



HONG KONG SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: May 01, 2026 - May 08, 2026

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

Executive Summary

Hong Kong's security landscape during May 1-8, 2026, was primarily shaped by ongoing internal security measures and evolving diplomatic engagements, rather than overt military activities. The period saw Chinese Premier Li Qiang reiterate Beijing's commitment to the "one country, two systems" principle for Hong Kong, albeit with nuanced phrasing, emphasizing strengthened governance and its role as a global connector. A significant diplomatic event was the Global Mediation Summit, hosted in Hong Kong, underscoring the city's ambition to become a hub for international dispute resolution. Meanwhile, the implications of recent amendments to the National Security Law, particularly regarding expanded police powers over electronic devices, continued to draw international scrutiny and domestic implementation efforts. Cybersecurity remained a key focus, with the city actively promoting awareness and implementing new critical infrastructure protection laws.

Key Security Developments

- Premier Li Qiang's Remarks on Hong Kong Governance

On May 3, 2026, Chinese Premier Li Qiang addressed the opening of the fourth session of the 14th National People's Congress, calling on Hong Kong and Macau to strengthen governance and leverage their unique positions to serve as vital links between China and the international community. He reaffirmed Beijing's commitment to the "one country, two systems" principle, but notably omitted the phrase "fully, accurately, and unswervingly" used in previous reports, suggesting a potential shift in emphasis towards Beijing's interpretation of the framework. This signals Beijing's continued assertion of control over Hong Kong's political direction while encouraging its economic integration and international role.

- Global Mediation Summit Highlights Hong Kong's Role

From May 7 to May 8, 2026, Hong Kong hosted the Global Mediation Summit at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, organized by the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed). Chief Executive John Lee Ka-chiu stated Hong Kong's commitment and strong positioning to become a global mediation capital, emphasizing its advantages under the "one country, two systems" framework. The summit, attended by over 400 leaders and professionals from 48 countries, reinforced Hong Kong's strategic alignment with China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-30) to become a regional hub for legal and dispute resolution services.

- Europe Day Reception in Hong Kong

On May 8, 2026, the EU Office to Hong Kong and Macao hosted its annual Europe Day reception in the Maritime Museum. This event, attended by over 200 VIPs from government, business, civil society, and diplomatic missions, served as a platform to celebrate peace and unity in Europe and to foster relations with Hong Kong and Macao. It underscores ongoing diplomatic and economic ties between Hong Kong and the European Union, despite broader geopolitical tensions.

- Continued Implementation of National Security Law Amendments

The period saw the ongoing implications of revised implementation rules under Article 43 of the National Security Law (NSL), which came into effect on March 23, 2026. These amendments empower Hong Kong police to compel individuals, including U.S. citizens and those transiting through Hong Kong International Airport, to provide passwords or decryption assistance for electronic devices in national security investigations. Refusal is now a criminal offense, punishable by a fine of up to HK\$100,000 and one year in prison. This significantly expands law enforcement's digital surveillance capabilities and has drawn international concern regarding privacy and human rights.

- U.S. Criticism and Hong Kong's Rebuttal on National Security

The April 17, 2026, release of the U.S. Department of State's "2026 Hong Kong Policy Act Report" continued to generate diplomatic friction. The report criticized the NSL and the 2024 Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), alleging degradation of Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms. In response, Beijing and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government issued strong rebuttals, condemning the report as biased interference in China's internal affairs and asserting that national security laws are essential for stability and prosperity.

- Enhanced Cybersecurity Framework for Critical Infrastructure

Hong Kong's Protection of Critical Infrastructures (Computer Systems) Ordinance, which took effect on January 1, 2026, continued to be a focus for cybersecurity efforts. This legislation mandates enhanced cybersecurity standards for providers of essential services across eight critical sectors, including energy, finance, and healthcare. The establishment of a Commissioner of Critical Infrastructure (Computer-system Security) office is aimed at overseeing and enforcing this new regime, reflecting a proactive approach to protecting vital digital assets against rising cyber threats.

- Counter Cyber and Physical Terrorism Joint Exercise

On April 16, 2026, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), in collaboration with INTERPOL, other police forces, and critical infrastructure operators, conducted the "Counter Cyber and Physical Terrorism Joint Exercise 2026," codenamed "STEALTHNET". This exercise aimed to enhance counter-terrorism preparedness across various sectors and strengthen readiness for potential terrorist activities and future large-scale

international events, indicating a focus on both cyber and physical threats.

- Ongoing Cybersecurity Awareness Initiatives

Throughout the period of April to August 2026, Hong Kong is running several cybersecurity awareness initiatives, including the Cybersecurity Staff Awareness Recognition Scheme 2026/27 and the HKCT × HKtag SHIELDtag Cybersecurity Challenge 2026 for secondary school students. These programs aim to strengthen cyber security and enhance staff and public awareness, particularly within the academic community, to build overall computer system resilience against cyberattacks.

- Hong Kong's Role in Regional Supply Chain Restructuring

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po stated on April 27, 2026, that the ongoing restructuring of global geopolitics is not a threat but a catalyst for Hong Kong's evolution as a major trade center. He emphasized Hong Kong's unique value as a "super-connector" in bridging different economies and markets as global supply chains become more regionalized. This highlights Hong Kong's strategy to adapt to changing global economic dynamics and maintain its relevance.

- Deepening Ties with the Middle East

On March 25, 2026, Financial Secretary Paul Chan reiterated Hong Kong's commitment to strengthening collaboration with the Middle East, despite geopolitical risks, noting "ambitious plans" from Saudi Arabia and Qatar to invest in non-oil sectors. He cited a planned US\$1 billion co-investment fund between Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund to help Hong Kong and Greater Bay Area firms expand into the Middle East. This indicates a strategic diversification of economic partnerships.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Hong Kong's security developments during this period are deeply intertwined with broader geopolitical shifts, particularly the evolving relationship between China and major Western powers. Premier Li Qiang's recent remarks, while affirming "one country, two systems," signaled Beijing's continued emphasis on strengthening governance and integrating Hong Kong more closely into the national development framework. This reinforces the narrative of Hong Kong's role as a "super-connector" and "super value-adder" for China, as articulated by Chief Executive John Lee and Financial Secretary Paul Chan, aiming to leverage its unique position to bridge Chinese and Western cultures and markets.

The ongoing implementation of the National Security Law (NSL) and the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance (SNSO), particularly the expanded police powers over

electronic devices, continues to be a significant point of contention with the United States and other Western nations. The U.S. Department of State's "2026 Hong Kong Policy Act Report" and subsequent rebuttals from Beijing and Hong Kong officials underscore the deep ideological divide and the U.S.'s sustained criticism of what it perceives as an erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy. This diplomatic friction contributes to a broader regional dynamic where the U.S. and its allies express concerns over human rights and rule of law in Hong Kong, while China views such criticisms as interference in its internal affairs.

Despite these tensions, Hong Kong actively seeks to maintain and expand its diplomatic and economic ties. The hosting of the Global Mediation Summit and the Europe Day reception in early May demonstrate efforts to position Hong Kong as an international hub for dispute resolution and to foster relations with the European Union. The EU's continued openness to capital from Hong Kong and mainland China, even amidst its "de-risking" strategy in certain sectors, suggests a pragmatic approach to economic engagement, viewing Hong Kong as a "bridge" to Asia. These efforts aim to mitigate the impact of geopolitical competition and reinforce Hong Kong's international standing, even as its internal governance aligns more closely with Beijing's national security imperatives.

Military and Defense Analysis

Hong Kong's defense is the responsibility of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) garrison stationed in the Special Administrative Region, and as such, Hong Kong does not maintain its own independent military force or engage in defense acquisitions. During the period of May 1-8, 2026, there were no specific reports of PLA military activities or exercises directly within Hong Kong. The broader military news from March 2026 regarding the PLA's new artificial intelligence-based mission assignment system for aerial tankers reflects China's ongoing military modernization efforts, but this is a national development rather than a specific Hong Kong defense posture change.

The focus of security in Hong Kong remains predominantly on internal security, law enforcement, and cybersecurity, rather than conventional military defense. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) plays a central role in maintaining order and enforcing national security legislation. The "Counter Cyber and Physical Terrorism Joint Exercise 2026" ("STEALTHNET"), conducted by the HKPF in April 2026 with international partners, highlights a focus on enhancing preparedness against both cyber and physical terrorism threats, which falls under the purview of internal security and law enforcement rather than traditional military defense. This indicates a capability development in specialized security operations rather than a shift in military force posture or defense spending by Hong Kong itself.

Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months):

In the immediate future, Hong Kong will likely continue to solidify its national security framework. The full implications and enforcement of the recently amended National Security Law rules, particularly regarding digital access, will likely become more apparent through legal cases and public responses. We can expect continued diplomatic exchanges and potential friction with Western nations, especially the U.S., over human rights and autonomy concerns, as evidenced by the "2026 Hong Kong Policy Act Report" and subsequent rebuttals. Economically, Hong Kong will push its role as a "super-connector" and a hub for dispute resolution, leveraging events like the Global Mediation Summit to attract international business and investment, particularly from the Middle East and the EU. Cybersecurity initiatives, including awareness campaigns and critical infrastructure protection, will remain a high priority.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas:

A critical flashpoint remains the application of national security laws, particularly the expanded powers of law enforcement over electronic devices and the potential for extraterritorial application, which could impact international business and travel to Hong Kong. The ongoing legal proceedings against pro-democracy figures and activists will continue to draw international attention and criticism. Any further tightening of information control or restrictions on freedoms could exacerbate tensions with democratic nations. The broader U.S.-China geopolitical competition will continue to cast a shadow, with Hong Kong often becoming a focal point for disagreements over values and influence. While not directly military, the potential for economic sanctions or retaliatory measures from Western countries could impact Hong Kong's financial stability and international standing.

Indicators to monitor:

Key indicators to monitor include the frequency and nature of arrests or prosecutions under the NSL and SNSO, especially those involving foreign nationals or digital evidence. Statements and actions from the U.S. and EU regarding Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights will be crucial. The success of Hong Kong's initiatives to attract international business and investment, particularly from non-Western economies, will indicate its ability to adapt to geopolitical shifts. Furthermore, developments in cybersecurity incidents and the effectiveness of the new critical infrastructure protection ordinance will be important for assessing the city's resilience. The rhetoric from Beijing regarding "one country, two systems" and Hong Kong's integration into national development should also be closely watched for any further shifts in emphasis.

Strategic recommendations:

For businesses and individuals operating in or interacting with Hong Kong, it is recommended to conduct thorough legal due diligence regarding the evolving national security legislation, especially concerning data privacy and digital device access. Companies should review their cybersecurity protocols in light of the new critical infrastructure ordinance. Diplomatic entities should continue to engage with Hong Kong on issues of mutual interest while clearly articulating concerns regarding human rights and rule of law. Hong Kong, in turn, should strive for greater transparency in the application of its security laws and continue to highlight its unique economic and legal advantages to maintain international confidence and its role as a global financial and trade center. Diversifying economic partnerships, particularly with emerging markets and the Middle East, could help mitigate risks associated with U.S.-China tensions.

Structured Assessment

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## ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

### Source: HK Free Press

- [US President Donald Trump heads for Xi summit overshadowed by Iran war](#) (2026-05-08 05:37)

US President Donald Trump heads for a superpower summit with Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping next week hoping the Iran war will not spoil the mood in Beijing. Trump will be expecting a lavish welcome at the high-stakes meeting, which he delayed in March because of the Middle East conflict. But the war will still loom [...]

- [Hong Kong urged to step up rodent checks despite no local residents on hantavirus-hit cruise ship](#) (2026-05-08 04:43)

An infectious disease specialist has called on Hong Kong authorities to step up rodent checks, despite confirmation that no residents from the city were on board the hantavirus-hit cruise ship in the Atlantic Ocean. Speaking on an RTHK programme on Friday, physician and infectious disease specialist Dr Joseph Tsang said the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation [...]

- [2 UK-Chinese dual nationals convicted of spying on Hong Kong dissidents](#) (2026-05-08 02:32)

A retired Hong Kong policeman and a former UK Border Force official were convicted by a London jury Thursday of conducting “shadow policing” on British soil on behalf of China. Ex-police superintendent Bill Yuen, 65, and Peter Wai, 38 — both dual Chinese-British nationals — were found guilty of assisting a foreign intelligence service under [...]

- [Hong Kong restaurants can apply for dog-friendly permits from May 18](#) (2026-05-07 23:30)

Hong Kong restaurants with an area larger than 20 square metres can start applying for licences to allow dogs in their premises from May 18, the government has announced. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said in a statement on Thursday that it would accept applications from May 18 to June 8. The department is [...]

