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## Switzerland in the local press

**Switzerland ousts France in round of 16 at Euro 2020** ([RTHK](#), June 29):

Switzerland's football team moves on to the quarter finals after beating France on penalties.

**Swiss reject law to help country meet Paris carbon emissions goal** ([ChinaDaily](#), June 14):

A new CO2 law was narrowly rejected, with 51.6 percent of voters opposing it in a nationwide referendum. The rejection meant it would now be "very difficult" for Switzerland to reach its 2030 goal of cutting carbon emissions to half of their 1990 levels and to become net neutral on emissions by 2050.

## Foreign Policy / International Relations

**Apple Daily closure signals Beijing's repression** ([TheStandard](#), June 25):

U.S. President Biden called the closure of the Apple Daily tabloid a "sad day for media freedom" and said it signaled "intensifying repression" by China, while vowing to maintain support for the people of the city, Reuters reports. He further called on Beijing to stop targeting the independent press and release detained journalists and media executives. Apple Daily was forced to end a 26-year run amid a national security crackdown that froze the company's funds.

**Beijing rebukes foreign politicians over Apple Daily** ([RTHK](#), June 24):

China's Foreign Ministry office in Hong Kong accused "a small amount of American and Western politicians" of using press freedom as an excuse to continuously attack Hong Kong's national security law (NSL). It declared that the authority of the NSL cannot be challenged, and added that "Western politicians who are anti-China" should stop interfering in China's internal affairs.

**Hong Kong human rights score plummets** ([HKFP](#), June 24):

According to an index by the Human Rights Measurement Initiative (HRMI), Hong Kong's human rights scores plummeted since 2019, getting an overall score of 2.2 out of 10.

**Staff of Taiwan representative office leave Hong Kong** ([TheStandard](#), June 20):

All but one Taiwanese staffer at Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Hong Kong left the city due to "unreasonable political" visa conditions set by the city's administration, including being required to sign a statement that there is only "one China". The office will only maintain essential operations.

**EU, UK & US criticise Apple Daily arrests and raid** (SCMP, [RTHK\(1\)](#), [RTHK\(2\)](#), [Reuters](#), June 18):

An EU spokesperson said the raid on pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily and the arrest of five managers, "further demonstrates how the national security law is being used to stifle media freedom and freedom of expression in Hong Kong". Taiwan, Canada, Australia, and the UK criticised the use of the national security law to suppress media freedom. The US "strongly condemned" the arrests and called for the immediate release of those arrested.

**NATO chief calls for alliance to 'respond together' on China ahead of talks** ([SCMP](#), June 14):

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has called for the alliance to strengthen its collective policy on China ahead of talks in Brussels on Monday. Stoltenberg said that China does not share NATO's values, "in the way they crack down on democratic protests in Hong Kong", among others.

**G7 criticises China over Hong Kong** ([SCMP](#), [RTHK](#), June 13):

G7 issued a strong statement on China, calling for a fresh investigation into the origins of COVID-19 and urged China to "respect human rights and fundamental freedoms" in Hong Kong and Xinjiang and "those rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong enshrined in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law". Beijing has repeatedly hit back against what it perceives as attempts by Western powers to contain China. It says many major powers are still gripped by an outdated imperial mindset after years of humiliating China.

**Government hits out at UK six-monthly report on Hong Kong** ([RTHK](#), [HKGov](#), June 11):

The latest British report said the National Security Law was not being used for its original purpose to target just "a tiny number of criminals who seriously endanger national security", but to stifle political opposition, with the mass arrests of pro-democracy figures, including media tycoon Jimmy Lai. It said the National People's Congress acted unilaterally on electoral changes in Hong Kong, reversing China's promise in the Basic Law of gradual progress towards universal suffrage, and further hollowing out the Legislative Council. The HK government responded officially with the statement that the NSL "upholds the rights and freedoms... as well as the high degree of autonomy of the HKSAR".

**HK government hits back at ‘unfounded’ accusations on China by EU** ([SCMP](#), June 10):

HK has rejected the EU’s “unfounded” allegations that Beijing has breached the Sino-British Joint Declaration by overhauling the financial hub’s electoral system and installing a national security law. The government also accused Brussels of using HK issues as a pretext to attack Beijing and defended the security law as helping to restore stability after the 2019 social unrest. EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell said Beijing’s changes to Hong Kong over the past year “contradict China’s international commitments under the (declaration)... and have a negative impact on the EU’s legitimate expectations and interests”.

**Chief Executive expects lifetime foreign sanctions** ([TheStandard](#), June 8):

Chief Executive Carrie Lam said she expected to be targeted with foreign sanctions for the rest of her life. Lam said in November that no banking service was available to her and that her salary was paid in cash following sanctions imposed on her and 11 Chinese and Hong Kong officials by the United States.

## Mainland

**China unveils new legal weapon to hit US and other Western rivals** ([SCMP](#), June 8):

Western governments have been piling pressure on Beijing over such issues as Hong Kong’s freedoms and the treatment of Uygur minority in Xinjiang. China’s top legislative body is set to pass a new anti-sanction law on June 10, giving substantive legal backing and protection to the country’s retaliatory measures against punitive actions by Western governments on Chinese officials and companies.

