterrence” plan. This follows a rare joint appeal from the British and German defence chiefs, who urged Europeans to build a moral and strategic case for a massive surge in...

- [Fix, don't fire 'digital employee' OpenClaw over security risks: Paul Chan](#) (2026-03-16 12:02)

Hong Kong's finance chief has likened the powerful AI agent OpenClaw to an efficient "digital employee", saying it should not be dismissed but rather improved to address security risk concerns. Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po's remarks on Monday followed a recent Digital Policy Office advisory urging government departments to avoid installing OpenClaw or its variants due to security concerns. "AI agent OpenClaw has awed the world; the convenience it offers is just like having a digital...

- [AI poisoning: fake fitness tracker fools chatbots in China, sparking outcry](#) (2026-03-16 12:00)

An undercover investigation by state-run China Central Television (CCTV) has cast a harsh light on a controversial practice in a nascent industry: the "poisoning" of artificial intelligence models with fabricated information. The report showed how techniques of generative engine optimisation (GEO) – the AI version of search engine optimisation (SEO) – could be used to manipulate AI chatbots, provoking widespread public concern and debate as both industry insiders and observers anticipated...

- [Hong Kong businessman expected to take loss on Peak properties he bought for US\\$255m](#) (2026-03-16 11:53)

Luxury residential property on Hong Kong's Peak Road owned by businessman Chan King-wai has been put up for sale by public tender, several years after he acquired it from companies linked to CK group. Marketing agent JLL said on Monday that the adjoining sites at 86, 88 and 90 Peak Road are being offered for joint sale by tender. The residential lots have a combined area of about 28,620 sq ft. The site could attract bids of about HK\$70,000 (US\$8,939) to HK\$100,000 per square foot, said Joseph...

- [Arrest of stateless teen in Malaysia highlights plight of Sabah's 1 million non-citizens](#) (2026-03-16 11:49)

The arrest of a 17-year-old stateless teenager during a school outing to buy Eid clothes at a Sabah mall for allegedly failing to show valid residence papers, has returned scrutiny to Malaysia's treatment of undocumented people. Niko Ansboy, a student at Borneo Komrad, an alternative school for stateless children, was waiting outside a store during a school trip to the 1Borneo Hypermall when police detained him on Sunday. He was stopped by officers patrolling after the Kota Kinabalu District...

- [Papers please: China raises pressure on Panama amid canal row with ship inspection wave](#) (2026-03-16 11:30)

Beijing has increased its inspections on Panama-flagged vessels entering Chinese ports, a source from the shipping industry said, an action intended to raise the Latin American country's stress level after its courts voided the operating rights of Hong Kong-based

conglomerate CK Hutchison in the Panama Canal. Port state control (PSC) – the inspection regime countries may deploy to verify the compliance of foreign ships with various international standards – was being used as a form of leverage...

- [PLA ramps up Taiwan patrols after lull as Beijing slams Lai's 'independence confession'](#) (2026-03-16 11:19)

The People's Liberation Army ramped up aircraft sorties near Taiwan over the weekend, ending two weeks of relative calm just as a defiant speech by Taiwanese leader William Lai Ching-te drew a strong rebuke from Beijing. From 6am on Saturday to 6am on Sunday, Taiwan detected 26 PLA aircraft sorties operating around the island. Sixteen of these entered the island's air defence identification zone (ADIZ), according to data released by Taiwan's defence ministry on Sunday. The 26 sorties marked a...

- [China: we're still talking to US about Trump trip after threat to delay over Iran crisis](#) (2026-03-16 10:33)

China said on Monday it was still talking to the United States about President Donald Trump's planned visit later this month, following his threat to delay the trip. Trump has been trying to pressure countries that rely heavily on oil from the Persian Gulf to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway that Iran has effectively closed in retaliation for US and Israeli attacks. On Sunday, he told the Financial Times "it's only appropriate that people who are the beneficiaries of the..."

- [Most Filipino women think a woman's place is in the home, survey finds](#) (2026-03-16 10:30)

The Philippines ranks among Asia's most gender-equal societies by several international measures. Yet ask Filipino women where they truly belong and most will still tell you: at home. A new survey has found that 83 per cent of Filipino women agree "being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay", up from 70 per cent when the same question was posed in 1994. The findings, released by independent pollster Social Weather Stations earlier in March to coincide with National Women's Month,...

