


Press Review Hong Kong

3 July 2024 / N°246

 Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Consulate General of Switzerland in Hong Kong



Contents

| | |
|--|----------|
| Switzerland | 2 |
| Hong Kong Partners with Art Basel to Promote City's Culture on Global Stage | 2 |
| Swiss Private-Equity Firm Expands into Hong Kong for Mainland China Investment | 2 |
| Foreign Policy / International Relations | 2 |
| Hong Kong Visitors to EU to Require Travel Authorization from 2025 | 2 |
| US Imposes Sanctions on Hong Kong Firms for Supporting Russia's Economy | 2 |
| UN Calls for Release of Detainees under Hong Kong National Security Laws | 2 |
| Mainland | 2 |
| Beijing's Five-Year Travel Permits for Non-Chinese Hong Kong Residents Welcomed by Foreign Chambers..... | 2 |
| Beijing Gifts Pandas to Hong Kong on SAR Establishment Day | 2 |
| Beijing Criticizes UK Judge for "Slandering" Hong Kong's Rule of Law After Resignation | 2 |
| Domestic Policy / Politics / Law | 3 |
| Mixed Reactions Mark Hong Kong's 27th Handover Anniversary Celebrations | 3 |
| 29-Year-Old Charged Under Hong Kong Security Law for 'Seditious' Bus Graffiti | 3 |
| Government Appeals Acquittal in the 47's Case..... | 3 |
| Beijing Official Praises Hong Kong's Judiciary and Rule of Law Amid Foreign Judge Resignations | 3 |
| Hong Kong Police Denounce Claims of "Unreasonable Warning" on Tiananmen Anniversary | 3 |
| Security Tightened for Sensitive June 4 Commemoration in Hong Kong | 3 |
| Western Diplomats Visit Hong Kong's Victoria Park on Tiananmen Anniversary..... | 3 |
| Trial of Jimmy Lai Adjourned Due to Health Concerns Amid National Security Proceedings | 3 |
| Economy | 4 |
| Hong Kong Unions Criticize Expansion of Non-Local Care Workers Quota..... | 4 |
| Hong Kong's Struggles with Smart City Development Despite Thriving Tech Innovation | 4 |
| Hong Kong Rises to 5th in Global Competitiveness Index as Singapore Regains Top Spot | 4 |
| One Third of Hong Kong Companies Optimistic About New Hirings | 4 |
| Hong Kong to Spearhead Mainland China's Hydrogen Vehicle Showcase in Green Energy Initiative ... | 4 |
| Hong Kong stock markets will continue trading during typhoons | 4 |
| Hong Kong Civil Servants to Receive 3% Pay Rise Despite Survey Indications | 4 |
| Cultural / Education / Science / Social | 5 |
| Pride Month Bazaar Cancelled Due to Government Licensing Intervention..... | 5 |
| 94% of Hong Kong Public Schools Partner with Mainland China Institutions | 5 |
| Hong Kong University Tuition Fees to Increase by 17.6% Over Next Three Years | 5 |
| Hong Kong Survey Finds High Family Happiness | 5 |
| Macao | 5 |
| Macao Casinos See Slow June as Chinese Tourists Stay Away | 5 |
| Macao Government Challenges US Tier 3 Ranking in Human Trafficking Report | 5 |
| International Infrastructure Forum in Macao Emphasizes Green Growth and Digitalization | 5 |

Switzerland

Hong Kong Partners with Art Basel to Promote City's Culture on Global Stage

Hong Kong has entered a three-year partnership with Art Basel aimed at enhancing global tourism by showcasing the city's unique culture and attractions. This collaboration will promote Hong Kong at Art Basel events in Basel, Miami, and Paris, aiming to attract high-end visitors and deepen ties with global art communities. The initiative includes immersive experiences at exhibitions and highlights Hong Kong's vibrant art scene and cultural heritage. The partnership seeks to attract more overseas travelers and integrate artistic and tourism promotion efforts effectively. [SCMP](#), June 23

Swiss Private-Equity Firm Expands into Hong Kong for Mainland China Investment

Partners Group, a prominent Swiss private-equity firm, has inaugurated its Hong Kong office, marking its 21st global location. This move is aimed at leveraging Hong Kong's status as a major financial hub to access affluent clients and facilitate investments in mainland China. Headed by veteran fund manager Henry Chui, the office will focus on distributing investment products and engaging with high-net-worth individuals and global wealth managers in the region. Partners Group, with assets totaling US\$147 billion, views Hong Kong as a strategic gateway to tap into the growing wealth management opportunities in Asia-Pacific, particularly within the Greater Bay Area. [SCMP](#), June 21