- [Hong Kong independent bookshop fined HK\\$6K for holding stand-up comedy show without licence](#) (2026-05-07 12:32)

Hong Kong independent bookshop Book Punch and its owner have been fined HK\$6,000 after holding a stand-up comedy show without an entertainment licence – the second time they have been penalised within a month. Pong Yat-ming and his firm, Active Experiential Learning Company, which owns Book Punch, were fined HK\$3,000 each on Monday afternoon after [...]

- [China hands suspended death sentences to 2 ex-defence ministers for graft, state media report](#) (2026-05-07 12:27)

A Chinese military court handed suspended death sentences on Thursday to two former defence ministers for corruption, state media said. They are the harshest sentences that Beijing has slapped on high-ranking military officials as part of President Xi Jinping's sweeping anti-corruption campaign. Wei Fenghe and Li Shangfu's sentences will be "commuted to life imprisonment" after a [...]

- [Tai Po fire: High-risk renovation project classified as minor works with no regular inspections, inquiry hears](#) (2026-05-07 08:19)

A maintenance project at the fire-hit Wang Fuk Court should have been classified as high risk, but was instead categorised as minor works requiring no regular inspections, a government surveyor has told a public inquiry. Nick Yung, a senior maintenance surveyor at the Housing Bureau's Independent Checking Unit (ICU), gave his testimony before an independent [...]

- [Record no. of nominations for HKFP at this year's prestigious SOPA journalism awards](#) (2026-05-07 08:08)

Hong Kong Free Press journalism has been nominated for three prestigious Society of Publishers in Asia (SOPA) Awards – a new record for the newspaper. HKFP photojournalist Kyle Lam's five shots of the Tai Po fire tragedy were nominated in the Excellence in Photography category. In the Carlos Tejada Award for Excellence in Investigative Reporting category, HKFP's [...]

- [Japan fires missiles during drills, drawing China rebuke](#) (2026-05-07 05:54)

Japan fired surface-to-ship missiles and sank an old warship in waters between the Philippines and Taiwan as part of major military exercises that include US forces, angering China. Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi has accelerated Japan's shift towards a more muscular defence policy, further casting off — with US encouragement — Tokyo's pacifist stance in place [...]

- [Hong Kong lawmaker Judy Chan receives lowest-level sanction from Legislative Council over driving offence](#) (2026-05-07 05:16)

Hong Kong's lawmaker Judy Chan has received a written warning from the Legislative Council (LegCo) over her January traffic offence, the lowest-level sanction under a new code of conduct introduced earlier this year. The Legislative Council Supervisory Committee submitted a report to LegCo on Wednesday detailing its investigation into a complaint relating to Chan's driving. [...]

- [Tai Po fire probe: Senior surveyor admits gov't unit gave advance notice before site inspections](#) (2026-05-06 23:30)

A senior surveyor at a government inspection unit has admitted alerting the renovation consultant ahead of site checks at Wang Fuk Court before the estate went up in flames, a public

inquiry has heard. Victor Dawes, lead counsel to the independent committee investigating the fatal fire, questioned Andy Ku, a senior maintenance surveyor at the [...]

- [Beijing to play ‘greater role’ in ending Mideast fighting, Chinese FM says](#) (2026-05-06 10:31)

China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Beijing would play a “greater role” in ending hostilities in the Middle East during talks with his Iranian counterpart on Wednesday, a week before US President Donald Trump is due to meet Xi Jinping. China is a key customer for Iranian oil, defying sanctions imposed by the United States, [...]

- [Tai Po fire survivors petition for homeowners’ meeting after collecting 247 handwritten signatures](#) (2026-05-06 07:25)

A group of Tai Po fire survivors have petitioned their housing estate’s administrator to hold a general meeting with homeowners to discuss long-term resettlement and related financial matters after collecting 247 handwritten signatures. The petition organisers issued a media statement on Tuesday, saying that they had delivered the petition and the handwritten signatures to Hop [...]

- [Rubio warns against ‘destabilizing’ acts on Taiwan before Trump’s China visit](#) (2026-05-06 04:54)

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio warned Tuesday against any “destabilizing” actions on Taiwan before a trip to China by President Donald Trump and called on Beijing also to raise pressure on Iran. Trump is scheduled to pay the first visit of his second term to China next week, a trip he delayed after he [...]

- [7 arrested for alleged corruption in building maintenance projects](#) (2026-05-06 04:41)

Hong Kong’s anti-graft watchdog has arrested seven people for alleged corruption in building maintenance projects, including the owner of a contractor firm who concealed his control over a company tasked with overseeing tendering. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) said in a statement on Tuesday that it arrested five men and two women, aged from [...]

- [Trans alum sues former secondary school over ‘discriminatory’ hair policies](#) (2026-05-05 23:30)

A transgender alum has sued her former secondary school over “discriminatory” policies that barred her from having long hair. Oscar Fung, who studied at Lung Kung World Federation School Limited (LKWFSL) Lau Wong Fat Secondary School in Tai Kok Tsui from 2019 to 2025, filed a writ in the District Court on Thursday, local media [...]

- [Hong Kong hiker dies, another survives after rescue from Japanese peak](#) (2026-05-05 12:34)

One Hong Kong hiker has died, and another one survived after being rescued from a Japanese mountain, according to media reports. Japanese TV Chubu-Nippon Broadcasting (CBC) reported on Tuesday afternoon that two men, believed to be Chinese nationals, were stranded on Mount Okuhotaka, Japan's third-highest peak, resulting in one fatality. According to CBC, Japanese police [...]

- [China fireworks factory blast kills 26, injures 61](#) (2026-05-05 08:58)

The death toll from a giant explosion at a fireworks factory in central China rose to 26, with 61 more injured, officials said Tuesday. The explosion occurred at around 4:43 pm on Monday at the Liuyang Huasheng Fireworks Manufacturing and Display Company in Liuyang, Hunan province, state broadcaster CCTV reported. Following the blast, all fireworks [...]

- [Taiwan president says island has 'right to engage with the world'](#) (2026-05-05 07:45)

By Joy Chiang Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said Tuesday the democratic island has the "right to engage with the world", after he returned from a trip to Africa that Taipei has accused Beijing of trying to derail. Taiwan said China applied "intense pressure" to Seychelles, Mauritius and Madagascar to revoke overflight permits for Lai's original [...]

- [Hong Kong proposes tighter claw machine regulations over addiction fears](#) (2026-05-05 07:02)

Hong Kong authorities have proposed tightening the regulation of claw machine shops by implementing a licensing regime to curb addiction risks. The Home and Youth Affairs Bureau's proposal, included in a document submitted to the Legislative Council (LegCo) on Monday, comes as claw machine shops proliferate in the city as a low-maintenance business opportunity. "Since [...]

- [Hong Kong gov't collects record high tax revenue of HK\\$458 billion, boosted by stamp duty](#) (2026-05-05 05:50)

The Inland Revenue Department (IRD) has announced that tax revenue jumped by 22 per cent in the 2025-26 fiscal year, hitting a record high of HK\$458.3 billion. Unveiling the provisional tax figures at a press conference on Monday, Benjamin Chan, commissioner of Inland Revenue, attributed the rise partly to rallies in the property and stock [...]

- [China's Wu Yize wins World Snooker Championship for first time in dramatic finish](#) (2026-05-05 04:17)

China's Wu Yize won the World Snooker Championship for the first time with a dramatic 18-17 victory over Shaun Murphy in the final on Monday. Wu held his nerve to seal his thrilling triumph in a tense last frame shoot-out at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre. The 22-year-old is the second Chinese player to win the world [...]

- [Former Hong Kong police officer appointed to lead government's media relations department](#) (2026-05-04 23:30)

A former police officer who led daily press briefings during the 2019 protests and unrest has been appointed to a top post leading the Hong Kong government's media relations department. Authorities announced on Monday that John Tse would begin the role as head of the Information Services Department (ISD) on Tuesday. Tse was previously appointed [...]

- [HKFP Lens: Hundreds flock to Ham Tin Beach in Sai Kung during Labour Day Golden Week holiday](#) (2026-05-04 13:01)

Hundreds of people descended on Ham Tin Beach in Sai Kung on Saturday, the second day of the Labour Day Golden Week holiday in mainland China. The tranquil spot is one of the many attractions in Hong Kong that have gained popularity on mainland Chinese social media platforms in recent months, prompting concerns about overtourism [...]

- [China's Wu seizes lead in World Snooker Championship final against Murphy](#) (2026-05-04 12:40)

China's Wu Yize is on track to win the World Snooker Championship after building a 10-7 lead against Shaun Murphy in the final on Sunday. The 22-year-old's superb long potting and composed break-building ensured he would go into Monday's deciding sessions in pole position to lift the trophy for the first time. Wu's clearance of [...]

- [Hong Kong press union faces HK\\$730K prepaid tax demand, accuses tax office of misallocating public resources](#) (2026-05-04 12:10)

The Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) has said it was ordered to pay HK\$730,000 in provisional taxes within days and has accused the city's tax authorities of misallocating public resources with audits on independent media. HKJA chairperson Selina Cheng held a press conference on Monday morning – ahead of an Inland Revenue Department (IRD) press [...]

- [Sweden arrests Chinese captain of suspected Russia 'shadow fleet' ship](#) (2026-05-04 09:53)

The Chinese captain of a ship that Sweden boarded this weekend over suspicions it belonged to Russia's "shadow fleet" has been arrested, the Swedish prosecution authority said on Monday. Sweden's coast guard on Sunday boarded the 182-metre (597-foot) Jin Hui, suspected of sailing under a false Syrian flag. It was the latest of several boardings [...]

- [Over 60% of homeless unfamiliar with medical waiver applications amid higher hospital fees, NGO survey finds](#) (2026-05-04 05:09)

Over 60 per cent of Hong Kong's homeless are unfamiliar with how to apply for medical waivers, and nearly three-fifths are reducing medical visits due to increased public hospital fees, an NGO has found. ImpactHK, which serves the city's homeless, surveyed 120 people between February and March to understand how medical fee reforms were affecting [...]

- [Hong Kong gov' t and Reporters Without Borders trade barbs over press freedom ranking](#) (2026-05-04 03:42)

The Hong Kong government and legislature have condemned Reporters Without Borders (RSF) after the city was ranked low in the NGO' s annual press freedom index. They also hit out after German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) awarded jailed media tycoon and Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai a press freedom prize. In RSF' s 2026 global press [...]

- [Tourists flock to Hong Kong countryside as city records 600,000 arrivals in first 2 days of Golden Week](#) (2026-05-03 23:30)

Hong Kong' s countryside has seen an influx of tourists with the start of the Labour Day Golden Week in mainland China, recording over 600,000 arrivals in the first two days of the five-day-long holiday. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said on Saturday that ecological hotspots were crowded on Friday, the first day of [...]

- [Sri Lanka arrests 37 Chinese nationals at suspected scam centre: police](#) (2026-05-03 15:22)

Sri Lankan police have arrested 37 Chinese nationals suspected of running a cyberscam centre in the capital Colombo, a spokesman said on Sunday, in the latest crackdown on foreign-run online fraud. The suspects, aged between 23 and 44 and including one woman, were arrested after a tip-off, the police spokesman said. “They had entered the [...]

- [Taiwan leader makes delayed visit to Eswatini after China objections](#) (2026-05-03 02:51)

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te on Saturday announced his arrival in Eswatini — Taipei' s only diplomatic ally in Africa — after an earlier trip was cancelled when several countries revoked overflight permits. Those various African nations withdrew overflight permission following “intense pressure” from Beijing, one of Lai' s closest advisers said at the time, forcing cancellation of [...]

- [Press Freedom Day 2026: 25 reasons to support HKFP' s independent newsroom](#) (2026-05-03 02:00)

As we mark Sunday' s UN World Press Freedom Day, ahead of HKFP' s 11th anniversary next month, our team of seven are soldiering on. We remain on the ground despite unprecedented political and financial pressure last year, including threats and harassment, scrutiny from multiple government departments, pressure on our corporate partners, and false complaints to the authorities. [...]

- [Chinese swimmer Sun Yang reports cyberbullying to police](#) (2026-05-02 04:39)

Three-time Chinese Olympic champion swimmer Sun Yang filed a police report after being subjected to “large-scale” cyberbullying, his team said Friday. Sun, 34, returned to competition in 2024 after a four-year ban for smashing vials of blood during a 2018 doping test, the circumstances of which he still disputes. His team said Friday that false [...]

- [‘Clearly me’ : Chinese AI drama accused of stealing faces](#) (2026-05-02 02:00)

By Sophia Xu and Purple Romero Christine Li is a model and influencer, but not an actor, so when she saw herself playing a cruel character in a Chinese microdrama she felt bewildered, then angry and afraid. The 26-year-old is one of two people who told AFP their likenesses were cast without consent in the [...]

