



HONG KONG SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: April 22, 2026 - April 29, 2026

This report was produced using open-source intelligence analysis. The assessment is grounded in publicly available reporting and should be cross-referenced with primary sources. RSS feed articles are listed in the annex for reference.

Executive Summary

This analysis could not be generated due to a technical issue.

Key Developments

- Unable to generate a security analysis for Hong Kong at this time.
- Please try again later or select an alternative analysis method.

Outlook

Please check back later for an updated analysis.

ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

Source: HK Free Press

- [Authorities to ‘look into’ rubbish, other items in fire-hit Wang Fuk Court flat, official says \(2026-04-29 04:37\)](#)

A government official has said authorities will “look into” the situation after a resident at the fire-hit Wang Fuk Court found rubbish and other items that did not belong to his flat when he retrieved his belongings. The resident of Wang Cheong House, the first block hit by the blaze, told reporters on Tuesday that [...]

- [Hong Kong housing estate Richland Gardens draws controversy over hiring of non-local security guards \(2026-04-28 23:30\)](#)

Hong Kong residential estate Richland Gardens has sparked controversy after announcing the hiring of non-local workers as security guards. The owners’ corporation of Richland Gardens – a government-subsidised housing estate in Kowloon Bay – announced on Threads on Monday that its management company was training a group of “non-local security guards,” who started working on [...]

- [Hong Kong gov’ t to extend buyout plan to Wang Fuk Court block spared by fire – if 75% of owners agree \(2026-04-28 11:40\)](#)

Hong Kong authorities have said they will extend their buyout plan to include flats in the only Wang Fuk Court block unaffected by the deadly fire if three-quarters of the owners agree to sell their properties. Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong announced the plan at a press conference on Tuesday, around two months after the [...]

- [Political commentator to stand trial in Oct over disclosing nat. sec probe details \(2026-04-28 10:35\)](#)

A Hong Kong political commentator charged with disclosing details of a national security investigation will stand trial in October. Wong Kwok-ngon, known by his pen name Wong On-yin, appeared at the District Court on Tuesday. Judge Stanley Chan said the pre-trial review would take place behind closed doors on August 11, and the trial would [...]

- [‘Toothless tiger’ : Greenpeace criticises gov’ t measures at Hong Kong geopark island ahead of Golden Week holiday \(2026-04-28 07:34\)](#)

Greenpeace has called the Hong Kong government’ s planned measures at Sai Kung’ s Sharp Island “a toothless tiger,” as authorities predict a daily influx of 1,000 visitors to the ecological hotspot during China’ s Golden Week holiday in May. The environmental NGO

issued a statement on Tuesday in response to the measures announced by the Agriculture, Fisheries [...]

- [Meta to backtrack acquisition of AI firm Manus after China block, report says](#) (2026-04-28 05:49)

Meta is preparing to backtrack its acquisition of AI startup Manus, the Wall Street Journal reported late Monday, after China banned the transaction citing national security concerns. Facebook owner Meta announced in December it had agreed to acquire Manus, an artificial intelligence agent created by a company founded in China but now based in Singapore. [...]

- [Chinese protesters demand Cambodia unfreeze accounts with scam-linked firm](#) (2026-04-28 04:49)

By Suy Se Waving their national flags, dozens of Chinese nationals protested outside Cambodia's central bank on Monday, demanding the unfreezing of accounts they opened with a financial services firm linked to cyberscamming. Some demonstrators wielded umbrellas and clashed with scores of local security personnel armed with batons, leaving at least two protesters bloodied. The [...]

- [Hong Kong anti-graft watchdog charges 2 men for inciting election boycott, blank votes in 'patriots only' legislative polls](#) (2026-04-28 03:58)

Hong Kong's anti-corruption watchdog has charged two men accused of urging others on social media to boycott and cast blank votes in last year's legislative elections. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), which oversees Hong Kong's election legislation, said in a Monday statement that the two men, aged 38 and 63, were charged with alleged [...]

- [Hong Kong's CLP Power increases fuel surcharge for 2 consecutive months](#) (2026-04-27 23:30)

Hong Kong's CLP Power will increase its electricity fuel surcharge for the second consecutive month amid rising oil prices, bringing the total electricity tariff to 141.6 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh). CLP Power, one of the city's two electricity companies, announced on Wednesday that it would increase the fuel cost adjustment starting from May 1 to [...]

- [Mainland Chinese tourist rescued after falling into sea near Clear Water Bay](#) (2026-04-27 12:39)

A mainland Chinese tourist was rescued after falling into the sea while reportedly taking photos at a lookout point near Clear Water Bay. Police said they received a report just before 11am on Sunday that a woman lost her footing near the Fat Tong Mun Lighthouse and fell into the sea. She was saved by [...]

- [Hong Kong police arrest 9 in joint int’ l. crackdown on online child porn](#) (2026-04-27 12:17)

Hong Kong police have arrested nine men in a joint operation with law enforcement agencies in six other jurisdictions, targeting the production, use and distribution of child pornography online. The city’s police force said on Monday that Operation Hurdler arrested a total of 326 people in March and April in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, [...]

- [China blocks Meta’ s acquisition of AI startup Manus](#) (2026-04-27 10:02)

China has blocked Meta’ s acquisition of AI startup Manus, the top economic planning body said Monday, after a regulatory review that reportedly also saw Beijing restrict two co-founders from leaving the country. Facebook owner Meta had agreed to acquire Manus, an artificial intelligence agent created by a company founded in China but now based in [...]

- [Buildings Department did not conduct flame tests on Wang Fuk Court scaffold nets, fire probe hears](#) (2026-04-27 08:25)

The Buildings Department (BD) did not conduct flammability tests on the scaffold nets covering Wang Fuk Court before the housing estate was struck by a deadly fire last year, an official has told a public inquiry into the blaze. The BD’ s assistant director for mandatory building inspection, Karen Cheung, testified on Monday that her department [...]

- [China threatens countermeasures if EU enacts ‘Made in Europe’ plan](#) (2026-04-27 06:30)

Beijing slammed on Monday an EU plan aimed to bolster the bloc’ s industries against fierce competition from China, vowing countermeasures if it is enacted. The EU unveiled in March new “Made in Europe” rules for companies trying to access public funds in strategic sectors including cars, green tech and steel, obliging firms to meet minimum [...]

- [Over 201,000 moviegoers snap up \\$30 tickets on Hong Kong’ s Cinema Day](#) (2026-04-27 04:30)

More than 201,000 people took part in Hong Kong’ s annual Cinema Day on Saturday, enjoying discounted HK\$30 tickets at theatres citywide. The Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau hailed the event as a “great success.” In a Facebook post on Sunday, the bureau said that this year’ s Cinema Day drew 201,519 moviegoers, with 1,694 screenings held [...]

- [Tai Po fire: Residents return to retrieve belongings, take final photos and mourn neighbours](#) (2026-04-26 23:30)

Wang Fuk Court residents continued to return to their fire-scorched housing estate to collect personal belongings over the weekend. One family said they planned to take “one last photo” inside their flat, while a couple brought flowers to mourn a neighbour who died in the blaze. Residents of Wang Cheong House, the tower first hit [...]

- [Exiled Tibetans to elect government in vote condemned by China](#) (2026-04-26 06:23)

By Tenzin Woeden Tibetans outside Chinese control vote on Sunday for a government-in-exile, an election of heightened significance as they brace for an inevitable, eventual, future without their revered spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. The India-based Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) — condemned by China as “nothing but a separatist political group” — is a key [...]

- [Central Asian gas giant Turkmenistan deepens reliance on China](#) (2026-04-26 02:00)

In the desert expanse of Turkmenistan, Chinese engineers are hard at work at the vast Galkynysh gas field — a mega project that is deepening the closed Central Asian state’s already extensive ties with Beijing. Energy-rich Turkmenistan, one of the world’s most reclusive and sealed-off states, has stated its desire to diversify its exports towards [...]

- [Ramen, nightlife and love: A Japanese entrepreneur’s 55 years in Hong Kong](#) (2026-04-26 00:30)

Ippei-an Ramen & Bar, a Japanese restaurant that has been in operation for 42 years, is located in what people may say is one of Hong Kong’s worst locations. Energy Plaza, a commercial building in Tsim Sha Tsui East, is no longer a lively spot. Quite a number of restaurants have shut down over the [...]

- [2 Chinese pandas headed to US zoo](#) (2026-04-25 07:13)

Two giant pandas from China are headed to Atlanta on a new 10-year conservation deal. Pandas Ping Ping, a male, and Fu Shuang, a female, will live at Zoo Atlanta, China Wildlife Conservation Association said in a statement Friday. The organization signed the research agreement with the United States zoo last year, it said, noting [...]

