

Hong Kong : About the Monday August 5 city-wide strike

Monday 5 August 2019, by [CREERY Jennifer](#), [HUANG Claire](#), [LEE Danny](#), [TSANG Emily](#) (Date first published: 5 August 2019).

Press review, updated during the whole day.

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Hong Kong transport chaos as protesters lead city-wide strike: Over 230 flights cancelled, 7 MTR lines affected

5 August 2019 10:06 - Jennifer Creery (HKPP)

<https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/08/05/transport-chaos-across-hong-kong-protesters-lead-city-wide-strike-230-flights-cancelled-7-mtr-lines-affected/>

Hong Kong was plunged into transport turmoil on Monday as a city-wide strike gripped the city, bringing rail and airline services to a halt in some areas.

MTR

The affected MTR lines — parts of the Kwun Tong, Island, Tseung Kwan O, East Rail, West Rail line, with the Airport Express and Tsuen Wan line suspended from around 9am and 11:17am respectively — saw dense crowds of angry commuters pour onto the platforms.

At several MTR stations, including Tai Wai, Central, Diamond Hill and Fortress Hill stations, protesters blocked the doors with their bodies and objects, such as water bottles, while verbal confrontations broke out as commuters tried to board the trains.

RTHK reported that a protester at Lai King Station blocked a train door from closing by lying down and had to be removed by medical staff on a stretcher

The disruptions are part of a planned city-wide strike across seven districts — Tuen Mun, Sha Tin, Tsuen Wan, Wong Tai Sin, Tai Po, Mong Kok and Admiralty.

Airport

As of 9.30am on Monday, over 230 arrival and departure flights on Hong Kong Airport International Airport's website were shown to be cancelled as some staff walked out.

The Airport Authority's released a statement at 00:10am saying that "potential circumstances" might affect the airport's operations.

Meanwhile, the Hang Seng Index – the city's stock-market index – fell by 1.6 per cent when it opened on Monday morning.

Commuter's nightmare

A spokesperson for the Labour Department urged employers on Monday morning to make flexible work arrangements for staff affected by the transport disruption

"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," they said

Ninth consecutive week of protests

The city has entered its ninth consecutive week of protests sparked by a now-suspended extradition bill, which has seen tensions flare over the government's handling of the crisis, the police's use of crowd control measures, and mob violence.

Monday's mass strike comes a day after wildcat road occupations broke out at the end of two separate anti-extradition law protests in Tseung Kwan O and Kennedy Town, with flashpoints at other districts including Kwun Tong as the evening wore on.

Chief Executive Carrie Lam is set to meet the press at 10am.

Hundreds of flights cancelled leaving travellers facing chaos as citywide strike action hits Hong Kong International Airport

5 August 2019 10:59am - Danny Lee (SCMP)

<https://www.scmp.com/print/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3021412/hundreds-flights-cancelled-leaving-travellers-facing-chaos>

Air traffic controllers take sick leave forcing authorities to close one runway until Tuesday morning. Delays could get worse, with companies waiting to see if baggage handlers and check-in staff join protest.

A paralysing citywide strike as part of the escalating anti-government protests forced Hong Kong airport authorities to **cancel some 230 flights** on Monday morning.

Air traffic controllers have called in sick en masse, echoing the actions of an estimated **500,000 Hongkongers from more than 20 business sectors**.

The number of flights that can take off, or land, has been affected as a result, and **authorities said only one of the two runways would be in operation** from midday on Monday until 6am on Tuesday.

Only 34 flights would be permitted per hour during that, instead of up to the 68 per hour that normally take off from the city's international airport. Flights around Asia bore the brunt of the cancellations.

The strike is part of the protests that have rocked the city for more than two months, with protesters demanding the full withdrawal of the extradition bill, which has already been shelved, and an independent investigation into the government's poor handling of the political crisis.

More than 1,000 passenger flights were scheduled to depart and arrive in Hong Kong on Monday, with 511 services departing the city, according to the airport authority's website. By 8.30am, 117 departures and 98 arrivals had been cancelled.

The city's airlines, Cathay Pacific, Cathay Dragon, HK Express and Hong Kong Airlines, all advised passengers to check before they travelled to the airport on Monday.

Cathay and Hong Kong Airlines both offered travel waivers to rebook or re-route, while Cathay Pacific "strongly" recommended against non-essential travel.

For some, just getting to the airport proved a challenge, with protesters in the city forcing the Airport Express train service to be briefly suspended.