- [China urges US to preserve ‘stability’ in ties, warns Taiwan is ‘risk point’](#) (2026-05-01 05:16)

China’s foreign minister on Thursday urged the United States to maintain “stability” between the two powers and warned that Taiwan posed the biggest risk, weeks before President Donald Trump visits Beijing. In a call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Beijing and Washington should “safeguard the hard-won stability” [...]

- [Taiwan economy grows at fastest pace since 1987](#) (2026-05-01 02:00)

Taiwan’s economy expanded at its fastest pace in nearly 39 years thanks to robust demand for artificial intelligence technology, data showed Thursday, despite concerns over the Middle East crisis. The island is a global powerhouse in the manufacturing of semiconductor chips, which power AI, and its economy has been growing at a fast clip in [...]

- [HKFP Lens: ‘Bodies in Motion, Bodies at Rest’ – Gareth Brown’s 19 years of dance photography](#) (2026-05-01 01:00)

Hong Kong photographer Gareth Brown has spent the past 19 years working on a personal project called “Bodies in Motion, Bodies at Rest” – using dance to showcase the city’s unique spots. For what he called a “very personal passion project,” he photographed ballerinas, contemporary and traditional dancers, as well as artistic swimmers and aerialists, [...]

- [‘Not good enough’ : Key points from gov’t departments’ testimony at Tai Po fire inquiry](#) (2026-05-01 00:00)

In the second half of April, the public inquiry into the deadly Tai Po blaze heard from multiple government departments about authorities’ oversight during a major renovation at Wang Fuk Court before the tragedy unfolded. In the first 10 days of the hearings, residents gave damning testimony of how their complaints about potential fire hazards [...]

## Source: RTHK English News

- [HK 'well positioned to become global mediation centre'](#) (2026-05-08 04:46)

Chief Executive John Lee on Friday said Hong Kong is striving to become an international mediation centre at a time when rising volatility in global affairs is making it "imperative" for more peaceful resolutions to be reached. The remarks came as he delivered a speech at the

Global Mediation Summit, hosted by the International Organisation for Mediation (IOMed) in Wan Chai. Lee noted that more states had been joining IOMed, the Hong Kong-based dispute resolution body, since its inauguration last year. "I'm pleased to note that since last October's inauguration ceremony, the number of signatory states has climbed from 37 to 41, while the number of contracting states has gone from eight to 13," he told participants. "Hong Kong is committed to becoming a global mediation capital. And we are well positioned to do this. Hong Kong is the only common law jurisdiction in China, our country. And now, as IOMed's headquarters, Hong Kong is at the very heart of global dispute resolution and its promising future." Lee also said the country's 15th Five-Year Plan offers strong backing for IOMed and that the city welcomes governments, companies and investors to make use of the platform to settle disputes. The summit is being attended by some 400 leaders, policymakers and industry professionals from 48 countries and regions, with panels covering cross-cultural global mediation, financial and investment dispute mediation. The event also came as part of the five-day Mediation Week 2026, which opened on Monday with seminars on disputes related to schools, sports, the elderly and neighbourhoods. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Three Mideast banks launching, expanding ops in HK](#) (2026-05-08 04:33)

The UAE's top lender and two other Middle Eastern banks are launching or expanding operations in Hong Kong, as they target better China connectivity and foreign business growth amid uncertainty in the domestic economic outlook. First Abu Dhabi Bank, the No. 1 lender by assets in the United Arab Emirates, plans to roughly double its office space in Hong Kong, said two sources familiar with the matter. Mashreq Bank, the UAE's fifth-largest, will relocate staff to a new office in Central in the third quarter, it said in a statement in response to a query. The growing presence of the Middle Eastern financial institutions in Hong Kong comes against the backdrop of the US-Israeli war on Iran that has put Gulf countries centre stage by disrupting their oil supplies. Financial industry sources said the Middle Eastern banks' moves were tied to their efforts to internationalise and strengthen links with China, as cross-border trade and investment between the two regions remain strong. "Our growth in Hong Kong is firmly anchored in our ability to provide banking solutions facilitating the increasing trade and investment flows between Greater China and MENA," said Chermaine Lai, country head at Mashreq Bank Hong Kong. Oman's Sohar International Bank announced in April it has received approval from the Hong Kong Monetary Authority to establish a representative office, marking its foray into an international market for the first time. First Abu Dhabi Bank and Sohar International did not respond to requests for comment. The sources spoke on the condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media. Mashreq, whose new office is double the size of its current premises, said the bank sees Hong Kong as a "significant offshore hub for China-related financing activity". Sohar International expects to kick off its business in the city in the second half, according to a person with direct knowledge of the matter. The three Gulf banks will operate from Cheung Kong Centre II, an office tower in Central, the sources said. Sam Gourlay, property consultancy JLL's head of office leasing advisory in Hong Kong, said the recent Middle East conflict may have, in some cases, prompted banks to fast-track their

strategic investment plans in the city. Hong Kong serves as a gateway for moving capital from and into the mainland, and most global banks have their regional hubs in the city, which offers a host of services – from corporate banking to wealth management. The HKMA has been actively promoting Hong Kong's financial system and market advantages to the Middle Eastern countries over the past few years, including via bilateral meetings with central banks in the Middle East, a spokesperson said. Gulf lenders have been expanding outside of their home turf in the Middle East and beyond in recent years as they look to tap new markets and boost trade and investment by opening commercial branches or through mergers. The banking services offered by First Abu Dhabi Bank, Mashreq Bank and Sohar International include corporate and investment banking, trade finance, transaction banking, treasury services and wealth management. First Abu Dhabi Bank has offices in locations including Hong Kong, Shanghai and Singapore, and last year it joined China's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System as a direct participant amid strengthening ties between the UAE and China. Mashreq has also been growing in Asia, particularly in India and in Pakistan, where its digital bank Mashreq NEO became fully operational late last year, while Sohar maintains a more limited international footprint. Five Middle Eastern lenders currently have a banking presence in Hong Kong, out of about 200 banks registered with HKMA, according to data from the city's de facto central bank. Sohar International said in a LinkedIn post last month that opening a Hong Kong office reflects the bank's "endeavours to internationalise its business" and will support its clients who do business in the wider Asian market. (Reuters) Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HA regularises telehealth scheme for bowel condition](#) (2026-05-07 13:35)

The Hospital Authority on Thursday announced it has regularised a Princess Margaret Hospital scheme that remotely monitors patients suffering from inflammatory stomach flu. Patients taking part in the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Smart Care Telehealth Programme are required to complete an e-survey that consists of up to six questions in the HA GO app every four weeks or when necessary. A survey score of under 3.6 means that a patient's condition is well controlled, and those above that number means a patient needs medical care. Nurses would regularly review the results and follow up individually as required. Patients needing care who are in a stable condition can choose to hold a telehealth meeting with doctors. They can also choose whether to use a medication delivery service or pick up their pills in person. Edmund Wu, associate consultant for medicine and geriatrics at Princess Margaret Hospital said the scheme provides convenience to patients. "We have found that 92 percent of patients like this new smart care telehealth model and 81 percent of them appreciate the flexibility of the follow-up arrangement, including reducing follow-up frequency," he added. The scheme will be discussed at the upcoming Hospital Authority Convention 2026 to be held from May 11 to 13. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Man hurt when evading arrest over burglary: police](#) (2026-05-07 10:30)

Police said a man was injured when he allegedly tried to evade arrest over a burglary case. Officers on Thursday went to a unit on Mok Cheong Street in To Kwa Wan to investigate the case

in which three suitcases and 10 boxes of models were taken from another flat in the building earlier. Police said a 40-year-old man is suspected of attempting to escape by jumping out of the unit. He suffered injuries to his hands, legs and forehead and was sent to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for treatment. A 39-year-old woman was arrested in the police operation. Officers earlier arrested a 50-year-old woman in Yau Ma Tei in connection with the case. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Govt surveyor criticised for shifting blame at inquiry](#) (2026-05-07 09:43)

The chairman of the Wang Fuk Court fire inquiry on Thursday criticised a government surveyor, saying his explanations were unconvincing and appeared to shift blame. Justice David Lok made the remarks after senior maintenance surveyor Yung Siu-lun from the Housing Bureau's independent checking unit testified at the hearing. Yung is responsible for approving documents to ensure renovation works follow regulations. At the hearing, Yung said his Independent Checking Unit was not told that the Buildings Department had raised the inspection rate to 20 percent in its guidelines for projects like the one at Wang Fuk Court. Senior counsel Victor Dawes, who represents the inquiry, asked Yung if he was trying to shift responsibility to the Buildings Department instead of his own unit. Yung reiterated that if he had known earlier that the guidelines had been updated, he might have done an on-site inspection at Wang Fuk Court and discovered the unauthorised openings that allowed renovation workers to enter the building from the outer wall. In response, Justice Lok said Yung's explanations for many questions felt weak to the committee and came across as shifting blame on the Buildings Department. The inquiry earlier heard that unauthorised openings along staircases turned escape routes into death traps at the Tai Po residential estate when the deadly inferno broke out last November. Thick smoke poured through and many residents could not escape. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Pair jailed in HK\\$280m money laundering case](#) (2026-05-07 09:34)

The District Court on Thursday sent two women to 36 months and 58 months in jail each for money laundering. They were found guilty of bringing in a total of HK\$280 million in crime proceeds from the mainland on multiple occasions between 2018 and 2019. Authorities said this is the first such conviction since the Cross-boundary Movement of Physical Currency and Bearer Negotiable Instruments Ordinance took effect in 2018. The court heard the pair frequently transported a large quantity of cash to Hong Kong via boundary control points. Handing down the sentences, judge Lily Wong said the two women were not the masterminds of the case but they played a significant role nevertheless. The pair were arrested in 2019 but the trial did not open until 2023 because of the city's social unrest and the pandemic. The judge reduced the pair's sentences by six months each, citing the delay. Authorities welcomed the sentences, saying they will have a deterrent effect. Billy Au, investigator at the Customs' financial investigation bureau, said the jail terms reflected the severity of the offence. "The two defendants claimed that they brought cash to currency exchange stores in Hong Kong for third parties to exchange, or use it to invest in a cosmetics business," he said. "However, the evidence

they provided could not support their claims. Their explanations at the time of the arrest and their testimonies in court were contradictory." Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Protect youngsters from deep fake dangers'](#) (2026-05-07 08:49)

Lawmakers say there is a responsibility to educate young people on the dangers of deep fake technology while ensuring responsible use of electronic devices. This came as the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) held a conference on Thursday to discuss ways to prevent teenagers from getting addicted to their electronic devices. Speakers from universities and schools shared their insights on how students are exposed to electronic devices from an extremely young age — lowering attention spans and putting them at risk to cyberbullying and even suicide. Professor Annis Fung from the Department of Social and Behavioural Sciences of City University proposed forming government bureaus specific to internet safety. She also said platforms and schools need to take more responsibility in making sure students' exposure to internet content is controlled. Another issue is deep fake technology. DAB vice chair Holden Chow said regulation is of utmost importance. "I would say we have [a] responsibility to regulate these sorts of problems. At least if we could make an effort to have a whole set of laws to govern these sorts of deep fakes, that is something we should do." Chow said the next steps would be to reference legislation from other places and see what Hong Kong should do. "I'm pretty sure that having heard a lot of advice from these stakeholders ... we believe that we need to do something about it (uncontrolled internet usage amongst youngsters)." Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Staircase openings mistaken for broken windows'](#) (2026-05-07 06:40)

A senior Housing Bureau surveyor has told the Wang Fuk Court fire inquiry that he thought unauthorised openings in staircases at the estate were nothing more than broken windows. The inquiry earlier heard that unauthorised openings in staircases turned escape routes into death traps at the Tai Po residential estate when the deadly inferno broke out last November. Thick smoke poured through and many residents could not escape. The inquiry has also been told that unauthorised openings allowed renovation workers to enter the building from the outer wall. Senior maintenance surveyor Yung Siu-lun from the Housing Bureau, who was responsible for approving documents to ensure the works follow regulations, told Thursday's hearing that from the photos he'd seen, he thought the stairwell windows were simply damaged. The independent committee's senior counsel, Victor Dawes, challenged the explanation. He pointed to the photos showing openings on every five floors of the stairwell, asking if it was possible that windows were damaged on every five floors. Dawes said if Yung, as a professional, could not spot the problem, then residents could not be expected to notice it either. Yung replied that he would have noticed the issue if he had gone to the site in person. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Estranged couple found dead in murder-suicide case'](#) (2026-05-07 06:13)

Police have classified as murder-suicide the death of a 77-year-old man and his estranged 71-year-old wife whose bodies were found at a public housing estate in Sau Mau Ping. Speaking

in a press briefing, assistant district commander of Sau Mau Ping, Terry Wan, said officers went to a flat at Po Tat Estate on Wednesday afternoon after they were alerted by the man's brother. Police found the man hanging in the kitchen and the body of the woman in the bedroom. She suffered injuries to her face, neck and hands. The couple were married in 1980. Officers said their relationship had strained after their son, who had suffered from depression, took his own life in 2018. Wan said the woman filed for divorce in 2024 and a temporary order was issued the following year under which the couple were to live separately for a year. Officers added the man recently returned from the mainland to Hong Kong, and the woman helped him find accommodation. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['HK gets a boost from the success of Chinese snooker'](#) (2026-05-07 04:59)