- [Chinese EV carmakers aim to build up presence in Europe](#) (2026-04-25 02:00)

By Laurence Benhamou Chinese carmakers have quickly built up their presence in the lucrative European auto market, buoyed by technological advances their competitors are trying to copy, and analysts say their next step is to begin producing locally. Largely unknown in the continent three years ago, brands including BYD, Chery, Geely and XPeng achieved a [...]

- [Are Hong Kong’s new national security rules for restaurants clear enough?](#) (2026-04-25 02:00)

The Hong Kong government’s attitude to the rule of law is interestingly ambiguous. It wishes to claim credit for being a law-abiding government, but it does not want to sacrifice for this purpose the achievement of other desires. This implicit conflict is nicely wrapped up in the matter of restaurant licences. In any sensible jurisdiction, [...]

- [HKFP Lens: Hong Kong laundry on streets – where private meets public](#) (2026-04-25 01:30)

Hong Kong is famous for its tiny, cramped living spaces. Many flats lack balconies, making drying laundry a major challenge. As winter gives way to warmer months, many lower-income

families hang their garments and bedding in outdoor public areas on sunny days. Some also take food items like dried tangerine peels, salted fish, and dried [...]

- [NGO Reporters Without Borders says French journalist denied entry to Hong Kong in Nov, slams ‘weaponising’ of visas](#) (2026-04-24 08:27)

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has said that a French journalist was denied entry to Hong Kong in November, accusing the city’s authorities of “weaponising visas” against foreign media workers. Antoine Vedeilhe, who was shooting a documentary for French public broadcaster France Télévisions, was questioned upon arrival at Hong Kong International Airport on November 2 last [...]

- [China’s DeepSeek releases long-awaited new AI model](#) (2026-04-24 05:27)

Chinese startup DeepSeek released a new artificial intelligence model Friday, more than a year after it stunned the world with a low-cost reasoning model that matched the capabilities of US rivals. DeepSeek-V4 “features an ultra-long context of one million words”, the company said in a statement on social media platform WeChat, hailing it as “cost-effective” [...]

- [Passenger dies after collapsing on Cathay Pacific flight from UK](#) (2026-04-24 04:22)

A man has died after reportedly collapsing during a Hong Kong-bound Cathay Pacific flight from the UK. Police said they received a report at around 6.15am on Friday that a passenger had lost consciousness on an inbound flight. The man, 51, was declared dead at the scene after the aircraft landed at Hong Kong International [...]

- [China stealing US AI technology, White House official says](#) (2026-04-24 03:30)

The White House on Thursday accused Chinese entities of a massive effort to steal US artificial intelligence technology and vowed to take action to prevent the alleged theft. “The US has evidence that foreign entities, primarily in China, are running industrial-scale distillation campaigns to steal American AI,” White House science and technology chief Michael Kratsios [...]

- [‘Disaster’ alarm and emergency alert not activated for Tai Po fire because they were ‘not suitable,’ official tells inquiry](#) (2026-04-23 23:30)

Neither Hong Kong’s top “disaster” fire alarm signal nor an emergency alert system were deployed during the Tai Po fire because they were “not suitable,” a senior official has told a public inquiry. Derek Armstrong Chan, deputy director of operations at the Fire Services Department (FSD), testified on Thursday before an independent committee investigating the [...]

- [Oxfam’s living wage for Hong Kong set to rise to HK\\$64 per hour from Oct](#) (2026-04-23 23:30)

Oxfam Hong Kong is to raise the city’s living wage to HK\$64 per hour from October 1. Originating in the UK as a global movement in 2011, the living wage refers to a wage that allows

employees and their families to meet basic needs and enables them to live a decent life. This includes being [...]

- [Hong Kong gov' t urged to make better arrangements for Tai Po fire victims to collect belongings](#) (2026-04-23 11:43)

A survivor of the deadly Tai Po fire has urged the government to make better arrangements for residents to retrieve personal belongings and allow a longer time to visit their flats. Jason Kong, a resident at the fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court and former member of the estate owners' corporation, told local media on Thursday that [...]

- [Taiwan minister makes rare trip to disputed South China Sea island](#) (2026-04-23 10:23)

A Taiwanese government minister has made a rare visit to a Taiwan-controlled island in the hotly contested South China Sea, as the coast guard held drills including a simulated boarding of a suspect vessel. Taiping island, also known as Itu Aba, is the largest in the disputed Spratly archipelago, which is also claimed by China, [...]

- [Hong Kong actor Gregory Wong applies to appeal 2019 LegCo storming riot conviction, sentence at top court](#) (2026-04-23 10:00)

A Hong Kong actor convicted of rioting at the Legislative Council during the 2019 pro-democracy protests and unrest has lodged an appeal at the Court of Final Appeal. The top court is scheduled to hear a leave to appeal application from Gregory Wong, the Judiciary' s website showed on Thursday. No hearing date has been set [...]

- [China foreign minister calls for complete eradication of Cambodia scam centres](#) (2026-04-23 06:45)

China' s top diplomat Wang Yi called for the complete eradication of scam centres in Cambodia during a meeting with Prime Minister Hun Manet in Phnom Penh, according to Beijing' s foreign ministry. Cambodia hosts dozens of scam centres with tens of thousands of people perpetrating online scams — some willingly and others trafficked — in a [...]

- [Labour NGO calls for thorough gov' t probe into worker death at Kai Tak Hospital site](#) (2026-04-23 05:01)

A labour NGO has urged the Hong Kong government to thoroughly investigate the death of a 59-year-old worker, who was killed by a heavy industrial component at the Kai Tak Hospital construction site. A worker, surnamed Lam, was found unconscious at the construction site at around 5pm on Wednesday, police said. He was sent to [...]

- [Scaffold nets, foam boards, workers smoking not within fire service' s remit, official tells Tai Po blaze probe](#) (2026-04-22 23:30)

Fire hazards like substandard scaffold netting, flammable foam boards and workers smoking on site fell outside the purview of the Fire Services Department (FSD), a senior official has told a

public inquiry into the deadly Tai Po blaze. Michael Yung, assistant director of fire safety at the FSD, testified on Wednesday that his department is [...]

- [Health official warns of ‘moderate’ dengue fever risk after Hong Kong records first local case this year](#) (2026-04-22 11:36)

Dengue fever poses a “moderate” risk to Hong Kong, a health official has said after the city recorded its first local case of the infection this year. Albert Au, head of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP), said in an RTHK radio programme on Wednesday that rising temperatures and the imminent rainy season made environments [...]

- [China ‘appreciates’ African countries revoking Taiwan president flight permits](#) (2026-04-22 08:09)

China said Wednesday it had “high appreciation” for African countries after several revoked overflight permits, curtailing a planned trip by Taiwan’s leader to Eswatini, the island’s only diplomatic ally on the continent. China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and opposes the self-governed island’s participation in international organisations and exchanges with other countries. Taiwan’s President [...]

- [Hong Kong pilot scheme sees 10 elderly social security recipients move to Guangdong care homes since Oct launch](#) (2026-04-22 07:57)

A Hong Kong government pilot scheme to relocate elderly social security recipients to care homes in Guangdong province has seen 10 beneficiaries since its launch in October. Secretary for Labour and Welfare Chris Sun revealed the figure in a written reply to a lawmaker last month, saying that the 10 elderly residents had moved to [...]

- [Former Hong Kong trade office director runs in UK local elections for right-wing Reform party](#) (2026-04-22 07:20)

A former Hong Kong trade office director is running in the UK local elections as a candidate for the right-wing Reform UK party after emigrating to the country two years ago. Lee Sheung-yuen, who worked as a Hong Kong civil servant for 24 years, is contesting a seat on Ealing Council in London. According to [...]

- [Taiwan leader postpones Eswatini trip after overflight permits revoked due to ‘intense pressure’ from China](#) (2026-04-22 05:31)

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te has postponed an official trip to Eswatini, the democratic island’s only diplomatic ally in Africa, after several countries revoked overflight permits following “intense pressure” from China, a senior aide said Tuesday. China claims Taiwan is part of its territory and opposes the self-governed island’s participation in international organisations and exchanges with other [...]

