



# HONG KONG SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

## AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: March 10, 2026 - March 17, 2026

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

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## Executive Summary

During the period of March 10-17, 2026, Hong Kong's security landscape was primarily shaped by ongoing national security enforcement, evolving cybersecurity threats, and the economic repercussions of global geopolitical tensions. The Chinese central government reiterated its firm support for Hong Kong's actions in punishing national security crimes and strongly rejected external interference in its judicial affairs. Concurrently, Hong Kong faced economic vulnerabilities due to the Middle East conflict, experiencing rising energy prices, yet also positioned itself as a stable hub for attracting capital amidst global instability. Cybersecurity emerged as a critical concern, with discussions around AI-related risks and the need for enhanced digital defenses. Furthermore, Hong Kong demonstrated increasing alignment with mainland China's national development strategies, including the formulation of its own local five-year plan in conjunction with China's 15th Five-Year Plan.

## Key Security Developments

- **National Security Law Enforcement and External Interference:** On March 13, 2026, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Guo Jiakun, affirmed the central government's steadfast support for the Hong Kong SAR government in prosecuting criminal activities that endanger national security in accordance with the law. Guo also explicitly rejected any external forces' interference in Hong Kong's judicial affairs and China's internal matters, emphasizing that China has consistently opposed illicit unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. on officials in Hong Kong. This statement underscores Beijing's continued resolve to assert its authority over national security in the region.
- **Espionage and Pro-Democracy Dissidents:** British prosecutors brought two dual Hong Kong and UK nationals to court on March 4, 2026, for allegedly spying on UK-based Hong Kong pro-democracy dissidents. The individuals, Chung Biu Yuen, a former superintendent in the Hong Kong Police employed by the Hong Kong Economic Trade Office (HKETO), and Chi Leung Wai, a UK Border Force officer, were accused of surveilling pro-democracy protesters and British political figures, and gathering information for the HKETO. This development highlights ongoing concerns about intelligence activities and attempts to monitor or suppress overseas pro-democracy movements linked to Hong Kong.
- **Cybersecurity Risks from AI:** Hong Kong's Financial Secretary, Paul Chan Mo-po, on March 16, 2026, called for further enhancement of the open-source AI agent

OpenClaw, acknowledging growing concerns about cybersecurity and privacy risks associated with the technology. This follows the "Hong Kong Cybersecurity Outlook 2026" report, released by HKCERT in January 2026, which identified AI-driven attacks and supply chain vulnerabilities as top cybersecurity risks for the year. A webinar on "AI Applications in Schools and Data Protection" was also held on March 10, 2026, by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (PCPD), indicating a proactive approach to addressing AI-related security and privacy issues.

- **Economic Vulnerability to Middle East Conflict:** As of March 17, 2026, Hong Kong's status as a global hub has exposed it to economic strain from the ongoing Iran war, particularly through rising energy prices. Cathay Pacific Airways, the city's flagship carrier, is set to double its fuel surcharge for most routes from March 18, reflecting the increased operational costs. Economist Gary Ng warned that potential recession and inflation could outweigh any benefits, impacting overall demand and the city's financial markets.
- **Hong Kong as a Stable Financial Haven:** Despite the economic vulnerabilities, Treasury chief Christopher Hui stated on March 15, 2026, that Hong Kong is capitalizing on its stability amidst global geopolitical conflicts, attracting capital and family offices. Law firms and banks in the city have seen a significant increase in global inquiries since February 28, 2026, from entities looking to relocate family offices and seek asset management services. This indicates Hong Kong's perceived resilience as a secure financial platform.
- **Alignment with China's National Development Strategy:** The Hong Kong Budget for the fiscal year 2026-27, delivered on February 25, 2026, outlines a strategy to align with China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030). Notably, Hong Kong will, for the first time, formulate its own local five-year plan, signifying a closer integration of its development trajectory with national policy priorities. This alignment emphasizes technology self-reliance, industrial modernization, and domestic consumption.
- **Investment in AI and Regional Collaboration:** On March 17, 2026, the Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited (HKIC) participated in a strategic investment round for CARSOME, a Southeast Asia-based integrated car e-commerce platform. This investment, totaling over US\$30 million, signals a broader collaboration aimed at strengthening ties between Southeast Asia and Greater China, with Hong Kong positioned as a regional gateway for advancements in automotive technology, supply chain sourcing, and talent development, including the increased application of artificial intelligence.

## Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Hong Kong's recent security and economic developments are intrinsically linked to broader geopolitical shifts, particularly China's evolving global posture and its relationship with major powers. China's firm stance on national security in Hong Kong, as articulated by its Foreign Ministry on March 13, 2026, underscores its determination to maintain stability and control within its perceived sovereign territory, rejecting any external interference. This approach often leads to diplomatic friction with Western nations, particularly the US and EU, who frequently express concerns over Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights. The prosecution of Hong Kong and UK nationals for alleged espionage in the UK further exemplifies these tensions, highlighting the international dimension of security issues related to Hong Kong.

The ongoing Middle East conflict has a tangible impact on Hong Kong, primarily through economic channels. Rising oil prices, a direct consequence of the conflict, are increasing operational costs for businesses like Cathay Pacific, leading to higher consumer prices and potential inflationary pressures. This vulnerability highlights Hong Kong's exposure as a global trading and financial hub to distant geopolitical events. However, Hong Kong also leverages its perceived stability to attract capital and family offices, positioning itself as a safe haven amidst global turbulence. This dual effect means that while global instability can create economic headwinds, it can also reinforce Hong Kong's role as a reliable financial center for those seeking stability.

China's broader strategic objectives, outlined in its 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), which emphasizes technological self-reliance, industrial modernization, and national security, directly influence Hong Kong's development trajectory. Hong Kong's formulation of its own local five-year plan, aligning with the national blueprint, signifies a deeper integration into mainland China's economic and strategic agenda. This integration, while offering opportunities for growth and collaboration, particularly in AI and technology, also reinforces Beijing's influence over the SAR's future. The ongoing economic discussions between the US and China, including the consideration of a "US-China Board of Trade" as discussed on March 16, 2026, also shape the broader trade and investment environment for Hong Kong, as its economy remains deeply intertwined with both major powers.

## Military and Defense Analysis

Hong Kong's defense is primarily the responsibility of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Hong Kong Garrison. While specific military activities within Hong Kong during the March 10-17, 2026, period were not extensively reported, the PLA Hong Kong Garrison held its mobilization ceremony for the 2026 training year on January 4, 2026. This annual event signifies the commencement of military training aimed at

enhancing combat capabilities and strengthening the garrison's ability to fulfill its defense responsibilities in Hong Kong.

On a broader national level, China's defense spending for 2026 is projected to increase by 7 percent, reaching approximately 278 billion US dollars. This increase, while slightly lower than the 7.2 percent observed in the previous three years, reflects China's continued commitment to the modernization of the PLA amidst slowing economic growth. The 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030) places a heavy emphasis on technological development, including advanced computing, data infrastructure, and artificial intelligence, with an explicit call for greater military-civil fusion. These national-level defense and modernization efforts indirectly impact the capabilities and strategic posture of the PLA Hong Kong Garrison, as it benefits from the overall advancements in the PLA's force structure and technological prowess.

## Outlook and Forecast

**Short-term trends (1-3 months):** In the immediate future, Hong Kong is likely to experience a continuation of the trends observed in this reporting period. Enforcement of national security laws will remain a priority for the Hong Kong SAR government, with strong backing from Beijing, potentially leading to further legal actions and continued diplomatic scrutiny from Western nations. The economic impact of global geopolitical events, particularly the Middle East conflict, will likely persist, influencing energy prices and overall market stability in Hong Kong. Cybersecurity will continue to be a significant area of focus, with increased attention on mitigating AI-driven threats and strengthening digital infrastructure, as highlighted by recent reports and initiatives. Hong Kong's integration into mainland China's national development strategies, including the alignment of its local five-year plan with China's 15th Five-Year Plan, will deepen, influencing economic policies and development priorities.

**Critical flashpoints and risk areas:** Critical flashpoints could arise from any perceived escalation in national security cases or further actions by the Hong Kong government that are viewed internationally as undermining the city's autonomy. This could trigger renewed diplomatic condemnation and potentially lead to further sanctions or restrictions from countries like the US and EU. Economically, a prolonged or intensified Middle East conflict could lead to more severe disruptions in global supply chains and energy markets, significantly impacting Hong Kong's trade and financial sectors. The rapid adoption of AI technologies, while offering economic opportunities, also presents a growing risk of sophisticated cyberattacks and data breaches, which could undermine confidence in Hong Kong's digital security.

Indicators to monitor: Key indicators to monitor include statements and actions from both Hong Kong and Chinese central government officials regarding national security, particularly any new legislative developments or high-profile prosecutions. International reactions from major powers, including the US, UK, and EU, concerning Hong Kong's political and legal developments will be crucial. Economically, tracking global oil prices, inflation rates in Hong Kong, and capital flow trends will provide insights into the city's resilience amidst external shocks. In cybersecurity, monitoring reports from HKCERT and other security agencies on emerging threats and incident statistics will be vital for assessing the evolving risk landscape. Furthermore, observing the progress of Hong Kong's integration with China's 15th Five-Year Plan and the implementation of its local five-year plan will indicate the direction of its long-term development.

Strategic recommendations: To enhance its security posture, Hong Kong should continue to strengthen its cybersecurity defenses, particularly in light of the increasing threats posed by AI-driven attacks and supply chain vulnerabilities. This includes investing in advanced cybersecurity technologies, fostering public-private partnerships, and promoting cybersecurity awareness and training. Diplomatically, Hong Kong could seek to proactively engage with international partners to clarify its national security framework and address concerns about its autonomy, aiming to mitigate negative perceptions and maintain its international standing. Economically, while leveraging its role as a stable financial hub, Hong Kong should also explore strategies to diversify its economic dependencies and build greater resilience against global market volatilities. Continued alignment with China's national development plans, while carefully managing its unique "One Country, Two Systems" framework, will be essential for long-term stability and prosperity.

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## ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

### Source: HK Free Press

- [Hong Kong to see ‘shocks, volatility’ in oil supply amid Middle East war, leader John Lee says](#) (2026-03-17 05:29)

Hong Kong Chief Executive John Lee has warned of “shocks and volatility” in the city’s oil supply amid the ongoing war in the Middle East, saying that the government is in talks with airlines and fuel suppliers. Addressing reporters at a weekly press conference on Tuesday morning, Lee said he was “very concerned” about the [...]

- [Over 400 homeowners from fire-hit Tai Po complex petition city leader for help meeting estate management](#) (2026-03-16 23:30)

More than 400 homeowners from the fire-hit Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po have petitioned Hong Kong leader John Lee to facilitate a meeting between residents and the government-appointed administrator, Hop On Management. As of Monday afternoon, 431 flat owners – including representatives of those killed in the November inferno – had signed the letter, [...]

- [China says ‘maintaining communication’ with US over Trump’s visit](#) (2026-03-16 11:42)

Beijing said on Monday it is in talks with Washington over an expected visit by US President Donald Trump, who has pressured NATO allies and China to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz. Trade is set to take centre stage in the potential talks between President Xi Jinping and Trump expected at the end of [...]

- [Mui Wo-bound ferry caught in fishing net, stranded at sea for an hour](#) (2026-03-16 10:05)

A Mui Wo-bound ferry was stranded at sea for an hour after getting stuck in what appeared to be a fishing boat’s net, HKFP has learned. A Sun Ferry vessel, which departed the Central Pier No. 6 at 3.10pm on Monday, got stuck in a fishing boat’s net at around 3.35pm, passenger Nicky Blokhoff told [...]

- [Google’s Gemini AI chatbot finally rolling out to all Hongkongers](#) (2026-03-16 08:00)

Google has said it will gradually open its Gemini Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool to all users in Hong Kong, with the accompanying mobile app to follow. For years, Hong Kong has been ranked alongside mainland China, Syria and North Korea as a place where tech firms avoid rolling out their AI chatbots. OpenAI and Microsoft [...]

- [Trump pressures NATO, China over Iran’ s closure of strategic waterway](#) (2026-03-16 07:17)

By AFP teams in Jerusalem, Tehran, Manama, Dubai, Baghdad and Washington President Donald Trump on Sunday sought to pressure NATO allies and China to help reopen the Strait of Hormuz, the critical oil transport conduit that Iran has effectively closed in retaliation for the US and Israeli war against Tehran. Global oil prices have surged [...]

- [Kai Tak Sports Park named one of TIME’ s World’ s Greatest Places 2026](#) (2026-03-16 06:41)

Hong Kong’ s Kai Tak Sports Park has been included on TIME’ s World’ s Greatest Places 2026 list, with the American magazine praising the stadium as a “technological standout.” The mention on the annual list comes as Kai Tak Sports Park – which cost HK\$30 billion to build – marks its first anniversary. Kai Tak Sports Park [...]

- [Manosphere influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate, accused of rape and trafficking, revel in Hong Kong](#) (2026-03-16 05:52)

Controversial influencers Andrew and Tristan Tate, British-American brothers who face human trafficking and rape charges in Romania and the UK, have made an appearance in Hong Kong. Andrew Tate, 39, posted a video on his X account at around 1.30am on Saturday, showing himself and his brother, Tristan, 36, in the city’ s nightlife district Lan [...]

- [Hong Kong couple arrested for suspected child neglect after boy, 1, falls to death from Tsuen Wan flat](#) (2026-03-15 23:30)

A Hong Kong couple have been arrested after their one-year-old son fell to his death from their Tsuen Wan flat. Police told HKFP they received a call at around 10.37am on Sunday that a boy had been found lying on a podium at Hanley Villa, a housing complex in Tsuen Wan. He was suspected of [...]

- [China, South Korea power into Women’ s Asian Cup semifinals](#) (2026-03-15 07:26)

Defending champions China scored twice in extra-time to book a blockbuster semi-final against hosts Australia at the Women’ s Asian Cup on Saturday, with a dominant South Korea joining them in the last four. Hard-working Shao Ziqin brilliantly fired into the right corner in the 94th minute at Perth and China sealed a tense 2-0 victory [...]

- [Trump, Xi prepare to meet amidst Iran war, uncertain goals](#) (2026-03-15 02:00)

By Danny Kemp and Beiyi Seow with Isabel Kua in Beijing Just over two weeks before President Donald Trump is due to meet his counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing, Chinese uncertainty over the US leader’ s goals and the impact of the Iran war hang over the highly anticipated state visit. Trump’ s trip, his first to [...]