Wayne Griffiths, head coach of billiard sports at the Hong Kong Sports Institute, said the recent rise in Chinese snooker talent would definitely help attract more young players to the sport. His remarks came after China's Wu Yize won at the World Snooker Championship for the first time on Monday, becoming the second Chinese player and second youngest player to win the world title after Zhao Xintong beat Mark Williams to make history as the first Asian to lift the trophy last year. He told RTHK's Backchat programme on Thursday that the past two years had been "fantastic times for Chinese snooker", with two Chinese snooker players winning the World Snooker Championship in two consecutive years, noting that Hong Kong would also benefit from the success of Chinese snooker. "We are getting the trickle down effect here in Hong Kong, China as well, because any success in the region obviously invokes more interest in other people ... and this gives us fantastic opportunities to find talent for the next generation, the new Marco Fu, the next Ng On-ye," he said. He said the results will also draw more young players to the sport after witnessing the recent success of Chinese snooker players. "The recent results for sure will have a massive effect for us trying to attract players to the sport because we're competing with golf, tennis, soccer, equestrian ... we've got to try to catch these young players, get them interested in the sport," he said. He pointed out that the government's support had been excellent, with funding and resources available for youth development programmes. The government also relaxed the rules last year for snooker and billiard halls, including lowering the minimum age of entry from 16 to eight years old and extending the permitted stay for young patrons until 11pm. Children are also allowed to enter approved establishments as early as 7am and rules prohibiting entry for those wearing school uniforms were lifted. He added the future of snooker in Hong Kong was promising and hoped the city could attract some of the sport's biggest stars to future events. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [FEHD makes use of AI to pinpoint dripping aircons](#) (2026-05-07 04:22)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department on Thursday said a new system equipped with AI functions will boost its efficiency in tackling dripping air conditioners. It aims to tackle hundreds of blackspots across the city between May and September, including those with more serious dripping problems or those that cause nuisance to people waiting for public transport. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, assistant director of operations Wan Chi-shun said as

the peak usually occurs at night, 70 percent of the more than 300 officers in charge of dripping air conditioners will be deployed to handle the issue at the time, while the rest will carry out enforcement work in the morning. He said the third-generation investigation system comes with an infrared night-vision function and can observe dripping issues up to 40 floors high. "The third-generation is equipped with AI-image recognition technology. It can automatically help staff pinpoint the location and source of the dripping water," he said. "This allows them to identify the spot sooner. In the past, without this technology, staff had to rely on the naked eye." Before the system was available, officers handled about 3,000 cases during the whole of 2023, Wan said, and the figure almost tripled to 8,600 cases when the second-generation system was in use last year. The department expects to handle up to 500 air conditioner dripping blackspots this year, he added. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Motorcyclist dies in early-morning crash in Kwun Tong](#) (2026-05-07 01:02)

Police are investigating a fatal traffic accident in Kwun Tong in which a 58-year-old man died after his motorcycle hit the kerb near the Kowloon entrance to the Eastern Harbour Crossing. Police said the accident happened just before 1 am Thursday on Lei Yuen Mun Road. Officers said the motorcycle reportedly went out of control and rammed into the left side kerb while travelling along Eastern Harbour Crossing towards Hong Kong, before skidding forward and flipped on its side. The man, suffering head injuries, was rushed to United Christian Hospital in an unconscious state. He was certified dead later. Edited by Raymond Yeung

- [Hong Kong records 1.19m visitors over Golden Week](#) (2026-05-06 13:33)

Hong Kong welcomed about 1.19 million visitors over the Labour Day Golden Week, marking a rise of eight percent compared to the same holiday a year ago. Arrivals from the mainland increased 10 percent to about 1.01 million during the May 1-5 period, according to figures released by the Immigration Department on Wednesday. Most of them opted to travel to the SAR via the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point, followed by the Express Rail Link West Kowloon checkpoint. Hotel occupancy rates reached 90 percent, which was slightly higher than last year, despite a 10 percent rise in room prices compared to long holidays in the past. Chief Secretary Eric Chan said in a statement that the surge in visitor arrivals provided a boost for various sectors. "Representatives of some shopping malls indicated that consumption in various retail categories saw year-on-year double-digit increases," he said. Chan also noted that this generated "considerable economic benefits" for the catering sector. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Hop On to hold meetings to update Wang Fuk residents](#) (2026-05-06 13:05)

The management company appointed to oversee affairs at Wang Fuk Court following a deadly inferno announced on Wednesday it will hold two sessions later this month to update homeowners on the estate's situation. Hop On Management said the sessions, to be conducted online on May 12 and 20, will cover the financial situation of the owners' corporation, and arrangements for various refunds. They will also offer an assessment of the current condition and scope of repair works for the only block not affected by the fire. Hop On noted that no

votes will be held at the sessions, adding an owners' general meeting will be arranged if any issues require voting later. Up to two homeowners from each unit can attend either one of the meetings, and they have to register at least two days in advance. Those who successfully secure a spot will be notified by SMS up to two days after registration. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Beijing trip in the works for all 90 lawmakers in July](#) (2026-05-06 10:24)

Legislative Council President Starry Lee on Wednesday said preparations are being made for all 90 lawmakers to make a trip to Beijing in July, with part of the objective being to help them better understand the country's 15th Five-Year Plan. She said the trip would involve study as well as field trips and that announcements would be made when plans had become more concrete. Lee said it would be of a great help to Hong Kong if lawmakers could have the chance to learn in person about the country's latest developments, concrete arrangements regarding the latest five-year plan and national strategies. "I believe that will help lawmakers better assist the SAR government in aligning with the 15th Five-Year Plan," she said. "And I believe it will also help in formulating and pushing forward Hong Kong's first five-year plan, as well as implementing it." Lee also said that Legco had recently introduced a spokesperson mechanism not seen in previous legislative terms, adding the system permitted official responses to be set forth on various matters. "A spokesperson mechanism is common place in many organisations. Having such a system, I think, allows Legco to better respond to inquiries from the public, especially from [the press]," she said. Who the spokesperson is representing depends on what the issue is in each case, Lee said, adding that the media would still be able to ask individual lawmakers for their views. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Uzbek firms urged to use HK as springboard to mainland](#) (2026-05-06 09:39)

Chief Executive John Lee appealed to Uzbek businesses on Wednesday to use Hong Kong as a springboard to expand their operations into the mainland. He made the remarks at a business forum attended by Uzbekistan Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, who is leading a delegation of senior officials and business leaders here for an official visit. "For Uzbek enterprises here with us, if you are looking to tap into the vast Chinese market, Hong Kong is your ideal partner," Lee said. "Hong Kong speaks the language of international business. Our financial experts can help you raise capital. Our lawyers, accountants and arbitration specialists can guide you and your business every step of the way." Lee also said Hong Kong and Uzbekistan are building stronger government and business ties for good reasons. He stressed that the high-level visit "speaks volumes about the strength of the relations between Uzbekistan and China." Lee said he is confident that Hong Kong and Uzbekistan would build on their existing cooperation and explore more "mutually rewarding partnership" opportunities. The CE and Aripov also witnessed the exchange of bilateral agreements that had been signed by representatives from China and Uzbekistan on enhancing cooperation between the two countries. The bilateral agreements cover several strategic sectors, such as energy, agriculture, and air cargo. Earlier in the day, Lee and senior officials met Aripov at Government House to exchange views on further strengthening cooperation between the two places. Lee also welcomed more young people

from Uzbekistan to pursue further studies and develop their careers in Hong Kong, aiming to enhance people-to-people and cultural ties between the two places. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Officers make 27 arrests over illegal fuel operations](#) (2026-05-06 09:31)

Twenty-seven people have been arrested in a citywide joint operation targeting illicit fuel activities. During the operation in April, codenamed Knockout, police, customs and fire officers seized 15 vehicles and one speed boat. They also seized more than 21,000 litres of illicit fuel – including about 8,000 litres of petrol and 13,000 litres of diesel – with a total estimated value of about HK\$3.3 million. Among the arrestees, 10 allegedly operated illegal fuel stations and six were suspected of patronising such stations, with the rest being cross-boundary vehicle drivers and crew members. Divisional commander Lenon Cheung, from the Customs’ Revenue Crimes Investigation Bureau, said on Wednesday that the illicit fuel was mainly from the mainland, as fuel costs there are at least 50 percent cheaper than in Hong Kong. "Based on the information we have, the fixed illegal fuel stations were mainly located in remote and rural areas in the New Territories," he said. "Our investigation showed the customers patronised these illegal fuel stations [after learning about them] via online platforms or through recommendations from friends." Officers also found mobile illegal fuel stations in city centres including an outdoor car park in Kowloon Bay, which senior station officer Yeung Chun-wa from the Fire Services Department’ s Anti-illicit Fuelling Activities Task Force said criminals had used trucks as undercover. "These fuelling stations did not install fire service equipment that they were supposed to have, and it also lacked proper management," he said. "The outdoor car park is located next to a viaduct, and there are many residential and commercial buildings nearby. If there’ s a leakage, fire or even an explosion, it can bring extremely serious injuries and death, as well as property damage." Members of the public are urged not to patronise illegal fuel stations, as they face a criminal record and liability, as well as risk damage to their vehicles. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Advance notice wouldn't let managers hide violations'](#) (2026-05-06 08:51)

A senior Housing Bureau surveyor on Wednesday told the Wang Fuk Court fire inquiry that he did not think advance notice of inspections would give site managers a chance to hide violations. Senior maintenance surveyor Ku Siu-ping from the bureau's independent checking unit said he had inspected the estate 10 times, eight with “pre-booking” . He said an advance notice was needed because a supervisor must be there to explain how things work, so he believes there was a practical need. He disagreed that it would alert the site to hide violations. Senior counsel Victor Dawes questioned whether advance notice of inspections would make it impossible for inspectors to identify real problems. Dawes gave the example of the contractor rushing to order scaffolding nets that met the required standard just to pass the inspection. Ku responded that the scaffolding nets at Wang Fuk Court covered a large area. He said his team did not tell anyone in advance which spots would be checked, so there was no way for the contractor to know where to "tamper with". The inquiry previously saw a video of a scaffolding net being set on fire in a safety test. It did not stop burning after 10 seconds – someone had to

blow it out. Yet the net still passed the fire safety test. Ku explained that they did two more tests again, and both times the net did not catch fire. So he had no particular reason to suspect a problem at that time. He said in some cases, a net may catch fire because of environmental factors. He explained these were used nets, so they might have picked up other flammable materials from the construction site. That is why they usually do multiple tests to double check and they would not demand a full replacement just because a net catches fire once. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Yet another arrest made over 2020 killing in TST bar](#) (2026-05-06 08:29)

One more arrest has been made over a murder and wounding case in Tsim Sha Tsui nearly six years ago, police said on Wednesday. The bar fight on October 6, 2020, led to the death of a 36-year-old man and injuries for some people. Officers laid a holding charge of murder against the 28-year-old man, who was arrested in Tuen Mun, and the case was set to be mentioned at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts later on Wednesday. Prior to the latest arrest, 13 people had been nabbed between October 2020 and November 2022. Eight of them were charged while five people were released unconditionally following investigations. Investigations by the regional crime unit of Kowloon West are continuing. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Checks 'not regularly made' on major-renovation sites](#) (2026-05-06 07:31)

A senior Housing Bureau surveyor told an inquiry hearing on Wednesday on the deadly Wang Fuk Court fire that its officers did not regularly conduct inspection visits to sites where major-renovation work was being carried out – and that they mainly dealt with paperwork. This came after a slate of safety violations – including unauthorised openings in staircases, windows sealed with foam boards and usage of non-fire-retardant bamboo scaffolding netting – has since emerged as key factors in the rapid spread of the inferno that killed 168 people at the Tai Po residential estate last November. Senior maintenance surveyor Ku Siu-ping, from the bureau's independent checking unit, confirmed that these violations fell under the purview of his unit's supervisory responsibilities. However, he said the supervision system did not require regular or proactive inspections. Officers mainly carried out reviews of paperwork and mostly conducted site visits only when they had received a complaint, Ku added. Under the system, he said, they rely on engineering consultants to supervise contractors. Ku agreed there was no mechanism to check the reliability, honesty or quality of these consultants. The inquiry earlier heard that a registered inspector working for the project consultant died in July 2022. Ku told the inquiry he did not know the inspector had died until 2024, when he handled a complaint and tried to contact him. Ku said he then requested that the project consultant appoint another registered inspector. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Delicacies tourism a treat for visitors and eateries'](#) (2026-05-06 06:08)