- [Iran to turn bombed girls' school into museum commemorating US 'crimes'](#) (2026-03-16 10:19)

Iran plans to convert the girls' school that was bombed on the first day of the war into a museum commemorating the nearly 200 victims of the strike. "This school is a living document of the Americans' willingness to commit crimes and must be registered and documented for preservation in the historical memory of the Iranian people," the Iranian government said in a statement issued on Monday. At least 168 pupils aged between seven and 12 years old, 26 teachers and four parents were killed in the...

- [Google to open Gemini chatbot to all Hong Kong users amid city's AI push](#) (2026-03-16 10:15)

Tech giant Google will gradually roll out its generative AI services to all users in Hong Kong starting with the Gemini web app before introducing a mobile version for the chatbot and virtual assistant. The move is expected to eliminate the barriers that previously forced many residents to use virtual private networks (VPNs) or third-party platforms to access Google's flagship artificial intelligence (AI) models or other alternatives. "We believe expanding the Gemini experience will drive more...

- [How China ethnic minority groups use chicken bones of small roosters to predict fortunes](#) (2026-03-16 10:00)

Ethnic minority groups in China have long relied on a gruesome method to predict their fortunes: beating a rooster to death and reading its femur bones, a practice that has lasted for centuries. Tracing back to the Tang (618–907) and Song (960–1279) dynasties, the custom is known as "Dajibu", meaning chicken divination. It originated from ancient spiritual beliefs in southwestern China, where people lacking access to medicine would beat bronze drums to pray for healing. Chicken bone divination...

- [Strait of Hormuz marks first full day's pause as no ships cross amid Iran war](#) (2026-03-16 09:30)

Maritime tracking data showed that no ships passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, marking the first full day without any confirmed commercial traffic in either direction since February 28, when the US and Israel began military strikes on Iran. Crossings dropped to zero, below the previous seven-day average of 2.57 daily transits, according to maritime analytics firm Windward. Although no vessels entered the waterway that day, about 400 ships sailed in the Gulf of Oman on Friday, it...

- [Senior Hong Kong policeman denies molesting clerk in indecent assault case](#) (2026-03-16 09:15)

A senior Hong Kong police officer has denied molesting a government clerk at the force's headquarters more than a year ago. Senior Superintendent Ian Chow Ngai-kong, 50, on Monday stood trial at Eastern Court on three counts of indecent assault over the alleged incidents at police headquarters in Wan Chai on June 19 and November 1, 2024. The court heard the complainant, a senior clerical officer from the Civil Service Bureau, was seconded to the police force to provide administrative support...

- [Confusion over Malaysia-US trade deal as 'null and void' claim retracted](#) (2026-03-16 09:14)

Malaysia's government has been forced onto the defensive over its much-touted tariff deal with the United States, after a minister walked back an earlier claim that the agreement had been rendered "null and void" by a US Supreme Court ruling. Prime Minister Anwar

Ibrahim's administration signed the deal in October, promising US\$240 billion in investments and purchases of American goods, including beef and aircraft, in exchange for continued access to the world's largest consumer market at a...

- [Dubai flights disrupted after drone attack near airport; missile kills 1 in Abu Dhabi](#) (2026-03-16 09:14)

Missiles and drone attacks hit across the UAE on Monday, with a drone-related incident sparking a fuel tank fire near Dubai airport that disrupted travel, while a missile killed a civilian in Abu Dhabi. In the eastern emirate of Fujairah, a drone attack on oil infrastructure sparked a fire, just one day after smoke was seen rising from a major UAE energy installation in the emirate. The attacks came a day after Iranian foreign minister Abbas Araghchi said in an interview that rockets had been...

- [2 dead after Japanese school trip boats capsize off US military base site in Okinawa](#) (2026-03-16 09:11)

Two boats carrying 21 people capsized on Monday off Henoko, a controversial relocation site for a US military base off Japan's southern island of Okinawa, throwing all into the water and leaving two of them dead, officials said. The Japan Coast Guard said 18 of them were students from a Kyoto high school on two boats, 10 on Heiwa Maru and eight on the smaller Fukutsu, to observe the Henoko area as part of their peace education programme. Rescuers pulled all 21 people out of the water, but...