Earlier, Cathay Pacific Group, which operates Cathay Pacific, Cathay Dragon, and HK Express, had reduced the number of cabin crew to a minimum to ensure as many flights as possible would take off, as it had recognised a large number of flight attendants and some pilots would call in sick. Airport information showed that eight of the 19 flights to Taipei operated by Cathay had been axed, as were half of the 10 flights to Beijing, while seven out of 15 services to Shanghai Pudong were cancelled.

Only one in four Hong Kong Airlines services to the Chinese financial hub would operate.

In Asia, four out of 10 Bangkok flights were scrubbed by Cathay, while Hong Kong Airlines axed three of its seven flights.

Tech professional Davis Ng, 45, saw his Cathay Pacific flight to Singapore at 2.30pm flight cancelled and opted to buy a Singapore Airlines flight at 8am instead.

"I don't think it is inconvenient for me to change to an earlier flight and to get ready at 5am. The message had already been clear to me that there would be a big strike in Hong Kong today. People understand what the situation is about and the traffic to the airport this morning was quite smooth," Ng said.

Filipino domestic helpers Angiels Rondalas, 67, and her friend Amelia Quia arrived for their 1pm flight to Manila at 8am to avoid the disruption, only to find it had been cancelled.

"Now we are stranded," Rondalas said. *"I have been in Hong Kong for 30 years and never seen things like this."*

"Even on my vacations now I don't leave the house to be safe, we are foreign so we don't go to those rallies. We just go with the flow to be safe".

On Monday morning, the airport authority put barriers up at every check-in desk aisle so it could implement crowd control measures, anticipating travellers would still turn up to seek help for cancelled flights.

It is uncertain if other airport staff would join the strike action, with companies waiting to see if baggage handlers and check-in desk staff also call in sick.

The strike hit at the height of the summer, when packed flights generate most of the profits for airlines, dealing a blow to the publicly listed Cathay Pacific Group.

Shares in Hong Kong's largest airline fell 3.13 per cent to HK\$10.52 a share at the opening of market trading on the city's stock exchange.

The company has been weathering the effects of the US-China trade war, of which it is sensitive to as the fifth largest cargo airline, nevertheless, its shares are trading at its lowest since October 2018.

Cathay will release its financial results for the first half of 2019 on Wednesday.

Additional reporting by Karen Yeung

What's your best way home from work as major strike continues to rock city

5 August 2019 5:19 pm - Emily Tsang (SCMP)

<https://scmp.com/news/hong-kong/transport/article/3021486/hong-kongprotests-whats-your-best-way-home-work-citywide>

Hong Kong has been rocked by chaos on Monday and as the evening rush hour closes in, commuters are starting to think about the best way home. Here's what you need to know.

MTR

Despite grinding to an almost total standstill this morning, the MTR is perhaps the best choice in the evening since its service has resumed and all lines are running smoothly.

FERRIES

The cross-harbour ferry is also running as normal.

ROADS

Four major roads are being occupied by protesters, causing traffic jams on Hong Kong Island and Kowloon.

It may not be a good idea to take transport on the ground, such as buses, taxis, or tram that will drive pass these sections:

- The Mong Kok sections of Nathan Road and Argyle Streets, where a crowd from an anti-government rally has spilled onto the road.
- Harcourt Road outside Admiralty centre, where more than 1,000 protesters are gathering. They are now on the move to Central.
- Lung Cheung Road off Wong Tai Sin MTR station where traffic in both directions is blocked by protesters. There are serious traffic jams around this district.
- Tuen Mun Highway outside Parklane Square, towards Tuen Mun, is blocked by protesters, where a rally is still taking place in the nearby area.

FLIGHTS

Some 250 flights have been cancelled on Monday owing to airport staff, ranging from flight attendants to air traffic controllers, taking mass sick leave in response to the citywide strike.

The key rail link between the city and the airport, the Airport Express, was earlier suspended but is now running smoothly. But the in-town check-in service will be suspended for the rest of the day.

Standard Chartered, Hang Seng Bank close branches as citywide strike, protests wreak chaos in Hong Kong

5 Aug. 6pm - Enoch Yu

<https://scmp.com/business/bankingfinance/article/3021465/standardchartered-hang-seng-bank-close-branches-citywide>

All three note-issuing banks in Hong Kong saw their shares fall to the lowest level in three months as a citywide strike disrupted travel and violent protests continued.

The yuan falling below 7 per US dollar in response to Trump's new tariffs also hit the share prices.

Seven of Hong Kong's biggest banks – including two note-issuing lenders – **closed branches on Monday** as strikes and protests brought large parts of the city to a standstill.

