

LIVE BLOG

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Hong Kong Braces for Fresh Protests After Leader Lam Digs In



■ Medical staff attend to injured protesters as they gather during a general strike in the Admiralty area of Hong Kong on Aug. 5.

Photographer: Anthony Wallace/AFP via Getty Images

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Key Points

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Sunday August 4, 2019

Tony Jordan Senior Editor [t tonygjordan](#)

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Welcome to TOPLive. Hong Kong is bracing for a general strike and accompanying rallies on Monday, August 5 after another weekend of unrest in the Asian financial hub. Join us for news, analysis and reaction to the latest developments.



Photographer: Justin Chin/Bloomberg

Tony Jordan Senior Editor [t tonygjordan](#)

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Hong Kong protesters looked to shut down the city with a general strike on Monday after a ninth straight weekend of unrest triggered by Beijing's tightening grip over the financial hub, my colleague Iain Marlow writes. Here's our latest story on events over the weekend: [Hong Kong Protesters Look to Shut Down City; Flights Canceled](#)



Photographer: Justin Chin/Bloomberg

Daniel Ten Kate Asia Government Managing Editor [t dantenkate](#)

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Some news just in from Hong Kong police following the weekend of protests and clashes throughout the city:

- [Hong Kong Police Say 44 Protesters Arrested](#)
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Daniel Ten Kate Asia Government Managing Editor [t dantenkate](#)

It's a beautiful sunny morning in Hong Kong today. The tunnels crossing the harbor into the downtown area on Hong Kong island were clear in the early-morning hours today. We'll soon find out if protesters will shut down major subway and bus connections, which can bring the city to a standstill.

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Tony Jordan Senior Editor [t tonygjordan](#)

Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. has canceled more than 130 flights to and from Hong Kong Monday, it says on its website.

The airline scrapped more than 70 departing flights and 60 flights scheduled to arrive in the city, according to an update at 5:20 a.m. local time.

For details on the flights affected, you can check Cathay's travel advisory [here](#).

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David Ingles Bloomberg TV Presenter [t DavidInglesTV](#)

Just a reminder of the really bad week we saw for Hong Kong stocks. MSCI Hong Kong plunged 6%, which was roughly a 3-standard deviation move looking at market data going back to 1990. Also, the index is currently on the longest streak of declines in over 5 years and if it falls again today, it would then match the 9-day streak in March 1997, curiously leading into the China handover.

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Dominic Lau Breaking News Editor

Hong Kong Airlines is canceling at least 30 flights Monday, according to the latest update on its [website](#).

Tony Jordan Senior Editor [t tonyjordan](#)

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China's state media warned that the central government won't sit by and let the disruption in Hong Kong go on. You can read more about the response from China's state press here:

[Beijing Won't Let Hong Kong Unrest Go On, State Media Warns](#)

Daniel Ten Kate Asia Government Managing Editor [t dantenkate](#)

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China's top priority is to "resolutely support" police to strictly enforce the law and stop the violence in Hong Kong, the People's Daily said in a front-page commentary Monday. As the mouthpiece of the Communist Party in Beijing, the newspaper's commentaries effectively amount to government statements.

The strong backing of the Hong Kong police suggests that China won't yet call on the PLA to restore order. Such a move threatens to erode Hong Kong's autonomy to a point where the U.S. would reconsider the city's special trading status, which could deliver a severe blow to the economy.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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The non-cooperative movement has started gathering in subway stations to disrupt morning commuters. At the Diamond Hill station a few passengers are obstructing train doors and others are pushing them out of the trains.

The non-cooperative movement had called on protesters to begin disrupting operations at three MTR stations from 7:30 a.m. local time this morning. The stations being targeted are Diamond Hill, Lai King and Fortress Hill.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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Pretty chaotic scenes on the platform at Diamond Hill station: Dozens of protesters with masks on are still obstructing train doors. One has a

sign urging others to join them in today's general strike. It's also happening in Lai King and Fortress Hill stations.

Daniel Ten Kate Asia Government Managing Editor [t dantenkate](#)

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The subway disruption is also evident now on the main line on Hong Kong island. Bloomberg reporter Eric Lam says the platform at Tin Hau station is filling up, with a train delayed more than 5 minutes (an eternity on the city's uber-efficient subway system).



Photographer: Eric Lam/Bloomberg

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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China Citic Bank International is temporarily suspending services at its Admiralty branch today "due to social situations." That branch is on Tim Mei Avenue, close to the government's headquarters and where one of the seven rallies is scheduled to take place.

Jodi Schneider Senior International Editor

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The protesters have called for general strikes several times before since the demonstrations began in early June. Yet those tended to fizzle out. With growing unrest in the city in the past few weeks -- and over the weekend -- it is expected that today's strike will disrupt much of the city.



Photographer: Justin Chin/Bloomberg

[Hong Kong Protesters Look to Shut Down City; Flights Canceled](#)

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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My colleague Jeff Black had his Cathay Pacific flight today from Singapore to Hong Kong canceled. He's now scheduled to fly

tomorrow instead.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

Tai Wai station, a train station in Hong Kong's New Territories, is also seeing disruptions, according to Hong Kong Cable TV.

Jodi Schneider Senior International Editor

Taxis are running in Hong Kong and at least one driver expects business to be brisk with disruptions to the subway and bus system expected. "We'll keep working," he said.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

Hong Kong's Labour Department urged employers to allow flexible work arrangements for staff because of the expected traffic disruptions:

"For staff who cannot report to work on time on account of conditions in road traffic or public transport services, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly."

Jodi Schneider Senior International Editor

Hong Kong's Airport Authority just sent out an advisory telling passengers to check with their airlines and "to proceed to the airport only when their seats and flight time have been confirmed."