- [China may snub Trump plea for help in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-16 09:04)

US President Donald Trump said he may put off a planned visit to Beijing as he sought to press China and other nations into helping reopen the Strait of Hormuz amid the war in Iran. "We may delay" the trip, he told the Financial Times on Sunday, without saying for how long. The visit, scheduled for March 31 to April 2, includes a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Trump has "demanded" that about seven countries help to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, he told reporters on Sunday, as the...

- [Malaysia's US\\$6 billion megaport imperils Mah Meri way of life](#) (2026-03-16 09:00)

Lingan bin Man pulls up to the fishing jetty in the early afternoon, guiding his small boat towards a narrow strip of wooden planks as waves crash against the dock. On board are his wife and toddler. Together, the Malaysian family inspects the day's catch: 2kg (4.4lbs) of clams after three hours at sea. "I can sell this for US\$7," the 52-year-old said. For fishermen in Kampung Sungai Kurau, a village on Pulau Carey, an island in Selangor state, this has become the new normal. Members of the Mah...

- [Could this Chinese breakthrough pave way for global organ transplant system?](#) (2026-03-16 09:00)

A team of scientists in China has developed a way to freeze and revive organs for transplant, extending their viability from as little as six hours to several days, according to a peer-reviewed study published in the Journal of Medical Devices. While the technology is still at the experimental stage and has not yet progressed to human trials, it could one day transform the entire field of organ transplantation, especially for hearts, the researchers say. “If just half of the currently discarded...

- [Shanghai sees massive F1 turnout, boosting city’ s pitch as sporting destination](#) (2026-03-16 08:00)

The Formula One (F1) Chinese Grand Prix drew record crowds over the weekend, another indication the wide-ranging efforts from host city Shanghai to raise its profile as a global sports and event destination are paying off. The three-day event, which concluded on Sunday, attracted more than 230,000 cumulative spectators, the highest attendance headcount reported by the Chinese financial centre in nearly two decades. On the opening day, the number of foreign arrivals through Shanghai’ s ports...

- [AI to narrow China’ s rural-urban economic divide](#) (2026-03-16 07:00)

China is counting on artificial intelligence (AI) to help the 450 million people living in rural areas left behind by the nation’ s economic boom. Farmers are already benefiting from the technology, using AI offerings such as DeepSeek or ByteDance’ s Doubao for help with issues like pig rearing, pest control and government subsidies. The State Council’ s “No 1 document” of 2026, extended a push for the “digital upgrading” of farming, with an emphasis on the greater integration of AI, drones, robots...

- [Myanmar’ s junta-proxy parliament meets for first time since 2021 coup](#) (2026-03-16 06:51)

Five years after armoured vehicles rolled through the streets of Myanmar’ s capital and the generals tore up an election result they did not like, a new parliament sat for the first time on Monday. The legislature that convened in Naypyidaw was stacked almost entirely with allies of Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the coup leader who ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021. In Myanmar’ s recent election, held across barely a third of the country, the army-backed Union Solidarity...

- [China’ s supply chain meets the wall of African resource nationalism](#) (2026-03-16 06:36)

Resource-rich African nations are increasingly asserting control over critical minerals to maximise domestic returns, sending global prices soaring and exerting pressure on Chinese supply chains. One price crunch started last month when Zimbabwe, Africa’ s biggest lithium producer, abruptly suspended exports of raw lithium minerals and concentrates. The country had originally planned to impose the ban in 2027 to encourage more local value-added processing of the mineral but the government brought...

- [Elderly driver arrested after car mounts pavement in Hong Kong, injuring 9](#) (2026-03-16 06:36)

A 75-year-old driver has been arrested in Hong Kong after stepping on the wrong pedal in his car and mounting the pavement, injuring eight pedestrians and throwing his passenger from the vehicle. Police were called to Lam Hing Street in Kowloon Bay at about 12.40pm on Monday following reports of a car veering onto the walkway outside the car park of Metro Centre II. Surveillance footage showed the man attempting to make a U-turn before the accident happened, according to the force. His...