- **HSBC Holdings** said it had closed 10 of its branches at 2.30pm.
- **Hang Seng Bank**, a subsidiary of HSBC, said it had shut five branches for the whole day, while 15 more closed early, in the afternoon.
- **Standard Chartered**, one of the three banks that issue currency in Hong Kong, closed several branches in the afternoon,
- **China Citic Bank International** closed five out of its 30 branches,
- **Citibank** closed two branches an hour earlier than usual.
- **Singaporean lender DBS** closed all of its branches in Hong Kong, saying it was for the safety of its staff.

Most of the banks' closures were in areas including Tsuen Wan, Mong Kok, Tai Po and Admiralty.

- **ICBC Asia**, the Hong Kong arm of Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the country's largest lender, said on Monday evening it was shutting all its branches until further notice.

"We respect the decision of some staff if they decide to join the strike while we need to make sure the branch operation can continue," said Louisa Cheang, vice-chairman and chief executive of Hang Seng Bank.

"We have decided to close five small branches on Hong Kong Island for the whole day today to transfer manpower to support other branches. We also decided to close more branches in the afternoon for the safety concern of our staff. We will continue to monitor the situation."

All three note-issuing banks in Hong Kong saw their shares fall to the lowest level in three months as a citywide strike disrupted travel and violent protests continued.

At the same time, China's currency fell below a psychologically important level for the first time in a decade after its trade war with the US escalated again.

Bank of China (Hong Kong) dropped 4.5 per cent on Monday morning to HK\$27.8 before bouncing back to close at HK\$28.1.

Standard Chartered Bank went down 4 per cent to HK\$62.3, and HSBC Holdings fell 1.8 per cent to HK\$61. The wider Hang Seng Index dropped 2.9 per cent as strike action brought much of the city's transport network to a standstill.

HSBC faced a double blow as its chief executive John Flint stepped down after just 18 months in office. Its subsidiary Hang Seng Bank plunged 4 per cent in the morning, also to a three-month low, to finish the morning at HK\$174. It recovered slightly to close the day 3.6 per cent lower at HK\$174.9. In a results announcement on Monday morning it said its expected credit losses and impairment charges had doubled to HK\$510 million in the first half of this year.

"Banks and all sectors went down because of the slide of yuan and the strike. If [the strikes] become routine, like the protests over the past two months, it will be destructive," said Louis Tse Ming-kwong, managing director of VC Asset Management.

"Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor's speech on Monday morning provided no solution to Hong Kong's current crisis. These are all bad omen and led to the sharp fall of the market today."

"HSBC Group and BOCHK are the major mortgage providers in Hong Kong. The protests and strikes are going to hurt the property market in the medium term and hence may lead to more bad debts for banks."

The yuan on Monday morning fell below 7 against the US dollar for the first time in about 10 years, and just days after the US president threatened to impose a new 10 per cent tariff on US\$300 billion worth of Chinese products from September 1.

Shares of the big four state-owned Chinese banks all dropped to their lowest level in recent years on Monday morning.

- Bank of China fell 2.6 per cent to HK\$3.05,

- Agricultural Bank of China lost 2.6 per cent to HK\$3.02 - both down to their lowest since mid-2016.

- Industrial and Commercial Bank of China slid 2 per cent,

- China Construction Bank lost 2.53 per cent, both trading at their lowest in two years.

- Bank of China Communications, another major mainland Chinese lender, lost 1.4 per cent to trade at a one-year low.

Ivan Li, head of CSL Securities Research, said the yuan's weakness was a more important factor than the protests in Hong Kong as the former would have a bigger impact on banks and companies.

"It should be noted that the recent move by the US Fed to cut the interest rate would probably be bad for the banks' net interest margins," Li said.

Union warns of further strike, as calm descends on Hong Kong after Monday chaos

Aug. 6, 2019, 8:50 pm - Claire Huang (The Straits Times)

<https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/union-warns-of-further-strike-as-calm-descends-on-hong-kong-after-monday-chaos>

(...) **Confederation of Trade Unions (CTU) chairwoman Carol Ng**, who helped organise Monday's citywide strike, told local broadcaster RTHK that more action might be ahead.

*"If there is still no proper response from the government and provided different platforms in the movement discuss further non-violent ways... **I believe it is possible to have another strike**,"* said Ms Ng on Tuesday. (...)

The CTU believes about 350,000 people took part in Monday's strike, of which around 290,000 attended rallies in different locations while the rest did not go to work. (...)