Catering sector lawmaker Jonathan Leung on Wednesday called on the government to promote "delicacies tourism" as part of efforts to prop up Hong Kong's restaurants. Speaking on RTHK's "In The Chamber" programme, Leung also suggested authorities set up a dedicated fund and

cross-departmental team, to coordinate work on driving the industry's growth. The remarks came after the sector received a boost from the mainland's Golden Week holiday, with tens of thousands of tourists flocking to various areas of the SAR. But Leung said despite the short-term increase in revenues, the industry remains under pressure with rising logistics costs and economic headwinds brought about by the tensions in the Middle East. He urged authorities to organise more mega events that combine tourism activities with delicate cuisines, citing past successes such as the Wine & Dine Festival which drew huge crowds last year. "The elements of Hong Kong's catering industry are actually very different from those in the mainland, as we have seven Michelin-starred restaurants that are graded with three stars, and over 200 caterers recommended by Michelin, among which 77 were with one star. "So we have an abundant pool of unique, high-end, attractive restaurants," he said. "Also, we have cultivated our own Hong Kong food culture over the past years, and our cha chaan tengs or bing sutt are excellent with diverse dishes. All these are worth promoting to visitors," he added. Leung also said the city has " huge potential" to promote Muslim-friendly dining experiences so to attract high-value Muslim visitors, adding that travellers should be encouraged to explore cuisines in all 18 districts to mitigate over-crowding issues in tourist hotspots. When asked how the conflict in the Middle East has weighed on the industry, Leung pointed to rising logistics costs as many ingredients are sourced from the mainland and overseas. "Now we've already seen a notable rise in transportation costs, and it's a problem that can't be avoided anywhere in the world. "But perhaps the development of the Northern Metropolis in the future might help offer support on the logistics to transport more fresh ingredients [to the city from the mainland]? "This is an area we can pay close attention to," he said. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Written warning for Judy Chan over careless driving](#) (2026-05-06 05:59)

New People's Party lawmaker Judy Chan on Wednesday was slapped with a written warning by the Legislative Council over her careless driving conviction this year. Legco's Supervisory Committee said it made the decision after the council received a public complaint regarding her conduct. Chan was driving the wrong way down Jaffe Road in Wan Chai in January, and the incident was caught on camera. In a report, the Legco committee said its members unanimously decided that she acted inappropriately, but at the same time they didn't consider her misconduct to be serious. "While this act of hers was imprudent and reckless, it did not involve serious misconduct such as a breach of personal integrity or abuse of power or dereliction of duty," it said. The committee also noted that the authorities didn't charge her for dangerous driving, and that Chan pleaded guilty for what was her first offence. It also accepted that she was remorseful and only made a poor decision for what it called a one-off convenience. The report also said Chan had been sincere in repeatedly apologising both publicly and to the committee, and that she would accept any punishment given to her. "[Chan] has swiftly taken a series of remedial actions, striving to minimise the negative impact of the incident on the reputation of Legco," it said. The committee also warned her to be mindful of her conduct and that she has to always ensure that she meets public expectations. Legco President Starry Lee, who also chairs the supervisory committee, described the warning as "

solemn". She said it was issued following its thorough review and investigation. "For a lawmaker and for anyone, receiving a formal written warning is actually a very stern warning. Everyone understands what a warning means and its function," she said while meeting reporters alongside Chan. "And this warning is made public, all members of the public and other legislators know about this. I believe for a lawmaker, it's a matter that has to be seriously dealt with." For her part, Chan said she's accepted the committee's decision with humility, while stressing that she hasn't driven since January. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Subsidy change set to aid 400 leukaemia patients](#) (2026-05-06 05:44)

The Hospital Authority on Wednesday said it expects more than 400 leukaemia patients will save hundreds of thousands of dollars a year following a major change to drug subsidies. The leukaemia drug Dasatinib was reclassified from a self-financed item to a special drug in April. Following the change, the annual cost for the targeted therapy dropped from as much as half a million dollars to just HK\$240. Officials estimate that the extra subsidies will cost the government approximately HK\$49 million per year. The authority's chief pharmacist William Chui said the change will allow more treatment options for patients. "There is lots of evidence showing the clinical efficacy and also the safety data to support the use of Dasatinib," he said. "According to international guidelines, Dasatinib is actually positioned as a second line treatment for leukaemia. "When the patient develops resistance to the first generation drugs treatment, Dasatinib is another choice for the patient and for the doctor to choose to treat the patient." The authority has added 11 new drugs into its Drug Formulary from the start of this year, including four different targeted therapy medications for various types of cancers. The authority also noted that more patients now qualify for the Samaritan Fund following a relaxation of the means test criteria. For the first three months of the year, the authority said 2,200 applications for drug subsidies and 1,050 for non-drug items made by individuals who do not receive Comprehensive Social Security Assistance were approved. These represent a 15 percent year-on-year increase, the authority chief manager on allied health Priscilla Poon said. "We targeted actually to increase the number of beneficiaries that can be included into our safety net. Those patients have been included into our safety net. They were able to pay less with the increase in our subsidies," she added. For example, a kidney disease patient, in a three-person household with disposable capital of HK\$303,000 and a monthly income of about HK\$59,000, now only needs to pay five percent of their medication costs, down from 20 percent. Single-person households also benefit from further relaxed means test criteria when applying for subsidies for one-off non-drug items. They are now eligible if their monthly income does not exceed 150 percent of the median monthly domestic household income for a one-person household. This income limit, which excludes foreign domestic helpers and is updated quarterly, stood at HK\$15,150 as of the end of February. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [One HK man dead, one rescued in Japanese Alps tragedy](#) (2026-05-05 13:45)

A Hong Kong man who was trapped while climbing the Japanese Alps has been rescued, while his companion – also an SAR resident – has died, according to Japanese media reports. The pair

reportedly had been climbing the Hida Mountains on Honshu since last Friday, and called for help two days later when they were caught in severe weather. Rescue teams deployed by the Nagano authorities were unable to reach them on Monday due to the conditions, according to reports. Local media reported that a helicopter located the pair on Tuesday. One of them, a 30-year-old man, is said to be conscious when he was airlifted to hospital. But his companion, identified by Japanese media as a 22-year-old Hong Kong man living in Tokyo, was pronounced dead shortly after being found. In response to media enquiries, the Immigration Department on Monday said it had contacted the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the SAR and the Chinese consulate-general in Nagoya after receiving requests for assistance. The department added that it's in close contact with the relevant authorities and will provide all possible assistance to the victims' families. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [12-year-old held for alleged explosives manufacturing](#) (2026-05-05 10:34)

A 12-year-old Form One student has been arrested on suspicion of attempting to make explosives, police said on Tuesday. Officers said they were alerted a day earlier to a video shared on social media purportedly showing someone manufacturing explosives in an experiment outdoors. The boy was apprehended in Tseung Kwan O the same day and has since been detained for investigation. There were no injuries or damage. Officers from the explosive ordnance disposal bureau seized chemical substances suspected to be explosive residue.

"While the experiment was conducted under a bridge, the site was right next to a public rest area and a jogging trail," acting chief inspector Choi Ting-kwong said. "He ignored his own safety and that of others by carrying out the experiment involving explosives in a public space." Choi reminded the public that manufacturing explosives is a serious offence. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Lawmakers back push to beef up fire safety law](#) (2026-05-05 10:19)

The vast majority of lawmakers on Tuesday expressed support for the government's plans to change fire safety laws following the deadly Tai Po blaze. Under the amendment bill, officials propose a number of tougher penalties for violations, such as shutting down fire safety devices without approval and responsible parties not ensuring that the devices always work. Several lawmakers, however, asked why officials only require maintenance firms to apply for sustained switch-offs of devices for late-night repairs three working days beforehand but not for daytime repair work. Secretary for Security Chris Tang said this came down to balancing relevant risks. "It is because during the daytime, shutdowns are likely to be for a short period of time for maintenance purposes," he said. "Very often, staff from the contractors will be on hand in the daytime, as well as guards or watchmen. "And residents would know about the maintenance work, so the risks therein would be lower. We want to balance the risks, and daytime risks are low." While property management firms will in future take up more fire safety responsibilities, such as conducting fire alarm checks every six months instead of a year, Tang said the legal changes should not result in a surge in the fees that they charge. He said the companies are already doing most of the things the amended legislation will mandate – it is just that they will

in future be considered to be legally responsible for fire safety matters. And in the event that affirm gets penalised for violating fire safety regulations, Tang said it should not pass on the fineto customers as it is the guilty party. With regards to the extra workload for frontline fire safetyofficers, he expects the Fire Services Department to handle it through internal staffredeployment. If there is really a need, Tang said, officials will look internally for moreresources, before the government asks the legislature for more funding. He also said thegovernment would recommend work be conducted in phases, if that is feasible, but noted thatin some instances it is not possible to ban contractors from working on an entire estatesimultaneously, like what happened in Wang Fuk Court. "For example, it's not feasible to repaira pipe only a few floors at a time when it connects all floors," Tang said. As for so-called "three-nil" buildings, that is, those that do not have owners' corporations, resident groups andmanagement firms, he said fire safety committees in district councils would organise fire drills.Tang also said officials have decided to amend laws to fine buyers of illegal fuel up to HK\$1million and imprison them for up to a year as such acts pose serious risks to communities. Henoted there have been recent cases of such activities in urban areas that have resulted inpeople suffering serious injuries and vehicles catching fire. Tang said the government wouldsoon conduct a one-month public consultation with a view to tabling the amendment bill withinthis year. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Q1 GDP growth hits near 5-year high](#) (2026-05-05 09:38)

The Hong Kong economy expanded at its fastest pace in almost five years in the first quarter. Advance estimates released by the Census and Statistics Department on Tuesday showed the city's gross domestic product jumped 5.9 percent year on year in real terms in the first three months of the year. That was also stronger than the 4 percent growth in the fourth quarter of 2025. First-quarter growth was boosted in part by exports, which rose by 23.8 percent from a year ago and 15.4 percent from the October-December quarter. Gross domestic fixed capital formation also helped lift the economy during the period, rising by 17.7 percent year on year in real terms, after an 11.7 percent growth in the fourth quarter. Both private and government consumption expenditure rose as well, with private spending up 5 percent year on year and government consumption 2.9 percent higher. Commenting on the figures, a government spokesperson noted that the local economy "expanded robustly" in the first quarter of 2026, adding that the outlook remains positive, thanks to strong global demand for AI-related electronics, sustained growth in visitor arrivals and robust cross-boundary financial activities. "Relatively solid business and consumer sentiment is expected to continue supporting domestic demand. However, persistent tensions in the Middle East pose downside risks to the economic outlook," the spokesperson said. "The government has taken targeted measures to safeguard energy supply stability and mitigate the impacts on affected sectors," the spokesperson added, noting that the authorities would closely monitor the risks. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Stroke of genius as pioneers sniff first aid chance](#) (2026-05-05 06:53)

Researchers at the University of Hong Kong said on Tuesday they have, in collaboration with InnoHK, developed the world's first nasal spray for patients suffering from the most common type of stroke to receive timely emergency aid prior to their arrival at hospital. Stroke is the fourth leading cause of death in the SAR, and ischemic stroke – caused by a blocked main artery – accounts for about 80 percent of the cases. Patients inhaling the nasal spray, NanoPowder, within 30 minutes of the onset of stroke symptoms, the team said, will have medication delivered straight to their brain, reducing the size of the infarction by more than 80 percent and thus reducing complications. Associate professor of pharmacology and pharmacy Aviva Chow said it currently takes more than two hours for patients to receive treatment in hospitals from the onset of symptoms and that only half of ischemic stroke patients manage to get the urgent medical assistance they need in time. The NanoPowder nasal spray only gives ischemic stroke patients a bit of leeway timewise to get medical assistance, he stressed, and that hospitalisation is crucial. While it usually takes 10 to 15 years to get a new medication from the discovery to the sale stage, the team expects the nasal spray will take only about five to seven years as they believe their application can be fast-tracked. "Ischemic stroke is a major disease in global setting. Normally when FDA [the US Food and Drug Administration], EMA [European Medicines Agency] ... for some of the major disease that will have a global impact, for example like Covid, for example cancer, their approval process normally will be faster because that will be very helpful to patients to receive early treatment," Chow said. Researchers aim to ultimately make the drug available for sale in pharmacies after carrying out clinical trials in 2030. Chow hopes the drug can be rolled out up to three years after the trials, depending on regulatory approval. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [HK-Dongguan biofuel hub drive flies in face of crisis](#) (2026-05-05 05:39)