- [Hong Kong to retire 22-year-old ‘Symphony of Lights’ show – but few tourists will miss it](#) (2026-03-15 00:30)

On a Friday evening in March, the Avenue of Stars was packed with tourists jostling for the perfect selfie spot against the Tsim Sha Tsui harbourfront. When the clock struck 8pm, more phones went up in the air as green lasers flickered across the nightscape. In the background, tourists could make out the faint sound [...]

- [UN human rights chief concerned by China’s ‘ethnic unity’ law](#) (2026-03-14 06:01)

UN rights chief Volker Turk voiced concerns Friday about China’s so-called “ethnic unity” law, saying it could restrict freedom of religion and culture. The law, passed Thursday by the National People’s Congress, formalises policies to promote Mandarin as the “national common language” in education, official business and public places. Rights advocates warn the law could [...]

- [‘We’ re family’ : AI agent ‘lobster fever’ grips China despite risks](#) (2026-03-14 03:00)

Chinese entrepreneur Frank Gao used to spend long hours running his social media accounts but now outsources the chore to AI agent tool OpenClaw, which is taking the country by storm despite official warnings over cybersecurity. OpenClaw, created in November by an Austrian coder, differs from bots like ChatGPT because it can execute real-life tasks [...]

- [Clearer statistics the missing link in Hong Kong’s waste reduction](#) (2026-03-14 02:00)

By Steven Chan, The Green Earth Ten years ago, the government introduced the Food Wise Hong Kong campaign featuring the unforgettable mascot Big Waster – a cartoon character with eyes literally bigger than his stomach. His catchy rap still rings in our ears: “Order only portions you can finish, buy only what you need... Stop [...]

- [Some Wang Fuk Court residents to participate as involved parties in fire probe hearings](#) (2026-03-13 13:24)

Some Wang Fuk Court residents, including former members of the defunct owners’ corporation, will participate as involved parties in the upcoming probe hearings on the deadly Tai Po fire, HKFP has learned. The independent committee tasked to investigate the inferno had accepted the applications from two groups of residents to participate in the hearings as [...]

- [Ex-education chief said registration not needed for interest classes, independent bookstore owner testifies in court](#) (2026-03-13 12:11)

A Hong Kong independent bookstore owner has cited a former education minister in court to defend charges linked to a Spanish course held last year. Pong Yat-ming appeared at the Kowloon City Magistrates’ Courts on Thursday to stand trial for allegedly managing an unregistered school after he held a Spanish course at his bookstore, Book [...]

- [Taiwan lawmakers allow gov’t to sign 4 US weapons deals](#) (2026-03-13 08:34)

Taiwanese lawmakers have given the government a green light to sign US agreements for four weapons deals, the parliamentary speaker said Friday, even before a proposal to fund these and other arms has been approved. The weapons — M109A7 self-propelled howitzers, Javelin anti-armor missiles, TOW 2B missiles and High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) — [...]

- [At least HK\\$15,000 to certify subdivided units under new law, surveyors estimate](#)

(2026-03-13 08:19)

Landlords may spend at least HK\$15,000 to have up to four subdivided units certified under the new law stipulating minimum living standards for shoebox flats in Hong Kong, a surveyors' association has said. Kenny Tse, chairperson of the Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors, spoke at a briefing on subdivided housing for landlords and real estate [...]

- [Hong Kong gov' t urged to stabilise oil prices as some residents turn to illicit fuel amid Middle East war](#) (2026-03-13 06:13)

The Hong Kong government has been urged to negotiate with oil giants to stabilise fuel prices, as some residents have resorted to buying illicit fuel amid soaring oil costs. Lawmaker Holden Chow, vice chair of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB), said on RTHK on Friday morning that skyrocketing oil [...]

- [Hong Kong court rules subversion trial of Tiananmen vigil activists will go on](#) (2026-03-13 05:07)

A Hong Kong court has ruled that two Tiananmen vigil activists have a case to answer over calls to “end one-party rule” in China in a subversion trial under the Beijing-imposed national security law. Three designated national security judges ruled on Friday that the prosecution established a prima facie case against Lee Cheuk-yan, Chow Hang-tung, [...]

- [US launches trade probes into China, other countries over failures to act on forced labour](#) (2026-03-13 05:04)

The United States launched trade investigations Thursday into 60 economies including China, the EU and Japan, fueling the possibility of further tariffs after the Supreme Court struck down President Donald Trump' s global duties. The set of probes, initiated by the US Trade Representative (USTR) office, will look into “failures to take action on forced labor” [...]

- [On Track to Save: Médecins Sans Frontières Hong Kong draws thousands to run for humanity](#) (2026-03-13 01:00)

Close to 4,000 athletes, celebrities and families gathered at the Hong Kong Science Park early Sunday morning, March 1, to join MSF' s large-scale running and orienteering competition and to support its international medical humanitarian work. In addition to the standard 10km and 3km running races, MSF revived its long-awaited orienteering event, offering a route suitable [...]

- [Records show reporter Selina Cheng was let go from WSJ due to redundancy, HR exec. says in unlawful dismissal suit](#) (2026-03-12 23:30)

Records show that journalist Selina Cheng was terminated by the Wall Street Journal due to redundancy, a top human resources executive for the newspaper's parent company has told a Hong Kong court. The unlawful dismissal lawsuit brought by Cheng against Dow Jones Publishing Co. (Asia) Inc., alleging that she was fired in July 2024 because [...]

- [China-North Korea train arrives in Pyongyang after 6-year pause](#) (2026-03-12 12:39)

A passenger train from China arrived in the North Korean capital on Thursday, state media said, after a six-year hiatus since the service was suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic. China is North Korea's largest trading partner and a vital source of diplomatic, economic and political support for the isolated nuclear state. Train journeys between the [...]

- [Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific to double fuel surcharges amid Mideast war](#) (2026-03-12 12:16)

Hong Kong's flagship carrier Cathay Pacific has announced that fuel surcharges for all flights will more than double next week, due to soaring oil prices amid the war in the Middle East. The surcharge increase will apply to all flight tickets issued on Wednesday and later, the airline said on Thursday. For short-haul flights, the [...]

- [Hong Kong authorities arrest 8 over alleged insider trading involving brokerages, hedge fund](#) (2026-03-12 11:42)

Hong Kong's anti-graft watchdog and financial regulator have arrested eight people and raided the offices of three firms over suspected insider dealing and corruption worth HK\$315 million in illicit profits. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the Securities and Futures Commission (SFC) said on Thursday that they conducted a joint operation, codenamed "Fuse," this [...]

- [China approves 'ethnic unity' law denounced by rights groups](#) (2026-03-12 07:42)

China approved what it called an "ethnic unity" law on Thursday, which rights advocates warn could further marginalise minority groups such as the Uyghurs. The law, passed by the National People's Congress, formalises policies to promote Mandarin as the "national common language" in education, official business and public places. China's government has been accused for [...]

- [Former pro-democracy district councillor Wong Chun-yeung jailed for 45 months for role in phone scams](#) (2026-03-12 05:48)

Former Islands district councillor Wong Chun-yeung has been sentenced to 45 months in prison for his role in a string of phone scam cases in 2023. Wong, 31 and unemployed, pleaded guilty to seven counts of money laundering at the District Court on Wednesday, Ming Pao reported. The defendant, also known as Sheep Wong, has [...]

- [10 injured in multi-vehicle pile-up on airport-bound Tsing Ma Bridge, 1 driver arrested](#) (2026-03-12 04:28)

Ten people have been injured and one driver has been arrested following a multi-vehicle pile-up on a major bridge leading to the Hong Kong airport. Police said they received a report of the accident on Tsing Ma Bridge at 8.31am on Thursday. Nine private cars and one light goods vehicle were involved in the pile-up, [...]

- [Fares for Lamma Island, Cheung Chau ferries set to rise 12.5% as Hong Kong gov' t defends 'moderate' fee hike](#) (2026-03-11 23:30)

Ferries to Hong Kong's outlying islands are set to increase next month, with fares for routes to Lamma Island and Cheung Chau expected to rise by 12.5 per cent. Fare adjustments will be made to six routes to areas including Cheung Chau, Lamma Island, Mui Wo and Peng Chau as part of a license renewal [...]

- [Call to end Chinese Communist Party rule does not mean 'overthrowing' gov' t, Hong Kong lawyer tells](#) (2026-03-11 13:10)

Calling for an end to the rule of China's ruling party does not mean "overthrowing" its government and state organs, a Hong Kong court has heard during the national security trial of Tiananmen vigil activists. The court on Wednesday continued to hear submissions from Lee Cheuk-yan and Chow Hang-tung, both former leaders of the now-disbanded [...]

- [Chinese University of Hong Kong suspends professor caught posing as pupil, photographing pupils in Sydney](#) (2026-03-11 11:54)

The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has suspended a professor who was arrested in Australia after posing as a student at a boys' school and taking photos of its pupils. Johnny Li, a professor at CUHK Business School, was arrested at a park opposite Sydney Grammar School, an elite boys' school, on March 6, [...]

- [Cathay Pacific says surcharge to rise as fuel prices jump during Mideast war](#) (2026-03-11 09:28)

Hong Kong aviation giant Cathay Pacific said on Wednesday that fuel surcharges would rise as prices soared in March after war broke out in the Middle East. The price of fuel so far this month is double the average of the previous two months, CEO Ronald Lam announced at a news conference. Energy concerns arising [...]

- [Chinese shipping company Cosco suspends operations at Panama Canal](#) (2026-03-11 08:07)

Chinese shipping giant Cosco said Tuesday that it is suspending operations at a Panama Canal port amid an ongoing row between the United States and China over the waterway's oversight. Cosco, which owns one of the world's largest fleets of tankers, is targeting the

Pacific Ocean port of Balboa, which Panamanian authorities took back under [...]

- [20 arrested in Immigration Department crackdown on domestic workers earning side income](#) (2026-03-11 07:48)

The Immigration Department has arrested 20 people in a raid targeting domestic workers working illegally, including some allegedly earning side income by providing HK\$50 massage or manicure services. The department said that 14 workers and six employers were arrested during a three-day operation that began on Sunday, the authority said in a statement on Tuesday. [...]

- [Mayday fans file complaints to Consumer Council after Taiwanese band's Hong Kong concert date rescheduled](#) (2026-03-11 05:07)

Dozens of fans have made complaints to Hong Kong's consumer watchdog after Taiwanese rock group Mayday rescheduled an upcoming concert at the Kai Tak Stadium two weeks before the show. As of 1pm on Tuesday, the Consumer Council had received 24 complaints about the rescheduled show involving a total amount of HK\$63,613, local media reported. [...]

- [Tai Po fire: Industrial workers' union urges gov't to return residents' belongings after suspected theft](#) (2026-03-10 23:30)

An industrial workers' union has urged the government to return the belongings stolen from Wang Fuk Court to the rightful owners after a suspected jewellery theft at the fire-hit estate. Chau Sze-kit, chair of the Hong Kong Construction Industry Employees General Union, spoke on RTHK on Tuesday morning after three industrial workers were arrested last week for [...]

- [China-North Korea trains to resume after 6-year halt](#) (2026-03-10 14:03)

Passenger train services between China and North Korea will resume this week six years after their suspension due to the Covid-19 pandemic, rail authorities in Beijing confirmed on Tuesday. Train journeys between the two countries were halted in 2020 as they imposed strict border closures to prevent the coronavirus from spreading. While China has since [...]

- [China's constitution cannot be directly implemented in Hong Kong, Tiananmen vigil activist says in nat. security trial](#) (2026-03-10 12:46)

Tiananmen vigil activist Chow Hang-tung has argued that China's constitution cannot be directly implemented in Hong Kong, saying that prosecutors have misunderstood the ambit of the top legal text. Chow, a barrister who led the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China before its disbandment in 2021, made submissions on Tuesday [...]

- [HKFP Monitor newsletter now members-only in donor benefits boost](#) (2026-03-10 11:00)

HKFP has boosted its membership offering, giving monthly/yearly donors exclusive access to HKFP Monitor from this Saturday. Members will automatically start receiving our flagship

newsletter, with each edition viewable on the website for recurring donors who are logged in. (Please note that Monitor is not yet accessible via our mobile apps.) Not a member? Join [...]

- [Ex-Apple Daily editor appeals 10-year prison sentence](#) (2026-03-10 08:14)

A former top editor of Hong Kong's now-shuttered Apple Daily newspaper has filed an appeal against his 10-year jail term in a high-profile national security case which saw media mogul Jimmy Lai sentenced to 20 years. A High Court document showed on Monday that Lam Man-chung, ex-executive editor-in-chief at the tabloid, had lodged an appeal [...]

