

PM Lawrence Wong China visit, 18 to 21 November: APEC in Shenzhen, then Beijing talks with Premier Li

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The PM Lawrence Wong China visit runs from 18 to 21 November 2026, with APEC leaders in Shenzhen first and then talks in Beijing on 20 and 21 November. The Prime Ministerâ??s Office (PMO) says Mr Wong is on a working visit, and Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong is Acting Prime Minister while he is away. Here is the itinerary, what he told APEC leaders on 19 November, and why it matters at home.

PM Lawrence Wong China visit: the itinerary

Per the PMO notice dated 17 November, Mr Wong attended the 33rd APEC Economic Leadersâ?? Meeting (AELM) in Shenzhen on 18 and 19 November. He then moves to Beijing for 20 and 21 November. The APEC theme this year is â??Building an Asia-Pacific Community to Prosper Togetherâ?•.

- Shenzhen, 18 to 19 November: AELM Plenary Session, plus bilateral meetings on the sidelines
- After the AELM: a planned bilateral meeting with President Xi Jinping before he leaves for Beijing
- Beijing, 20 to 21 November: a bilateral meeting and working lunch with Premier Li Qiang
- Also in Beijing: a meeting with Beijing Party Secretary Yin Li

Mrs Wong is travelling with him. So are Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan (Shenzhen only), Second Minister for Foreign Affairs and Home Affairs Sim Ann, Minister of State Foo Cexiang and MP Dr Hamid Razak. The PMO notice is the source for the delegation, and I have not seen the outcome of the Xi meeting yet.



Source: APEC China 2026

What Mr Wong told APEC leaders on 19 November

In his remarks at the plenary, Mr Wong said the region is entering a more contested and fragmented era of globalisation. He argued that Asia-Pacific should not split into competing economic blocs, and that APEC has a role in preventing that. He set out three points.

- Keep the region open and connected, building on CPTPP and RCEP towards APECâ??s vision of a Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific, and keep backing WTO reform
- Find new ways to cooperate even without full consensus, citing WTO plurilateral efforts such as the E-Commerce Agreement
- Make sure cooperation delivers real benefits to businesses and workers, such as less paperwork through the APEC Centre of Excellence for Paperless Trade

He also said AI cooperation should go beyond the race for chips and models. APEC could help with AI safety, responsible use, and AI adoption among small and medium enterprises. Our earlier piece on US licence rules for AI chips shipped to Singapore shows why that tension is close to home.

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Why Singapore and China keep meeting

In an op-ed published on 18 November, Mr Wong wrote that ties go back well before diplomatic relations began in 1990, and that the two sides marked 35 years of relations last year. He named three government-to-government projects: the Suzhou Industrial Park, the Tianjin Eco-City and the Chongqing Connectivity Initiative.

He added that the bilateral Free Trade Agreement, in force since 2009, has been upgraded over time and now covers areas such as the digital economy, sustainability and innovation. Singaporeâ??s Economic Strategy Review and Chinaâ??s 15th Five-Year Plan, he wrote, both point towards AI and emerging technologies as areas to cooperate in.



Source: APEC China 2026

What to watch next

Singapore takes on the ASEAN Chairmanship next year, and Mr Wong wrote that Singapore will chair APEC in 2030. He also noted the upgraded ASEAN-China Free Trade Area, which covers digital and green economies and supply chain connectivity. For another recent regional deal, see our explainer on ASEANâ??s first binding digital economy pact.

For ordinary Singaporeans, the practical angle is trade. Open markets and smoother paperwork feed into jobs and prices, a link visible in the October NODX figures. The PMO will publish further statements and photos on its newsroom as the Beijing meetings take place, so check there for confirmed outcomes.



Source: APEC China 2026

Date Created
20/11/2026
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