Source: RTHK English News

- [HKO urged to set target date for 14-day forecasts](#) (2026-04-29 05:27)

Hong Kong's auditor has called on the observatory to set a concrete timetable for extending its nine-day weather forecast to cover two weeks and to step up public education of its tropical cyclone warning system. In a report published on Wednesday, the Audit Commission noted that there have been various trial operations in weather monitoring and forecasting, including an extension of the outlook period from nine to 14 days for internal reference. The commission noted that the forecaster "had not set a concrete timeframe for the trial operation of extension of the weather forecast period from 9 days to 14 days". "[The observatory] needs to keep under review and evaluate the results of trial operations in weather forecasting, and formulate full implementation timeframes where appropriate," it said. The report cited the observatory's director as saying that "sufficient data covering different seasons and weather scenarios is needed to evaluate the performance of the potential new service on extension of the forecast period before launch", and that the forecaster will make assessments to formulate a full implementation schedule. Among other issues raised in the report, the auditor urged the weather forecaster to better educate the public on the tropical cyclone warning system, as it receives enquiries on the issuance of typhoon signals from time to time. It suggested the observatory publish "more comprehensive information" relating to tropical cyclones, such as factors that are taken into consideration when making decisions on issuing warnings. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- ['E-cigarettes, vapes ban to protect young people'](#) (2026-04-29 05:22)

A government official and an anti-smoking advocate on Wednesday said the ban on alternative smoking products will not impose additional restrictions on smokers but will enhance the protection of young people and prevent them from developing smoking habits. Their remarks came a day before a ban comes into effect on the possession or use in public of alternative smoking products, such as vapes, e-cigarettes, or heated tobacco. Anyone who violates the law faces a fine of up to HK\$50,000 and imprisonment of up to six months. Speaking on RTHK's Backchat programme, Grace Wong, senior medical and health officer at the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office of the Department of Health, highlighted the potential danger of alternative smoking products for young people. She said overseas figures and findings have shown that such products can quickly spread among young people and penetrate schools rapidly with their trendy designs and multiple flavours. She noted that adolescents who have used e-cigarettes are three to four times more likely to start smoking conventional cigarettes in the future. "These findings underscore the significant public health concerns... the product may serve as an entry point to long-term tobacco use rather than a means of harm reduction," she said, calling on the public to stop using such products from now on. Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health chief Henry Tong told the same programme that the ban will send a very clear message to both young people and adults that alternative smoking products are really harmful. He also said the new values education framework released by the Education Bureau

this month for all secondary and primary schools will teach students about the harm of e-cigarettes and bring Hong Kong a step closer to being a smoke-free society. "With the cooperation of parents, teachers, and the Education Bureau, we believe that we will continuously strengthen tobacco control education in Hong Kong's education system," he said. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- ['Purely CUHK's decision to repay loan early'](#) (2026-04-29 04:30)

The decision of a private hospital, run by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), to fully repay a government loan of more than HK\$4 billion earlier than scheduled did not come upon government's request, the institution's council said on Wednesday. The CUHK Medical Centre (CUHKMC) said this week it would repay the HK\$4.033 billion government loan in full by March next year, ahead of its plan to start paying off the money in 2028. It had earlier sought extensions to its repayment plan twice. Lawmaker Bill Tang, who's also a CUHK Council member, stressed that CUHKMC has been recording a surplus since last November, even though it had suffered losses. "I can say it's purely 100 percent in consideration of the best public interest and best CUHK interest," he said. He went on to say the decision was purely determined by the CUHK Council and the CUHKMC board. They believed the decision would be best for CUHKMC's development, Tang added. Another CUHK Council member and legislator, Ben Chan, said the decision would not impact the university's operations, despite its plans to provide loans or bank loan guarantees to the medical centre to pay back the loan. The money would not come from funds set aside for education purposes or other designated purposes, he said. Legco's Panel on Health Services will discuss the repayment proposal on May 8. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [More anxious residents return to fire-damaged homes](#) (2026-04-29 04:17)

Some residents of Wang Fuk Court felt a mix of anxiety and uncertainty on Wednesday, as those living on five floors of Wang Tai House – one of the more severely damaged blocks in last year's fire – began their turn to retrieve personal belongings. During this round of access, five floors of Wang Tai House and 10 floors of Wang Kin House will be opened for residents to return to their units and collect what they can. One resident, a man surnamed Liu who lives on a lower floor of Wang Tai House, described the experience as feeling like "opening a blind box". "A blind box means you don't know how badly it is burnt inside the unit. They only showed me a photo of the doorway. I wish they would have taken more photos so we could prepare mentally for the return," he said. "If they could take more photos, they should have taken one of the bedroom, the living room and the kitchen so that we could have an idea of what we can retrieve." Liu, who has lived in Wang Tai House for more than 40 years – since it first opened in 1983 – said there are many belongings he hopes to recover. Another resident, a man surnamed Lam who lives on a lower floor of Wang Kin House, said that while he misses his home, he feels he has no choice but to adapt. "I do miss this place, but there's no choice. It's burnt to this extent. I'm forced to move elsewhere. I see it as a change of environment after having lived here for over 40 years," he said. Meanwhile, another resident – who has not seen

the condition of her unit since the fire – said she had brought bags with her, hoping to collect as many of her belongings as possible. Residents of these two blocks have until May 1 to collect their belongings. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Extra support for Wang Fuk Court flat visits](#) (2026-04-29 03:50)

Authorities have announced expanded support for the households most severely affected by the fire in Tai Po, as more residents of Wang Fuk Court's seven damaged blocks return to their units to retrieve personal belongings. The operation entered its 10th day on Wednesday, marking the start of the third phase. During this round, five floors of Wang Tai House and 10 floors of Wang Kin House will be opened. Residents of these two blocks have until May 1 to collect their belongings, after which the remaining residents of Wang Tai House, along with those in Wang Shing House, will have their turn from May 2 to 4. Speaking to reporters in Tai Po, Deputy Chief Secretary Warner Cheuk noted that the situation in Wang Tai House and Wang Cheong House is particularly severe, given the higher number of fatalities from last November's blaze. As a result, he said special support measures have been put in place for residents of these blocks. "For units where fatalities occurred, each household will be accompanied throughout the entire process by a clinical psychologist and a social worker from the Social Welfare Department (SWD)," he said. "If individual households require additional support, the SWD will deploy more clinical psychologists or social workers. In addition, the number of accompanying police officers will be increased to two." Cheuk added that the Civil Aid Service will be present on the main floors, while dedicated teams of social workers, clinical psychologists and mobilised civil servants will provide support on the upper floors as needed. He also noted that after discussions with many residents, a clear desire has emerged for another opportunity to revisit their flats. "Their wishes are very clear. After the first round for Blocks A to G is completed, residents of Wang Chi House will be scheduled to go upstairs in batches from May 13 to 17," he said. "Then, once the current round of belongings collection for Blocks A to G concludes on May 4, we will announce as soon as possible the specific arrangements for allowing residents of these seven blocks to go upstairs again." Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Govt urged to markedly raise quota for southbound cars](#) (2026-04-29 03:34)

Business and Professionals Alliance lawmaker Aaron Bok on Wednesday said the government should significantly expand the daily quota for Guangdong vehicles travelling to Hong Kong, saying the current limit of 100 cars is too low. The engineering sector representative said he thinks the quota could be raised by as much as 10 times, to a 1,000 vehicles a day, saying this could help boost the economy. "I believe the government will take gradual steps in this regard. But if you ask me, it's not a problem to raise the quota to 500 a day or even 1,000," he said on the RTHK programme "In the Chamber". "A 10-fold rise might sound like a lot, but once the vehicles travel south, when they spread across the city, you don't really know where the cars have gone." Bok said his proposal to raise the quota would "definitely not" lead to traffic congestion, stressing that "not every vehicle will travel to Canton Road" in Tsim Sha Tsui as

different drivers would want to go to different places. He said the SAR is mostly ready to digest more southbound vehicles, as many shopping malls have been fitted with national standard charging facilities or converters for electric vehicles from the mainland. The lawmaker went on to say that the existing rules require southbound drivers to obtain a Hong Kong licence before being allowed to travel. For additional safety, he said authorities could subject them to extra tests on important traffic regulations in the SAR, such as no parking by double yellow lines, no crossing double white lines and traffic signs for no entry zones. Bok raised similar questions in Legco. In a written reply to the legislature, transport minister Mable Chan said it plans to expand the quota in an orderly and gradual manner. "[The SAR government] is planning to progressively expand the scope of the scheme from the current four cities in Guangdong Province... to other Guangdong cities after six months of implementation, with a view to taking forward the Southbound Travel Scheme in a prudent and manageable manner," she said. Factors at play, the secretary noted, include the capacities of port facilities, local road traffic and support facilities such as electric vehicle chargers. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Wang Fuk Court residents make long climbs back home](#) (2026-04-28 14:05)