Foreign Policy / International Relations

Hong Kong Visitors to EU to Require Travel Authorization from 2025

Starting mid-2025, Hongkongers planning trips to 30 European countries, including France and Germany, will need to obtain travel authorization through the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS). The process involves a straightforward application costing seven euros (about HK\$58), focusing on personal details and criminal records. ETIAS aims to enhance border security and efficiency, with applications typically processed swiftly, ensuring minimal impact on visa-free travel arrangements. [The Standard](#), [SCMP](#) June 20, 19

US Imposes Sanctions on Hong Kong Firms for Supporting Russia's Economy

The US Department of Treasury and Department of State announced sanctions on over 300 targets, including individuals and entities in Hong Kong, for aiding Russia amid the Ukraine conflict. At least 21 Hong Kong-based companies and associated individuals were targeted for facilitating the supply of critical technology and equipment to Russia. The sanctions aim to restrict Russia's access to international resources and technology, broadening the scope to include those supporting Russia's offshore financial system and military-industrial base. [HKFP](#), June 13

UN Calls for Release of Detainees under Hong Kong National Security Laws

The UN rights chief condemned the use of Hong Kong's national security laws, urging the release of those "arbitrarily detained." Volker Turk emphasized that such laws must be clear, necessary, and proportionate, criticizing recent convictions under the 2020 law. He reiterated concerns about the law's compliance with international human rights standards and called for its repeal. Turk also highlighted the dangers of new national security ordinances passed in March 2024, warning against their potential to suppress freedom of expression and target dissent. [HKFP](#), June 1

Mainland

Beijing's Five-Year Travel Permits for Non-Chinese Hong Kong Residents Welcomed by Foreign Chambers

Foreign chambers and expatriates in Hong Kong have supported Beijing's decision to introduce five-year multi-entry travel permits for non-Chinese permanent residents. Approximately 270,000 adults stand to benefit from these permits, which facilitate easier entry into mainland China for purposes like business, tourism, and family visits. This move is seen as crucial for reinforcing Hong Kong's role as an international gateway and enhancing cross-border connectivity within the Greater Bay Area, although calls persist for expanding the permit's coverage to include non-permanent residents holding foreign passports. [SCMP](#), July 1

Beijing Gifts Pandas to Hong Kong on SAR Establishment Day

On July 1st, 2024, Hong Kong celebrated its 27th SAR Establishment Day with a flag-raising ceremony at Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai. Chief Executive John Lee, alongside political figures and officials, attended the event. During a reception, Lee announced that Beijing would gift Hong Kong two pandas, the fifth and sixth to reside at Ocean Park. He expressed gratitude for Beijing's support and highlighted recent achievements such as implementing national security legislation and efforts to attract skilled workers to Hong Kong. [RTHK](#), [SCMP](#) July 1

Beijing Criticizes UK Judge for "Slandering" Hong Kong's Rule of Law After Resignation

Beijing has intensified its criticism of British judge Jonathan Sumption following his resignation from Hong Kong's top court, accusing him of "slandering" the city's rule of law and violating judicial ethics by commenting on ongoing cases. Sumption resigned from the Court of Final Appeal and condemned Hong Kong's national security law, claiming it suppressed dissent and compromised judicial independence. Beijing's liaison office and the national security arm in Hong Kong issued strong statements, denouncing Sumption's remarks as unethical and politically

motivated. His resignation, alongside fellow British judge Lawrence Collins, highlights concerns over the judiciary's independence under the national security law. [SCMP](#), June 14

Domestic Policy / Politics / Law

Mixed Reactions Mark Hong Kong's 27th Handover Anniversary Celebrations

On July 1st, 2024, Hong Kong marked its 27th handover anniversary with citywide celebrations and discounts at various venues. Despite promotions at over 1,000 eateries and attractions like Ocean Park, a patriotic fair saw sparse attendance reportedly due to a heavy police presence, dampening the festive atmosphere. The day featured a patriotic parade of fishing boats at Victoria Harbour and speeches emphasizing improvements in livelihoods and security measures by Chief Executive John Lee. However, concerns over police presence and subdued public participation marked the day's events. [HKFP](#), July 1