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

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

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

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

## Source: RTHK English News

- [Visitor numbers up 18pc in first two months of year](#) (2026-03-17 04:30)

Hong Kong saw nearly 10 million visitor arrivals in the first two months of the year, up 18 percent from a year ago. The Tourism Board announced on Tuesday that the number of mainland travellers rose by 22 percent, to nearly 7.9 million during the period. In February alone, which coincided with the Lunar New Year, mainland arrivals surged by more than 50 percent to over 4.2 million. Visitor arrivals from outside the mainland also rose by eight percent to more than two million. "With notable results from long-haul markets, the number of visitors from Australia, France and Germany grew by 20 to 30 percent year on year," it said in a statement. The board went on to say there were fluctuations in visitor figures for the first two months of the year compared to the same period last year, in part due to different dates for the Lunar New Year holiday and Ramadan. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Wang Fuk victims can salvage belongings by late April](#) (2026-03-17 04:13)

Residents of the seven blocks engulfed by the Wang Fuk Court inferno in November will be given the green light to return to their homes to collect their personal belongings by late April, according to Chief Executive John Lee. Speaking before the weekly Executive Council meeting on

Tuesday, Lee said he understood residents' strong desire to go back and have a look at the place they called home. But the top concern for the administration, he said, was to ensure safety and orderliness. Lee said he had urged the government task force working on the matter to announce details of the arrangements by this month. "We want to ensure that this can be done early. The deputy chief secretary, Warner [Cheuk], is working hard on the plan so as to ensure that it will be done safely and orderly," Lee said. "Because a lot of units, having been burned very seriously, have structural problems, including ceiling, walls, beams. Some have no windows or doors and the floor is full of debris. So we have to ensure that the number of people that will be allowed to go up and down the staircase, that will be done safely and orderly." He added that the administration would also provide any extra support that families might need when returning to their flats, such as with those who were elderly and those who hoped to be able to retrieve personal belongings in quantity. On long-term accommodation arrangements for residents displaced by the fire, Lee said the dedicated 100-strong engagement team had been visiting them over the past two weeks to lay out their options. One of the options proposed by the government involves a HK\$6.8 billion buyout plan for all flats in these seven blocks. Lee said the government would give the residents ample time to consider their choices. The cases handled so far by outreach officers had been "as expected", he said, noting that only a small number of them were more complicated and required revisits. Lee also said the administration and all relevant government workers would "fully co-operate" with the investigation by the independent committee, which is set to begin its first round of eight evidentiary hearings on Thursday. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Govt to work with Legco on SAR's five-year plan: CE](#) (2026-03-17 03:39)

The government will work with the Legislative Council in formulating the SAR's own Five-Year Plan which will align with that of the nation, Chief Executive John Lee said on Tuesday. Ahead of the weekly Executive Council meeting, Lee said Hong Kong's plan will focus on improving the economy and people's livelihoods. The CE will lead the work on the plan, which is due to be unveiled at the end of the year. Lee said the timing will be "tight". "In order to help the government complete the work in such a tight timeframe, I propose that under the executive-led system, the government and the Legislative Council will jointly come up with a mechanism to look into the matter and collect opinions, so as to leverage the positive interaction and cooperation between the executive and legislative branches," he said. Lee said the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and relevant Legco subcommittees will conduct joint research and hold meetings to collect opinions on specific topics for analysis. They will compile the results right away and submit these to the government as soon as possible, Lee added. Public consultation will start around the fourth quarter of the year, he said. As for expediting the Northern Metropolis development – a task for the SAR under the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan – Lee said the government would submit dedicated legislation on Tuesday to ensure speed and quality go hand in hand. The CE said he hopes the legislation will be passed this year. "We hope to reach a consensus with the Legislative Council. The dedicated legislation will allow us to have more flexibility and expedite the progress over certain matters to ensure

our competitiveness," he said. "At the same time, each process is vetted by Legco, which will ensure quality. We also believe during the vetting period, by having the public opinion, it will allow the final legislation and policies to be of better quality." Legco president Starry Leed described the co-operative mechanism for the SAR's five-year plan as ground-breaking and innovative. A joint statement made along with the council's top co-ordinators, Ronick Chan and Stanley Ng, said the legislature will do all it can to support the mechanism and complete the plan as soon as possible. "We will demonstrate our sense of responsibility by sparing no effort to actively gather views from all sectors, and conducting thorough research and analysis," the trio said. "[We will] submit reports to the SAR government and offer advice for it to outline an important development blueprint for the SAR, while effectively connecting to the country's 15th Five-Year Plan." Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Govt to ensure stable fuel supply amid ME tensions](#) (2026-03-17 03:38)

Chief Executive John Lee on Tuesday said authorities have proactively reached out to various suppliers to guarantee a stable supply of fuel for Hong Kong in light of escalating tensions in the Middle East. Speaking ahead of the weekly Executive Council meeting, Lee acknowledged that disruptions to the oil market are affecting the entire world. To safeguard the city's supply chain, the chief executive outlined several measures being taken to mitigate risk. "One thing we do to ensure safer supply is making suppliers be aware of the risk to ensure that they will have contingency plans," he said. "First of all, they should work on ensuring alternative supplies if it is possible. The second thing is ensuring that they have enough stockpiles." Lee also highlighted the importance of energy resilience. He noted that authorities are preparing to adjust the fuel mix for electricity production, allowing for a flexible response to changing circumstances by readily adjusting the proportions of natural gas, coal and nuclear power. In addition to supply concerns, the administration is closely monitoring the market to protect consumers. Lee noted that the Competition Commission is on alert to investigate any potential malpractices, which could range from unfair competition to price manipulation. He added that the Consumer Council is also keeping a close eye on the situation, and appealed to suppliers to remain mindful of public affordability and uphold their social responsibilities during this volatile period. Officials have also maintained communications with local stakeholders, he said. "The government has also been in touch with local airlines and also will be meeting fuel suppliers, petrol fuel suppliers, so as to ensure that they will know their social responsibility and also provide more updated and early information about supply, about prices and that is important so as to let people know more about potential changes." Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Chip gearmaker 'Little Giant' begins InnoPark race](#) (2026-03-16 10:34)

A mainland manufacturer of semiconductor equipment setting up shop in Hong Kong's Yuen Long InnoPark began building its plant on Monday, targeting a production start by the middle of next year. Henan Oriental Materials, which makes front-end equipment and key components, is on a national list of innovative enterprises that have been dubbed "Little Giants". The SAR is giving around HK\$200 million in subsidies to the firm, which is investing HK\$800 million in the

project. Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry Sun Dong said in a launching ceremony that the government had earmarked HK\$10 billion in 2024 to speed up new industrialisation and attracting strategic enterprises to set up in Hong Kong. He said the plant was one of four approved applications and that the firm's investment pledge was in excess of HK\$2.5 billion. With the country's latest five-year plan clearly stating that new industrialisation has to be a major development area during the period, Sun said, the SAR government has been responding to the call, as shown by its funding allocations. For his part, Henan Oriental Materials founder Wang Yongchao said the company planned to hire, besides technicians, more than 100 top-level talent locally. He said the company had picked Hong Kong because, among many things, it enabled the firm to reach the international market, noting that guests at the ceremony came from southeast and central Asia. Wang added that the SAR, as a global financial and talent hub, was an attractive location given his firm's expansionary efforts. "The development of our hard technology enables capital investments to yield high and sustained returns, creating a very positive link-up. So Hong Kong's financial advantage immensely empowers us," he said. "And then the talent here has an edge. There is also Hong Kong's role as an international hub and its connection with the world." Wang said his company also planned to set up a design office in the Northern Metropolis. He went on to say that as part of his firm's co-operative efforts with local universities, it had sent technicians to study here and they should graduate in around two years. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Talent summit 'offers one stop opportunities in HK'](#) (2026-03-16 07:27)

An upcoming talent summit will provide valuable collaboration opportunities in one stop and help people with skills to seize opportunities in the SAR, Hong Kong Talent Engage director Felix Chan said on Monday. Global Talent Summit Week is set to take place from March 17 to March 29, with Wednesday and Thursday featuring an international talent forum and the CareerConnect Expo, while nine new satellite events with global and local partners will be running for more than a week. Speaking on RTHK's Backchat programme on Monday, Chan said changes in the global race for talent made this summit particularly important for the city. One of these back in September saw Hong Kong's ranking leap to fourth globally from ninth in the World Talent Ranking 2025 published by the International Institute for Management Development, making for its highest-ever placing and putting it first in Asia. Chan said the leap in rankings had given the city momentum to gauge future trends in the global talent markets. With the city being an "important gateway for talent for China", he added, there will also be discussions about the integration of Hong Kong with the mainland, Greater Bay Area and the entire talent ecosystem. "I think the platform this time will provide a very good cross-regional and also cross-sector collaboration opportunities for talent to look for all these insights in one stop," Chan said. Retention, he added, will be just as important as recruitment, making support for talent and their families in areas such as assistance with employment, housing and education and setting up businesses crucial for long-term settlement in Hong Kong. Chan also pointed out that the summit would also explore upcoming trends in technology and artificial intelligence, providing a platform for talent and enterprises to discuss and learn about the latest

developments. He said the development of AI+ in Hong Kong in recent years had been in linewith China's national strategy and was also going to impact the business models, organisationalstructures and business procedures of all industries in the SAR. As Hong Kong actively aligneditself with the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan, the summit, Chan said, would definitely attract widerrange of talent and industry leaders from around the world than in the past. Edited by TonySabine

- [Nine hurt as car hits pedestrians on pavement](#) (2026-03-16 06:52)

One person was seriously injured and eight others hurt after a car was driven onto a pavement in Kowloon Bay on Monday afternoon. Police were alerted to the accident on Lam Hing Street near Metro Centre II at around 12.40pm. A car passenger, 75, suffered serious injuries to her head and ribs after being thrown out of the vehicle. Police said she was believed not to have been wearing a seatbelt. Eight pedestrians suffered minor abrasions and bruises. They were conscious when taken to hospital. The 75-year-old driver of the vehicle was arrested on suspicion of causing grievous bodily harm by dangerous driving. He was not injured and passed a breathalyser test. “The driver was trying to make a U-turn,” Inspector Tsoi Shiu-kei said. “According to the police’ s preliminary investigations, the driver mistakenly stepped on the gas pedal instead of the brake, causing the car to lose control and rush on to the pavement, hitting eight pedestrians. "The female passenger in the car was thrown out of the vehicle.” A witness said the car was being driven at quite a “high speed” and because it was lunch hour, there were dozens of people on the pavement at the time. Another witness said he heard at least two bangs – of which the second was very loud – and that he also saw wrecked railings and a tree knocked down. \_\_\_\_\_ Last updated: 2026-03-16 HKT 16:28 Edited by Tony Sabine

- [IT chief urges caution over OpenClaw security risks](#) (2026-03-16 05:18)

The innovation and technology chief on Monday warned of security concerns linked to OpenClaw, saying all government units have been told to refrain from installing the artificial intelligence agent. Sun Dong, the secretary for innovation, technology and industry, also said officials are aware of the potential risks of using the AI agent, including excessive permissions, data leakage and system intrusion. The administration had drawn up a comprehensive set of IT security policies and guidelines for government units, requiring them to conduct strict assessments before installing any applications within internal systems, the minister added. " Given the uncertainties brought by OpenClaw, especially the security risks associated with it, the Digital Policy Office has reminded all bureaus and departments not to install OpenClaw on computers connected to government network systems," Sun said. "We also suggest non-government organisations and individual users to take sufficient security measures when using OpenClaw." The open-source AI agent software is designed to carry out tasks on users' computer systems on their behalf, such as clearing one's inbox, sending emails, managing calendars and checking in for flights. OpenClaw has surged in popularity on the mainland, and adopting the technology has been dubbed "raising a lobster", in reference to the app's lobster

logo. OpenClaw was developed by Peter Steinberger, an Austrian, and uploaded to GitHub, a cloud-based platform that acts as a central hub for developers, last November. Steinberger, who built OpenClaw to help organise his digital life, was hired last month by ChatGPT maker OpenAI. (Additional reporting by Reuters) Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Most pillows rest easier for those with bigger builds](#) (2026-03-16 04:55)

Most pillows on the market are designed to provide better back support for larger body types, according to a study by the Consumer Council. The watchdog said overall durability and comfort were satisfactory for the 13 models it tested, including seven memory foam, three latex and three polyester pillows. However, it found that support levels varied depending on the physical builds of users, with the disparity seen most in tests on people who go to sleep in the supine position on their backs. On a five-point scale for back support, nearly every model tested scored a four or above for users with larger body sizes, with five being the best for lumbar support. But for those with smaller body sizes, only two pillow models managed to score a four. The council also highlighted that quality was patchy among polyester and memory foam options. It noted that one polyester model was found to have a small contact area for the head while two memory foam models showed poor performance in allowing water moisture to pass through, affecting the comfort for their users. Kenneth Chan, vice-chairman of the watchdog's committee on sustainability, public affairs and education, urged users to be selective in their choice and use of pillows. "When using a suitable pillow in the supine position, the head, neck and chest should be aligned horizontally when viewed from the side of the body," he said. "When sleeping on one's side, the face, neck and chest should form a straight line when viewed from the front of the body. "Do not continue to use a pillow that is too high. If a pillow feels too low, place a towel underneath and gradually increase the height until it is suitable." Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Smooth online booking for non-local drivers'](#) (2026-03-16 04:15)

The Transport Department on Monday said an enhanced online booking system that allows non-local drivers to apply for a test-free driving licence is operating smoothly. Starting on Monday, applicants must make appointments via the new system as the online same-day queuing service was no longer available. The service quota was also increased to 550 per working day. Speaking to RTHK, assistant commissioner for administration and licensing, Amy Lee, said the department had released its booking quota in batches last week and the booking rate for the coming four weeks from Monday to April 10 had reached 80 percent. Some timeslots at the end of March were still available for people to make appointments, she added. Lee also said the department would ensure the system's stability. "During the system optimisation, we have passed stress and safety tests by some independent consultants commissioned by the Digital Policy Office," she said. "We also have a backup plan for the system. In case the main system has a malfunction, we will switch to a backup system to continue providing the services, so people don't need to worry about it." Lee went on to say that the online booking process was simple and applicants could complete the process within 10 minutes. Security measures were also in place to prevent online bots from snatching up the

quota, she said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Some 24-hour gyms stacking fees for short-term users'](#) (2026-03-16 03:52)

The Consumer Council is urging gym-goers to read the fine print before signing up for 24-hour fitness centres after a recent investigation showed that hidden fees can significantly inflate the cost of membership – especially for short-term users. The watchdog reviewed the membership terms and service fees of 11 round-the clock fitness centres in Hong Kong and found that while all of them offered monthly payment options, five charged extra fees on top of the advertised monthly rate, which included enrolment fees and charges for electronic keys or key cards. The council highlighted a particular concern for those gym users who might be unsure about their long-term commitment and opt for a one-month membership. In a comparison of average monthly costs between one-month and 12-month plans, one centre stood out for charging both an enrolment fee and an electronic key fee on top of the basic monthly rate. Since these non-refundable fees were spread over a shorter period, the average monthly cost for a one-month plan was more than double that of the 12-month plan. Three other centres also recorded more than a one-fold difference after calculating the monthly average. In some cases, the watchdog said consumers could find it difficult to sign up for a true one-month plan at all. Although two centres advertised a "one-month membership" on their websites, trial visits showed they actually required a minimum commitment of two months. After accounting for these exceptions – such as centres with mandatory two-month commitments or those lacking a standard one-month option – the average monthly cost for a genuine one-month membership among the remaining centres ranged from HK\$498 to HK\$1,850. "For consumers planning long-term training, a 12-month membership generally offers better value," said Kenneth Chan, the council's vice-chairman of the committee on sustainability, public affairs and education. "Including non-removable costs, the average monthly fees ranged from HK\$349 to HK\$783, which were still lower than the average monthly fees of one-month plans in general." The council urged anyone considering a gym membership to carefully review all potential charges before signing and encouraged them to ask detailed questions about any additional costs to ensure they fully understand the financial commitment. "Consumers should take note of their total annual spending when making comparisons and also pay attention to whether the contract renewed automatically and whether fees would be adjusted after renewal," Chan said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK set to bear the fruits of economic growth: CE](#) (2026-03-16 03:27)