Dozens of Wang Fuk Court residents made long climbs back to their fire-ravaged homes on Tuesday to salvage what's left of their belongings, spending around two and a half hours on average in the buildings once engulfed in flames. Higher floors of Wang Cheong House and Wang Tao House were made available for people to return, with a total of 498 individuals making trips to the Tai Po housing estate for the day. The government said residents spent around two hours and 33 minutes on average inside the blocks. There were seven cases requesting police assistance in connection with suspected missing property such as watches, jewellery, cash and gold accessories, and officers were able to recover the belongings in one instance. In four other cases, there were no signs of ransacking and the residents could not provide details on the belongings concerned. The force would further investigate the remaining cases. There was also one case involving a resident seeking help after feeling unwell. Residents of Wang Tai House and Wang Kin House would be allowed to return to retrieve their belongings from Wednesday. Edited by Priscilla Ng

- [Govt announces buyout plan for Wang Chi House owners](#) (2026-04-28 10:50)

The government said on Tuesday it will consider expanding the buyout plan for Wang Fuk Court to cover the only building in the residential estate not to have been affected by November's inferno. That came as homeowners in the block, Wang Chi House, reached a high level of consensus on one of the options being offered up by the government on their rehousing. About 77 percent of homeowners in the block expressed preliminary support for the sale of their homes to the government. Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong said at least 75 percent of the owners must sign a letter of acceptance to officially confirm their interest by June 30 for the offer to be binding. Residents of Wang Chi House, he said, will face a lot of difficulties if they wish to remain, even though the fast-spreading fire left their block untouched. "In terms of maintenance issues, they will have to put up quite a bit of money in order to carry out all the

maintenance works necessary," he said. "And there are also fundamental problems relating to the underlying lease, relating to the underlying deed of mutual covenant, which if they want to modify under the current law, it requires the agreement of each and every one of the 1,984 households, which is really, really very difficult to reach." But Wong stressed that the government was not trying to force homeowners to take up the offer. "We do think the proposal is a good one for them... but it doesn't mean that we'd like to force them to accept the proposal," he said. "At the end of the day, it is their decision, having regard to their own circumstances. "But we do think that what we have put on the table is very reasonable and should actually be quite attractive." The government is offering the same deal to Wang Chi House flat owners as that for the seven blocks directly affected by the fire: HK\$8,000 per square foot for flats for which the land premium had not been paid and HK\$10,500 for those who have had their premium paid. The acquisition is expected to cost HK\$1 billion for Wang Chi House, Wong said. Officials also announced that its former residents will get to return home again between May 13 and 17 to collect their personal belongings. Four people will be permitted to make multiple trips during the designated three-hour time slot. "On the first day, the first seven levels will be opened, starting from the lower floors. Following that, six additional floors will be opened each day for the next four days," Deputy Chief Secretary Warner Cheuk said. People who used to live in the other seven blocks will also be allowed to make a second trip back to their flats, Cheuk added, and arrangements for them to do so will be announced in due course. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [HK export value rises at fastest pace in over 5 years](#) (2026-04-28 09:44)

The value of Hong Kong's exports expanded at their fastest pace in more than five years, rising by 35.8 percent year on year in March thanks to robust demand in AI-related electronic products, according to official statements. Figures released by the Census and Statistics Department on Tuesday showed that the value of the city's outbound shipments stood at HK\$618.4 billion, compared with the HK\$408.8 billion seen in February when the year on year increase stood at 24.7 percent. It also marked the fastest rise since January 2021. Meanwhile, the value of imported goods rose by 41.2 percent year on year in March to HK\$707.5 billion, after an annual increase of around 30 percent a month earlier. The latest figures left the city with a trade deficit of HK\$89.1 billion, or about 12.6 percent of the value of imports of goods, in March. Commenting on the figures, a government spokesperson noted the city's exports "continued to stage a strong performance" during the period, but warned about the outlook ahead. "The heightened geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have led to an upsurge in international energy prices, posing downside risk to the near-term global economic outlook, with potential disruptions to global trade flows and supply chains," the spokesperson said. "Nonetheless, global demand for AI-related electronic products remains robust and should provide staunch support to the performance of Hong Kong's merchandise exports." Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK Disneyland shows its magic with debt-free first](#) (2026-04-28 08:23)

Hong Kong Disneyland on Tuesday said it had fully repaid all shareholder loans to achieve zero debt for the first time by the end of its latest fiscal year – a major milestone that managing director Tim Sypko said reflected the resort’s strengthening financial health. Unveiling the park’s annual performance review, Sypko reported a net profit of HK\$536 million on revenue of HK\$8.69 billion for the 2024-25 fiscal year ending on September 27, 2025. In the previous fiscal year, the theme park achieved an historic net profit of HK\$838 million. "These accomplishments are especially notable given the rapid resumption of Hong Kong’s outbound travel, ongoing macroeconomic uncertainty, as well as the extreme weather conditions Hong Kong experienced in 2025, all of which have influenced travel patterns and visit intent," he said. Despite those challenges, Sypko said, total annual attendance at the theme park reached 7.5 million while per capita guest spending rose two percent year on year to set a new record. Overall hotel occupancy also jumped six percentage points to 79 percent. The theme park, Sypko pointed out, remains one of Hong Kong’s largest tourism and entertainment employers, with roughly 9,000 full-time and part-time staff on its payroll during the fiscal year. On the expansion front, Sypko noted that new Pixar and Marvel-themed attractions are already under construction, with the experience revolving around the fabled animation studio scheduled to launch next year. Looking ahead to the upcoming Labour Day Golden Week, he said the park is optimistic about visitor numbers from the mainland, adding that hotel occupancy is nearly full. "We are nothing but welcoming of all those guests to come visit Hong Kong Disneyland. The strength of our brand, the strength of our experience [and] the record level of revisit intent," he said. "These are powerful indicators that we expect to play well with this holiday." Sypko also emphasised the importance of a diverse guest mix, noting that the team will lean into different markets as appropriate. "Supported by a growing base of Disney fans across key markets and a strong pipeline of new and innovative offerings, Hong Kong Disneyland is optimistic about its long-term prospects and confident in its important role as an international travel destination for Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area," he said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Novel tech' fabrics, apricot wine get fair go in HK](#) (2026-04-28 08:14)

Mainland companies are hoping to tap into overseas markets as they showcase cutting-edge products and technologies at the city's trade fairs amid geopolitical risks and trade uncertainties. Their remarks came as some 5,600 exhibitors joined seven "mega" trade fairs at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai and AsiaWorld-Expo, which kicked off on Monday and would run until Thursday. The trade shows cover housewares, fashion, printing and packaging, premium gifts, as well as intellectual properties. First-time exhibitors from the mainland included those from provinces such as Xinjiang, Shanxi, Zhejiang and Jiangsu and cities like Wuhan and Quanzhou. Mary Ma – founder of the Hangzhou-based Textile Library, which focuses on using technologies to give a modern touch to fabrics with Chinese features – said she hoped the move to join a trade show this time, her company's second this year, could lead to more international exposure. "My inspiration mainly came from these traditional Chinese style patterns, and I hope to present them in a different way, so I created these new series," she told RTHK. "I hope that through the trade fairs this time, we can bring the new

series all over the world because we might encounter more foreign buyers here, thereby enabling Chinese material brands to go global." Founded in 2015, the company also serves as a non-profit platform to "archive" some 5,000 fabrics, including those that can change colours based on different lighting and temperatures, that incorporate what she describes as "novel technologies". When asked if she has observed any increase in inquiries from overseas buyers, following a wave of "China maxxing" or "Becoming Chinese" social media trends in Western countries, Ma preferred to stress that "it's important to also learn more about Western lifestyles— so as to be able to expand there". "Many people thought the East was full of mystery or exotic charms, but from a business perspective you must try to understand their way of life too," she said. "I don't merely hope that these raw materials and products from China will be tourist-centric items, I hope they can truly be integrated into people's daily lives overseas. " I hope to become one of the leaders in the lifestyle space and let people experience that the movement is towards being 'Creative in China' now, instead of 'Made in China'." The company is also collaborating with Thailand weaving factory, Thai Num Choke Textile, to explore opportunities in Southeast Asia. Thai Num's assistant manager Kamin Pongsarojanavit said: "I found a lot of interesting fabrics, special fabrics that we don't have in Thailand or that we don't have the capability to produce in Thailand, so we're starting to import some of her fabrics in the local market." Wang Jinxiang, chief executive of Shanxi Silin Agricultural Development, a young company that develops apricot fruit wine, said the company hopes to further expand overseas as well as in the Hong Kong market. "In fact, the apricots from our local Yanggao county are quite famous in the domestic market and are ranked among the top in the whole country," she said. "We are becoming more and more confident and we have already exported products to Sweden and France. We hope the events this time can further expand our market scale." With the company chalking up 57 million yuan in sales in the second half of last year, Wang said around 40 percent of sales now come from overseas and that the firm is now in the process of striking deals with a South Korean company. When asked if the latest uncertainty in the Middle East might affect business planning and development, Wang acknowledged concerns over shipping costs but said the European market is still full of potential, "especially in France, as they have a strong appreciation for such refined, original and traceable products". "Our wine's aroma and taste also suit their dietary preferences, and some are used by Michelin-starred chefs there to match with their cuisines," Wang said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Fanling Bypass to open to motorists on May 3](#) (2026-04-28 05:44)