- [20 Thai sailors return home after Iranian attack in Strait of Hormuz](#) (2026-03-16 06:24)

Twenty Thai crew members of a cargo ship attacked in the crucial Strait of Hormuz arrived in Thailand on Monday, with three of their colleagues still stranded on the vessel in the Gulf. The Thai-registered Mayuree Naree was hit by two projectiles on Wednesday while transiting through the Gulf waterway, after departing a port in the United Arab Emirates. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said they had struck the Thai ship, as well as a Liberia-flagged vessel, in the strait because they had ignored...

- [James Taylor-Foster, Para Site's 'wild card' director, on 'beautiful paradox' of Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-16 06:01)

With his peroxide blond hair, dark moustache and luxuriant eyebrows, London-born curator and writer James Taylor-Foster is easy to pick out among the tourists and selfie-takers in the courtyard of Yick Cheong Building, also known as the “Monster Building”, in Hong Kong's Quarry Bay neighbourhood. The South China Morning Post is meeting the 33-year-old here shortly after the board of the Hong Kong non-profit art space Para Site chose him to be its next executive director. That space, a few...

- [China woman uses AI-generated man to lecture on respecting science, rejecting superstition](#) (2026-03-16 06:00)

Young people in China are contributing to a fake account generated by artificial intelligence (AI) to lecture their parents about healthy and scientific life values. A social media account called “Lao Zhao jiang dao li”, or “Mr Zhao talks sense”, went viral recently, amassing over 200,000 followers in just two months. The man surnamed Zhao, based in southwestern China's Chongqing municipality, claimed in his profile that he is a retired professor who has specialised in parent-child relationships...

- [Couple to face child neglect charges after son swept into sea during Typhoon Ragasa](#) (2026-03-16 05:35)

A Hong Kong couple whose five-year-old son was swept into the sea at a waterfront during Super Typhoon Ragasa last year have been charged with child neglect and are set to appear in court on Tuesday. Police revealed on Monday that the boy's father, a 40-year-old man surnamed Yen, and mother, a 38-year-old woman surnamed Li, were arrested in Chai Wan on

January 6 and were charged last Wednesday with ill-treatment or neglect by those in charge of a child or young person. The case will be heard at...

- [Hong Kong watchdog warns 24-hour gym users of hidden costs, data privacy risks](#) (2026-03-16 05:03)

Monthly fees at Hong Kong's 24-hour fitness centres vary widely and can more than double depending on additional charges, the Consumer Council has found, as it warned residents to be cautious when providing sensitive personal data, including facial images for recognition systems. The consumer watchdog revealed on Monday the results of a survey of 11 round-the-clock gym operators, finding that although all offered monthly membership plans, nearly half imposed extra non-refundable charges that...

- [Malaysia's government accused of using law to silence critics](#) (2026-03-16 04:52)

Several Malaysian civil society groups on Monday accused Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim's government of using a harsh criminal law provision to intimidate critics after police questioned activists, academics and political researchers over an alleged plot to topple the government. The backlash follows an announcement in late February that police were investigating allegations of a conspiracy to "topple the government and sabotage national stability" involving "a local influential figure" and an...

- [China defence experts vanish online, Thai coconut cartel crisis: 5 weekend reads you missed](#) (2026-03-16 04:12)

We have put together stories from our coverage last weekend to help you stay informed about news across Asia and beyond. If you would like to see more of our reporting, please consider subscribing. 1. Top Chinese nuclear, radar and missile experts vanish from engineering body site 2. The US is shifting THAAD to the Middle East. What does that mean for China? 3. Hong Kong OpenClaw users say tool is helpful 'family member' who must be watched 4. Inside the coconut cartel: how Chinese money...

- [Things 'I do not like' drove me to quit US for Hong Kong: top mathematician Ngo Bao Chau](#) (2026-03-16 04:00)

World-leading Vietnamese mathematician Ngo Bao Chau has said his decision to leave the US was not just the result of the worsening academic environment there, but also a vision to transform Asia into the next global powerhouse for maths and science. Ngo, the first Vietnamese recipient of the prestigious Fields Medal, will join the University of Hong Kong in June. "I want Asia to be the next America or the next Europe [as] a place where science and mathematics thrive," he said in an interview on...

- [Philippines' Jollibee stands out as Southeast Asia's global restaurant exception](#) (2026-03-16 04:00)

From Singapore's hawker stalls to Thailand's street markets and Vietnam's noodle shops, Southeast Asia is home to some of the world's most celebrated food cultures. Yet the region has produced relatively few restaurant chains with global brand recognition, even as Chinese food and beverage groups climb international rankings. Analysts say structural factors – including smaller domestic markets, fragmented regional consumer tastes and fewer brands expanding aggressively overseas – have slowed the...