**China blasts US and EU consulates for displaying Tiananmen Massacre candles** ([HKFP](#), June 5):

China berated the US and EU consulates in Hong Kong for displaying candles to commemorate the June 4 Tiananmen crackdown; it further urges the organs of relevant countries in HK to “immediately...stop meddling with HK affairs and China’s internal affairs at large, and avoid playing with fire”. On Friday, candles were seen lit in the windows of the EU’s office and US consulate building, which is next to the residence of the HK’s Beijing-appointed leader Carrie Lam.

## Domestic Policy / Politics

**Police have watch list of residents to arrest if attempting to flee** ([SCMP](#), June 28):

An unnamed source claims that over 50 people released on bail are on watch list, and will be intercepted and arrested by police enforcing the NSL if they attempt to flee the city. A senior editorial writer at the now-defunct Apple Daily was arrested over the weekend after attempting to leave for Britain.

**Govt. reshuffle – Security secretary becomes Chief Secretary** ([RTHK](#), June 25):

On 25 June, Secretary for Security John Lee replaced Matthew Cheung as Chief Secretary, and Police Commissioner Chris Tang replaced Lee. One of Tang’s deputies, Raymond Siu, became the new police chief.

**Opposition party members resign ahead of new oath-taking rule** ([SCMP](#), June 20):

The opposition Civic Party lost about two-third of its remaining district councillors in a new round of resignations. They did not give reasons for leaving the party. The remaining 5 councillors will continue to defend the base. More than 100 district councillors, including those who signed a declaration supporting a so-called primary election postponed legislative election – could face disqualification because of the new oath-taking requirement.

**Chief Executive criticises lawmakers over Gay Games comments** ([HKFP](#), June 15):

On 15 June, Chief Executive Carrie Lam hit out at pro-establishment lawmakers for their “divisive” comments about the Gay Games 2022, which will be held in Hong Kong. Without naming anyone, Lam said the remarks of some lawmakers were regrettable, and will “unnecessarily divide society and even raise hatred among certain sectors in the community”. She added that she sees no problem with the Gay Games. In response to Lam, lawmaker Junius Ho said “natural people” reject those of the same sex, and the mainstream should not be “side-lined”.

**Police makes three arrests over anniversary of protests** ([RTHK](#), June 14):

Police arrested three people and issued at least 10 summonses for breaches of social distancing on 12 June, amid tense scenes as officers tried to prevent any gathering to mark the second anniversary of a key date in the 2019 protests. On 11 June, police had also arrested two people for promoting an unauthorised assembly. Both were released on bail on 14 June and accused the police of arresting them in order to send a warning to the public.

**First national security suspect faces alternative charge** ([SCMP](#), June 7):

Prosecutors win right to bring traffic ordinance charge as alternative should they not be able to prove terrorism under Beijing-imposed law. The first person charged under Hong Kong's national security law can be found guilty of dangerous driving even if prosecutors fail to prove he committed a terrorist act by driving a motorcycle into a group of police officers at a 2020 protest, the High Court has ruled.

**Mourners defy police ban with candles for Tiananmen vigil** ([TheStandard](#), [SCMP](#), [RTHK](#), June 4):

Hundreds of people defied a police ban to commemorate the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown at several locations before they were quickly told to leave. For the first time, authorities closed Victoria Park, which had become the annual rallying point on the anniversary. One of the organisers, Chow Hang-tung, was arrested on the morning of 4 June under the Public Order Ordinance, which covers publicising unlawful assemblies. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken pays tribute to the Tiananmen activist and said his country would "stand with the people of China" and "honour the sacrifices of those killed 32 years ago, and the brave activists who carry on their efforts today in the face of ongoing government repression", adding that "the Tiananmen demonstrations are echoed in the struggle for democracy and freedom in Hong Kong".

**Government to require real-name registration for SIM cards** ([HKFP](#), June 2):

Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Edward Yau announced that people will be required to register their identity when buying pay-as-you-go mobile phone SIM cards from March 2022, saying a month-long consultation showed the requirement had "strong" public backing.

**Pro-democracy party to boycott elections** ([HKFP](#), [RTHK](#), June 1):

The League of Social Democrats announced on 1 June that it will not field candidates in the upcoming election committee or Legislative Council polls, saying Hong Kong has lost a fair and just electoral system following Beijing's overhaul. The pro-democracy group urged its allies to also boycott the polls, but said people should still use their votes to express their "true opinions".

## Economy / Finance

**Hong Kong fall on the list of world's most competitive economies** ([SCMP](#), June 17):

Swiss-based Institute for Management Development IMD said that China's economy is getting more globally competitive as a result of its success in managing the coronavirus pandemic, while HK's has been dragged down by a deteriorating labour market and a decline in international investment. The Chinese economy came in at 16th in the 2021 IMD World Competitiveness Rankings (20<sup>th</sup> in 2020). HK was ranked at seventh, down from No 5.

