

March 10, 2023

Bloomberg
The Editor

Dear Editor,

The skewed reporting in the article “Hong Kong’s New Normal Isn’t Fooling Anyone” (March 9) does a grave disservice to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) as well as the business community as a whole.

We take strong exception to the article’s misleading and groundless remarks regarding the Hong Kong National Security Law (NSL). As an international practice, every state enacts laws to safeguard national security. It should be stressed that the NSL was enacted to restore the enjoyment of rights and freedoms, which many people in the HKSAR had been unable to enjoy amid the social unrest of serious violence between June 2019 and early 2020. The NSL has clearly achieved the intended effect of swiftly and effectively restoring stability and security in Hong Kong, enabling businesses at large to resume normal operation and flourish. The article’s deliberate disregard for all these facts serves nothing but ideological bias.

To suggest that overseas companies and investors place lesser importance on political stability and security of a place is out of touch with reality. In the 2022 survey of the HKSAR Government, cited in the article, of overseas and Mainland China companies operating in Hong Kong, “political stability and security” was ranked sixth on a list of the 16 most important factors. Only very tiny percentages of the survey respondents cast an unfavourable view of Hong Kong in respect of, inter alia, this factor and such top five factors as the tax system and a low tax rate, free flow of information, a corruption-free government, rule of law and independent judiciary, and a free port status.

With all these competitive edges, and the unique advantages under “one country, two systems”, Hong Kong continues to be one of the leading global financial centres. Ranked as the world’s freest economy, Hong Kong is a free, open and business-friendly international metropolis enjoying the strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world. The HKSAR Government spares no effort to provide a conducive environment in Hong Kong for businesses to thrive and strengthen their competitiveness.

The HKSAR Government steadfastly upholds human rights in the HKSAR. Article 4 of the NSL clearly stipulates that human rights shall be respected and protected in safeguarding national security in the HKSAR, and that the rights and freedoms which the residents of the HKSAR enjoy under the Basic Law and the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong shall be protected in accordance with the law. Any measures or enforcement actions taken under the NSL observe the above principle.

As always, the media can exercise their right to monitor the HKSAR Government's work. Their freedom of commenting on and criticising government policies, which occur as a matter of routine, remains uninhibited, as long as they are not in violation of the law. The media landscape in Hong Kong remains vibrant.

The rule of law is a core value of Hong Kong and the cornerstone of its success. All law enforcement actions taken by Hong Kong law enforcement agencies are based on evidence and strictly in accordance with the law in respect of the acts of the persons or entities concerned. Such actions have nothing to do with their political stance, background or occupation.

With the COVID-19 epidemic coming under control and rapid resumption of normal travel, Hong Kong is once again seamlessly connected to Mainland China and the rest of the world. The number of overseas visitor arrivals in January 2023 increased by about 168 times compared with January 2022, and was up by about 50% compared with December 2022. We have every confidence that visitor arrivals will continue to go up.

The HKSAR Government launched the "Hello Hong Kong" Campaign in February 2023 to welcome visitors to Hong Kong to experience the hustle and bustle of Asia's world city. The air ticket giveaway was launched in March 2023 for a period of about six months, starting with Southeast Asia and followed by Mainland China, Northeast Asia and other markets. The free tickets in various source markets were snapped up within hours.

Such overwhelming response and the growth in arrival statistics are clear evidence that Hong Kong has been much missed, and is treasured and loved, by friends around the world who will not be fooled by the article. They are solid proof that Hong Kong has swiftly returned to business as usual.

Hong Kong will continue to thrive as a cosmopolitan city, welcoming visitors with open arms to see for themselves the tremendous business opportunities and diversified tourism offerings it brings.

Yours sincerely,

Chan Kwok-ki
Chief Secretary for Administration
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region