The eastern section of the new Fanling Bypass will open to motorists on Sunday at 8am, marking the first major transport infrastructure project to be completed under the Northern Metropolis development. The four-kilometre dual two-lane carriageway that connects Fanling Highway to the Fanling North New Development Area will cut travel time by 10 minutes, as motorists travelling to and from Kowloon will no longer have to pass through the busy roads in Sheung Shui and Fanling town centres. The construction of the bypass also marked the first time the horizontal bridge rotation method had been deployed to allow a section of the bypass to span across the East Rail Line. Chief Engineer Pakin Cheung, from the Civil Engineering and

Development Department, said the method allowed workers to first build the structure in a temporary position, before rotating it into its final placement in just two nights' time. "The aim mainly is to enhance speed and efficiency. As the bridge spans across the East Rail Line, we can only carry out works at night," he said. "If we build the prefabricated components one by one each day, it can take 100 to 200 nights." Moreover, the department also highlighted the use of China-made S960 ultra-high strength steel in a cycle track and pedestrian bridge at the Lung Yeuk Tau Interchange. Cheung said the strength of such steel is about three times higher than the conventional types. "Compared to usual concrete structures, we saved 30 percent of construction cost. What are the main reasons? Because it is lighter. Material-wise, it is more expensive," he said. "But because it is lighter, the foundation cost was reduced, and the time needed for construction would also drastically reduce." Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Geopark patrols to be stepped up for Golden Week surge](#) (2026-04-28 04:52)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department on Tuesday said it would beef up manpower at a tourist hotspot in Sai Kung during the Labour Day Golden Week, when 1,000 visitors are expected to flock there each day. Sharp Island – about 15 minutes by boat from Sai Kung Pier and part of Hong Kong's UNESCO Global Geopark – is a popular destination for snorkellers given the highly diverse range of coral species to be found in the pristine waters off its shore. Assistant director Jim Chu said 600 to 800 visitors normally come to the island during weekends and public holidays, but the figure is estimated to surge during the May 1 to May 5 holiday. "On the island itself, 11 staff members will be responsible for patrols, giving out advice, as well as educating visitors," he said. "On the water, there will be five guides – two for snorkellers and three for kayakers – to help us manage the coral area." Staff will be stationed on the island from 9am to 6pm each day until the final kaito ferry departs. Drones will also be used to conduct hourly patrols to keep a lookout for actions that threaten marine ecology, Chu added. Apart from trilingual broadcasts to remind revellers not to step on corals, senior marine conservation officer Janet Lee said the department would also be distributing water-proof maps to point out spots that are unsuitable for snorkellers to enter and exit the water. "In research that we carried out on coral baselines with the World Wide Fund for Nature since the end of last year, we found out about the distribution of corals at snorkelling or diving areas, and we designed a coral-friendly route map based on the data," she said. "[The map] labels areas with dense corals and shallow waters where we least want people to enter or exit the water as corals are most vulnerable." In the long run, the department is looking to draft laws to protect the ecological environment. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HKUST assures med complex, talent can advance together](#) (2026-04-28 03:53)

The president of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) on Tuesday expressed confidence that the construction of a new medical research complex and the recruitment of top-tier talent could move forward simultaneously, ahead of the facility's planned opening in 2028. A medical education and research complex is now under construction at the university's Clear Water Bay campus, following the government's approval last

November to establish the city's third medical school. The complex will house the university's new School of Medicine and play a key role in supporting teaching and research during its initial phase. Speaking to reporters after the groundbreaking ceremony for the complex on Tuesday, Nancy Ip said the new medical school had already drawn strong interest from international medical professionals. She noted that seven clinical professors have joined so far, and positive responses have come from individuals in the United States, Europe, Australia and Singapore who are keen to join the university. Ip said she is highly confident that the future medical school's professors will bring international experience. She also highlighted the potential for collaboration between the third medical school and the city's two existing medical schools, which could enhance Hong Kong's contributions to innovative healthcare. Regarding tuition fees and curriculum design, Ip said the university would refer to industry standards. "We will benchmark against the two existing outstanding medical schools and also benchmark against other medical schools in the region. That is an ongoing process," she said. Ip added that HKUST graduates will be both clinically excellent and technologically adept, ready to serve the public as safe, competent and future-ready doctors who can leverage new technologies to improve patient care. Meanwhile, HKUST Council Chairman Harry Shum said the purpose of the third medical school is to provide more medical talent to serve the city's community. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [CATL prices shares at low end of range at HK\\$628](#) (2026-04-28 03:33)

China's Contemporary Amperex Technology Company Limited (CATL) has priced its Hong Kong share sale at the lower end of the indicated range, raising HK\$39.19 billion, according to an exchange filing on Tuesday. CATL, the world's largest EV battery maker, is offering 62.4 million new H shares at HK\$628.20 each, representing a seven percent discount to the stock's last close. CATL has launched the share sale in Hong Kong as it seeks to secure capital with its share price still elevated amid overseas expansion and intensifying competition in China's EV market. The term sheet showed that the new shares would be offered at a range between HK\$628.20 and HK\$651.80 each. The company said proceeds raised from the share sale would be used for the construction of global new energy projects and the layout of zero-carbon business, research and development investment and daily working capital, among others. (Reuters) Edited by Tony Sabine

- [New med school to train next generation of doctors: CE](#) (2026-04-28 02:48)

Chief Executive John Lee on Tuesday said Hong Kong's newest medical school will help train a new generation of doctors and help elevate the SAR's research and medical education standards. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) received government approval last November to establish the SAR's third medical school. As part of the initiative, the university is building a dedicated medical education and research complex to house its School of Medicine, which will support teaching and research during the school's initial phase. Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the complex on Tuesday, Lee emphasised that the new medical school would improve the quality, efficiency and capacity of the city's

healthcare and medical services. “It will increase local doctor training, easing manpower shortages,” he said. “It will help us meet the challenges of an ageing population. Beyond these, HKUST’s medical school will develop differently from our two existing ones.” He explained that this differentiation would “create synergy, drive innovation, generate multiplier effects and raise our medical education capabilities”. “Hong Kong is fast emerging as an international centre for medical training, research and innovation,” he said. “Building a third medical school will get us there that much faster. We are moving decisively to bring these benefits to Hong Kong.” The chief executive said that he approved the university’s proposal last year to launch a four-year graduate entry medical programme offering a combined Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery degree. The first cohort, he said, will consist of 50 students, with classes beginning in the 2028-2029 academic year. Lee noted that the government has established three working groups under a task force to ensure the new medical school’s success. “The members include relevant government departments and outside experts, such as the chairman of the Medical Council of Hong Kong, these groups will now work with HKUST on every stage of implementation, advising curriculum, finances and more,” he said. “I’m sure HKUST will also work closely with the Medical Council to complete course accreditation and advance all fronts. Our goal is clear: to ensure that the new medical school and its teaching hospital become a key pillar of Hong Kong’s medical teaching and service system.” The eight-storey complex, Lee said, will serve as one of the medical school’s core facilities. It is scheduled for completion by mid-2028 – just in time to welcome the first cohort of students. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [CUHK Medical Centre to repay HK\\$4bn govt loan early](#) (2026-04-28 01:53)

A private hospital run by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has said it will fully pay back a government loan of more than HK\$4 billion ahead of schedule, though authorities said they never made such a repayment request. The CUHK Medical Centre (CUHKMC) in Sha Tin had suffered losses and sought extensions to its repayment plan twice, but the hospital says its financials have since improved. “As the hospital’s been implementing various measures to boost operations, and cost management and control, its financial situation has gradually stabilised,” CUHKMC said in a statement published on Monday. The university plans to provide loans or bank loan guarantees to the hospital to support the repayment of the HK\$4.033 billion government loan by March of next year. In a statement, a government spokesperson said authorities never asked the hospital to settle the loan early. “The proposal for early repayment was initiated jointly by the CUHK and the CUHKMC to the government. Having taken into account various considerations, the government has agreed to the proposal in principle,” the statement said. Legco’s Panel on Health Services will discuss the repayment proposal on May 8. Edited by Altis Wong

