

HONG KONG

SOCIETY

YouTuber forced to retract claims of Lam's UK trip

Ex-TV news anchor apologises for erroneously reporting former chief executive was in Britain

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A Britain-based YouTuber, who stoked controversy after claiming former chief executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor was in London just 17 days after her term ended, has apologised in the face of photos proving she is still in Hong Kong.

Former commerce minister Fredrick Ma Si-hang also confirmed he met Lam at a Chinese opera show in Sha Tin Town Hall on Saturday night – the same evening the ex-leader was said to have been seen in the British capital.

Ma's account yesterday was in line with events depicted in a picture obtained by the *Post* from a source.

95,000

UK-based Chris Wong Chun-yin – a former senior TVB news anchor – has about this many subscribers to his YouTube channel

Lam, who recently stepped down after completing her term in the top job, was also seen at a seminar at the Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai on Monday, during which Xia Baolong, director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office, delivered an online speech. She did not respond to media questions that day.

The evidence has forced YouTuber Chris Wong Chun-yin, also a former television anchor in Hong Kong, to post an apology on Facebook after he claimed for two days that Lam had been spotted at Heathrow Airport, based on "a source".

"We only relied on a single source and did not make further verification in the process. We were not prudent enough," he said, retracting his original post.

On Sunday, Wong said on social media that a source had seen both Lam and husband Lam

Siu-por at the London airport, supposedly in transit.

"No pictures ... but trustworthy," Wong had said in his post with hashtags.

Lam is among 11 Hong Kong and mainland officials still under US sanctions, with her potential movement out of the city drawing much attention.

She does not have dual nationality, but her husband and both of their sons carry British passports.

A night after Wong's claims, Lam was then seen attending the seminar organised by the semi-official Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies.

On Monday night, Wong continued to question the former leader's whereabouts, arguing she could have returned to the city late Sunday night to attend the seminar, suggesting some news reports were out to "discredit" him.

He also released a voice recording from "his source", in which the person, who did not wish to be identified, said she saw a woman "appearing to be" Lam at Heathrow's Terminal 5.

Wong was a senior TVB news anchor for more than six years before quitting last year and leaving for the United Kingdom.

He operates his own news commentary YouTube channel, which has about 95,000 subscribers.

Former commerce minister Ma told the *Post* he had seen Lam on Saturday night at the same show, slamming Wong for spreading rumours and being unprofessional.

"Wong Chun-yin has too much imagination, how can he write such a plot?" Ma said, pointing out the former TV anchor's actions only "hurt oneself and the industry".

The *Post* has reached out to the office of the former chief executive for comment.

Lam terminated her Facebook and Instagram accounts after stepping down on June 30.

She also said she would refrain from commenting on government policies and would only consider education work if invited by schools.

EDUCATION



Janita Farooq, 17, who will study accounting and finance at the University of Hong Kong. Photo: Xiaomei Chen

University life adds up for schoolgirl who aims to bring diversity to financial world

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A 17-year-old schoolgirl's dream of adding more gender and ethnic diversity to the financial sector in Hong Kong took a step closer to reality after she was admitted to the business school at one of the city's top universities.

Janita Farooq, from the Hong Kong Taoist Association The Yuen Yuen Institute No 3 Secondary School, has secured a place on the accounting and finance programme at the University of Hong Kong (HKU) through the school nominations direct admission route in late June.

The scheme was designed to give pupils with special talents and interests the chance of direct admission to city universities.

"I was doing housework when my teacher called to tell me I got the offer. I was extremely happy and my mother hugged me when she knew it," Farooq said.

"It was unbelievable to me, so I kept on asking the teacher, 'Are you sure?'"

She added her parents were "extra excited" because she was the first in her family to win a place at a university.

Farooq, who was born in Pakistan and has lived in Hong Kong since she was two, said she

developed an interest in the business world in Form Three.

She explained her curiosity about the finance sector led her to choose economics and business, accounting and financial studies as her elective subjects.

"Not many members of ethnic minority communities join the financial sector and the industry is also male-dominated," Farooq said. "Since I have such an interest, I would like to devote myself to the industry. When boys can do it, girls can also do it."

It was unbelievable to me, so I kept on asking the teacher, 'Are you sure? I was extremely happy'

JANITA FAROOQ ON GETTING INTO HKU

She was one of the 47,891 candidates who took the Diploma of Secondary Education (DSE) this year and achieved 17 marks in five subjects. In 2020, she also attained level 9 for Chinese in GCSE, equivalent to 5** in DSE.

But she had already got an offer from the University of Hong

Kong (HKU) before the release of the exam results yesterday.

Farooq was also ranked as outstanding for her extracurricular activities, as she won prizes in public speaking competitions and the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival in her senior secondary school years.

She also served as chairwoman of the Community Youth Club at her school and took part in activities such as visits to care homes.

Farooq admitted the coronavirus pandemic had made studying for exams more stressful.