29-Year-Old Charged Under Hong Kong Security Law for 'Seditious' Bus Graffiti

A 29-year-old man in Hong Kong has been charged under the city's new security law for allegedly writing seditious graffiti on the back of bus seats. The charges include three counts of sedition and two counts of property damage, stemming from incidents in March and April. This marks one of the first cases under the law, which was enacted to safeguard national security and carries harsh penalties, including up to seven years in jail. Critics argue the law is overly broad and has been criticized internationally for its impact on freedom of expression in Hong Kong. [SCMP](#), June 25

Government Appeals Acquittal in the 47's Case

The Department of Justice has first announced its decision to appeal the acquittal of Lawrence Lau in a subversion case involving an alleged plot to disrupt government operations by taking control of Legco. Former district councillors Lawrence Lau and Lee Yue-shun were cleared of conspiracy to commit subversion under the national security law, with the High Court judges expressing uncertainty about their intent to subvert state power. While the appeal targets Lau's acquittal, the judgement regarding Lee will not be challenged. [RTHK](#), June 13

Beijing Official Praises Hong Kong's Judiciary and Rule of Law Amid Foreign Judge Resignations

Xia Baolong, Beijing's top official overseeing Hong Kong affairs, commended Hong Kong's judiciary for upholding the city's rule of law. During a visit to Beijing, Xia emphasized the importance of Hong Kong's common law system and the independence of its courts. His remarks followed the resignation of three overseas judges from the Court of Final Appeal, including British judge Johnathan Sumption, who cited political reasons for leaving. Xia reaffirmed Beijing's support for Hong Kong's legal framework and denounced criticisms of the city's rule of law, asserting that judges play a crucial role in safeguarding national security under the "one country, two systems" principle. [SCMP](#), June 13

Hong Kong Police Denounce Claims of "Unreasonable Warning" on Tiananmen Anniversary

On the 35th anniversary of the 1989 Tiananmen crackdown, the Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) criticized police actions, claiming officers obstructed reporting and issued an "unreasonable warning" to their chairman, Ronson Chan, in Causeway Bay. Police condemned these accusations, stating officers were conducting routine operations and warning a disruptive reporter. During the event, police expanded their cordon due to crowding, leading to tensions with journalists. The HKJA also condemned the temporary detention of Swiss photographer Marc Progin, calling it an infringement on press freedom. Police maintained the detentions were necessary for crowd control and unrelated to the individuals' professions. [HKFP](#), June 7

Security Tightened for Sensitive June 4 Commemoration in Hong Kong

On June 4, 2024, tensions were high in Causeway Bay, Hong Kong, as police detained activists and subdued protestors during what was once the annual Tiananmen Square candlelight vigil. Pro-democracy activist Alexandra Wong Fung-yiu, known as Grandma Wong, was among those taken away after chanting slogans. Security was intensified with police patrols and armored vehicles, reflecting increased vigilance under Article 23. Meanwhile, in Taipei, Taiwan's leadership reaffirmed the significance of remembering the June 4 incident amid international observance. [The Standard](#), June 5

Western Diplomats Visit Hong Kong's Victoria Park on Tiananmen Anniversary

On the 35th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown, at least five Western diplomats made an unexpected appearance at Victoria Park in Hong Kong. They were seen walking through the park amidst heavy police presence, marking a rare public display of solidarity with those commemorating the event. The diplomats' visit comes amid heightened restrictions and warnings from Hong Kong officials against activities that could undermine national security. Despite diplomatic gestures, tensions remained high as police arrested several individuals for alleged violations related to public remembrance activities. [SCMP](#), June 4

Trial of Jimmy Lai Adjourned Due to Health Concerns Amid National Security Proceedings

Jimmy Lai, the prominent Hong Kong pro-democracy media tycoon, saw his trial adjourned on its 87th day after his lawyer reported him feeling unwell and trembling in court. Lai, aged 76 and detained since December 2020, faces charges under the national security law, including conspiring with foreign forces and publishing seditious materials. Despite pleas from international entities for his release, Lai's trial has continued amidst ongoing legal and health challenges, highlighting tensions surrounding Hong Kong's national security legislation implemented in 2020. [HKFP](#), June 3