- [Strong buying appetite at trade fairs despite war](#) (2026-04-27 13:34)

Traders from around the world attending seven “mega” fairs in Hong Kong, including those from the Middle East, said their buying appetite remains strong despite the ongoing conflict in

the Gulf region that sent shockwaves through international supply chains. The trade fairs, ranging from lifestyle to intellectual properties, opened on Monday at the Convention and Exhibition Centre and AsiaWorld-Expo where thousands of exhibitors from dozens of countries and regions showcase their latest designs. Nitin Chaudhry, managing director at Fotokad Advertising Services which is based in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, said it's mostly business as usual even though cost has risen because of the Iran war. "And if we are booking any containers right now, yes, they are more expensive than earlier, but it's not something that cannot be absorbed. I'm sure as the situation improves, these charges would come to normalise as well," he said. Juzar Basrai, director at Wajihee Trading Co. which imports corporate gifts in Dubai, UAE, said while it may cost more to import from the SAR and the mainland, their buying interest remains strong. "It's still a story that is unfolding right now, but we stay committed to both Dubai, UAE, and to Hong Kong, as well as the mainland. Our business interests are growing stronger every year," he said. Mohamed Arif, managing director at AHA Trading Co, which also specialises in importing gifts and premiums, believes business ties between the Middle East and the SAR and the mainland will remain close despite the uncertainties arising from the war. "We are looking for new products from both Hong Kong and the mainland, especially Hong Kong because of the quality products," he said. In addition to business executives from the Middle East, merchants from other parts of the world said they too want to build stronger business ties with China and the region. Daniela Dalla Valle, directrice generale at retailer EK France, told RTHK that while the Iran war has "significantly" affected the industry, her company is still keen to explore houseware products from the mainland, the SAR and Asia in general, citing the region's "innovation, style, and cost". "Because I consider that in Asia... you are very fast in developing innovative products, and that's why we came," she said. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [71 arrested as 136 scammed of HK\\$530m](#) (2026-04-27 10:29)

Seventy-one people have been arrested this month in connection with 66 scam and money-laundering cases that saw 136 victims tricked into parting with more than HK\$530 million. Speaking on Monday, Inspector Julian Leung from the Hong Kong Island regional technology and financial crime unit said the suspects – 49 men and 22 women aged between 20 and 76 – were arrested for alleged money laundering and obtaining property by deception. Of the cases, an American company suffered the highest single loss of over HK\$14 million, he said. That, Leung said, came after the manager of the company received an email from a scammer posing as the firm's chief executive in July requesting the transfer of the money to a Hong Kong bank account. "The unsuspecting manager made the transfer as instructed. It wasn't until the person contacted the real CEO of the company that they learned the CEO's email had been hacked and realised that it was a scam," he said. Leung said two people involved in the case had been arrested on suspicion of money laundering. He warned that money laundering is a serious offence and subject to heavier sentences. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Greater Bay Area has 'key role in China's development'](#) (2026-04-27 09:39)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Monday said the Greater Bay Area would serve an all-round role in the national development process as the country focused on new quality productive forces and reshaping the economic cycle as part of its 15th Five-Year Plan. He made the remarks at a forum hosted by the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong to look at the opportunities for the SAR in the development blueprint outlined in the five-year plan. The Greater Bay Area, Chan pointed out, is equipped with a complete industrial chain for high-end manufacturing that is supported by the inherent advantages that Hong Kong brings. “The Greater Bay Area, which includes Hong Kong, plays an irreplaceable role on a global scale, combining an international financial centre, a frontline role in artificial intelligence and a high-end manufacturing ecosystem,” he said. “Hong Kong definitely is an international super-connector among the Greater Bay Area cities with both international finance and talent, connecting world-leading research, the mainland’s strong production capacity and global financial network.” The government, Chan said, is also formulating the SAR’s own five-year plan at full speed. The authorities will work with different sectors to explore the priorities, implementation plan and road map for the blueprint, he said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [326 arrested in cross-border crackdown on child porn](#) (2026-04-27 09:33)

Hong Kong police said on Monday that they've worked with their counterparts in six regional countries in arresting 326 people on suspicion of producing and possessing child pornography, as well as other sex-related crimes. The arrests were made in the past month in the SAR, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Brunei. A Hong Kong cybersecurity superintendent, Ferris Cheung, said nine men, aged between 18 and 61, were arrested in the SAR in the joint operation. "Police seized 15 computers and external hard disks as well as eight phones from the suspects and their homes. During our preliminary inspection, officers found more than 200 videos and pictures of child pornography," she told a press conference. "We believe that they downloaded the materials through social media platforms, websites or point-to-point sharing software." Police are also linking one of the suspects, a 28-year-old man, to an indecent assault case dating back to 2023 and 2024. Officers said the victim, a 12-year-old boy at the time, was assaulted on several occasions. The police said the suspect and the alleged victim got to know each other online. Officers called on parents to help prevent cybercrimes by building relationships of mutual trust with their children and offering them guidance over the use of social media. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Specific oversight not the purview of Buildings Dept'](#) (2026-04-27 08:36)

Assistant Director of Buildings Karen Cheung on Monday testified that while the Buildings Department possessed the statutory power to oversee the use of foam boards during renovation projects, specific oversight in the case of Wang Fuk Court fell elsewhere. That, she stressed, is because Wang Fuk Court, being a subsidised housing estate under the Home Ownership Scheme, falls under the jurisdiction of the Housing Bureau's independent checking unit, which has the responsibility to oversee the work of registered contractors and inspectors and to investigate any problems. While the checking unit does not have the statutory power to

initiate prosecutions or conduct disciplinary actions, Cheung said, it is responsible for filing reports with the Buildings Department so that it could take any necessary enforcement action. Earlier, the independent committee looking into the disaster that claimed 168 lives last November heard the Buildings Department had failed to conduct on-site tests on the fire-retardant properties of scaffolding mesh nets used for major renovations at Wang Fuk Court before the inferno. Cheung also told the hearing that officials had relied mainly on certificates provided by contractors. The committee's lead counsel, Victor Dawes, expressed concern over how the department verified the credentials of such documents. He pointed out that it had, in the aftermath of the devastating inferno, found out that more than one allegedly fake fire-retardant certificate for scaffolding nets had been used during inspections before the fire occurred. Cheung, the first official from the department to testify, said staff had only checked if certificates were issued by recognised laboratories. The department, she stressed, has since made collection of random on-site samples for analysis a standard procedure. Cheung also said blocking windows with foam boards and creating temporary openings in emergency staircases are both violations of building construction regulations. However, she added that the use of temporary openings was not a common industry practice. Cheung noted that an inspection conducted in the aftermath of the inferno discovered that only eight out of the more than 400 buildings undergoing renovations had created such temporary openings. The inquiry also heard that there was a discrepancy in how the Housing Bureau's independent checking unit and the Buildings Department carries out on-site inspections. Quoting the written testimony of a checking unit staff member, Dawes noted it was standard practice for the checking unit to make an appointment with the contractor to ensure that registered inspectors would be present to answer questions. However, Cheung testified that the Buildings Department would not follow the same practice. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Sense of longing and belonging tinges Wang Fuk returns](#) (2026-04-27 04:52)

People driven away by the fire that tore through most of Wang Fuk Court continued on Monday to salvage what they could from flats in uninhabitable blocks and say emotional goodbyes to places they had called home for decades. The returnees on Monday were from Wang Cheong and Wang Tao blocks. Like many others, a man surnamed Lo came back for belongings that held special meaning to him and to bid farewell to his home. "[I want to retrieve] sentimental items such as those left by my late parents," he said. "I want to say goodbye to my home, where I had lived for decades. I will leave a note chronicling my memories of the place." Another man, surnamed Tse, returned to his Wang Tao House home to retrieve a Bible and an instant hot water dispenser used by his mother for medication. When asked what he wanted to do most inside his flat, he said: "Sit on the sofa. That was the most comfortable spot in my home." Tse's mother would not walk up because of old age and lack of stamina. She said her son would video call her after getting inside their flat so that she could have a final look. "This is my home. If I had been able to go up myself, I could have taken whatever I want. It's also exhausting for the younger ones," she added. Thirteen-year-old Eden came back to say

goodbye to a place he had called home for almost half his young life. “I hope to get my award certificates and medals which I got from mathematical competitions. I asked to come back here. I want to see my home for one last time,” he said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Free beach access guaranteed under commercial model'](#) (2026-04-27 03:54)