Chief Executive John Lee said he was confident the SAR would grasp the opportunities brought about by Beijing's 15th Five-Year Plan to help both Hong Kong and the nation become stronger and more prosperous. Delivering his opening address at the Hong Kong Economic Summit on Monday, Lee said the administration was accelerating with the formulation of its own five-year plan from 2026 to 2030, which would offer clear guidelines for socio-economic and livelihood development to better align with the nation's goals. "As a special administrative region of the country, Hong Kong must adopt a broader perspective and contemplate deeply to

better understand the strategic goals of the plan, and accurately recognise our mission, and the significant opportunities that lie in integrating with, and serving the nation's broader development," he said. He noted that the local consumption and business environments had improved this year, along with a fall in interest rates. The government would bolster its efforts in improving the well-being of residents for them to share the fruits of economic growth, headed. As a super connector and a super value-adder, the CE said Hong Kong would deepen its cooperation with Greater Bay Area cities and help shape it as world-class bay area. The SAR is also expanding its global trade network, including stepping up exchanges with emerging economies in the Global South, he added. He noted that there were uncertainties in the global economic outlook, due to the complex and volatile geopolitical situation, and disruptions to supply chain and economic order due to tensions. Hong Kong should seize the opportunities amid the shifting landscape, he added, saying that the rise of the Global South, the reshaping of the global trade landscape, the accelerated development of AI and the ongoing digital transformation, and the drive of sustainable development have all injected vitality and brought about opportunities to the global economy. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['We shouldn't dictate timing on complaints handling'](#) (2026-03-15 08:57)

Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau on Sunday said it would be unrealistic to impose a time limit on the Medical Council in handling complaints, but that certain procedures could be streamlined. The government aims to submit a bill on the council's reform to the Legislative Council in the first half of this year. Speaking on a TVB programme, Lo said he hopes the reform could resolve the Medical Council's governance and administrative issues in one go. The health minister said the council needs to strike a balance between the complainants and the respondents. But a deadline could be imposed on some of the procedures, Lo added. "For example, if they agree, could we set a time limit for expert witnesses to submit a report? It could be one, two or even three months instead of endless waiting. "Also, there should be a deadline for scheduling a hearing, and panel members could not constantly say they are unavailable." Lo said relevant deadlines could be set by the Medical Council itself, as council members are serving on a voluntary basis and busy with their own work. Meanwhile, he said the fee reforms at public hospitals have lowered the chances of emergency room resources being abused and wasted. He said overall visits to the accident and emergency departments dropped by more than 10 percent two months after the reforms took effect. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Special rehab programme for 2019 arrestees: Tang](#) (2026-03-15 08:10)

Security minister Chris Tang said the police have in place a special rehabilitation programme for young suspects arrested but not charged over the 2019 protests. "For these young people, police have been running a special project in the past year or two," Tang told an RTHK programme. "Officers have contacted these youngsters under the legal framework and provide them with rehabilitation opportunities by taking part in some positive activities." Tang said he couldn't provide too much details about the programme due to operational reasons. The

secretary for security also said he had been in touch with some of those jailed, and that they had shown remorse for their actions. He said most of them have been released from prison, and some have managed to return to school or found a job. Tang added that Hong Kong is one of the safest cities in the world, with an expanding CCTV network helping with crime prevention and detection. He said while there are plans to increase the number of surveillance cameras to more than 60,000 in the coming years, the number of cameras per square kilometre is still relatively low compared with other places. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Toddler dies after falling from height](#) (2026-03-15 07:54)

Police on Sunday said a toddler died after he fell from height in Tsuen Wan. Sources said his parents were arrested on suspicion of negligence. Officers received a report shortly after 10.30am that the boy, who was about 2 years old, was lying unconscious on the platform of a Hanley Villa block. His parents are said to be inside the flat at the time. The family rushed the boy to nearby Adventist Hospital where he was certified dead. Sources said the victim was playing with his older brother in the living room when the incident occurred. RTHK understood that the flat concerned didn't have window frames installed, nor were the windows locked. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Govt urges cabbies to install e-payment systems soon](#) (2026-03-15 05:48)

The Transport Department on Sunday urged taxi drivers who have not yet installed electronic payment methods in their cabs to install and familiarise themselves with the payments systems as soon as possible. Taxi drivers will be required to provide passengers at least two types of electronic payment choices from April 1. According to the department, the two electronic payment means must comprise one QR code electronic payment and one non-QR code electronic payment medium, such as Octopus, credit cards or fast payment system. "The new requirement aims to leverage the use of electronic technology to further enhance the overall quality of taxi services," a department spokesperson said. "Different types of e-payment means can provide convenience to passengers, especially tourists, in settling fares, cater to their different needs, and improve the operational efficiency of the taxi trade at the same time." Drivers can choose the electronic payment medium according to their operational needs. They are also required to post stickers on the cab's windows to display the provided electronic payment for identification by passengers. Passengers can also continue to pay in cash if they want. If drivers fail to provide an electronic payment method without a reasonable excuse, they may be fined up to HK\$5,000 and imprisoned for six months. Passengers may also call the government hotline "1823" or "2889 9999" for the department's Transport Complaints Unit if drivers fail to provide e-payment choices from April. The Transport Department said it has launched measures to step up publicity and public education for major electronic payment platforms and the taxi industry since August last year. They include briefing taxi drivers on the legal requirements, organising more than 20 workshops and 11 taxi stand outreach activities. So far, about 1,900 drivers have participated in the workshops. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['HK embraces opportunities amid Mideast tensions'](#) (2026-03-15 04:30)

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury Christopher Hui on Sunday said the turbulent Middle East situation brought Hong Kong both challenges and opportunities. The US-Iran conflict is affecting global energy and capital markets, but the Hong Kong market is operating well, he said. He added the city could serve as a stable and safe asset management centre for global funds during these turbulent times. “On the financial services side, the stability, the safety and also sophistication of financial centre is more robust than ever in terms of how we are being viewed internationally and also domestically,” Hui said after a Commercial Radio programme. “And that's why, against this backdrop, we are proposing measures to strengthen our role as an asset and wealth management centre in the current regime where many investors would like to diversify their investment.” Meanwhile, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau has announced it would enhance its regulation of money lenders. The measures include introducing a debt servicing ratio cap for unsecured personal loans of low-income earners. “In terms of the overall approach that we take to deal with this money lending regime is that we are applying a rather equivalent requirement, not just the domestic helpers, but everybody with a monthly income below HK\$12,000,” he said. “In this regard, we've applied a ratio which is applicable to the proportion of money on a monthly basis that is needed to repay the debt, at the same time, to make sure that all the lenders in this regime will be able to share information, so that there's no one single individual who would try to borrow from different lenders in such a way of circumventing the requirement.” He also said many households were being used as referees in their domestic helpers' lending activities. “That's why from August 1 this year, we require that no more such requirement can be imposed in lending activities in a sense that no referee will be required in such lending activities with a view to protecting our citizens.” Hui said authorities would adopt various measures to ensure the stable development of the city's money lender regime. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Minor issues, but new signalling system runs well: MTR](#) (2026-03-15 04:23)

The MTR Corporation on Sunday said there were a few teething problems with its new Tsuen Wan Line signalling system, but that trains were running smoothly in general. The system was in operation for the first day after changes were made overnight. An operating and metro segment deputy director with the railway company, Cheris Lee, said the problems were what they had expected and some 200 staff had been deployed to help. "For example, some trains didn't stop at the exact right spot, and the train captains had to manually drive a little to adjust and get the trains to the train doors. But these incidents are very isolated," she told reporters hours after the new system came online. Lee stressed this shouldn't have much effect on passengers, saying they shouldn't feel the impact of the adjustments. She said for Monday, when the signalling system would be running on the first working day, passengers should take note of the latest train information before they head to school or for work. However, Lee also said the adjustment period could take some time and the firm would closely monitor the situation. Among the contingency plans, she said, would be falling back to the old signalling system. This is the first system change for the MTR's urban lines, and the company plans to complete changes for all of them by 2029. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Taking part in national development an opportunity: FS](#) (2026-03-15 03:53)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Sunday said participating in the development of the country is not only Hong Kong's mission and responsibility, but also a huge opportunity for the city. Writing on his weekly blog, Chan said under the leadership of the Chief Executive, preparatory groups set up by various bureaux had now been transformed into formulation teams to prepare for Hong Kong's first five-year plan which would be completed within this year. "Working under a clear common goal, the bureaux collaborate and coordinated with each other to formulate comprehensive action plans," he wrote. "Throughout this process, we must adhere to the combination of a promising government and an efficient market, break away conventional thinking, embrace innovation and reform, and drive progress with a positive and pragmatic attitude." The finance chief also noted the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan points out Hong Kong's advantages can be further leveraged in the next five years. The plan also sets out clear guidelines for supporting Hong Kong to consolidate and enhance its competitiveness, and better integrate into and contribute to the country's development, he wrote. As an SAR of the country, Chan said Hong Kong must continue to learn from the nation's 15th Five-Year Plan. By learning from the plan, he said Hong Kong would be able to unleash greater growth potential by combining its own characteristics, including the institutional advantages of "One Country, Two Systems," the common law system, as well as the city's position as an international platform and financial hub. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [MPF chief eases concerns over stock market swings](#) (2026-03-14 07:24)

The public need not be too worried about how mandatory provident fund schemes are performing amid stock-market fluctuations in response to the ongoing Middle East conflict. That's according to Mandatory Provident Fund Schemes Authority managing director Cheng Yan-chee. Cheng told an RTHK radio programme on Saturday that MPF account holders should adopt investment portfolios based on their age. "The MPF is a long-term retirement savings plan ... There will certainly be fluctuations in the short term," he said. "But there is no need to be overly worried because the savings can only be withdrawn tens of years later in order to protect one's retirement. So we usually tell members that they do not have to be too worried about short-term fluctuations." Younger members, for instance, can be more aggressive in choosing their investment plans, Cheng said. He also stressed that members should be diversified in their investment portfolios to ensure stable returns. Cheng also said average administration fees for MPF accounts were expected to drop to 0.29 percent in the next financial year, thanks to the launch of eMPF – a centralised platform that allows people to check and manage their accounts. The fees, he pointed out, had been twice as high before the launch of the eMPF platform. The authority has estimated it will take a decade for administration fees to drop to 0.2 percent to 0.25 percent, but Cheng believes the target can be reached in just five years as more people opt for the digital channel and total assets increase. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Transport chief looks to minimise bumps in air travel](#) (2026-03-14 05:30)

Hong Kong will do its best to ensure stability in the air-travel sector and leverage opportunities amid no signs of an end to hostilities in the Middle East, Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan said on Saturday. Speaking on a radio programme, she said the SAR had been affected by the outbreak of hostilities due to it being an open economy and having a global aviation network, but insisted the city would be able to find its way out by increasing its services to other markets. "For Hong Kong, we can increase our capacity by adding direct flights to Europe and the United States or by expanding our scope for transit services," Chan said. "Moreover, Terminal 2 at our airport will be in operation from May 27, so we hope that will help alleviate congestion and increase our capacity, as well as provide more facilities for departing passengers." Chan said authorities were closely monitoring changes in the situation brought on by the ongoing hostilities and responding accordingly. Her bureau, she said, has demanded that airlines be transparent when it comes to changes in their fuel surcharges in the wake of increases by all local airlines following a spike in oil prices. As for the impact of higher fuel prices on the land-transport sector, Chan said communications had been exchanged with bus, minibus and taxi operators. Her bureau, she noted, has an established mechanism to deal with potential fee adjustment proposals from individual operators that takes into account overall operating costs and projected passenger growth while ensuring fares remain affordable. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [SMEs scramble for air cargo space due to Gulf conflict](#) (2026-03-14 05:20)

A commercial-sector lawmaker on Saturday said many companies in Hong Kong now had to compete for air cargo space to deliver goods on time amid a spike in fuel surcharges due to the ongoing Middle East conflict. Speaking after a Commercial Radio programme, Jonathan Lamport said this applied especially to firms exporting high-value, short-shelf-life goods that had traditionally relied on sea passage via Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states. The council comprises Arabian Peninsula countries, except Yemen. He said small and medium enterprises, in particular, had no choice but to switch to air freight if they had already signed an export contract. "So now it's not about how much they increase, it is, is there any space for those goods that they need to ship immediately, for example, pharmaceutical products, food products that can't wait. So those products need to go by air." Lamport went on to say that, for those contracts yet to be signed, firms had to talk to their clients about shouldering additional costs resulting from higher jet fuel charges driven by the spike in oil prices. Customers will have to bear the brunt of the increment, he added. Transport-sector legislator Lothair Lam, who had also appeared on the programme, said marine insurance had surged by 10 times due to the outbreak of hostilities. He said shippers also had to dig deeper into their pockets for wages, as workers would now have to pass through high-risk regions. As for the surge in diesel and petrol prices, Lam pointed out that local oil companies tended to raise pump prices quickly but reduce them slowly. He said the government should step up monitoring to ensure that oil companies were transparent when it came to higher prices at the petrol pump. The third lawmaker to appear on the programme, Perry Yiu, said the spike in airline fuel surcharges had made high-speed rail a more attractive alternative for people wanting to travel during the upcoming

Easter holiday. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Govt clarifies Wang Fuk rehousing arrangements](#) (2026-03-13 13:53)

The government on Friday dismissed media reports quoting Wang Fuk Court residents as saying they would lose their housing subsidy once they make a long-term rehousing decision. Authorities said it was also untrue that they would have to move out of the transitional housing they are currently living in within 30 days of getting the keys to the new unit they opt for. In a statement, officials said transitional housing operators will be flexible in this regard, and handle cases based on the families' actual needs. It said that as far as the rental subsidy is concerned, Wang Fuk homeowners are entitled to HK\$300,000 dollars over two years, and the money is given out in four batches. "If the homeowner is to take the cash after selling the rights to the property and not take part in the Special Sales Exercise, the rent subsidy will be paid until the disbursement date of the relevant amount," the Housing Bureau said. For homeowners who choose to buy a flat through the exercise, the bureau said the subsidy will be paid out until they collect the keys for a new unit. It went on to say that its engagement team will explain the arrangements to homeowners and they can also contact the team at anytime if they have questions. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [21 injured in Yuen Long four-car collision](#) (2026-03-13 12:59)

At least 21 people were injured following a four-car collision in Yuen Long on Friday. Police received reports at about 6.30pm, saying two buses, one light truck and a private vehicle crashed on Yuen Long Highway. Nine men and 12 women suffered light injuries. None of them were trapped. The Transport Department said it closed some Tuen Mun-bound lanes on the highway for the recovery operation. It also called on motorists to use other routes because traffic is heavy in the area, as the slip road at Shap Pat Heung Interchange was also closed. In a statement, bus operator Kowloon Motor Bus (KMB) said two of its buses, 276B and 269B, were involved in the accident when passing through Pok Oi Interchange. It said 20 passengers and a driver were injured. KMB added that staff will visit injured passengers, and investigate the cause of the accident. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Lower listing bar for companies with dual-class voting](#) (2026-03-13 10:31)

Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing (HKEX) proposed on Friday that the bar for companies with weighted voting rights (WVR) seeking to list in the SAR be lowered as part of broader reforms to further raise the city's listing regime competitiveness. In a public consultation paper, it suggests lowering the threshold for companies that have such dual-class voting rights to list to a minimum valuation of HK\$20 billion, half the current requirement of at least HK\$40 billion. It also proposed the market capitalisation threshold for such WVR listings be trimmed to HK\$6 billion from HK\$10 billion while lowering their revenue requirement to HK\$600 million from HK\$1 billion, according to the statement. The maximum ratio of shares with preferred voting rights, meanwhile, would be eased to 1:20 from the current 1:10 – if the applicant company has a market capitalisation of above HK\$40 billion, it said. "Our proposal aims to enhance the

exchange's attractiveness as a listing venue for high quality, high growth companies intending to retain their WVR structures," a statement reads. "It also seeks to strike an appropriate balance between market competitiveness and investor protection." Meanwhile, HKEX seeks to expand the scope of businesses that are eligible for listing under the WVR regime, as it redefines on what can be considered as "innovative companies" so as to cover more non-tech issuers but include those with innovative business models. Other key recommendations include allowing all companies to file listing applications confidentially, rather than the current regime of allowing only certain firms, such as biotech and specialist tech companies. To attract more companies that have already listed overseas, the bourse suggested lowering the market capitalisation requirement to HK\$6 billion from HK\$10 billion. "Our proposals are consistent with the policy direction of the HKSAR Government and market feedback. They seek to optimise the WVR listing regime, enhance the pathway to listing for homecoming Greater China issuers," it said. "The proposals in this paper are designed to foster a more inclusive and dynamic market environment, enhancing the breadth of investment opportunities available to meet the needs of both investors and issuers," it added. The move marks the first major overhaul of the city's WVR regime since its debut in 2018, and the relaxation of these new measures could help smooth the path for large mainland enterprises to debut on the city's stock exchange. The proposed reform came as the city's initial public offering market topped the world last year with 119 companies raising HK\$286 billion in new listings, compared with HK\$87.5 billion a year earlier. HKEX noted that the proposals were made after taking into account the latest market feedback to review its existing frameworks, especially those related to WVR, and as it compared the city's regime with regulatory changes in other markets, including the United States, the UK and Singapore. The consultation ends on May 8.

Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Patient network launched for comprehensive care](#) (2026-03-13 10:13)

The Primary Healthcare Commission on Friday launched the Primary Healthcare Co-care Network for better personalised patient care. The network was announced in the budget at the end of last month. Unlike past measures, when patients were required to access different platforms for different services, the new platform allows patients in different stages of treatment to access services in one single medical network. Primary Healthcare Commissioner Pang Fei-chau said the new system makes things more efficient and streamlined for patients.

"It will be more efficient to engage same group of doctors and also with same types of subsidisation and co-payment that will help to facilitate a further development in different types of illness from different perspectives like prevention, like diagnosis, screening, management, as well as the referral," he said. Phase 1 of this network will aim to serve 700,000 patients over the coming five years, integrating Hospital Authority family medicine clinics, public-private partnerships, and elderly services from the Department of Health later this year. Currently, it covers screenings for blood sugar, blood pressure, and blood lipids alongside screening for Hepatitis B for over 200,000 participants. The network targets high-risk patients with chronic illnesses, the elderly, patients at family medicine outpatient clinics, and patients under the

General Outpatient Clinic Public-Private Partnership Programme. Pang said future plans will see the network expanded to cover other chronic diseases while integrating services such as radiology and seasonal flu vaccination. On the same day, the Commission also launched the Yau Tsim Mong District Health Centre. It offers a vaccination room, a blood taking station, consultation rooms, and a therapy room for exercise, with audio visual smart technology to assist patients' rehabilitation. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Coleman Wong makes last eight in Dominicana Open](#) (2026-03-13 08:26)

Hong Kong, China tennis star Coleman Wong defeated another top-100 player to make it into the quarter-finals of the Republica Dominicana Open in Cap Cana in the Dominican Republic. The 21-year-old SAR sensation bested third-seeded and World No. 64 Damir Džumhur from Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-6, 6-4, 6-2, serving up eight aces and winning 72 percent of first-serve points. The city's tennis star will next face another top-100 player, Belgium's Alexander Blockx, at 2am Hong Kong time on Saturday. Wong, currently at a career-best World No. 123, entered the tournament's main draw as a lucky loser in the qualifying rounds. He defeated World No. 98 Roman Andres Burruchaga from Argentina in the opening round of 32. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Greater Bay Airlines surcharges double from Wednesday](#) (2026-03-13 08:12)

Greater Bay Airlines announced on Friday that fuel surcharges for non-mainland services would almost double from March 18 due to higher oil prices as a result of the Middle East conflict. This came after similar moves by Cathay Pacific and Hong Kong Airlines. For flights to the Maldives, the surcharge will rise from HK\$284 to HK\$541. Journeys to all other destinations, such as in Japan, Thailand and Malaysia, will see the surcharge for jet fuel rise to HK\$290 from HK\$142. The rate will remain unchanged for flights to and from the mainland. Greater Bay Airlines said fuel surcharges might be adjusted according to its established mechanism in line with changes in oil prices. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Swire to sell part of its stake in Cathay](#) (2026-03-13 06:03)

Swire Pacific on Friday said it would sell 153.1 million shares in Cathay Pacific Airways via a share placement, representing around 2.5 percent of the airline's total issued shares. It said the placing price would be HK\$11.74 per share, which was determined after a series of negotiations between the two parties with reference to Cathay's prevailing stock price and other considerations. The company said net proceeds from the sale would be around HK\$1.79 billion. After subtracting the current book value of the block of shares, at around HK\$1.42 billion, Swire said it expected to record a gain of HK\$365 million from the placement, with the net proceeds expected to be used for general working capital purposes. Swire will remain the largest shareholder of Cathay with a more than 45 percent stake in the airline after the sale. (Reuters) Edited by Edmond Fong

- [MTR pay rises 'slightly below demands of unions'](#) (2026-03-13 05:20)

A railway unionist said on Friday that pay rises announced by the MTR Corporation were slightly below their demands and called for improved benefits. Their response came after the corporation said pay increases would be between 1.6 and 3.84 percent for most non-management staff, depending on their performance. According to representatives of the Federation of Railway Trade Unions, over half of MTR staff will receive a 3.2 percent salary increase. Workers will also receive a one-off performance-based bonus of between 1.4 and 2.07 months' salary, it said. In a statement, the MTRC said the decision was made after a careful consideration of various factors, including its business performance, the market and economic environment, as well as employee contributions. Speaking after meeting the MTR management, federation spokesman Lam Wai-keung said the union groups were disappointed that the corporation had not responded to their call for improved benefits, including an increase in the overnight shift allowance. He said workers faced immense pressure having to carry out critical railway work within a two-hour window after the end of services every day. "No other profession can match the intensity of the pressure we endure as the two-hour window closes. Increasing our overnight shift allowance is a basic and reasonable demand," Lam said. "It is common industry practice to pay double for night work. Some union members have handled tender documents. If contractors have to work at night their tender price would be much higher. This also proves that this is a standard industry practice." However, Lam said, the pay increases this time around came closer to meeting union demands than on many occasions in the past. He added the federation would continue to engage in discussions with management to get the corporation to meet its other demands, which include instituting a tenure-based pay system and subsidising the cost of renewing professional licences. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Illegal fuel danger looms large for urban residents'](#) (2026-03-13 04:13)

Illegal fuel station operations are being conducted closer to more urban areas, posing a greater threat to public safety, the Fire Services Department said on Friday. That was evinced by the arrest of a man on Wednesday on suspicion of operating an illegal fuel station on a ground-floor unit of a mixed residential and commercial building in To Kwa Wan, with officers seizing 850 litres of petrol. Speaking on RTHK, divisional officer Ng Wing-chit said the new modus operandi of illegal fuel station operators poses a challenge for officers trying to shut them down. "In the past, they were located in remote areas, the countryside, cordoned-off areas or parking lots on derelict land," he said. "But now the trend is that they have become more mobile, fragmented and closer to the urban areas. "More mobile means they are no longer fixed at one station. They might use modified vehicles – that is to say, mobile illegal fuel stations or illegal fuel cars – which can go anywhere. Fragmented means they used to be large-scale. But now they are smaller and scattered around at different locations." Ng noted that the To Kwa Wan case could have put lives in danger in the event of any accident as, apart from residents living in the building, there were also elderly residential homes nearby. Higher oil prices have given motorists an incentive to go to illegal fuel stations as they offer cheaper fuel, he said. "Such illegal fuel stations lack compliant fire-service installations, equipment or management expertise," Ng pointed out. "Once there is a leakage, improper operation or a

spark, it can lead to a fire or an explosion. It's very dangerous." The department has received more than 200 complaints about illegal fuel stations in the first two months of the year, Ng said, which represents a 42 percent increase over the average monthly figure for last year. There has also been an 85 percent jump in the number of prosecutions initiated compared to the average monthly figure a year ago. The honorary life president of the Hong Kong, China Automobile Association, Ringo Lee, pointed out on the same show that fuel thefts had not – before Wednesday's revelation that more than HK\$30,000 worth of diesel had been siphoned from four oil tankers parked overnight in Tuen Mun – occurred for a long time. He suspected the oil tankers were easy targets as their huge loads of at least 1,000 litres made discoveries of fuel theft less obvious. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Social workers deserve gratitude for relief work: Sun](#) (2026-03-13 03:04)

The secretary for labour and welfare has pledged to review in due course a compassionate arrangement that attaches one social worker to each household of fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court, while acknowledging the officers' increased workload. In an exclusive interview with RTHK, Chris Sun said it was the right call to mobilise all of the government's 2,000 or so social workers following the disaster in November, as the affected residents deserved maximum support possible. His comments followed concerns regarding the workload of some social work officers. Sun described the scale of the operation as unprecedented, but noted such a household-matching policy had been used before in cases affecting a smaller amount of people. "You can say they've provided one-on-one matching for professional services... that included matters that the residents care about, but are unrelated to social welfare," he said. "We will rationally review everything once things settle down. But at this point, we feel that within such a short time span, we made the right, decisive call to adopt the 'one social worker per household' policy." The minister noted the social workers have been dealing with issues they're not familiar with, such as re-housing and helping residents apply for grants and subsidies. Sun said the Social Welfare Department has implemented measures to assist the officers, such as streamlining their travel expense claims and offering flexible holiday arrangements. But, he added, public recognition would go a long way in providing them emotional support. "I think our Social Welfare Department colleagues are worthy of everyone's support, a thumbs-up. They demonstrated a tremendous [will to] shoulder responsibility as they have a great sense of mission," he said. "When Hong Kong faces such enormous difficulties, as they are social workers, you may say that they're duty-bound. But you also have to be considerate about their heavy workload, it's really not easy." Sun said he expects their burden to gradually ease off once a long-term housing plan is finalised for Wang Fuk Court residents. That said, those who have lost their loved ones in the fire will continue to receive social welfare support, the minister added. On a separate note, the minister said officials are looking to kick start a trial scheme this year aimed at boosting support for elderly carers, as well as senior citizens living on their own. The scheme would involve installing fall sensor systems at their homes, with authorities to be alerted when potential danger is detected. No visuals will be recorded to ensure the users' privacy. Edited by Cecil Wong

- [MTR Corp sees profits drop 7pc in 2025](#) (2026-03-12 10:42)

MTR Corporation on Thursday reported its net profits declined by almost seven percent to HK\$14.68 billion in 2025 due to factors such as lower revenues from its mainland operations as well as higher operating costs. In releasing its annual results, the city's railway giant also noted that total revenue dropped by 7.5 percent to HK\$55.46 billion. Speaking at a press briefing, Michael Fitzgerald, the group's finance director, said a lower profit was recorded partly because of an impairment loss related to Hangzhou Metro Line 1. Other factors included rising operating costs and depreciation costs, as well as rental concessions offered to tenants in Hong Kong, while adverse weather also weighed on revenues. "But the group's financial position remains robust, and our net debt-to-equity ratio stands at the healthy level of 22.5 percent," Fitzgerald said. Excluding property development profits, earnings from recurrent businesses slipped by about 22 percent to HK\$5.65 billion in the 12 months ending in December. However, profits from property development rose by eight percent year on year to HK\$11.08 billion, thanks to progress made on projects at The Southside and in Lohas Park as well as Ho Man Tin station last year, while railway investments made years ago also helped boost growth. The company said that most of the earnings would be allocated to expanding its extensive rail network in the city, as well as asset maintenance, upgrades and replacements. "A key milestone among the new railway projects was the signing of the project agreement for The Northern Link part one," chief executive Jeny Yeung said. "[Now] preparatory works for the construction commenced, alongside integrated planning for both the main line and spur line. "We're targeting the commissioning of both lines no later than 2034 to support the Northern Metropolis development." While revenue from Hong Kong's railway operations rose by 2.5 percent to HK\$23.6 billion, sales from its mainland and international railways, property rental and management subsidiaries, which are its second largest source of income, plunged by nearly 19 percent to HK\$20.69 billion. The group proposed a HK\$0.89 dividend per share, bringing its total for the year to HK\$1.31, unchanged from that in 2024. Looking ahead, the group noted that while the macroeconomic situation remained challenging, the improving economic landscape and property sector suggested that it might begin to enjoy "a somewhat healthier" operating environment. Interest rate reductions could also benefit the company by driving down funding costs and mortgage rates, it added. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK men and women footballers cleared for Asian Games](#) (2026-03-12 09:49)

The local Football Association said on Thursday that both the men's and women's team for Hong Kong, China, would be competing at the Asian Games in Japan this year. That put paid to reports that organisers had changed entry requirements for this year's Games despite the men's team having made history at the previous games in Hangzhou by finishing fourth. Organisers were reported to have linked eligibility for participation to results at the Under-23 Asian Cup for the men's team and the Asian Cup for the women's side. The football association said it had been in touch with organisers over this matter and received an official notification from the Olympic Council of Asia on Wednesday confirming the local teams' entry. "We are pleased the teams can take part and welcome the decision of the Olympic Council of Asia," said

Eric Fok, who chairs the Football Association of Hong Kong, China. "This will benefit Hong Kongfootball and help players gain major-tournament experience." He went on to thank the SportsFederation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China, for its help and co-ordination and saidthe teams would press fully ahead with preparations for the Games. Edited by ThomasMcAlinden