- [Guess says it will shut all mainland China stores amid retail rethink](#) (2026-03-16 03:12)

US fashion brand Guess has told customers it will close all its stores in mainland China by the end of March, pending a new business model at a time when a growing number of international fashion retailers retreat from the market amid what analysts believe are issues including weak localisation and slow decision-making. Other foreign brands that have withdrawn entirely from mainland China in recent years include US label Old Navy, UK brand Topshop, and several labels owned by Spanish fashion...

- [Courier SF Express imposes temporary fuel surcharges within Hong Kong and Macau](#) (2026-03-16 03:09)

China's largest courier, SF Express, will introduce temporary fuel surcharges for local document and parcel deliveries within Hong Kong and Macau, set at HK\$1 (13 US cents) and MOP\$1, respectively, starting Monday amid a surge in global oil prices. The Shenzhen-based company said on Sunday that the surcharge was introduced in response to "the recent drastic fluctuations in global fuel prices due to the international situation," adding that monthly credit account clients would not be subject to...

- [Malaysia will not intervene militarily in Middle East, Anwar says](#) (2026-03-16 02:37)

Malaysia cannot get involved in what is happening in the Middle East, especially not via military intervention, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has said. He said that as a free country, Malaysia could voice its objections towards war and violence – but not by sending in troops. Dialogue and engagement should be the means to resolve any form of disputes, he said. "We do not agree when any country is attacked and colonised. We do not want any country to interfere in our national affairs," he said on...

- [How Asean can loosen dependence on US, China amid trade war fallout](#) (2026-03-16 02:00)

As trade tensions and new US tariff investigations rattle global supply chains, Southeast Asian economies are looking to broaden their options, but analysts say the region's deep links with the US and China mean any shift will be gradual rather than a clean break. The disruption could actually work in Asean's favour, accelerating supply-chain diversification and shifting more manufacturing to the region from markets such as Europe, India and the Middle East, they say. Economic ministers from the...

- [China's economy starts 2026 strongly as retail sales, investment rise](#) (2026-03-16 02:00)

China's economy got off to a strong start in 2026, as several indicators registered expectation-beating expansions in the first two months – though analysts cautioned the imminent energy crisis caused by the US-Israel war in Iran would present challenges for Beijing and the world at large in the months to come. Resilience in industrial output and retail sales, as well as a small expansion in fixed-asset investment, will provide a vital boost to Beijing as it strives to achieve an economic growth...

- [Mainland-style oversight system could help Legco to deliver](#) (2026-03-16 01:30)

After the annual “two sessions” in Beijing, it's clear that Hong Kong policymakers have their work cut out for them. It has been made abundantly clear what is expected of Hong Kong: stop messing around and get on with the national programme. Hong Kong is part of the nation's plans to move forward. The country knows exactly where the city fits into the big picture, how it can catapult growth in key areas and play the role of superconnector between China and the rest of the world. The 15th...

- [Hong Kong regulator sets ‘comprehensive’ review of medical insurance costs](#) (2026-03-16 01:00)

Hong Kong's Insurance Authority aims to increase transparency and the available range of medical insurance products to address rising costs, while also reviewing regulations with an eye towards attracting more international life-insurance buyers. “We would like to see the insurance companies introduce more medical insurance products that are more accessible and affordable for the general public, with sales practices that are fair to consumers,” said Clement Lau Chung-kin, the authority's...

- [China Liaoning warship's sole female senior officer urges fellow women to prioritise professional skills](#) (2026-03-16 01:00)

The sole female senior officer aboard China's Liaoning aircraft carrier has urged women to put aside their gender and focus on professionalism and responsibility. On March 7, during the 14th National People's Congress (NPC) in Beijing, a poised and confident female military deputy in uniform captured nationwide attention. Zhu Yuemeng, 36, from a modest family in Jilin province, northeastern China, is a naval lieutenant colonel and serves as a political instructor on board the Liaoning aircraft...

