

Tech conference dumps virus-hit Malaysia, stays in Hong Kong

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The RISE conference has been held in Hong Kong for five years.

A major tech conference has dropped plans to move to Malaysia and will remain in Hong Kong, organisers said Thursday, as the Southeast Asian nation faces a serious coronavirus outbreak.

The annual RISE Conference brings together CEOs, startups and investors and has already been held in Hong Kong for five years.

Organisers said last year they would move the Asia-focused conference to Kuala Lumpur in 2022, as tech firms fretted over Beijing's accelerating crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.

But on Thursday they did a U-turn, announcing the conference would be returning to Hong Kong for its next edition, as an in-person event in March.

"We always intended to come back to Hong Kong at some stage. RISE has grown to what it is today after five successful years in the city," said CEO of RISE Paddy Cosgrave.

Hong Kong officials added that the event would remain in the city until 2026.

A spokesperson for the company behind RISE said it was "no longer feasible" to hold the [conference](#) in Malaysia.

The firm did not give further details, but the country is facing its worse Covid-19 wave yet, reporting about 20,000 cases and hundreds of deaths a day.

Hong Kong, in contrast, has kept virus cases low through maintaining some of the strictest quarantine rules in the world.

The return of RISE is a boost for the financial hub's efforts to attract tech talent.

But it comes as major [tech firms](#) grow increasingly worried about China tightening its grip over Hong Kong since the imposition last year of a

sweeping national security law.

Hong Kong has long enjoyed greater online freedoms than mainland China, where content is frequently censored, but the law has given authorities new controls including internet takedown powers.

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