**HK loses USD76.9 billion due to pandemic** ([TheStandard](#), June 20):

HK General Chamber of Commerce chief executive Leung said that under the pandemic, HK has already lost USD76.9 billion and its economy can hardly recover if vaccination progress remains sluggish and border restrictions cannot be lifted.

**Jobless rate falls to lowest in a year** ([SCMP](#), June 17):

Unemployment rate dropped to its lowest level in a year, falling to 6% in the three months to the end of May, down from 6.4%. The administration said the employment situation between March and the end of May improved in almost all major sectors, with larger decreases in jobless rates recorded in construction, retail, accommodation and food services. The underemployment rate also came down, from 3.3% to 2.8%.

**Hong Kong's exports to China rises 18.4% in Q1** ([HKBusiness](#), June 14):

The value of HK total exports for outward processing in Mainland China rose 18.4% to USD17.3bn in 1Q 2021. Its imports also increased by 16% to USD21.2b, whilst Hong Kong's re-exports of Mainland origin to other places climbed 185% to USD24.4bn over the same period.

**New measure raises stamp duty** ([HKBusiness](#), June 12):

Stamp duty payable on contract notes for the sale or purchase of Hong Kong stock raises to 0.13% from Aug. 1 onwards from the current rate 0.1%. The ordinance will also raise the stamp duty rate to 0.26% on stock transfers from the current 0.2%.

**Banks increase their headcount in Hong Kong** ([Reuters](#), June 4):

Financial providers said they are stepping up hiring in HK, showing that the financial gateway to China outweighs concerns about Beijing's tightening grip. Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, UBS and other banks are each hiring hundreds of people in the city this year. Citigroup said it was increasing its staffing by 1,500 people, double the number of people it hired a year ago. Goldman, which has about 2,000 people in Greater China, expects hiring in Hong Kong to be up 20% this year.

## COVID-19 / Health & Environment

### **HK's air could be as fresh as Tokyo's by 2035** ([RTHK](#), June 29):

Environment Secretary Wong Kam-sing unveiled the administration's new Clean Air Plan with a target for Hong Kong to "become a liveable city with air quality on par with major international cities" by 2035 and added that SAR's air quality improved over the past decade. Wong said the administration will announce more details in its next Climate Action Plan.

### **Hong Kong to reduce quarantine to 7 days for fully vaccinated residents** ([SCMP](#), June 21):

Loosening of isolation rules likely to apply to residents who are double jabbed, test positive for antibodies and screen negative for the virus on their arrival from lower-risk countries.

### **Age limit for BioNTech vaccine lowered to age 12** ([RTHK](#), June 3, [TheStandard](#), June 15):

Children aged 12-15 permitted to receive the BioNTech vaccine from June 14 onwards. HK's other Covid vaccine, SinoVac, is available for people aged 18 and up.

## Macao

### **Macao to close its office in Taiwan** ([TheStandard](#), June 16):

After similar move by Hong Kong, Macao too suspended operations in its representative office in Taiwan. Macao's latest move was preceded by its refusal in 2019 to issue a visa to the new head of the local Taiwanese office. The relationship between the two places had since spiraled downward, the source said.

## Special Focus: National Security Law

### **July 1 march banned citing "grave threats" to public** ([RTHK](#), [SCMP\(1\)](#) [\(2\)](#) [\(3\)](#), June 20, 28 & 29):

Since 2003 up until 2019, the annual march was organized by the Civil Human Rights Front, where thousands of Hongkongers would voice their demands on a variety of political issues. Although the Civil Human Rights Front will not organize the protest in 2021, three other groups have been banned by the police from staging a march on July 1 for the second year, citing risks posed by the pandemic. The pro-democratic groups wanted to march from Victoria Park to the government's headquarters in Admiralty to call for resistance against "political suppression". HK may shut down Victoria Park and will put 10'000 officers for July 1 double anniversary of handover and Communist Party's founding.

### **Secretary for Security says new security legislation is needed** ([HKFP](#), June 22):

In an interview with Sing Tao, Secretary for Security John Lee said that new legislation was needed for areas not covered by last year's national security law (NSL) imposed by Beijing. Hong Kong's Basic Law specifies seven types of national security offenses but the NSL covers only four types. Lee added that the work involved was complicated, and it was hard to see it being completed within this legislative year. He added that some colonial-era ordinances might also need to be revised.

### **Oath-taking legislation: At least 150 HK district councilors face disqualification** ([SCMP](#), June 16):

Hong Kong district councillors could be unseated over their roles in an unofficial primary election when they are vetted next month under new oath-taking legislation, in what would strike another heavy blow to the city's beleaguered opposition.

### **Censors to ban films that endanger national security** ([RTHK](#), June 11):

Film censors ordered to ban any movies deemed to be supporting or glorifying acts that could endanger national security. The government said the changes to the Film Censorship Ordinance were part of its duty under the Beijing-imposed national security law.

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