Chief Executive John Lee said on Tuesday Hong Kong can turn challenges posed by the global energy disruption in the Middle East into "green opportunities", as exemplified by the SAR working with Dongguan to set up a biofuel base. The sustainable aviation fuel base would be set up in Dongguan by EcoCeres, a Hong Kong-based biofuel producer that specialises in using advanced technologies to turn waste cooking oil into globally certified sustainable aviation fuel. The move also came as the firm signed a memorandum of understanding with the Dongguan government in building the sustainable aviation fuel value chain. Speaking at the signing ceremony, Lee noted that the collaboration between Hong Kong and Dongguan marked a "real milestone" as the new base, the first such hub in the Greater Bay Area, would support the country's moves to reach its carbon-reduction goals. "Traditional aviation fuel carries a heavy carbon footprint," he said. "Sustainable aviation fuel, SAF, cuts lifecycle emissions by more than 80 percent. That is a substantial step toward greener aviation. "Hong Kong brings global finance, professional services and research capabilities. Dongguan brings mature chemical industry parks, logistics and a steady supply of used cooking oil, the essential raw material for SAF. " Together, we form a powerful combination." EcoCeres was set up by Hong Kong & China Gas, known as Towngas, and received backing from US private investment firm Bain Capital in 2023. EcoCeres products include hydrotreated vegetable oil, renewable naphtha and cellulosic

ethanol. Lee noted that the establishment of the new base is in line with the country's 15th five-year plan, which stressed the acceleration of the comprehensive green transition across the economy and society while promoting low-carbon transport. "The world faces energy disruptions. But Hong Kong, under 'one country, two systems', enjoys a unique advantage: strong support from the motherland and close connection to the world. We can turn green challenges into green opportunities," he said. Also speaking at the event was Dongguan municipal committee party secretary Wei Hao, who noted that there's great potential for the two sides to collaborate further, after the two cities previously jointly built an international hub connecting the airports of the two cities, which also became the world's first sea-land-air multimodal transportation project to lower logistics costs. Towngas chairman Peter Lee noted that green energy had become the "main theme" amid the "volatile" global environment, making the reduction of carbon emissions in the aviation industry "inevitable". Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Some lawmakers back tighter grip on claw machines](#) (2026-05-05 05:11)

Two lawmakers on Monday expressed their support for the government's plan to require operators of claw and pinball machines to obtain licences. Officials said machine operators would be required to apply for prize-based amusement licences under gambling laws. They also want to require internet cafes to obtain licences, instead of simply following a voluntary code of practice. The head of the Legislative Council's panel on home affairs, culture and sports, unionist Bill Tang, said the move should help tackle addiction problems, especially among young people. He said some claw machines have mobile phones as prizes, a reward far more valuable than the HK\$300 cap for other types of games that require licences. Tang noted that some operators of gambling abstention services have raised concerns about people spending hours each day on the machines. The Federation of Trade Unions lawmaker also backed the idea of regulation for individual machines rather than the premises they are located in, saying machines in one shop could belong to different individuals. "Such a proposal fits today's situation - we can see [the machines] in so many shopping malls and new-style restaurants," he told RTHK. "The machines are there to attract children and make parents consume at the restaurants." DAB lawmaker Vincent Cheng, meanwhile, agreed that the new regulations should not be so tight as to stifle operators. "Now, many shopping malls have introduced claw and pinball machines, perhaps due to difficulties in their operations," Cheng said on an RTHK programme. "We have to consider whether their industry's development would be affected [by the new laws]. We have to strike a balance here and avoid a scenario where they all have to close down because the law is too tight." The panel's councillors are due to discuss the matter at a meeting next Monday. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [New licensing proposed for claw machines, cybercafes](#) (2026-05-04 13:54)

The government has proposed regulatory changes to strengthen the supervision of claw machines, pinball machines and internet cafes. In a paper submitted to the Legislative Council on Monday, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau proposed amendments to the Gambling

Ordinance and Gambling Regulations to require individual licences for any gaming device involving prizes, odds and potential addiction risks. "We will also review the relevant laws to ensure that the relevant premises are properly regulated, so that the public can safely participate in these activities," the paper stated. Operators would be required to display clear licensing notices at the entrances. The bureau is considering adding more clauses, such as including addiction warnings on the notices. Authorities are also considering a number of ideas when it comes to regulating internet cafes. One option would see them being categorised as amusement game centres, which would effectively prohibit entry to students in school uniforms. An alternative proposal is to set up a system similar to that of e-sports venues. This would allow internet cafes to apply for licence exemptions on a case-by-case basis, provided they meet strict conditions. These would include fire safety and ventilation standards, as well as a total ban on accommodation. Lawmakers are set to discuss the proposals at the panel on home affairs, culture and sports next Monday. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Worker dies after trapped in lift shaft](#) (2026-05-04 11:03)

A lift technician died on Monday afternoon while carrying out repair works at a housing estate in Stanley. Police were called to the scene on Tai Tam Road at around 3pm and found the victim trapped inside a lift shaft. He suffered serious head injuries and was later pronounced dead. Officers suspect the worker fell from a height of about 10 metres. The Labour Department said it had sent staff to the scene and was investigating the cause of the incident. The Association for the Rights of Industrial Accident Victims said the deceased worker was in his mid-20s and in the process of replacing lift ropes when tragedy struck. The group said it is deeply saddened by his death and urged the employer to provide support for the family. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [John Tse named as new head of information services](#) (2026-05-04 09:31)

The government on Monday appointed former police spokesman John Tse as the new director of information services, effective on Tuesday. Tse joined the force in 1999 and then the Chief Executive's Office as its communications secretary nearly four years ago. He had been serving as the government's information co-ordinator since the middle of 2024. Secretary for the Civil Service Ingrid Yeung said Tse has extensive experience in public administration and is an outstanding leader and manager who is highly skilled in handling media and public relations. "I am confident that under his leadership, the Information Services Department will strive to promote public understanding of government policies and positions, and tell the world about the good stories of Hong Kong," she said in a statement. The administration said Tse was identified as the most suitable candidate following an open and internal recruitment exercise this year. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [SAR's tax revenue surges 22pc to HK\\$458.3bn](#) (2026-05-04 09:11)

The Inland Revenue Department on Monday said tax revenue surged 22 percent for the year 2025/26 as it issued 2.77 million tax return forms, including 1.85 million paper forms and 920,000 e-returns. Wang Fuk Court homeowners and residents will be waived from their final

tax bill for the 2025/26 financial year, on top of a similar waiver announced in December that aims to ease their financial burden following the inferno. Commissioner of Inland Revenue Benjamin Chan said they only have to fill in the return forms as usual. “I think what they need to do is to complete the information about their income, as well as whether they need to claim any allowance or deductions in the tax returns,” he said. All individuals must submit the forms by June 4, while sole proprietors have until August 4 to do so. There will be a one-month extension for those filing the form online. On the city's tax revenue in the previous financial year, Chan said provisional figures showed that it jumped by 22 percent to HK\$458.3 billion. He said this was partly driven by a 61 percent growth in stamp duty revenue to HK\$102.6 billion. “Last year, the number of property transactions increased significantly, and also the price of property has remained stable, and that’s the reason why we had a very good increase in the stamp revenue arising from property transactions,” he said. “As for the stock transactions, I think [it's] very obvious because you know that the trading volumes at the Hong Kong Stock Exchange has increased significantly [by] more than 50 percent.” Income from salaries tax and profits tax also rose, Chan said, as taxpayers earned more in the previous year, and more firms were liable to pay profits tax. The department forecasts that total revenue for the current financial year will stand at HK\$455.1 billion. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Wang Fuk residents retrieve paintings, designs](#) (2026-05-04 08:40)

The first round of home visits for Wang Fuk Court residents concluded on Monday as people salvaged what they could from their fire-ravaged homes. Some collected belongings which had a sentimental value to them, including a Wang Tai House resident who retrieved more than 30 of her own paintings. “I didn’t expect [that I could retrieve them] and I am a bit happy. I’ve been painting for over 10 years. I feel at ease seeing they are fine,” she said. A Wang Shing House resident said he retrieved some furniture of his own design over the decades. The man in his 70s said he hoped to return home again to collect more items. “We’ve poured our entire lives into this home. We are not very rich – we saved up to buy the flat when we were young and accumulated belongings along the way, and our children have grown up,” he said. “We had planned to live here until the very end, but now it has ended prematurely. This flat, with things inside, was like another child to us.” But another resident said she could hardly retrieve anything, adding it was emotionally difficult to return home. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Exchange Fund gains HK\\$34.5bn in Q1 amid volatility](#) (2026-05-04 08:30)

The conflict in the Middle East weighed on the first-quarter performance of the Exchange Fund, which posted its smallest investment gain in five quarters. According to figures released by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) on Monday, the fund, which serves as the city's financial war chest to defend the local currency, reported an investment income of HK\$34.5 billion in the first three months of the year. That's 56 percent lower compared with the figure of HK\$79.2 billion a year ago, and 34 percent down from HK\$52.6 billion in the fourth quarter of 2025. HKMA chief executive Eddie Yue said the January-March period had been rather "difficult" as the global equity market declined by almost 10 percent, following "huge volatilities" triggered by

US-Israel attacks on Iran at the end of February. By categories, investments in local stocksposted a loss of HK\$5 billion – its second straight quarterly loss – and reversed gains of HK\$16.4billion year on year. Investments from other equities logged losses of HK\$11 billion, comparedwith gains of HK\$15.3 billion in the fourth quarter of 2025. By contrast, foreign exchangeinvestment doubled from a year ago, posting gains of HK\$25.9 billion thanks to changes incurrency valuations. Bonds, meanwhile, reported gains of HK\$24.6 billion. "There's been a gainin the bond market investment partly because of the interest income, which offsets most of thebond price reduction we've seen over the quarter," Yue said. "And because of the weaker USdollar throughout the quarter, we've also seen the non-US dollar assets of the Exchange Fundrecording a foreign exchange gain. "In the end we've got HK\$34.5 billion in income, which isactually understandable given the volatility of the financial markets." Looking ahead, Yue spokeabout uncertainties in interest rate movements due to rising global oil prices and inflationaryrisks caused by the conflict in the Middle East. "Depending on where the military conflict isgoing and how that is going to affect oil prices, they [the US Federal Reserve] may have to watchfurther how inflation, how prices change in the US before deciding their next move," he said. "Of course, the new Fed chair will come in very shortly, but for the new Fed chair and the Fedboard of governors as a whole, they still need to look at all the different economic data inmaking their decisions... including inflation and employment. "And in both areas, there are stilluncertainties, so it's a bit hard to predict where rates are going because of the hugeuncertainties we are seeing now." The HKMA said HK\$5.8 billion of the investment income willgo to the government's fiscal reserves. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Female passenger, 62, dies after HZMB car crash](#) (2026-05-04 04:02)

A female passenger died in the early hours of Monday, after the private car she was travelling in crashed on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. Police said at about 4.41am, the vehicle was approaching Hong Kong when it was suspected to have lost control and flipped on its side after ramming into a number of traffic cones and a kiosk. Both the male driver, 67, and the passenger, 62, were trapped inside the car and had to be rescued by first responders. The woman sustained multiple injuries and was unconscious when taken to hospital, where she was certified dead. The driver meanwhile, hurt his limbs and was conscious when taken to hospital. The police's New Territories South special traffic investigation team is probing the case. Edited by Aaron Tam

- ['Camping doesn't hurt HK's hotel sector'](#) (2026-05-04 03:01)

A tourism sector representative on Monday said the surge in mainland tourists camping in Hong Kong's countryside would not hurt the city's hotel industry. Speaking to RTHK, the executive director of the Hong Kong Tourism Association Timothy Chui said the overall occupancy rate at local hotels reached more than 90 percent during the Labour Day Golden Week holiday. As for campers, Chui said that some of them were not staying outdoors for their entire trip, instead, they booked hotel rooms for part of their stay and continued spending money in the city. "Campers might sleep at the camping site for one night and opt for a hotel

on the following night. Hong Kong offers this option, it allows tourists to switch between a shorttime period. They may go camping one day and then continue dining, shopping and having fun in the urban areas the next,” he said. “This is exactly Hong Kong’s strength.” Chui also pointed out that about half of all hotel guests booked for one night, while the other half stayed for a longer period. He noted that hotel prices increased by 10 percent compared with holidays in the past, adding that some tourists would only decide their accommodation at the last minute. “For example, some visitors who have arrived in Hong Kong might not have booked a hotel. They can either stay in Hong Kong or return to Shenzhen or Zhuhai for accommodation, especially since the transport within the Greater Bay Area is very convenient,” he said. “It’s easy for tourists to leave Hong Kong, even in the early morning. So visitors’ decision on whether they would stay in Hong Kong was made late.” Meanwhile, Edward Leung, chairman of the Hong Kong Feast and Retreat Association, told the same programme that catering businesses at tourist areas saw a 15 to 20 percent boost. However, restaurants at districts near the border recorded a slight drop in business as many Hong Kong residents headed to the mainland during the Labour Day holiday. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [HK commemorates May 4 Movement anniversary](#) (2026-05-04 02:51)

Senior officials attended a flag raising ceremony on Monday to mark the 107th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement and the 90th anniversary of the Red Army’s Long March victory. Chief Secretary Eric Chan, deputy director of Beijing’s Liaison Office Sun Shangwu, deputy commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong Li Yongsheng, were among those who attended the event at the Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai at 8am. About 1,200 members from uniformed groups, as well as primary and secondary schools attended the event. Meanwhile, 20 youth representatives made a declaration, saying that they were willing to take up responsibilities, protect the nation and love the SAR. The May Fourth Movement began in Beijing in 1919, and was a youth-led campaign which protested against the decision to allow Japan to retain territories in Shandong province that had been previously seized from China by Germany. The demonstrations sparked nationwide protests and saw a surge in nationalistic fervour which resulted in the flowering of new political movements and ideas. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Scam reports stabilise but more elderly falling prey](#) (2026-05-04 00:48)

Hong Kong has seen a rise in the number of older people falling victim to online scams, even as the overall figure for such crime remains stable. Police say they recorded more than 9,400 scam cases between January and March this year, largely unchanged from the same period in 2025. But the number of over 60s being taken in by scams rose to 1,264, up from 952. Between them, they lost HK\$530 million to fraudsters, according to the force’s commercial crime bureau. Superintendent Theodora Lee said the single biggest amount stolen was HK\$84 million, with the victim a 67-year-old man who thought he was investing in cryptocurrency. Lee said the man had struck up a romantic relationship online with a fraudster claiming to be an expert in investments. “The victim had downloaded a fake investment app and transferred a total of

HK\$84 million crypto assets to the wallets designated by the scammer," the superintendent said.