- [100 civil servants get awards for outstanding work](#) (2026-03-12 09:38)

One hundred civil servants across 39 government bureaus and departments have received the Secretary for the Civil Service Commendation Award as recognition of their outstanding work performance. Civil Service Secretary Ingrid Yeung presented the commendation certificates at the Central Government Offices on Thursday afternoon. One of the recipients, Wong Wai-kin, is a senior scientific officer in the forecasting and warning services branch of the observatory. Wong, who is leading the development of a nowcasting system to provide early warnings for hazards related to heavy downpours and extreme weather, said he understands the public have high expectations when it comes to weather forecasts. He said the increasing frequency of extreme weather events is making forecasting more challenging and complex, but stressed that the observatory is constantly seeking improvements in this regard. "We have been using the latest technology and some of the latest instruments to enhance our weather monitoring network. We also use big data and artificial intelligence to improve our forecasting techniques," he said. "We also try to improve communication with the public to advise them about possible extreme weather conditions, such as through special weather tips or to explain on our blogs what might occur in the next few days to give everyone time for preparation." Another award recipient, Wong Chi-ming, has served in the Customs and Excise Department for 25 years, spending close to half of that time in the drug investigation bureau. The chief customs officer said one of the toughest challenges he had faced during his tenure in the bureau was cracking down on the smuggling of etomidate. The ceremony also marked the second year of the Civil Service Volunteer Commendation Scheme. Thirteen departmental teams and 435 individual civil servants received awards for their outstanding performances and contributions in participating in and promoting volunteer services. One of the recipients, a volunteer team from the Correctional Services Department, works with the HK Saving Cat And Dog Association to train and take care of stray dogs. Meanwhile a team from the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, in collaboration with the Wong Tai Sin care team, regularly visits elderly households to install energy-efficient LED light bulbs while sharing power-saving and safety tips. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Art stays above geopolitical fray with rise in sales](#) (2026-03-12 09:27)

The global art market regained momentum in 2025, led by renewed confidence at the high end. According to the Art Basel and UBS Global Art Market Report 2026, global art sales rose 4 percent to US\$59.6 billion in the past year, marking the sector's return to growth after a contraction in 2024. The United States, the United Kingdom and China accounted for 76 percent of global art sales by value, in line with 2024. "China maintained its position as one of the

world's leading art markets while Hong Kong continues to play a central role in the Asia artecosystem with several high value sales and early signs of macroeconomic stabilisation this year," said Adrian Zuercher, chief information officer at UBS Global Wealth Management. In China, art sales increased just over one percent year on year to US\$8.5 billion. The report also shows confidence strengthened heading into 2026, with 43 percent of dealers expecting sales to improve and 38 percent anticipating stable performance. Sentiment also improved among mid-tier auction houses, reflecting greater optimism amid ongoing economic and geopolitical uncertainty. "Although elevated costs, geopolitical uncertainty and tariff concerns are still affecting business, buyer confidence improved as the year progressed and the year closed with a succession of dynamic sales moments," said Art Basel chief executive Noah Horowitz. Clare McAndrew, founder of Arts Economics, noted that some categories of art were relatively insulated from the direct effects of tariffs. Broader policy uncertainty and trade fragmentation, she added, created challenges for businesses, affecting pricing and supply. "A wider shift towards protectionism and more domestically focused sales also pose longer-term risks, as the art trade relies heavily on international circulation and access to global audiences," McAndrew said. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK's 5-year plan to have 'profound impact': CE](#) (2026-03-12 09:23)

Hong Kong's first five-year blueprint will have a "profound impact" and will offer clear guidance on the socio-economic development of the SAR, Chief Executive John Lee said on Thursday. The city's leader also thanked central authorities for their support and care, and for putting forward a number of policies in the 15th Five-Year Plan promoting long-term prosperity and stability in Hong Kong and deepening development in the Greater Bay Area. In a social media post following the closing of the National People's Congress (NPC) meeting, Lee vowed to lead the whole of Hong Kong to align with the national development blueprint. "Hong Kong's first five-year plan, which aligns with the country's 15th Five-Year Plan, will have a profound impact. It is a shared action plan for the SAR," Lee wrote. "It will outline Hong Kong's development vision, core objectives, key areas and major initiatives for the next five years, offering clear guidance for Hong Kong's socio-economic and livelihood development and better integrating into and contributing to the nation's overall development strategy." Local NPC deputy Ma Fung-kuok said it is important for Hong Kong authorities to not work behind closed doors when formulating the city's own five-year plan. "When we return to Hong Kong, we will showcase, promote and introduce the country's 15th Five-Year Plan to society," Ma told reporters in Beijing. "We will also actively participate in the planning of the city's five-year blueprint and try our best to share our thoughts. We will also remind the government to make a good effort in aligning with the country's plan." Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Eight arrested over alleged insider trading, bribery](#) (2026-03-12 08:34)

Eight people have been arrested and more than a dozen locations raided as part of an operation targeting suspected insider dealing and bribery, Hong Kong authorities said on Thursday. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the Securities and

Futures Commission (SFC) said their joint operation on March 10 and 11 targeted seniorexecutives at two brokerages and a hedge fund. "Officers of the SFC and the ICAC searched atotal of 14 locations, including the offices of the licenced corporations, as well as residences ofthe arrestees. The ICAC also arrested six men and two women, aged between 35 and 60. Thearrestees included, among others, senior executives of the two licenced securities firms and thelicensed hedge fund management firm, as well as a middleman," the two bodies said in astatement. Authorities suspect executives from the brokerages accepted HK\$4 million in bribesfrom the owner of the hedge fund in return for confidential information regarding share salesby various Hong Kong-listed companies. "When the share placements were publicly announced,the share prices of the concerned stocks declined and the hedge fund allegedly made profits ofaround HK\$315 million from its short positions," the statement said. Short positions refer tostock short selling, which is a high-risk trading strategy where an investor profits from a shareprice decline by borrowing shares, selling them, and buying them back later at a lower price toreturn to the lender. While the ICAC and SFC did not name the three firms involved in the case,brokerage Guotai Junan International said earlier in a statement that one of its employees hadbeen arrested following a raid on its office. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [CX doubles fuel surcharge amid Middle East tensions](#) (2026-03-12 07:59)

Cathay Pacific on Thursday said it will increase its fuel surcharge by more than double from March 18 as supplies are disrupted and prices rise due to the war in the Middle East. The surcharge for long-haul flights will increase from HK\$569 to HK\$1,164, while the fee for short-haul flights will rise from HK\$142 to HK\$290. The surcharge for flights to the South Asia subcontinent will go up from HK\$264 to HK\$541. In a statement, the city's flagship carrier said the increased fees are due to the doubling of jet fuel prices this month. The airline said the surcharge prices will be adjusted monthly according to fuel costs, with updates to be posted on its website. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [New interface system a brainwave in Parkinson's fight](#) (2026-03-12 07:51)

Polytechnic University has developed a new brain-computer interface system using ultrasound to alleviate Parkinson's disease symptoms in a non-invasive manner. The technology – created by a research team led by Sun Lei from the university's department of biomedical engineering in collaboration with Huashan Hospital in Shanghai and Zhujiang Hospital in Guangdong – aims to offer a new non-invasive treatment option that targets Parkinsonian motor symptoms without invasive surgery or drugs. Sun said the technology could significantly improve the symptoms of Parkinson' s – which is primarily caused by the excessive loss of certain brain cells during ageing – by modulating the function of existing cells through ultrasound.

“Compared to other major modalities like electrical and magnetic, they either lack the specificity or focusing ability, or their focusing ability is pretty poor or they cannot penetrate pretty deep,” he said. “So ultrasound [waves] seem to be the only energy type that can actually penetrate deep [into] the brain,” Sun said, adding that they allowed the treatment process to be focused and non-invasive. Existing methods, he said, also come with surgical risks

and hardware limitations to their effectiveness but that this non-invasive technology allows doctors to easily stimulate brain cells in a precise manner. With testing on mice proving that the technology improves physical abilities, Sun said the team's plans include clinical trials with 100 patients at partner hospitals to assess safety and efficacy for regulatory approval. Beyond Parkinson's disease, Sun said preclinical data also supports its application in treatment for depression, epilepsy, weight control and sleep disorders. He said the scope of this technology might be expanded to treat these diseases in the future. Sun said the country's 15th Five-Year Plan had identified brain-computer interfaces as one of the fresh growth drivers for the economy and that this technology supports the country's strategic development. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Caution urged over use of AI agent platforms](#) (2026-03-12 07:20)

Cybersecurity officials are urging organisations to proceed with caution when adopting advanced AI agent platforms, warning that these powerful new tools introduce a much wider range of security threats than standard chatbots. In a statement on Thursday, the Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centre (HKCERT) said AI agent platforms - which can operate directly on local devices, install third-party skills and integrate with external services - "present a risk surface beyond that of typical conversational AI tools". The warning is centred on the rising popularity of an open-source platform called OpenClaw. Unlike a simple chatbot, OpenClaw is designed to be self-hosted and acts as a multi-channel gateway, connecting to messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram and Discord. It boasts features such as persistent memory, browser control and system access, allowing it to handle file operations, browser automation and script-related tasks across multiple environments. "This high degree of integration has quickly attracted attention from developers and technical communities," the centre said. However, HKCERT reported that malicious actors have already exploited interest in the platform by creating "fake GitHub repositories and Bing AI search results to distribute information-stealing malware and proxy malware to users searching for the OpenClaw Windows installer". Beyond fake downloads, the platform itself has had security flaws. According to HKCERT, "OpenClaw once had a high-severity vulnerability that could allow malicious websites to hijack developers' OpenClaw agents". While that specific vulnerability was patched on February 26, the incident serves as a stark reminder of the risks. "This incident serves as a reminder that organisations deploying AI agent tools may face greater risk exposure if they lack adequate security oversight and control measures," the centre said. Further compounding the risk is the platform's open-source skills ecosystem, known as ClawHub, which allows users to publish and install scripts to extend functionality. HKCERT warned that "while this open extension model accelerates feature growth, it also introduces supply chain risks associated with third-party components". To help organisations navigate these dangers, HKCERT has issued a set of cybersecurity recommendations, including verifying download sources and installation instructions, updating OpenClaw and exercising caution when installing third-party skills. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Wealth of opportunities for HK to be family office hub](#) (2026-03-12 06:40)

Hong Kong's forward-looking policies, stability and backing from national authorities are transforming the city into a premier global hub for family offices amid rising geopolitical risks, Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury Christopher Hui said on Thursday. Writing on his official blog, Hui also announced the fourth annual edition of the Wealth for Good in Hong Kong Summit would be held on March 23 and 24 and that the theme would be "Building Lasting Legacies". The event is a flagship wealth summit in the city that brings together the global heads of ultra-rich family offices and their advisers. There has been a massive wave of wealth transition across generations just as the scale of family offices has grown in the SAR, Hui noted. The city is becoming more appealing as a safe harbour for family offices and investors, who are re-evaluating their portfolios amid the intensifying geopolitical uncertainties, with a shift of their assets to the SAR becoming a rising trend, he added. "Amid the major transformation, the policy foresight and institutional stability of Hong Kong are becoming more precious – no risk of war, free flow of funds, a deep and stable capital market, as well as a well-established regulatory framework, coupled with long-term planning that is closely integrated with national development," Hui said. "All these are making Hong Kong the preferred option for global high-net-worth individuals and family offices to reallocate their assets." The upcoming summit, he said, will focus on three areas: wealth management, cultural values as well as intelligent technological innovation. Several top private wealth management decision-makers as well as family heirs will also delve into such topics as impact investing, family governance and philanthropy. A group of humanoid robots would kick off the summit with a performance, showcasing the rapid development of domestic technology, Hui said. His remarks came as the number of single-family offices in the SAR rose 25 percent over two years to 3,384 by the end of last year, with half of them having assets worth over US\$51 million. Artificial intelligence, embodied intelligence, as well as biological research are leading a new round of technological revolution, opening up new investment opportunities for global family capital, Hui said, adding that the city is striving to becoming a global hub for AI technology with the launch of its "AI Plus" initiatives. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Mayday concert axing resounds in sour note among fans](#) (2026-03-12 04:18)

The Consumer Council has received more than 150 complaints following the cancellation of the opening night of a concert series by the rock band Mayday at Kai Tak Stadium. The event organiser confirmed on Monday that the concert scheduled for March 24 – the first of four planned shows – had been scrapped. The band from Taiwan was originally set to perform in Hong Kong on March 24, 25, 27 and 28 as part of their 29th anniversary tour. Ticket holders for the affected date are entitled to a full refund. In a statement posted on social media on Wednesday evening, the organiser also offered these fans the option of attending a special 40-minute rehearsal session on March 24 free of charge on top of the refund and apologised for the disruption. By 8am on Thursday, the Consumer Council had logged 163 complaints related to the matter, with total claims amounting to more than HK\$447,000. Of the complaints, 71 were lodged by locals, with many saying they were dissatisfied with the organiser's failure to offer them alternatives such as priority ticket purchases or exchanges for other shows. The

largest local claim involves approximately HK\$7,900. The remaining complaints were filed by non-locals, most of whom were from the mainland, who expressed frustration that the organiser had not offered compensation for travel and accommodation costs. The highest claim in this regard was around HK\$8,000. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, Consumer Council chief executive Alaina Shum said the watchdog had reached out to the event organiser on Wednesday evening to seek clarity. "Our main concern is that we want to understand the refund arrangement," she said. "Its website previously said refunds should be made via the original payment channel if there haven't been any recent changes." Shum said the council was pressing for more specifics, noting that the organiser was expected to release more detailed information later on Thursday. "If it involves refunds, we need to see whether the channel is indeed the original one. We need to look at the timeline for when the refund will be processed," she said. "Also, we need to consider whether certain information will need to be provided by ticket holders, and whether that channel is secure, that is, consumer privacy rights must be protected." Following the cancellation of the March 24 show, Mayday has added a new concert, which will be held on March 29. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Licence warning as pig carcasses put shops in a spot](#) (2026-03-12 03:47)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has warned fresh provision shops not to place pig carcasses outside their stores or risk losing their licences. The warning came after the department recently recorded the first violation of this particular licensing condition since it was instituted in 2022. Officers found that a Kai Bo Food Supermarket outlet in Yuen Long kept pig carcasses outside the premises during special operations on more than 200 shops conducted across the city between late February and early March to clamp down on improper procedures after deliveries that increased the risk of rodent infestations. Officers issued more than 40 verbal warnings and initiated 21 prosecutions in the blitz. Speaking on RTHK, assistant director of operations Wan Chi-shun said the department was working to cancel the Yuen Long outlet's licence but that the final decision would be made after considering representations made by the shop. He warned that meat had to be properly handled. "Pig carcasses must be placed inside the store. The most ideal way is, first, to put it on a table," Wan said. "Second, some stores will hang it on the wall and not place it on the floor. "If they run out of space and need to use the floor, they can take appropriate measures – such as using suitable tools or items that can prevent contamination. These are acceptable to us." He went on to say that shops had to opt for items such as plastic sheets and wooden boards to place underneath the carcasses if they had no other spots apart from the floor. The department has also suspended a shop in Kowloon City from operating following rodent infestations. Wan said that even though the store had continuously carried out control measures following the suspension, it would only be allowed to reopen for business only when it met the department's requirements, describing the situation there as being "serious". He stressed that officers had continued to carry out random inspections, particularly during the early hours to target violations at fresh provision stores. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Ten hurt in chain collision on Tsing Ma Bridge](#) (2026-03-12 02:27)

Ten people were injured after 10 cars collided in a chain-reaction accident on Tsing Ma Bridge on Thursday morning. Police received reports at around 8.30am of the accident involving multiple westbound vehicles heading towards the airport. Photos circulating online show one car ending up on its side, while the front end of another suffered extensive damage along with a shattered windshield. Officers said two people had been trapped but were conscious when they were extricated. Several lanes had to be closed to facilitate the recovery operation, with airport-bound traffic stretching all the way back to Stonecutters Bridge as of 10:30am. The Transport Department said the lower deck carriageway of Lantau Link has opened to traffic to ease congestion, and urged motorists to remain patient as they pass through the area. The MTR said it had stepped up services on the Airport Express and the Tung Chung line.