- [30% jump in demand for regional holidays among Hongkongers amid Middle East war](#) (2026-03-16 00:30)

Demand for some regional holiday destinations among Hong Kong travellers has jumped by as much as 30 per cent ahead of Easter, as locals seek to avoid long-haul trips amid rising airfares and disrupted routes caused by the ongoing war in Iran, according to industry players. Travel agencies said the number of inquiries for trips to Japan, South Korea, mainland China and Australia had risen by between 10 and 30 per cent since the war escalated, while demand for destinations linked to the Middle...

- [Trump wants Japanese warships in Hormuz. Can Takaichi ‘dodge the bullet’ ?](#)

(2026-03-16 00:00)

The rapidly escalating conflict in the Middle East threatens to overshadow this week’s meeting between Japan’s Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and US President Donald Trump, where the two leaders are expected to deepen economic cooperation and collaboration in shipbuilding. Thursday’s summit at the White House puts Takaichi in a bind, caught between Trump’s call for Tokyo and others to send warships to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz and her country’s constitutional limits on taking part in...

- [Precision strike: China targets US, Japan stranglehold on photoresist supply](#) (2026-03-16 00:00)

China’s push for semiconductor self-sufficiency is shifting from broad aspiration to a precision strike on chokepoint materials, with photoresist – the light-sensitive chemical essential for etching microscopic circuits onto silicon wafers – emerging as a new battlefield. The sector, which provides the key material for lithography, was expected to enter a critical stage of “accelerated breakthroughs and large-scale application” over the coming years, according to Fu Zhiwei, chairman of Xuzhou...

## Source: The Diplomat China

- [Will China’s Stalinesque Purges Sabotage Its Military Ambitions?](#) (2026-03-20 13:28)

A side-by-side comparison of Stalin’s own military purges can help answer that question.

- [Taiwan’s New Southbound 2.0: Rewiring the Indo-Pacific Beyond China](#) (2026-03-19 13:25)

Taiwan intends to deepen and broaden its partnerships not only with New Southbound countries, but also with democratic partners across the world.

- [China’s Censorship Is the Most Pressing Threat to Freedom of Expression](#) (2026-03-18 11:53)

Advanced technologies are propelling the CCP’s capabilities for suppressing speech to an entirely new level, both within and beyond China’s borders.

- [Beijing’s Real Problem With Trump’s China Summit Delay](#) (2026-03-17 16:02)

In the end, a postponement may suit Beijing’s interests more than Washington’s – as long as it doesn’t become linked with the Hormuz issue.

- [Taiwan’s First PRC-born Legislator Stokes Controversy](#) (2026-03-17 12:32)

The status of Chinese spouses of Taiwanese has been increasingly a topic of debate in Taiwan.

- [Why China's OpenClaw Mania Is More Than Just a Tech Craze](#) (2026-03-16 16:06)

Local governments and tech conglomerates were the deliberate architects of the enthusiasm, while the central government was forced to hit the brakes.

- [Refashioning a Strategic Partnership: Canada and China in a Fragmenting World Order](#) (2026-03-16 12:41)

The Canada-China breakthrough may have made things easier for other middle powers, like the U.K. and Germany, who have also stepped up their links with China recently.

- [The China-Iran Partnership and the Limits of Beijing's Non-Interference Alliance Model](#) (2026-03-16 04:35)

A preference for strategic flexibility has left Beijing dependent on a narrow set of "allies" whose usefulness is limited – especially in times of crisis.

## Source: US-China Perception Monitor

- [Click Click Boom w/ Lizhi Liu](#) (2026-03-20 18:45)

The post Click Click Boom w/ Lizhi Liu appeared first on U.S.-China Perception Monitor.

- [Most Chinese favor peaceful ties over force for Taiwan: survey](#) (2026-03-19 19:50)

The post Most Chinese favor peaceful ties over force for Taiwan: survey appeared first on U.S.-China Perception Monitor.

- [Public opinion in China is hardening on America and Taiwan](#) (2026-03-19 19:45)

The post Public opinion in China is hardening on America and Taiwan appeared first on U.S.-China Perception Monitor.

- [Mainland Chinese see Taiwan positively, won't retreat from US trade war: survey](#) (2026-03-19 19:41)

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- [What to Expect from Trump's China Visit w/ Zhiqun Zhi](#) (2026-03-16 15:17)

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- [Reputation, Strategy, and Green Development w/ Alex Wang](#) (2026-03-16 14:20)

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