Director of Leisure and Cultural Services Manda Chan on Monday said the government is open to expanding a proposed pilot scheme which would involve the private sector managing certain public beaches. Her remarks came after the Leisure and Cultural Services Department invited businesses’ expression of interest in operating three public beaches – Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach in Tsuen Wan, Butterfly Beach in Tuen Mun and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District on Hong Kong Island. Speaking on a RTHK programme, Chan said the three beaches have unique features and business potential to host commercial activities. Authorities have also invited interested groups to propose other public beaches that could be included in the pilot scheme, she said. Chan said the government would oversee the operators’ performance to ensure and guarantee people’ s continued free access to these beaches, reasonable charges for activities and water safety. “We have certain expectations of the beach operators. Managing a beach is not an easy task and since this is a pilot scheme that we have never tried before, we hope the operators have experience in management, with strengths in venue management, market promotion and business skills,” she said. “Also, the operators should have service planning abilities and we will review their proposed target audience, the expected number of participants and plans to engage with local residents and tourists.” Lawmaker Chan Hok-fung, who represents Hong Kong Island West, also told RTHK that he hoped a commercial operation model could draw visitors to remote and less crowded beaches. He believes the pilot scheme would be attractive to businesses, adding that market forces can solve a manpower shortage of lifeguards. “In the past, we have observed that some swimming pools and beaches operated by the LCSD were closed due to a manpower shortage,” he said. “The salaries [for lifeguards] offered by the LCSD are fixed, and I hope that the commercial operation could raise the income of lifeguards and attract them to provide services at these beaches, improving the overall service efficiency.” The lawmaker also said he believes more public beaches could embrace commercial operations in the future. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [3D transport planning cuts risks for oversized loads](#) (2026-04-27 03:39)

The transport department has said a new three-dimensional route-planning platform is helping to make the transport of large modular construction components safer and more efficient. The "3D Swept Path Analysis Platform" funded under the government's HK\$1 billion Smart Traffic Fund, is designed to support innovation projects related to vehicles and smart mobility, and it has already been put to use in the construction of the Fanling Bypass (Eastern Section) that will be commissioned on May 3. The department's chief engineer George Fong said the project involved transporting prefabricated components for a large elevated cycle track and footbridge made of ultra-high strength steel from Tuen Mun to Fanling. Fong said the route was especially challenging because of the size of the components and the complicated road network involved.

Civil Engineering and Development Department engineer Keith Cheng said the original route proposed – through Wong Chu Road – would have caused a clearance problem with a noise barrier. He said the route was later changed to Tsing Wun Road after the platform's simulations showed the obstruction. Cheng added that the platform saved about three months of construction time, while the entire transport operation for the components was completed in over 12 nights. The analysis platform uses 3D computer technology to simulate how oversized loads move through complex junctions, significantly reducing the time needed for site inspections and route assessments. "Unlike traditional two-dimensional analysis for road transport, which can miss many details, the 3D environment allows us to see nearby traffic lights and obstacles and the exact clearance around them," Fong explained. "This allows us to deal with the actual situation at complex junctions, roundabouts and narrow road sections, and greatly reducing the safety risks involved in transporting the components," he added. Compared with traditional flat analysis, Fong said it can also identify more potential hidden hazards. The Fanling Bypass (Eastern Section) is the first major transport infrastructure project completed under the development of the Northern Metropolis. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Labour Day Golden Week set to pack hotels](#) (2026-04-27 03:10)

The coming Labour Day Golden Week holiday is expected to see the hotel sector do booming business, a sector representative said on Monday. Speaking on an RTHK programme, lawmaker Alan Chan who is also the chief operations officer at Miramar Group said that the company's hotels in Causeway Bay and Tsim Sha Tsui were at 95 percent capacity and chalking up an average stay of three days in spite of a rise in room prices by five to eight percent compared to last year. This reflected a rise in demand, he said, with mainland visitors less sensitive to room prices given that the yuan was appreciating. Chan pointed out that the unstable situation in the Gulf had not disrupted mainland visitors' plans to head to Europe, as planes departing from the mainland were transiting through Russian airspace instead of flying through the Middle East. He noted that many mainland travellers have also decided to head for Hong Kong instead of Japan. "If you look at flights from the mainland to Japan, you can see they keep shrinking compared to the same period last year," Chan said. "And because of that, a lot of mainland travellers have chosen to go to South Korea instead – that's their top priority right now. "Or they're heading to Southeast Asia via Hong Kong. Or coming directly to Hong Kong." Mega events such as concerts at Kai Tak Sports Park, which opened last year, and the Hong Kong Coliseum have also helped bring in a fair share of tourists, he said. Chan expects the retail sector to also benefit from the influx of mainland tourists in the upcoming Golden Week holiday, saying that there had been a five-percent rise in hotel occupancies in the first quarter, which also boosted sales at shopping malls nearby. The Immigration Department estimates the five-day holiday period, which commences on May 1, would bring 980,000 mainland visitors to the SAR – a seven percent growth from a year earlier. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Medical Council complaint inquiry adjourned to June 7](#) (2026-04-26 10:57)

An inquiry into an alleged medical incident in 2009 has been adjourned to June 7 for closing submissions. The Medical Council disciplinary hearing centered around an incident that left a boy permanently disabled after developing cerebral palsy and quadriplegia soon after his birth. The boy's parents alleged that a Baptist Hospital paediatrician, Sit Sou-chi, had been too slow to act on warnings from nurses about the baby's condition, after he developed a seizure in December 2009. On the second day of the hearing on Sunday, Sit said he believed the infant was choking on milk when he was notified by a nurse about the baby's abnormal situation over a phone call at around 4.30am. Sit said he was told that the newborn developed abnormalities around an hour before the phone call, and he subsequently instructed the nurse to put the infant into an incubator, suspend feeding and continue observation. He also told the inquiry that he considered the possibility of a brain infection but believed it was unlikely as the baby's situation had stabilised. Counsel for the Medical Council questioned whether Sit was telling the truth, as he had told the baby's parents in a meeting eight days after the incident that the infant was suspected of having convulsions, according to an audio recording played at the hearing. In response, Sit said the context of the conversation should be considered as he made the remarks after the baby was diagnosed with meningitis. The inquiry was initially scheduled for 2016, but was repeatedly pushed back and eventually abandoned last year after the council's inquiry panel decided that too much time had passed for the doctor to get a fair hearing. In November, the council said it would reopen the inquiry after Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau ordered a review of how the medical watchdog operates. Edited by Priscilla Ng

- ['Alternative smoking products ban won't hurt tourism'](#) (2026-04-26 08:38)

A large-scale publicity campaign is underway to remind tourists about an upcoming ban on alternative smoking products, a health official said on Sunday. From April 30, the possession or use of alternative smoking products, such as vapes, e-cigarettes or heated tobacco in public will be prohibited. Offenders will be subject to a fine of up to HK\$50,000, and imprisonment of up to six months. Speaking on a radio programme, Director of Health Ronald Lam said the new ban is not expected to impact the travel industry because he does not believe tourists come to Hong Kong just to smoke alternative tobacco products. He said visitors are being notified of the new regulations. "We have cooperated with other departments to carry out large-scale publicity, including posting large signs at entry ports and having inspectors from the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office distribute materials to tourists," he explained. "We are also working with the Travel Industry Authority and the Tourism Board to disseminate relevant information, so that tourists can know about the new law in advance." He added that mainland media outlets are also helping to release information. Lam reiterated that the legislation is necessary because alternative smoking products are just as harmful as traditional cigarettes. He added that in the longer term, the administration hopes to further bring down the local smoking rate, which currently stands at 8.5 percent. Edited by Priscilla Ng

- ['One last photo' — Wang Fuk residents' final goodbyes](#) (2026-04-26 05:29)