\_\_\_\_\_ Last updated: 2026-03-12 HKT 11:48 Edited by Raymond Yeung

- [Complaints after Mayday cancels opening concert](#) (2026-03-11 12:53)

The Consumer Council has received more than 100 complaints after Mayday cancelled the opening night of its concert series at Kai Tak Stadium later this month. The organiser announced on Monday that the March 24 concert for the band from Taiwan had been cancelled. Mayday was originally scheduled to perform in Hong Kong on March 24, 25, 27 and 28 as part of its 29th anniversary tour. The decision, the organiser said, was made “to ensure that all performances are delivered in optimal form, allowing fans at each concert to fully enjoy the special moments of the birthday celebration”. Those who hold tickets for the affected show are entitled to a full refund. They can also attend a special 40-minute rehearsal session to be held on March 24 free of charge, according to a social media statement by the organiser on Wednesday evening, as it apologised for the inconvenience caused. As of 5pm on Wednesday, the consumer watchdog had received a total of 111 complaints related to the cancellation. Forty-two were lodged by local consumers and the rest by non-local customers, the majority of whom are from the mainland. The complaints involve a total sum of HK\$296,194, according to the council. The largest individual claim from a local consumer amounted to HK\$6,700, while the highest from a non-local complainant was HK\$8,000. Grievances among local fans largely stem from the organiser’s failure to offer priority booking or ticket exchanges for other performances. Non-local complainants, meanwhile, expressed dissatisfaction over the lack of compensation for travel and accommodation costs. In a statement on Tuesday, the Consumer Council said cancelling individual concert dates would disappoint ticket holders and could disrupt the travel plans of visitors coming to Hong Kong for the show. The council urged the organiser to manage the situation appropriately, including considering alternative arrangements for affected fans. It also advised concertgoers to stay updated through official announcements and to keep relevant transaction records. Following the cancellation of the March 24 show, Mayday has added a new performance on March 29. Tickets for the March 29 show went on sale at noon on Wednesday. \_\_\_\_\_ Last updated: 2026-03-11 HKT 22:46 Edited by Edmond Fong

- [HA aims to expand stroke coverage scheme](#) (2026-03-11 09:49)

The Hospital Authority on Wednesday said it is looking to expand its pre-hospital stroke diversion scheme, which has been in place since last December in two hospital clusters, to all of Hong Kong, as a way to further reduce overall treatment times among such patients. In collaboration with the Fire Services Department, the scheme involves sending patients, suspected of suffering from a major stroke caused by a blocked main artery, directly to designated hospitals for treatment, aiming to decrease brain damage risks and chronic disability. This is on top of the authority's territory-wide pre-hospital stroke notification mechanism that was in place from 2021, with ambulance staff performing assessments before patients arrive at the hospital and informing the accident and emergency departments to make advance arrangements. Under the new scheme, patients within the New Territories East cluster would be sent to Prince of Wales Hospital, while those in the New Territories West cluster would be sent to Tuen Mun Hospital for clot busting. Up until this month, around 50 stroke patients were diverted to designated hospitals under the new scheme. About half of them received clot removal surgery. These patients had their waiting times from calling an ambulance to treatment reduced by an average of 80 minutes, saving time from hospital transfers and repeated assessments. “Every minute counts in acute ischemic stroke. For every minute, patients may run the risk of damaging or losing more than 1.9 million brain cells, so [the 80 minutes] is very significant,” said the authority’s director Wong Yiu-chung, who works on cluster services.

“What we have so far witnessed is that this period of time can benefit the involved patient because those who are affected with major vessel occlusion can have timely surgery and treatment being delivered to the patient,” he added. The authority said it would gradually expand the scheme to hospital clusters in Kowloon and Hong Kong Island this year. It added it would continue reviewing data related to the scheme to ensure smooth implementation. Stroke is the fourth most common cause of death in Hong Kong, with the authority having received around 19,000 patients in 2025 and about 85 percent of them suffering from ischemic stroke. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Police deal with hand grenade found in Happy Valley](#) (2026-03-11 09:08)

A police bomb disposal team safely dealt with a suspected grenade found in Happy Valley on Wednesday. Officers said they were called at around 1.40pm over the discovery on a slope along Stubbs Road. The device, which was said to be around the size of a lemon, was believed to be a British hand grenade. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Bureau made the item safe. Police said no one was injured and no evacuation was required.

- ['Authorities made every effort to mitigate fare hikes'](#) (2026-03-11 07:56)

A transport official on Wednesday reiterated that authorities tried their best to mitigate fare increases that are set to come into effect on April 1 on some outlying island ferry routes. Fares will go up by 12.5 percent for standard journeys from Central to Cheung Chau, Lamma, and on the inter-island services. Meanwhile, there will be no more ordinary ferry services to and from Mui Wo and Peng Chau, but the price for high-speed ferries will be slightly cheaper than the current rates. Assistant Commissioner for Transport Louisa Fung said the Transport Department

made every effort to balance the financial viability of the ferry services with the interests of residents when vetting the fare increase requests. “Both ferry service operators have been struggling financially. Setting aside government subsidies under special assistance measures, the six routes would record a loss of approximately 35 percent and 50 percent,” she said. “We have also noticed that ridership on the six routes has declined in recent years. Given the decrease in revenue coupled with the continuous rise in operating costs, there is a genuine need for fare adjustments to ensure the current service levels remain unchanged.” Fung said the approved increases are lower than the 20 to 30 percent rises requested by the operators. The assistant commissioner added that prices for multi-ride tickets and monthly passes will see smaller increases of eight percent, adding that this should be more bearable for the residents of the outlying islands. The double-digit percentage hike overall has drawn criticism from district councillors who warn that some residents, particularly elderly people, will be discouraged from travelling into urban areas. Fung said the department understands the importance of ferry services to the residents, adding that it asked operators to offer passengers more choices and greater flexibility on multi-trip tickets. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Cathay sees full-year profit and revenue soar in 2025](#) (2026-03-11 04:47)

Cathay Pacific Airways posted a 9.5 percent rise in full-year profit on Wednesday driven by a strong passenger traffic recovery and robust cargo demand and said it planned to lift capacity this year despite geopolitical volatility. Net profit at Hong Kong's flagship airline rose to HK\$10.83 billion for the year ended December 31, analysts' estimates of around HK\$10.05 billion and topping the HK\$9.89 billion recorded in 2024. Cathay Chairman Patrick Healy said the airline expected to grow passenger capacity by around 10 percent this year as it added frequencies and destinations to its network, which would also boost cargo capacity. However, the airline faces headwinds from the ongoing Middle East conflict, which has disrupted global aviation operations, increased jet fuel costs and led some airlines to raise fares and boost fuel surcharges. “The prevailing global geopolitical environment is volatile, causing unexpected shifts in passenger and cargo traffic flows as well as jet fuel prices,” Healy said in a statement. Revenue climbed 11.9 percent to HK\$116.8 billion in 2025, driven by a 15.8 percent surge in passenger revenue as Cathay began expanding its long-haul network to North America and Europe. The carrier flew 28.9 million passengers during the year, a 26.5 percent increase from 2024, achieving an 85.2 percent load factor. This marked Cathay's third consecutive annual profit following three years of losses over the pandemic, during which it made heavy layoffs. (Reuters) Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Shipping costs up by 20-30pc due to MidEast war'](#) (2026-03-11 04:31)

A lawmaker on Wednesday said that the Middle East conflict was posing a burden on the transport sector due to rising oil prices, but a tourism sector representative said the impact was limited on air passengers. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, transport sector lawmaker Lothair Lam said that overall shipping costs had risen by 20 to 30 percent. This came as fuel costs per voyage surged by US\$200,000 to US\$300,000, he said, and the closure of the Strait of

Hormuz connecting the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman had caused shipments to reroute, which can add an additional 15 to 20 days to the overall journey time. With oil production set to be raised by 206,000 barrels per day starting next month along with shipments rerouting away from the Strait of Hormuz to ensure a steady international oil supply, Lam believes the move would help tackle high fuel costs temporarily. "I think these measures will definitely reduce the oil price. But I don't think it will drop to the level seen before the Middle East conflict, as the situation there is still unstable," he said. "Twenty percent of the world's oil exports are from the Persian Gulf. As long as the situation in the Middle East remains unsettled, international oil prices will continue to fluctuate." He believes the higher costs would eventually transfer to consumers if the conflict continues. Steve Huen, executive director of EGL Tours, meanwhile, said the rise in fuel surcharges would not put a halt to people's travelling plans, even though Hong Kong Airlines will raise its fuel surcharges by up to 35 percent starting on Thursday due to soaring oil prices. He told the same programme the rise in fuel surcharges would not affect those who have purchased a ticket before the new price level takes effect. The increment only accounts for a small amount to tour fees, he said. "I believe people will not cancel their plans to travel because they have to pay some HK\$100 or HK\$200 to HK\$300 more," Huen added. He also said that the cancellation of all Cathay Pacific passenger flights to Riyadh and Dubai until the end of this month had caused a major impact to his firm. Additionally, many tours, particularly those bound for Europe and Africa that were scheduled to depart in the middle of this month and planned to transit through the Middle East, were called off as there are no alternative routes, he added. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK hosts Asia-Pacific smart customs conference](#) (2026-03-11 04:29)

Hong Kong's customs department began hosting the three-day Regional Conference on Smart Customs on Wednesday, positioning itself as a hub for collaboration to accelerate digital transformation in border control across Asia-Pacific. At the opening ceremony, Commissioner of Customs and Excise Chan Tsz-tat unveiled the department's new Smart Customs blueprint, a strategy aligned with the nation's broader goals of enhancing intelligence and connectivity at borders. "Hong Kong customs has invested in artificial intelligence, blockchain, cloud computing and big data analytics to harness the bigger opportunities of cooperation and explore future potentials of economic development," he said. He acknowledged the immense pressure on global customs agencies, which are grappling with record-breaking passenger and cargo volumes. However, Chan stressed that while disruptive technologies are revolutionising daily operations, the role of human expertise remains irreplaceable. "In applying the disruptive technologies to assist in our daily work, our frontline officers' expertise and experience remain invariable in steering the technological development," he said. "Hong Kong customs now leverage advanced equipment, AI and big data to enhance risk targeting and clearance precision in various different fields of work." Chan also highlighted the critical need for a skilled workforce, stating that the conference serves as an open platform to cultivate talent across both the public and private sectors. Security Secretary Chris Tang, for his part, said the conference brings together more than 100 leaders and experts from over 30 customs administrations and

the private sector across Asia-Pacific. He said the region now serves as the engine of the globaleconomy, handling nearly 40 percent of the world's merchant trade. Tang said the explosion ofcross-border e-commerce and regional supply chains has led to unprecedented levels of cargoflow, passenger movement and data exchange. "Traditional customs models characterised bypaper documents, manual inspections, fragmented data and repetitive border clearance can no longer meet contemporary trade needs," he said. He warned that modern challenges, includingcounterfeiting, drug trafficking, wildlife smuggling and emerging digital trade risks, demandmore precise and proactive border controls. "Against this backdrop, smart customs emerges asa strategic imperative by integrating digitalisation, data intelligence, automation andmultilateral connectivity," he said. "Smart customs, on one hand, facilitates trade by reducingcosts and speeds up clearance for legitimate business. On the other hand, it strengthens bordersecurity by detecting risk more effectively." Across the region, Tang said these initiatives aretaking shape around four interconnected pillars, namely data-driven intelligence, digital singlewindow trade, intelligence inspection and multilateral connectivity. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Customs crack down on fuel smuggling amid price surge](#) (2026-03-11 03:48)

The Customs and Excise Department on Wednesday said it has intensified its crackdown on cross-boundary vehicles illegally transporting large quantities of petrol from the mainland into Hong Kong, a practice driven by the recent surge in oil prices because of the Middle East conflict. Speaking to reporters at a customs press conference, Commissioner Chan Tsz-tat said the widening gap between retail petrol prices in Hong Kong and on the mainland has created a strong economic incentive for these illicit activities. He said that some cross-boundary vehicles are exploiting the situation by using modified, enlarged fuel tanks to carry cheaper mainland petrol into Hong Kong. Once here that fuel is extracted and sold to illegal fuel stations, he added. Chan stressed the serious legal and safety implications of the trade. "Buying and selling untaxed petrol is illegal and carries criminal liability. Hong Kong customs will vigorously combat this because it involves not only tax evasion but also significant risks," he said. "When this untaxed petrol is put into private cars, there is a considerable fire hazard. This poses a serious danger not only to the vehicle concerned but also to the surrounding neighbours." As part of enforcement efforts, the commissioner said the department would seize vehicles involved in such cases and would subsequently apply to the courts for their forfeiture. He urged the public not to break the law for small gains, warning that the resulting losses would far outweigh any benefits. Beyond the fuel smuggling issue, Chan addressed the broader impacts of the Middle East situation on Hong Kong, noting that the department has observed considerable disruptions to shipping, as well as the movement of both people and goods. However, he framed the situation as both "a risk and an opportunity" for Hong Kong. "In fact, Hong Kong exemplifies how, under the 'One Country, Two Systems' framework, we are able to provide a highly secure, convenient and transparent customs clearance and transportation system in areas such as logistics and trade," he said. Chan outlined the department's forward-looking strategy. "In the days ahead, Hong Kong customs will continue to actively promote various trade-friendly

measures to ensure that industries from around the world can conduct business, trade and logistics in Hong Kong with peace of mind," he said. "By providing a better enforcement environment, we enable businesses operating in Hong Kong to calculate their costs with certainty. This, I believe, is our advantage." Chan said the department would closely monitor the situation in the Middle East for any further impact on Hong Kong, particularly in maritime and air transport. He pledged to maintain close contact with the industry to provide appropriate assistance when necessary. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- ['Double blow to elderly over ferry fare hikes'](#) (2026-03-10 13:49)