They're advised to check with HKIA's website or the "HKG My Flight" mobile app for the latest information. It looks like disruptions to the airlines are expected to be widespread.

You can get more detail on the [airport's website](#).

Dominic Lau Breaking News Editor

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Hong Kong's MTR says passengers should expect travel times to be longer on the East Rail and West Rail lines.

Monday August 5, 2019

Tony Jordan Senior Editor [t tonyjordan](#)

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Hong Kong MTR Says Suspends Services on Part of West Rail Line

Alfred Liu Banking Reporter [t alfredliuhk](#)

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The MTR announced that extra travelling time would be needed because of the number of incidents involving people obstructing train doors and security doors on platforms.

I'm at the Tin Shui Wai MTR station on the West Rail Line, and the train isn't moving at all.



Photographer: Alfred Liu/Bloomberg

Dominic Lau Breaking News Editor

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The MTR just announced the suspension of services between Kam Sheung Road Station and Tuen Mun Station on the West Rail Line, while services between Kam Sheung Road Station and Hung Hom Station are running at 8-minute intervals.

Jodi Schneider Senior International Editor

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The focus of protesters this morning will be on "non-cooperation actions" at several busy subway stops, something of an echo of last week's disruptions to the MTR system here, as it is known. Yet this afternoon -- at 1 p.m. local time -- they're calling for a mass rally in seven locations including at Admiralty, which houses Hong Kong's government offices. Some fliers are also calling for activists to gather at bus terminals. So things are expected to spread out in the afternoon.

Adrian Wong Bloomberg TV

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With more than 160 flights cancelled today, the Hong Kong airport is packed.



Photographer: Adrian Wong/Bloomberg

Daniel Ten Kate Asia Government Managing Editor [t dantenkate](#)

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With the flight cancellations and subway disruptions, protesters are showing they can deliver a serious economic blow to Hong Kong. And ultimately that could change the cost-benefit calculation for both Chief Executive Carrie Lam and Beijing the longer these protests drag on.

China doesn't have great options to stop the demonstrations. Bringing in the troops could irreparably harm the city's economy, and there's no guarantee it would stop the unrest. Yet making more concessions could reward protesters for civil disobedience, a precedent the Communist Party doesn't want to set.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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I wonder how much rest some of these protesters have had. Hundreds of them were encircling police stations in multiple locations till early

morning. Some others were blocking traffic in Mei Foo, a residential area of Kowloon.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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My WhatsApp is extremely active this morning, with friends and relatives sharing traffic news as well as stories of being stuck on trains or platforms.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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In case you are wondering how the protests in Hong Kong reached this point, it all started with the government's consideration of a bill that would have allowed extraditions to the mainland.

As China seeks to assert greater control over Hong Kong, the city's 7.5 million people have regularly displayed a penchant for protest.



Read more from our QuickTake explainer:

[Why Hong Kong Is Protesting \(and May Do So Again\): QuickTake](#)

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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Speaking of the potential economic impact, Hong Kong's GDP contracted 0.3% in the second quarter from the previous three months, while growth on a year-earlier basis remained at 0.6%, according to data released last week. Both results were well below the estimates of economists surveyed by Bloomberg.

The trade war and ongoing protests are damaging the city's economy through consumption and the job market, according to Iris Pang, an economist with ING Bank NV.



Sanjit Das Visual Media Editor

Commuters are now rushing to take buses after MTR services were disrupted by the protesters. Here's what the bus station outside the Fortress Hill subway station looks like:



Photographer: Sanjit Das/Bloomberg



Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

Tourism could face further headwinds as unrest continues in the city. Last night, even Causeway Bay, one of Hong Kong's most popular shopping districts, had its first taste of tear gas.

Riot police fired rounds of tear gas after hundreds of black-clad protesters blocked traffic in the area, including one of the island's main thoroughfares and the Cross-Harbour Tunnel.



Photographer: Philip Fong/AFP via Getty Images



Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

The train disruptions we are seeing now are the third in less than two weeks. On July 30, train services were slowed and even partially suspended on the centrally located Island Line and the Kwun Tong Line across Victoria Harbor after protesters blocked doors and made requests for emergency assistance during the morning rush.



Dominic Lau Breaking News Editor

Services between Causeway Bay Station and Quarry Bay Station have been suspended, while services between Kennedy Town Station and Causeway Bay Station are at 8-minute intervals, according to the latest update from the subway operator.

Fion Li Hong Kong Bureau Chief [t fion_li](#)

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Protesters are calling for a general strike today. That's likely the second major strike since June 12, when many didn't go to work and instead took to the streets in Admiralty to stop the Legislative Council from proceeding with a meeting on the now postponed extradition bill.

Protesters were met with tear gas and rubber bullets in Admiralty that day, and it became one of the major turning points in the anti-extradition bill movement.

Jodi Schneider Senior International Editor

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Though flights are disrupted at Hong Kong International Airport today, the Airport Express rail service, somewhat ironically, has been packed on some legs. Commuters are using it as a way to get around subway disruptions, especially from Kowloon to Central Hong Kong.

Jodi Schneider Senior International Editor

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The Hong Kong Airport Authority has received calls for airport staff to join in the general strike. The airport's operator says it has "existing procedures to ensure smooth airport operations."

Tony Jordan Senior Editor [t tonyjordan](#)

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Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam to Meet Press at 10am

Dominic Lau Breaking News Editor

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Other MTR lines are also seeing some services suspended.

Jodi Schneider Senior International Editor



The government just announced that Chief Executive Carrie Lam will hold a press conference at 10 a.m. local time. She has not given a news conference in about two weeks and has not been seen much in public in the past month.

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