"Finally, when the victim tried to get the profits and failed, then he realised he had been scammed." Lee said many elderly people are coming across fake investment apps and tutorial videos made by criminals on social media platforms. Those with the most education and experience in investing are the most likely to fall for the scams, she said. "We believe that's because they have greater confidence in their investment decisions and because the scammers will use some very general and very true investment products to lure them into investing," Lee said. "The scammer would share real investment tips for them, so they would have built the trust with them." Since March, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has required banks to assess whether their customers could be in danger of being conned. It is also building a machine-learning model to check for potential stooge accounts which criminals use to process illicit funds, executive director Chan King-wang said. "We have already started collecting the account opening data from 11 banks. We are in the process of developing that model based on the historical data, as well as the confirmed real account cases data provided by the police. The model is already there, but the power of the model to predict whether an account is a real account has yet to be fully tested," he said. Chan added that the HKMA hopes to finalise the model as soon as possible. Edited by Altis Wong

- [Mixed reaction among Wang Fuk Court returnees](#) (2026-05-03 09:40)

Emotions were mixed among Wang Fuk Court residents who returned home to collect their belongings on Sunday, the second to last day of the first round of homecoming. A woman, surnamed Tse, said the three hours given to her family was enough to take everything they wanted from their Wang Shing House flat. She said they only took a few things of sentimental value, and won't really miss their ruined home. "We won't go up for a second time again. There's nothing else to pack up, we didn't take away many things," she told reporters. "It's hard to come back to live here again. It would be like going through a nightmare again. And you'd have to wait for like more than 10 years, why bother?" Another woman, surnamed Ho, was noticeably upset by how badly damaged her flat was, saying she's packed about a third of her belongings in 21 large bags and plans to make another trip back. "My friend told me it's time to declutter and say goodbye, but that made me feel upset," she told reporters. The government has indicated that arrangements will be made for those who want to return to their fire-hit flats a second time. Other families, meanwhile, still held out hope that officials would rebuild the estate on-site. One man living in the same block, surnamed Liu, said his home was largely untarnished by the blaze. He saw his bed looked the same before the fire, and his nephew's homework was still lying on the desk. He also said it's regrettable and disappointing if they won't be allowed to live there again. "We've lived here for more than three decades after all. Now that we're forced to leave, we're not very happy. "Why can't [the authorities] renovate the place to allow us to live here again? Or they can rebuild the place, I can wait for nine, 10 years to live here again." The government has said that it does not plan to rebuild Wang Fuk Court on-site, citing cost-effectiveness and technical difficulties. Inspecting the operation in Tai Po, Deputy Chief Secretary Warner Cheuk met with some residents as well as social workers and

clinical psychologists assisting them. He spoke to Wang Tai House residents waiting to move their belongings onto vans, and learned about the use of temporary storage space nearby. The minister offered his gratitude to all parties involved in helping the residents return to their homes. \_\_\_\_\_ Last updated: 2026-05-03 HKT 18:39 Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Senior officials should report problems to others'](#) (2026-05-03 08:16)

Secretary for the Civil Service Ingrid Yeung on Sunday said government department heads are responsible for reporting systemic loopholes after spotting them. If senior officials noticed a problem beyond the scope of their own department's authority, they should report it to other departments or bureaux, or discuss it during internal meetings, Yeung told a TVB programme.

“I believe department heads have the responsibility, apart from focusing on their own departments’ work, that when there is a problem that cannot be handled, they should report it and bring it to a higher level of the government,” she said. “If they fail to do that, they should be held accountable.” Yeung said the Heads of Department Accountability System proposed by the government aimed to enhance departments’ execution abilities. Investigations under the system, which will be divided into two tiers based on severity of issues, will cover all people involved instead of department heads only, she said. “After the investigation, we would follow an existing mechanism to handle. Whether it’s the permanent secretary, department head or frontline civil servant, if they are incompetent or have committed misconduct, we would handle it using the same mechanism and there will be same consequences,” she said. Asked if issues mentioned in the Wang Fuk Court inferno inquiry would affect pay rise for civil servants, Yeung said the government would consider all relevant factors. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Observatory issues hail warning](#) (2026-05-03 07:23)

The Observatory said on Sunday afternoon that hail may affect the city shortly. Bad weather has been hitting Hong Kong, with forecasters saying violent gusts reaching 90 kilometres per hour or above may affect the SAR. The Observatory said members of the public should seek safe shelter immediately. The Amber Rainstorm Warning was issued at 2.20pm. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Local restaurants to see 10pc revenue growth'](#) (2026-05-03 05:54)

A representative from the catering industry on Sunday forecast that local restaurants would see revenues rise by 10 percent year-on-year during the Labour Day Golden Week holiday. In an interview with RTHK, Simon Wong, president of the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants and Related Trades, said the growth was mainly driven by a surge of mainland visitors. "Since we have close to half a million visitors coming to Hong Kong for the first two days on the Golden Week, we saw that the catering industry for these two days has been very good," he said. "I would estimate that there would be an increase of about 10 percent in our business and even for some busy districts with a lot of tourist attractions, the business enjoyed about 15 to 20

percent increase in their business," Wong added. Wong explained that restaurants in busy areas like Tsim Sha Tsui, Yau Ma Tei, and Jordan stayed open till midnight due to high demand during the holiday, resulting in higher expected growth. Despite a large number of locals leaving for the Greater Bay Area or Shenzhen, he noted that a 13 percent year-on-year increase in mainland visitors helped fill in the gap. Wong also forecast the industry would record a daily turnover of around HK\$280 million to HK\$300 million on average during the holiday. "Compared to Mother's Day or Christmas holiday, the record can be HK\$350 million, or even record high of around HK\$400 million, but with HK\$300 million for the Labour Day per day business is already quite well," he said. As of 10am on Sunday, the third day of the holiday, the Immigration Department recorded more than 189,000 inbound and outbound visitors. There were around 111,000 inbound visitors, with mainland tourists accounting for over 61,000, while more than 78,000 people left Hong Kong, of which about 53,000 were Hongkongers. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Strong GDP growth expected in Q1: FS](#) (2026-05-03 05:36)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Sunday said Hong Kong is expected to see the strongest quarterly growth in nearly five years. His remarks came as the government gets ready to release the advance estimates of the city's gross domestic product for the first quarter of 2026 on Tuesday. Writing in his weekly blog, Chan said GDP growth is expected to accelerate, thanks to improvements in private consumption and good performances in exports and fixed investments. Local consumption has been recovering over the past year, with mega events held by the government attracting more tourists, he said. Chan said the number of visitors to Hong Kong reached over 14.3 million in the first quarter, while the tourist volume for the whole year was expected to exceed an earlier estimate of 53.8 million, driving tourism-related spending to over HK\$240 billion. During the Labour Day Golden Week holiday, Hong Kong recorded more than 600,000 visitor arrivals on the first two days of May, marking a six percent increase year-on-year, he said. Chan added that some restaurants and stores were expecting business to be strong during the holiday. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Motorists give thumbs-up to new Fanling Bypass](#) (2026-05-03 04:52)

The new Fanling Bypass opened on Sunday morning — the first major piece of transport infrastructure in the Northern Metropolis development project that has come into service. The four-kilometre, Eastern Section of the bypass takes vehicles from the edge of Tai Po on Fanling Highway to a new town in Fanling North. Officials said the route would save commuters around 10 minutes during peak hours. Civil Engineering and Development Department chief engineer, Pakin Cheung, said operations were smooth. "It's Sunday, so most residents might have been testing the new bypass out, to head towards the urban areas in Kowloon. They benefited from using the bypass to reach the Fanling Highway quicker, he told RTHK. "As for Monday, the first working day of the week, we expect the traffic to be busier, so motorists may need more time to get used to new entries and exits along the bypass." DAB lawmaker Yiu Ming, representing New Territories North, said drivers need to be careful about new signage, as some sections that used

to allow drivers to change lanes now have solid lines. A number of motorists who tried out the new route said they enjoyed the experience, but added there might need to be some adjustments. One of them was a driver surnamed Man, who lives in Ping Che. "The new road is quite good, but maybe it's brand new so there are some rocks around. I find the signage to be clear," he said. "It saved some time, because you don't need to go through the old routes that have a lot of traffic lights. So I very much look forward to the first working day, hopefully this bypass can help residents in the district." Other drivers said while they personally won't use the bypass much for now, they believe it will be a very important route down the line when an influx of residents is expected later with the development of the Northern Metropolis. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [IOMed set for inaugural high-level summit](#) (2026-05-02 09:48)

Secretary for Justice Paul Lam said the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) will hold its first high-level summit next week. The event, which will focus on dispute resolution, marks a major milestone for the organisation, which began operations just last year. Speaking on a radio programme, Lam said the biennial Mediation Week will run from May 4 to 7, followed by the first-ever Global Mediation Summit, hosted by IOMed on May 8 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. According to Lam, this summit represents the organisation's first high-level meeting since its launch. Chief Executive John Lee is expected to attend, and a number of experienced, influential figures have been invited to speak on the latest developments in international, commercial and investment mediation. Over 1,000 participants from more than 60 countries have already registered, either to attend in person or join online. Lam also shared his hope that mediation culture would serve not only nations and large commercial institutions but also the public. "Regarding the mediation week schedule, the first four days will be more focused on people's livelihood and down-to-earth matters, centred on our local Hong Kong context – regardless of age group or type," he said. "Because what I really want to say is that the culture of mediation needs to be very down to earth. "While there should be high-level international elements, mediation is not only about serving between nations, nor only about serving large commercial institutions – it must also help the general public." Lam expressed confidence that the establishment of IOMed in Hong Kong would create a "magnet effect" that attracted a wider range of international organisations to the city for talent exchanges. He also revealed that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank planned to set up an office in Hong Kong, with progress described as good and hopes high for the matter to be finalised within this year. Additionally, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law is expected to open its Asia-Pacific liaison office in Hong Kong by the end of 2026. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Metropolis to look north for infrastructural direction](#) (2026-05-02 09:24)

Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn said on Saturday that the government will make improvements to infrastructure and industrial layout plans for the Northern Metropolis to ensure they are aligned with the country's 15th Five-Year Plan. Officiating at an opening

ceremony a day ahead of the commissioning of the first major transport infrastructure project in the metropolis, she said the four-kilometre Fanling Bypass (Eastern Section) would serve residents in Fanling North's first public housing project, due to be completed this year. Linn also said land acquisition and infrastructure development in North District had entered the final stages and that authorities would make improvements to various developments in the Northern Metropolis. "The commencement of the bypass is just the beginning," she said. "The government will continue to improve the industrial layout, transport network and community amenities at the Northern Metropolis. "We will do our best to develop the Northern Metropolis into a new engine that would drive Hong Kong's development, to inject new economic vitality and create a better living environment for residents." The bypass stretches from Kau Lung Hang, Tai Po, connecting to Shek Wu San Tsuen in North District and the Fanling North New Development Area. Motorists can save approximately 10 minutes during peak hours by using the bypass to travel between Lung Yeuk Tau, Luen Wo Hui and Fanling Highway. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Confidence high Wang Chi owners will accept buyout bid](#) (2026-05-02 06:42)

Authorities remain confident that owners of Wang Chi House will agree to sell their flats by the end-of-June deadline with the deployment of special engagement teams to ensure they fully understand the acquisition scheme. The government has announced that it is considering expanding its buyout plan for Wang Fuk Court to include Wang Chi House – the only building in the residential estate not affected by November's deadly fire. The move came after homeowners in the block showed a high level of consensus on one of the government's rehousing options, with around 77 percent of them having expressed preliminary support for selling. For the offer to become binding, at least 75 percent of owners must sign a letter of acceptance by June 30, officially confirming their interest. Speaking on a radio programme on Saturday, Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong, who also heads the task force on emergency accommodation arrangements for those displaced by the Wang Fuk Court fire, pointed out that the engagement team's role is to help residents understand the pros and cons of the acquisition scheme, not to act as a "sales team". "From the very beginning, I personally briefed the team members," Wong said. "I told them that they don't need to meet any targets. The most important thing is to present the scheme clearly. "There is no pressure to get every owner you meet to agree to sell. That is very clear." Wong emphasised that the scheme is voluntary and based on mutual agreement. "If 10 or 20 percent say they don't intend to sell, I respect that and won't criticise them," he said. However, Wong noted that owners who opt out must understand that their flats would, if Wang Chi House doesn't reach the threshold for compulsory sale, then fall back into the normal market mechanism – complete with unresolved land lease and deed of mutual covenant issues, as well as estimated repair costs of at least HK\$30 million. He also revealed that the team has encountered residents still struggling emotionally with the impact of the fire. "Some say their psychological trauma is huge," Wong said. "Although their block was not directly affected by the fire, it's right next door. Going back makes them very uncomfortable. They don't want to live there again."