Islands district councillors said upcoming ferry fare hikes may discourage elderly residents of outer islands from travelling, urging authorities to come up with special concessions to ease their financial burden. From next month, fares for six major outlying island ferry routes will go up, including a 12.5 percent increase for standard journeys to Cheung Chau, Lamma, and inter-island services. At a special Islands Council Traffic and Transport Committee meeting on Tuesday, many councillors said the elderly will suffer a "double blow" – the fare hikes coinciding with a revamp of the HK\$2 transport subsidy scheme. Under the revamp that will take effect on April 1 as well, beneficiaries must pay 20 percent of the fare for any trips that cost more than HK\$10 - instead of the current flat HK\$2 rate. For an elderly passenger taking a high-speed ferry to Cheung Chau on Sundays or public holidays, the fare will rise to HK\$9.50. Some councillors urged the Transport Department to explore targeted concessions for elderly residents of outlying islands, such as granting them a special exemption from the revamped HK\$2 subsidy scheme or offering alternative subsidies to mitigate the impact of the fare hike. They also said since ferries are the only transit option for most outlying island residents, a double-digit percentage hike overall is not acceptable. In response, principal transport officer Curtis Chiu stressed that authorities have weighed multiple factors to balance the operational challenges faced by ferry operators with the interests of residents. He pointed out that the approved increases were lower than those applied, noting that operators had originally sought fare hikes of between 20 and 30 percent. Many councillors also urged ferry operators to boost non-ticketing revenue, such as by renting out pier space more often. They called on the Transport Department to upgrade pier infrastructure – such as constructing a footbridge to connect the second levels of the outlying islands ferry piers in Central – to make pier rentals more accessible and appealing to potential tenants. Chiu said the department would continue discussions with operators on increasing non-ticketing income and stressed that authorities are seeking ways to improve infrastructure at the piers in the long term. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Rising world oil prices hurt HK people, businesses'](#) (2026-03-10 11:50)

Experts and representatives of the transport trade said rising oil prices, driven by the conflict in the Middle East, are placing significant financial strain on individuals and businesses in Hong Kong. The spike in global oil prices has begun to reverberate through the local transport industry, driving up fuel costs. Stanley Chaing, chairman of the Lok Ma Chau China-Hong Kong Freight Association, said the depot pickup price of diesel has more than doubled over the past

two weeks, from around HK\$4.9 per litre to approximately HK\$10.6. Chaing described the speed and scale of the increase as alarming, noting that the added costs are hitting the industry hard, while self-employed drivers are facing even greater pressure. "The daily fuel consumption of a light truck and a heavy truck ranges from approximately 50 litres to over 100 litres," he said. "Somaintaining a light truck, the daily fuel cost has increased by HK\$200 to HK\$300. For a heavy truck, the daily fuel cost increases by about HK\$500 to HK\$600. "Especially for individual operators, it's even tougher. They have to pay an extra ten-odd thousand dollars or so each month, which has a certain impact on their livelihoods." The pain is also being felt by everyday motorists at the pump. Leung, an insurance industry worker who drives to meet clients across Hong Kong, said his fuel expenses have gone up. "Of course, the impact is significant because the line of work I'm in requires me to go to many places every day," he said. The ripple effects are extending to air travel as well, with Hong Kong Airlines announcing it would raise fuel surcharges for most flights from Thursday. Professor Achim Czerny, from the Department of Logistics and Maritime Studies at Polytechnic University, said airlines often follow one another's lead on pricing. But he warned that higher surcharges could hinder the recovery of passenger traffic, which has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels. "In 2018, we had 75 million passengers at Hong Kong International Airport," he said. "Last year, only 61 million passengers, so what we would want is quickly recover and get back to the 75 million. "But of course, now the situation with the oil prices and then the fuel surcharges getting higher, this is not ideal." He added that while fuel surcharges are itemised separately, passengers ultimately focus on the total ticket price, making any increase a potential deterrent to travel. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [HK welcomes more mainland companies: FS](#) (2026-03-10 11:13)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Tuesday said Hong Kong's financial markets have buffered challenges brought by the recent geopolitical situation as the city continues to attract mainland companies to come here. Speaking at a spring reception jointly hosted by the government investment promotion arm Invest Hong Kong and the Chinese Enterprises Association, Chan said "doing our own thing" is of utmost importance under such global conditions, and the SAR should continue to push for development, as well as speed up the integration into the nation's planning. The finance chief also said more mainland enterprises can make good use of the SAR's advantages to go global. "We welcome more mainland companies to come to Hong Kong, to utilise the full-chain financial support as well as our advantage of being internationalised," he said. "The government has put forward the set up of a cross-sector professional services platform to support enterprises in going global, and the service will be available from this month." Chan also called on mainland companies to actively participate in the Northern Metropolis development to bring talent, skills and industrial chains to the city, saying the government has prepared a range of flexible policies to cater for potential investors. Meanwhile, InvestHK's director-general Alpha Lau said the number of clients at her office has reached an all-time high, with mainland companies and the SAR mutually benefitting each other. She said the agency will continue to attract investments and leverage the SAR's services,

and proactively align with the nation's planning to serve broader development goals. As of the end of last year, around 3,100 mainland enterprises had set up shop in the city. One of them is Miniso, a retailer that currently has more than 8,000 branches across the world after setting foot in Hong Kong in 2015. Its vice president Alice Yang said the SAR's geographical location, as well as being highly inclusive and international, helped elevate the brand's reputation. She added they are planning to open more stores in the city this year. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Cathay extends Mideast flight suspensions to end-March](#) (2026-03-10 08:37)

Cathay Pacific announced on Tuesday that it would continue with its suspension of Middle East flights for the rest of March due to the volatile situation in the region. The cancelled flights include daily passenger flights to and from Dubai in the UAE and the Saudi Arabian capital of Riyadh till March 31. The SAR's flag carrier said its freighter flights to the two places would also be cancelled. It said affected passengers would be able to rebook, reroute or cancel their flight tickets, adding it would monitor the situation closely. The airline also said it would offer extra passenger flights to London and additional capacity to Zurich in March to cater for a surge in demand to destinations in Europe. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK Airlines to raise fuel surcharges from Thursday](#) (2026-03-10 06:59)

Hong Kong Airlines has announced it is further increasing fuel surcharges for most of its flights effective from March 12, with those for short-haul tickets rising 30 percent compared to the beginning of this month. The changes came as oil prices continued to soar amid the escalating conflict in the Middle East, with the international benchmark, Brent crude, leaping 26 percent in Asia trading on Monday to as high as US\$119 a barrel before easing. In a statement released on Tuesday, the local carrier noted that fuel surcharges for short-haul flights departing from Hong Kong will rise by HK\$50 to HK\$212, covering destinations such as those in Japan, South Korea and Thailand. The surcharge for flights to the mainland will rise by HK\$5, to HK\$190. Long-haul flights departing from Hong Kong will increase by HK\$150, or 25 percent, to HK\$739. There are also price increases for flights coming into Hong Kong. Separately, the city's flagship carrier, Cathay Pacific, said it had established a mechanism to review fuel surcharges each month. "As part of this process, we primarily take into account movements in jet fuel prices, rather than crude oil prices, together with other relevant operational factors, and make adjustments where appropriate," it said. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

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

Islands district councillor Yip Pui-kei said on Tuesday many residents had been left with the feeling they had little choice but to accept proposed fare adjustments on six major outlying island ferry routes. Set to take effect from April 1, a 12.5 percent increase will be applied to a standard journey and freight service on routes to Cheung Chau, Lamma and the inter-islands services. Prices for multi-ride tickets for services to Cheung Chau, Lamma, Mui Wo and Peng Chau are also set to see an eight percent increase. According to a paper submitted to the

district council, the Transport Department said the changes would be part of the renewal of the five-year operating licences for Sun Ferry and Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry. The department said the fare hikes were “moderate and minimal” and necessary to balance the financial viability risks of operators facing declining ridership and rising operational costs. Yip, vice chairman of the Islands district council traffic and transport committee, disagreed. “The ferry service operators originally applied for a fare increase of around 20 percent to 30 percent. We – and the local community – have already given a lot of feedback to the Transport Department, trying our best to get the increase reduced,” he said on an RTHK radio programme. “But overall the islanders feel they have no choice but to accept the fare hike – even though they think it's still too much in the way of what they should be paying for what is a daily expense.” Yip added that the elderly would bear the brunt most as the revamped HK\$2 transport subsidy scheme was also set to take effect from the beginning of next month. Following the changes, beneficiaries of the subsidy scheme will have to pay 20 percent of fares for trips that cost more than HK\$10 – instead of the current flat HK\$2 fare. Yip urged ferry service operators to offer discounts to the elderly, such as half-price fares and designated monthly passes. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

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

A former mainland security official said an Interpol annual event to be hosted in Hong Kong in November would showcase the SAR police force’s capabilities. Hong Kong's hosting of the Interpol general assembly will see the city gather, for the first time, more than 1,000 police executives from around the world. Speaking to RTHK in Beijing, former vice minister of public security Chen Siyuan said the event held great importance. “This is a major event of great practical and historical significance. It is also an event that the Chinese authorities, especially the Chinese police, attach great importance to,” he said. “It strengthens international exchanges and law enforcement co-operation to jointly combat transnational crimes. It is a meaningful event.” Hosting the annual event in the SAR for the first time holds, Chen said, great significance. “[The meeting] would showcase the capabilities of law enforcement and international exchanges of Chinese police, including Hong Kong police,” he said. “I believe this year’s Interpol meeting should include rich content, including international law enforcement co-operation, and content that we need to discuss in accordance with Interpol’s principles. “The content should be quite extensive and I believe [the event] can yield fruitful results.” Chen said he hoped global law enforcement agencies could reach a consensus through exchanges at the meeting to step up their war on online scams as they were harmful to people all over the world. With the efforts of Interpol, mainland and Hong Kong police forces, he said, online scams can be rendered less ubiquitous to pose less of a risk to people and their hard-earned assets. Chen also called for closer co-operation between mainland, Hong Kong and Macao police forces. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

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

A construction industry representative on Tuesday suggested that items at fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court be returned to homeowners and tenants before construction works take place. Police

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

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

The city's sole delegate to the top national legislature has said that the formulation of Hong Kong's own five-year plan will be crucial for the SAR amid a period of economic transformation. Starry Lee, who sits on the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, has also said the blueprint for the city will be in line with the One Country, Two Systems principle. A new national development planning law is currently under review at the annual Two Sessions in Beijing, highlighting the importance of One Country, Two Systems, and supporting Hong Kong and Macao in aligning with national development. On the sidelines of the annual political gatherings, Lee underscored the importance for Hong Kong to have its own policy goals. "Due to the lack of planning in the past, our economic transformation has yet to see obvious changes for quite a long while," she said. "We have also seen that under the country's plans every five years, the nation's technological advancements and all aspects of development are progressing at full speed according to that plan." Lee pointed out that it is important for the territory to serve the nation's development, and pointed out that people should look beyond the chapter on Hong Kong and Macao in the 15th Five-Year Plan. "Now our country is doing a lot of things to boost local consumption, [we should see] how we can help in this aspect. A lot of [mainland] enterprises do want to expand their market overseas. Hong Kong has its professional services and strengths to help all these enterprises expand their network outside the country." Lee was among Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress who met Vice Premier Ding Xuexiang in the capital, where he said the Legislative Council has "much to offer under the executive-led system". The delegate, who is also the Legco president, said it is important for lawmakers to monitor the government by way of putting forward their own thoughts on improving what authorities have proposed. Monitoring officials does not necessarily mean opposing plans or using "relatively strong words" to criticise the government, Lee added. Edited by Aaron Tam

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

The ongoing conflict in the Middle East should have limited impact on Hong Kong's overall economy due to the region's "insignificant" direct investment, according to a property tycoon. Far East Consortium chairman David Chiu added that there would not be much capital flowing out of the Middle East due to the conservative approach by wealthy families. Continued strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran -- coupled with Tehran's retaliatory attacks -- disrupted global supply chains and upended the world's energy and transport sectors. Chiu, a Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference Standing Committee member, is currently in Beijing to attend the Two Sessions meetings. In an exclusive interview with RTHK, he spoke on a wide range of issues. "When it comes to investing in Hong Kong – direct investment [from the Middle East] – today is absolutely insignificant, and therefore, it won't affect our economy at all," he said. "But of course, on the macro-economy side, because of the war, interest rates may not come down as rapidly as we all want, oil prices may go up further. "I don't think we should expect, especially now [with] the war situation, too much money will come into Hong Kong for the time being." The businessman also gave a bright outlook of Hong Kong's housing market, saying he would "boldly predict" prices to rise by over 15 percent this year and the next. However, Chiu had reservations on Financial Secretary Paul Chan's decision to raise stamp duty for luxury home transactions valued at HK\$100 million or more to up to 6.5 percent. "I personally think that it's a little bit too early," he said, explaining that developers rely on both buyers at home and abroad to recoup their investment. "Especially now, we need a lot of money to develop our Northern Metropolis, and that releases a lot of new investment for the developers. And the developers would not be able to invest a lot of money, unless they can release some of the inventory." Chiu, who's "very bullish" of the Northern Metropolis development, revealed his company is in the "final stage of negotiation" with authorities on land premium regarding a land parcel in the area. "We have a piece of land, which will... allow us to build about 600,000 square feet of residential [buildings], amounting to close to 900 units, next to the Hung Shui Kiu light rail station." Under a 2024 pilot scheme, the government will award plots of land in the Northern Metropolis to winning bidders for collective development. In submitting a bid, firms must also tender for a site reserved for technology development. To that, Chiu said it is a "new territory" for developers as they have to look for partners in the tendering process. Edited by Raymond Yeung