Economy

Hong Kong Unions Criticize Expansion of Non-Local Care Workers Quota

Two Hong Kong unions have voiced opposition to the government's decision to increase the quota for non-local care workers in residential care homes. They argue that this move poses a significant threat to local employment opportunities rather than supporting them. The decision, aimed at addressing a labour shortage, has sparked concerns among local workers who fear a shift in the industry's workforce dynamics. Government officials, however, emphasize the need to accommodate new care facilities while asserting that imported workers will complement rather than replace local professionals in the long term. [HKFP](#), June 21

Hong Kong's Struggles with Smart City Development Despite Thriving Tech Innovation

Despite a wealth of tech inventors and innovators, Hong Kong faces challenges in commercializing products and advancing its smart city plans. Ronald Pong, an information security specialist, cites reluctance to embrace new ideas and slow adoption of smart mobility as major barriers. Hong Kong dropped to 20th in the 2024 Smart City Index, excelling in digital infrastructure but lagging in areas like car-sharing.

Efforts such as government funding and private sector innovations show promise, but public education and greater openness to new technology are crucial. Lawmaker Duncan Chiu emphasizes the need for better commercialization of research to drive progress. Without these changes, Hong Kong risks falling behind in its smart city ambitions. [SCMP](#), June 20

Hong Kong Rises to 5th in Global Competitiveness Index as Singapore Regains Top Spot

Hong Kong has achieved 5th place in the 2024 World Competitiveness Ranking, a report by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). This marks a return to the top tier after ranking 7th in 2023 and follows a notable improvement in economic performance. Meanwhile, Singapore has reclaimed the top position for the first time since 2020. The ranking evaluates economies based on economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency, and infrastructure, with Hong Kong demonstrating improvements across business efficiency and infrastructure despite a slight dip in government efficiency. [HKFP](#), June 19

One Third of Hong Kong Companies Optimistic About New Hirings

A survey by ManpowerGroup found that 37% of Hong Kong employers plan to increase hiring in the next three months, driven by rising cross-border spending. However, 29% anticipate a decrease, 32% expect no change, and 2% are uncertain. Hong Kong's employment outlook stands at 8%, below the global average. Employers in Hong Kong show the weakest hiring intentions in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by Japan. The IT sector is the most optimistic with a 32% net employment outlook due to AI adoption. In contrast, the transport, logistics, and automotive sector has the lowest outlook at negative 17%. Additionally, 52% of companies have adopted AI tools, with 25% planning to do so within the next year. Positive outlooks are also reported in health care, life sciences, communication services, financials, real estate, industrials, materials, and consumer goods and services.

[The Standard](#), June 19

Hong Kong to Spearhead Mainland China's Hydrogen Vehicle Showcase in Green Energy Initiative

Hong Kong aims to lead mainland China's hydrogen vehicle development, with plans to legalize widespread hydrogen use for vehicles by 2025. This initiative, part of efforts to reduce carbon emissions, was announced by Hong Kong's environment chief, Tse Chin-wan. The strategy includes introducing legislation by 2025 to support hydrogen innovation and establish safety protocols distinct from other gases. The city will leverage its connectivity and mainland support to showcase hydrogen energy's role in achieving carbon neutrality, enhancing international competitiveness, and fostering new product development. [SCMP](#), June 17

Hong Kong stock markets will continue trading during typhoons

Starting from September 23, Hong Kong's financial markets will remain open during typhoons and extreme weather conditions, Chief Executive John Lee announced. The decision aligns Hong Kong with international financial standards and follows broad support from brokerage and securities firms. This marks a departure from decades-long practices of suspending trading during severe weather, including typhoon signals and black rainstorm warnings, which disrupt market activities. The change aims to ensure continuity in financial operations despite the city's typhoon season, typically from August to September. [CNBC](#), June 17

Hong Kong Civil Servants to Receive 3% Pay Rise Despite Survey Indications

Civil Service Secretary Ingrid Yeung announced that due to budget constraints, Hong Kong's government will implement a 3% pay rise for all civil servants, lower than the 4.01% to 5.47% indicated by the latest pay trend survey. Yeung explained the decision, emphasizing recognition of civil servants' work and maintaining morale amid a budget deficit. Fung Chuen-chung, chairman of the Civil Servants General Union, criticized the proposed increase, highlighting issues of high turnover and hiring difficulties not addressed by the 3% rise. Lower-ranking civil servants, in particular, are disappointed, expecting the 5.47% indicated by the survey. Despite the dissatisfaction, honorary chairman of the Senior Government Officers Association, Lee Fong-chung, acknowledged that the raise would still help staff cope with inflation. [RTHK](#), June 5