According to Wong, formal acceptance proposal letters will be sent to all Wang Chi Houseowners within the next two weeks. Owners who wish to sell, he said, simply need to sign and return the letter, after which the government will proceed to the next step. Edited by ThomasMcAlinden

- [Public vaping ban 'won't dim HK allure to tourists'](#) (2026-05-02 03:56)

The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office said on Saturday this week's expansion of the smoking ban would not deter tourists from visiting Hong Kong. As of April 30, the use of alternative smoking products – including e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and herbal cigarettes – in public spaces is banned. Public possession alone brings a HK\$3,000 penalty. More serious breaches, including the importation or sale of these items, mean a fine of up to HK\$50,000 and up to six months in jail. As of 5pm yesterday, the office's inspectors had conducted 216 operations and issued four penalty notices. Speaking on an RTHK programme, control office head Manny Lam pointed out that the ban on the importation of alternative smoking products had been in force for four years and that such regulations are not unique to Hong Kong. "If we look at the whole world, more than 30 countries and regions have imposed similar laws, including Singapore and Thailand, which rolled out such regulations in 2014 and 2018, respectively," he said. "We have not seen any impact on their tourist numbers following such bans. Lam said his office had been informing tourists about the ban since the beginning of the year. He said this involved collaborating with Customs, the Tourism Board, the Travel Industry Authority, and airlines. As for the January 1 expansion of the smoking ban to within three metres of doorways of places like hospitals and government clinics, schools, residential-care homes and child-care centres, Lam said more than 11,000 inspections had been carried out in the first quarter. They resulted in more than 2,100 fixed-penalty notices being issued, including 23 for smoking in the newly stipulated areas. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Uber says acquiring e-hail taxi startup FlyTaxi](#) (2026-05-01 21:26)

Uber says it is acquiring the Hong Kong e-hail taxi start-up FlyTaxi. Launched 13 years ago, locally-built FlyTaxi was one of the first meter taxi platforms in Hong Kong. In a statement, Uber said FlyTaxi would continue to operate as normal and there would be no change for drivers and riders using the FlyTaxi or Uber apps. It said the move was part of its commitment to growing the taxi industry and providing greater economic opportunities to drivers. FlyTaxi's founder Simon Siu said joining forces with Uber was a proud milestone. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Labour of lore as tourists hit all the high spots](#) (2026-05-01 08:58)

Mainlanders began flocking to Hong Kong on Friday as the five-day Labour Day Golden Week holiday kicked off. Many of them visited the former Yau Ma Tei Police Station, saying they wanted to experience the historical landmark in person after having seen it used as a location in local films. A woman surnamed Li, who is from Chengdu, said she was thrilled as she enjoys the dramatic fare that Hong Kong films conjure up on the silver screen. "I have only been seen [the building] on screen and never come close to it," she said. "But now that I'm here, it's like

all those scenes – those exciting, thrilling movies, the chase scenes with all the handsome police officers – are being replayed in my mind,” she said. Another tourist said the former police station had been popular as a tourist spot among travellers online so she came to take photographs of the landmark fixture in Hong Kong's film history. With some heading for some of the more popular tourist hotspots such as Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong Disneyland and Ocean Park, the slightly more intrepid went to Sai Kung's Sharp Island for the unique natural scenery and rich coral outcrops of Unesco Global Geopark. “I am from Shanghai and I like the outdoors a lot, but there is no such unique spot that encompasses the sea and mountain there, and it takes a few hours to drive to go somewhere distant, so I think it is quite convenient there,” a woman surnamed Shen said. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department staff will be deployed in strength to ensure that the 1,000 mainland visitors expected to head there on all five days of the holiday are on their best behaviour. They will also implement various measures, such as distributing leaflets to boost environmental protection awareness as well as guiding kayakers and snorkellers in as well as out of the water in some instances. A woman surnamed Wang from Shenyang told RTHK that the measures are useful, as not all people are aware of the right thing to do in certain circumstances. She added that violators could be fined to ensure a deterrent effect. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Quota scheme set for mega bridge travel between SARs](#) (2026-05-01 08:43)

All permanent residents as well as companies registered in Hong Kong can soon apply to use the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to travel by car between the two special administrative regions. This came as the Transport Department said on Friday that an open category for these two categories of applicants would be set up as part of an attempt to make cross-boundary travel more efficient. There will be a quota of 200 for applicants in each category when applications open on Thursday. “These new open quotas will provide additional convenience for Hong Kong residents to drive to Macao for work, business, visiting families or sightseeing, thereby strengthening ties between the two places,” a spokesman said. Currently, only permanent residents and firms meeting specific requirements can apply. Besides these, another quota of 1,000 – half of them new and the rest reallocated – will be set aside for existing eligible applicants in the upcoming round. Under the quota scheme, drivers are entitled to multiple entries into Macao using the mega bridge starting from mid-July until it expires in 2029. However, the department stressed, current holders of quotas issued after September 2023 are not eligible to apply this time around. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Early queues in Wang Fuk race to retrieve belongings](#) (2026-05-01 08:01)

Long queues formed at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po in the early hours of Friday as more people returned to retrieve belongings they were forced to leave behind when the deadly inferno tore through most of their residential estate. In the latest phased arrangement, five floors in Wang Tai House and 10 floors in Wang Kin House were opened up. By just before 9am, dozens of people had lined up outside Kwong Fuk Community Hall to register and receive the protective gear they had to don before they were allowed to go into the buildings. Many were seen toting

large red-white-blue canvas bags, pulling handcarts or wheeling suitcases. A woman surnamed Chan who lived in Wang Tai House, one of two buildings that were severely damaged in the blaze, said she hoped to retrieve what mattered most to her family. "I definitely want to retrieve valuables and sentimental items like photos," she said. "My mother will not be going up with me, but my older sister and two friends will. My mother is already 85 years old, so walking up 14 floors is way too difficult." A woman surnamed Kwan said she owned three high-floor units in Wang Kin House, which she had been using for both self-occupation and rental. She said she had managed to put the fire incident out of her mind for a while but that her mood turned heavy again when she learned she could finally go upstairs. "Most important is that I can get my son's photos and certifications. I also want to grab my own awards from work," Kwan said. "I heard from my social worker that it is a good thing if we don't get advance photos to give us an idea of our unit's condition. If we don't get photos, it means the condition of our home isn't too bad. "I hope the condition of Wang Kin House is better than what we expect it to be." A man surnamed Siu, who had been living in Wang Kin House, said his parents were among the first batch of owners and that their greatest wish had been to move back into their unit. He added that though his father is reluctant to part with the flat, he knows he has to let go. Siu also said the family believes the government has been very considerate of their situation. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Employers 'missing out on MPF offset subsidies'](#) (2026-05-01 07:58)

Lawmaker Lam Chun-sing has called on the government to step up its publicity promotional efforts for a subsidy scheme that helps employers deal with the abolition of the mandatory provident fund offsetting arrangement a year ago. His remarks came after the government said it had received more than 20,000 applications for the subsidy that aims to assist employers to adapt to the policy change and processed more than 16,000 of them. Speaking on an RTHK programme on Friday, Lam, who chairs the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions, said the number of applications was lower than expected. "Some employers may not be aware of the scheme," he said. "Even if they are, they may not know the application procedure and just skip it thinking it only involves a small amount of money. "I hope the government can enhance its promotion to small and medium enterprises. "Since the government has reserved HK\$33.2 billion for subsidies over 25 years – and only disbursed HK\$40 million so far – I think this resource should be used to support SMEs." Lam also said many of the applications had been lodged by employers in the construction and catering sectors. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Cabbies, fares told go extra mile on e-payment options](#) (2026-05-01 07:33)

The Taxi Drivers and Operators Association has called on cabbies and passengers to avoid potential confusion over electronic payments by communicating clearly with each other. The call on Friday came a month to the day after it became mandatory for taxi drivers to provide at least two e-payment options. The Transport Department has received 65 complaints as of April 17, with the grouses mainly about cabbies failing to offer electronic payment methods and

certain platforms charging passengers transaction fees. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, association secretary-general Wong Tai-hoi said most of the complaints arose as a result of a lack of communication. “For example, I may provide two electronic payment options, but a passenger may use something else,” he said. “[They would say] why can't you provide, say, the credit card payment option, why don't you have it? Aren't you supposed to provide it?” Wong pointed out that even though there are stickers on taxis showing which e-payment methods are available, drivers working different shifts might offer different options without changing the stickers. He urged drivers to make it a practice to make it clear to customers when they board which two payment options they offer. Passengers, Wong added, should at the same time also keep cash in hand in spite of the availability of e-payment options, Wong added. He also pointed out that while Octopus Card Hong Kong has waived handling fees for cabbies using its app for business purposes, it is uncertain whether the arrangement is permanent. The cost of using e-payment methods, Wong stressed, is very high for drivers. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Four people fined on day one of expanded smoking ban](#) (2026-05-01 07:30)

Four fixed-penalty notices were issued on Thursday, the first day Hong Kong's new tobacco-control regulations effectively banned the use of alternative smoking products in public places, according to the head of the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office. As of April 30, a total ban on alternative smoking products – including e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products and herbal cigarettes – has been in place in public spaces. Offenders caught possessing, using, importing or selling these items face penalties of up to HK\$50,000 and six months in jail, while public possession alone can result in a HK\$3,000 fine. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme on Friday, Manny Lam, head of the control office, said that as of 5pm on the first day of enforcement, his office had issued four penalty notices under the relevant law. He added that inspections would continue across various locations, particularly in areas with high pedestrian traffic. Lam noted that the low number of violations was largely expected. "This is largely in line with our expectations," he said. "First, these products such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products have already had their import, sale, promotion and manufacturing banned for four years. "In fact, there is no legal way to obtain these products in society." Lam also credited public awareness campaigns for the low number of infractions. "Given our extensive publicity work recently, we expected that the number of these penalty notices issued would not be very serious," he said. Lam emphasised that ongoing publicity efforts aim not only to encourage public understanding and compliance with the law but also to raise awareness about the dangers of alternative smoking products. "Publicity work is never perfect or completely sufficient, but even though we have done a lot, we will keep doing it," he said. "We hope that through publicity, besides helping people understand and comply with the law, the public will also truly understand what the hazards of these products are." Lam reiterated that alternative smoking products contain nicotine, are not “harm-reduction” tools, and do not help people quit smoking. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Two Sai Kung cabbies nabbed for allegedly overcharging](#) (2026-05-01 02:45)

Two taxi drivers have been arrested in Sai Kung in an undercover operation for alleged overcharging a day prior to the start of the Labour Day Golden Week. The men, aged 43 and 66, were suspected of charging about HK\$300 and HK\$540, about twice the original fare. They were also alleged to have failed to ensure their taxi driving licences and meters were openly displayed. Police said their taxis had been impounded for further investigations. Last Saturday, Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism Rosanna Law said authorities were determined to clamp down on taxi drivers' misbehaviour, including overcharging. The government would not tolerate any misconduct that affects the SAR's tourism reputation, she added. Offenders face a fine of up to HK\$10,000 and six months in prison for a first conviction for overcharging. Edited by Robert Kemp