She said she started to have online classes in Form Four and school was suspended off and on over the course of the pandemic.

Farooq explained teachers were not able to cover some topics thoroughly because of the suspension of normal schooling. "I was a bit scared that I did not have a deep understanding of certain topics and if they appeared in the exam, then I would not know how to answer," she said.

But Farooq added that her teachers organised extra classes in her last year to help pupils catch up, and that support from teachers and her parents helped her to overcome the problems caused by Covid-19. "My parents did not put too much pressure on me and my teachers also contacted me frequently to offer help," she said.

CRIME

INMATE TO SERVE OUT SENTENCE IN THAI JAIL

Prisoner held in Hong Kong returned to own country in first such transfer under two-decade old agreement between the two governments

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A Thai inmate serving a jail term in Hong Kong has been repatriated to serve out the remainder of their sentence, marking the first transfer of its kind since the two governments struck a deal more than two decades ago.

The Thai consulate in Hong Kong hailed the move, saying it marked "the two sides' close cooperation on criminal matters".

In a Facebook post, the consulate said: "In July 2022, the Royal Thai Consulate-General in Hong Kong was successful in realising the transfer of Thai sentenced persons from [Hong Kong] to Thailand, the first ever to be conducted since the agreement on the transfer of offenders was concluded between the two governments in 2000."

The inmate had asked to serve the remainder of their sentence in their home country, it said, adding the transfer "constitutes a significant achievement for both Thailand and [Hong Kong] as a result of the two sides' close cooperation on criminal matters".

Pictures were also uploaded in Monday's post, showing pixelated images of the inmate escorted by several people. In the photos, the person did not appear to have taken a special passage at the airport and looked to have travelled back to Thailand through the passenger terminal and a regular boarding gate.

Few details about the inmate were provided. The nature of the crime committed in Hong Kong was not mentioned, nor was the length of the sentence and how much of it the person had already served. Personal particulars of the inmate were also not disclosed.

The Hong Kong Security Bureau said the policy would help inmates – both Hongkongers serving sentences elsewhere and non-local residents jailed in the city – adapt to prison life more easily.

It would also assist their rehabilitation, as they would be in a more familiar environment free from language barriers and could



The inmate is escorted through the airport in Hong Kong on the way back to Thailand under the transfer arrangement. Photo: Facebook

get visits from family and friends. "To protect personal privacy, we do not respond to questions on the offences and terms of imprisonment of the concerned sentenced persons," the bureau spokesman added.

According to the bureau, from 2019 to July this year, the government received 56 applications from non-local residents sentenced in Hong Kong for transfer to other jurisdictions to serve their remaining sentences. The applications are being processed.

As of July 15, a total of 138 sentenced persons have been transferred to Hong Kong and 47 sentenced persons have been transferred to other jurisdictions since 1997 to serve their remaining sentences.

Solicitor Paul Tse Wai-chun, who has experience helping Hongkongers serving prison terms in the Philippines, said: "The transfer scheme is a good scheme and is conducive to the sentenced person's rehabilitation and reintegration into society."

But Tse, who is also a legislator representing the Election Committee constituency, added that the red tape involved had sometimes been a hurdle.

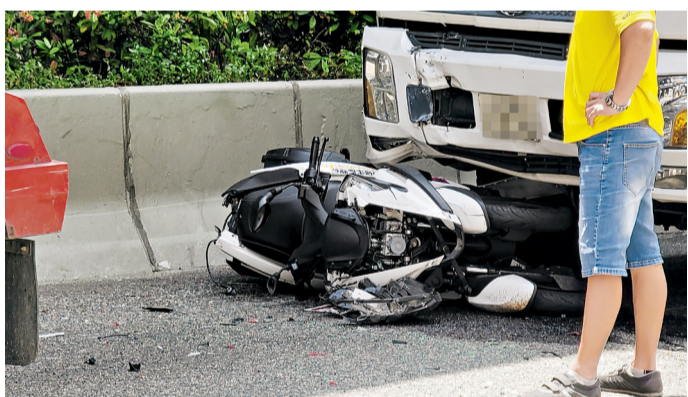
"Having the agreement is one thing. But sometimes, there are some formalities required by the transferring or receiving party that need to be cleared and it may take a long time for a transfer to take place."

Hong Kong has signed Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreements with 17 countries since the 1997 handover, including Australia, France and Britain. However one with the US was suspended in 2020 in a row over Beijing's national security law. The deal with Thailand came into force in August 2000.

In general, such agreements allow a prisoner to apply to serve the remaining part of his or her sentence in their place of origin.

An inmate may be transferred if the sentence is one of imprisonment or any form of confinement for life, for an indeterminate period due to mental incapacity, or for a fixed period of which at least one year remains to be served at the time of the request.

ACCIDENT



The wrecked motorbike lies trapped under the truck. Photo: Handout

Truck driver arrested over deadly motorbike collision

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A pillion passenger died and a motorcyclist was injured when their bike was sandwiched between a delivery van and a truck in a three-vehicle pile-up yesterday.