Pride Month Bazaar Cancelled Due to Government Licensing Intervention

An LGBTQ group in Hong Kong, Gay Harmony, canceled their Pride Month Bazaar scheduled for Saturday after the government intervened. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) notified the organizers that they lacked the required Temporary Places of Public Entertainment Licence. Gay Harmony had not applied for such a license in previous years and planned to do so after being informed. However, the FEHD contacted the venue, iSQUARE mall, directly, instructing them not to lease the space to the group. The bazaar, intended to feature 40 booths and an exhibition on LGBTQ partnership rights, was thus canceled. The FEHD stated they would enforce regulations against unlicensed public entertainment if necessary. Despite legalizing same-sex sexual activity in 1991, Hong Kong lacks anti-discrimination laws for the LGBTQ community and does not recognize equal marriage, though public support for it is high. [HKFP](#), June 27

94% of Hong Kong Public Schools Partner with Mainland China Institutions

As of May, 94% of Hong Kong's public and semi-private schools have partnered with mainland Chinese institutions to promote exchange and national identity, according to the Education Bureau. The "Sister School Scheme," launched in 2004, now includes 935 Hong Kong schools forming 2,933 partnerships. Nearly HK\$130 million was allocated for this initiative in the last academic year, with no plans to extend funding to private and international schools. The program aims to broaden students' horizons and enhance their sense of national identity through various exchange activities. [SCMP](#), June 27

Hong Kong University Tuition Fees to Increase by 17.6% Over Next Three Years

Hong Kong authorities have announced a phased increase in university tuition fees, marking the first adjustment in nearly three decades. The increment, totaling HK\$7,400 (US\$947) by 2027-28, is described as "modest" despite concerns from lawmakers and students. The move aims to address declining cost recovery rates and align fee adjustments with inflation, with assurances that financial aid will support students in need across the city's publicly funded universities. [SCMP](#), June 20

Hong Kong Survey Finds High Family Happiness

A survey by Hong Kong University and Baptist University's social work department shows nearly 60% of respondents rate their family happiness positively. Conducted between July and August 2023 with 4,500 adults, the study highlights higher contentment among higher-income individuals, homeowners, and those aged 55+. Professor Kelvin Wang noted cultural differences in happiness perception compared to Western norms, emphasizing the importance of family well-being in Chinese culture. [RTHK](#), June 13

Macao

Macao Casinos See Slow June as Chinese Tourists Stay Away

Macao's casinos experienced a slowdown in June, reporting a 16.4% year-on-year increase in gross gaming revenue to 17.7 billion patacas (\$2.2 billion). This figure fell short of analysts' expectations and was 12.4% lower than the previous month. Cautious sentiment among Chinese tourists, hesitant to spend amid economic uncertainty, contributed to the dip. Despite efforts to attract visitors with promotions, including freebies, Macao's gaming sector continues to face challenges, compounded by regulatory risks and a downturn in the high-roller market. [Bloomberg](#), July 1

Macao Government Challenges US Tier 3 Ranking in Human Trafficking Report

The Macao government strongly criticized the US State Department's 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report, which categorizes Macao alongside Afghanistan, Syria, and Iran as Tier 3 for human trafficking. The report stated that Macao does not meet minimum standards to combat trafficking and lacks significant efforts to do so, particularly in sectors like casinos and entertainment. Macao's Office of the Secretary for Security rebutted these claims, citing international strategies in place and asserting low or zero trafficking rates for years. They criticized the US for overlooking its own trafficking issues despite categorizing itself as Tier 1. [Macao News](#), June 26

International Infrastructure Forum in Macao Emphasizes Green Growth and Digitalization

The 15th International Infrastructure Investment and Construction Forum held in Macao centered on the theme of "Green Innovative Digital Connectivity." The event gathered over 3,500 industry representatives from more than 70 countries and regions. Key discussions focused on advancing green infrastructure, energy, transportation, and finance, with emphasis on collaborative efforts among policymakers, companies, and governments to foster economic opportunities. The forum highlighted global projects in infrastructure connectivity, underscoring the importance of cooperation in achieving breakthroughs in green innovation and digital transformation within the industry. [EN](#), June 21

Consulate General of Switzerland in Hong Kong

62/F, Central Plaza, 18 Harbour Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, Phone: +852 3509 5000

hongkong@eda.admin.ch, www.eda.admin.ch/hongkong

Copyright © 2023. All Rights Reserved. 612.0 – WMI