Police arrested the truck driver, a 43-year-old man, on suspicion of dangerous driving causing death and driving with a suspended licence and without third-party insurance. As of yesterday afternoon, he was still being held for questioning.

Emergency personnel were called when the collision occurred on Kwun Tong Road near the junction with Ting On Street in Ngau Tau Kok at 11.18am.

A photograph posted online showed part of the motorcycle trapped under the truck in the crash. A police spokesman said an initial investigation showed the truck driven by the 43-year-old rammed the motorcycle from behind and the bike was slammed into the back of the delivery van.

"The motorcyclist was trapped under the truck and had to be freed by firefighters," he said.

The 55-year-old rider suffered multiple injuries and was

conscious while being carried into an ambulance. He was taken to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Yau Ma Tei for treatment.

His passenger, a 54-year-old woman, was knocked unconscious and was taken to United Christian Hospital in Kwun Tong, where she was certified dead just before noon.

Officers from the Kowloon East traffic unit are investigating the cause of the crash.

In the first six months of this year, 41 people died in as many road traffic accidents across the city. In 2021, there were 97 victims in 94 fatal crashes.

Separately, a 38-year-old man behind the wheel of a Ferrari was arrested on suspicion of drink driving after a collision with another car and a taxi at the junction of Chatham Road South and Gascoigne Road in Yau Ma Tei soon after 12.30am yesterday. All three drivers were unhurt in the incident, according to the force.

About seven hours later, two police cars were involved in a head-on collision on a path leading to the force's operational base near Man Kam To control point. Police said both vehicles suffered damage to their front and no one was injured in the incident.

SOCIETY

Teen challenges school policy on long hair for boys

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A teenager who experienced gender dysphoria has lodged a rare complaint to the city's equality watchdog challenging a school policy against long hair for male students, sparking heated discussions on whether educators have overlooked cases of mental distress among this community.

In an Instagram video that went viral yesterday after attracting nearly 380,000 views within a day of its release, the teen surmised Lam recalled being forced to get a haircut to avoid suspension from school, adding that the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) was pursuing the complaint.

"The ban is not only discriminatory but also ignored reasons some male students hope to wear long hair. Gender dysphoria has been overlooked by schools and society in Hong Kong," said Lam, who studies at Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Wong Fut Nam College, a subsidised school in Kowloon Tong.



The ban is not only discriminatory but also ignored reasons some male students hope to wear long hair

LAM, STUDENT

ence because of a mismatch between their biological sex and gender identity. Lam had put "she/her" in the Instagram bio to indicate the pronouns preferred for use.

In a reply to the *Post*, the EOC said it would not disclose whether inquiries or complaints had been received, citing confidentiality.

Secretary for Education Christine Choi Yuk-lin yesterday said she believed the school could handle the matter professionally.

The Form Five student had argued in the video that the school's "unreasonable and outdated" dress-code policy violated the Sex Discrimination Ordinance. "I was threatened that I could be barred from school activities or even get suspended as punishment. I was then forced to cut my hair 1½ months ago," Lam said, adding that one teacher had issued a warning that the school would be "overwhelmed" if people decided to lodge complaints against its male students for having long hair.

Lam said the unease over the situation had triggered the decision to file an official complaint to the equality watchdog and was recently told the case

was being pursued through formal investigation or mediation.

Lam also argued that the usual grounds for schools to uphold similar bans were not substantiated, noting boys with long hair would not damage the reputation of any institution and the tidiness of each student did not depend on the length of their locks.

"Schools teach students not to judge others based on the way they look, but at the same time worry that their hairstyle might affect schools' reputations. Isn't it self-contradictory?" Lam said. "If schools don't make changes, will society remain stagnant?"

The teenager said the decision to complain was inspired by a court ruling initiated by former opposition lawmaker Leung Kwok-hung, known as "Long Hair", which found in 2020 that different hair-cutting standards for male and female prisoners constituted discrimination.

The legal battle by Leung was in response to the Correctional Services Department forcing the former lawmaker to have his iconic long hair cut during his imprisonment in 2014.

According to a local media outlet, the school involved had

said the purpose of its dress-code policies was to help develop good living habits and a healthy image, and prepare pupils for entering the workforce.

Speaking in a personal capacity, Dr Rizwan Ullah, an EOC member and vice-principal of Law Ting Pong Secondary School, said whether different requirements for hair lengths of male and female students constituted discrimination depended on whether one's rights had been deprived on the sole basis of sex.

"It's nothing wrong to have different rules based on schools' rationales but the crux is whether schools are able to respond to the special needs of individual students," he said.

Diana Kwok Kan, a sex therapist and a scholar specialising in gender studies at the Education University of Hong Kong, cited local cases she had handled, saying children might experience discomfort caused by a discrepancy between one's gender identity and biological sex as early as four years old.

"Misgendering of adolescents with gender dysphoria diagnosis could induce self-harming or suicidal behaviour," she said.