Residents of the fire-ravaged Wang Fuk Court on Sunday continued to say emotional goodbyes to their homes, with one family planning to take a final group photograph inside their apartment. Authorities are allowing people to return in small groups to collect their belongings. Ms Poon, a resident, lived in one of the destroyed blocks. Like many others, she returned not just for clothes or documents, but for memories. "We agreed we want to take one more family photo inside our home. We've always had family gatherings at home... every birthday, we go back to that flat to eat together. So we already have so many group pictures all taken inside that house," she said. "So today, when we have this chance... maybe the very last time we come back. We also want to make sure we take one last family photo in this home. As a keepsake." Another resident, Mr Ma, came back not just for belongings — but to pay tribute to a neighbour who died in the fire. "Today I brought flowers. We just wanted to give a little something — from the heart — to her. She was like a friend to us. Around 30-years-old. A mother," he said. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK's financial growth unstoppable: FS](#) (2026-04-26 05:25)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan says the development of Hong Kong's financial market is "unstoppable" despite global uncertainties. Writing in his weekly blog, Chan said the SAR continued to rank first globally in initial public offerings this year, with the funds raised through IPOs exceeding HK\$140 billion as of last week. More high-quality enterprises are using Hong Kong's fundraising platform for their global business expansion, he said. Chan also said global investors are diversifying their asset allocation amid rapid technology development and geopolitical risks to reduce reliance on a single market. "Hong Kong is stable and safe, and gathers capital and talent," he said. "With advantages including free flow of capital and data, as well as a legal system and the rule of law that are widely known and trusted by the business sector, Hong Kong's attractiveness to global investors is further rising." The FS went on to say that investors were increasing their investments in Asia, where cutting-edge enterprises and projects in green energy, advanced manufacturing and digital finance are emerging. "As a leading international financial hub in the region, Hong Kong will continue to serve as a super-connector to facilitate the efficient connection between capital and opportunities, achieving win-win results," he said. Chan added the growing financial market has supported the local economy. He said the Labour Day Golden Week holiday is expected to bring about 980,000 mainland visitors to Hong Kong, boosting the retail, catering, hotel and tourism sectors. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Movie fans pack theatres for HK\\$30 Cinema Day](#) (2026-04-25 10:04)

Movie lovers packed theatres across Hong Kong on Saturday for the annual Cinema Day, which offered screenings for just HK\$30. At a cinema in Mong Kok, long queues formed outside the venue in the afternoon, with the line at one point stretching well beyond the entrance. One woman said she and her friends usually spend weekends shopping and relaxing on the mainland, but they decided to stay in Hong Kong specifically for the cheap movie screenings. She added that she wished such discounts were available more often. "It would be better if it

happened once a month,” she said. “It could help boost the city’s economy. It will make people want to spend in the city more.” Some students who had just finished their university entrance exams also took advantage of the offer. A student surnamed Leung said she loves watching movies with her friends and that the discounted price – which is even lower than regular student tickets – was too good to pass up. “There are a lot of distractions when you watch movies at home, like playing on your phone,” she said. “But you will be more focused when you watch in the theatres. I think the vibes are also very different.” Leung added that Cinema Day is a great activity to share with friends and that holding it more often might help avoid overcrowding. A visitor from Shenzhen surnamed Li made a special trip to Hong Kong just to catch a film. She said the atmosphere in the city’s movie theatres is excellent, though she finds regular ticket prices too expensive. She was thrilled to secure discounted tickets for herself and her friends. Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism Rosanna Law shared on social media that she also took part in the annual event, watching “Someone Like Me” featuring actress Fish Liew, who recently won Best Actress at the Hong Kong Film Awards. Law noted that watching movies in the theatre allows for complete immersion and careful appreciation. According to figures released at noon, she said this year’s cinema attendance increased by nearly 10 percent compared to last year. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Wang Fuk returnees file over 40 lost property reports](#) (2026-04-25 09:25)

Police said on Saturday that more than 40 reports have been lodged regarding missing property in the first five days that displaced residents of Wang Fuk Court were allowed to return to their homes to salvage what they could. Since Monday, residents were allowed to visit their former residences in batches for the first time since seven out of the estate's eight blocks were ravaged by a fast-spreading fire in October. Throughout the five days, former residents of Wang Sun, Wang Cheong and Wang Yan houses were allowed to go home to around 460 units. Police Commissioner Joe Chow said there are no indications of theft among the cases for the time being. “Some units had been ravaged by the fire and belongings turned to ashes, so the items may never be found,” he said. “Some items were actually recovered immediately or were found after we helped with a follow-up search. “There are also some cases where residents were not quite sure where the item was located originally, or whether it was ever in the unit in the first place.” Chow said the force has established a dedicated team to investigate such cases and that it will continue to monitor the situation. Back in March, three renovation workers were arrested for allegedly stealing jewellery from a unit at the estate. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Vets show guts in fish-out-of-water surgery on ray](#) (2026-04-25 06:47)

Ocean Park said its veterinary team has successfully saved a cow nose ray from a life-threatening gastric rupture in what experts believe may be a world-first surgical achievement. In an announcement that coincides with World Veterinary Day on Saturday, the park said the approximately 20-year-old male ray was discovered to have excessive fluid buildup and a persistent intestinal protrusion during a routine health examination in late March. Further diagnostic testing revealed a grave internal injury: foreign objects, including

remnants of a fish head and squid tentacles, had escaped into the ray's body cavity, indicating a severe stomach wall perforation. A subsequent CT scan confirmed the extent of the damage, with Ocean Park saying that the condition would have been fatal without surgical intervention. The team performed a two-hour exploratory surgery under general anaesthesia the following day, in which surgeons removed the foreign debris and repaired the stomach perforation. Open surgery on elasmobranchs – the class of marine animals that includes sharks and rays – presents unique challenges, in which veterinarians must manage anaesthesia on an aquatic animal outside of water, navigate the complexities of gastric surgery and contend with poor wound healing and post-operative infection risks. "This was truly one of the rarest cases our team has ever encountered," said Paolo Martelli, the park's director of veterinary services. "We are not aware of any global precedents for a gastric rupture of this nature in a cownose ray receiving such an emergency and extensive surgical repair, making this a potentially pioneering achievement in marine veterinary medicine." The ray is now in a stable condition, with the surgical wound showing no signs of complications. The veterinary team said it would continue to monitor its recovery closely. Ocean Park highlighted the case as part of its ongoing commitment to animal care, research and conservation, noting that the expertise of its veterinary staff not only ensures the well-being of the park's animal ambassadors but also contributes valuable insights to global veterinary science. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Push to extend Bay licensing scheme for lawyers](#) (2026-04-25 05:23)

Deputy Secretary for Justice Horace Cheung said on Saturday that the Department of Justice would discuss with mainland counterparts the regularising of a pilot scheme that has licensed more than 600 local lawyers to practise in the Greater Bay Area. The six-year scheme, launched by the GBA Lawyers Organisation and set to expire in October, is part of the group's plan to fully leverage lawyers' professional strengths to enable them to contribute to the GBA's development. Speaking on an RTHK programme, Cheung said the department would be pushing for regularisation as the scheme had been well received by the SAR's legal industry, with the number of lawyers sitting for the licensing examination each year remaining stable. He also said more and more countries and regions were learning about, and joining, the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed), which was launched here in October. When asked whether IOMed could play a mediating role in the ongoing disputes in the Middle East, Cheung said it was up to the parties concerned. "It would be up to the US, Israel, and Iran to decide whether they would want to make use of the International Organization for Mediation," he said. "But I believe a lot of countries and regions around the world, when they encounter disputes with others in the future, they will be willing to make use of the organisation to deal with their problems." Cheung also said the Department of Justice would promote the Global Mediation Summit to be held here next month and that the event would help position the SAR as an international mediation centre. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Law warning for shops, taxis that prey on tourists](#) (2026-04-25 04:27)

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism Rosanna Law has vowed to take a tough stance against unethical practices that have long tarnished the city's tourism reputation, with the mainland's five-day Labour Day Golden Week approaching. The Immigration Department estimates that about 980,000 mainland visitors will arrive by sea, land and air between May 1 and 5. Speaking on a radio programme on Saturday, Law said authorities are determined to crack down on two long-standing problems: coercive shopping and so-called "black taxis" – rogue drivers who overcharge passengers. She noted that the industry's previous self-regulatory structure had already been overhauled with the establishment of the Travel Industry Authority, as a direct result of that determination. "The authority has conducted many high-profile inspections, and some travel agencies and tour guides have had their licenses revoked," Law said. "I hope this shows our resolve." Law made it clear that there would be zero tolerance for misconduct, especially as Hong Kong rebuilds its tourism image. "If today we are seeing a return of visitors, and Hong Kong's tourism reputation is being rebuilt – and possibly even better than before – I will never tolerate any bad apples," she said. Regarding black taxis, Law said enforcement operations would target known problem areas. "In fact, we know they could be at the airport, border checkpoints or even at night in Lan Kwai Fong," she said. "So we will definitely clamp down on black taxis." The Customs and Excise Department and the Travel Industry Authority have already carried out joint inspections targeting unethical business practices such as switching price tags and mishandling change by some retailers. Law urged industry players to cherish Hong Kong's tourism reputation, warning that there is no room for shortcuts. "Don't think that just because there are more visitors – some of whom might not be fully aware – you can take the chance to do something illegal," she said. "First, it harms our tourism reputation – nobody wants that. Second, you can't get away with it now." The reason, she explained, is the ubiquity of mobile phones and social media. "Mobile phones are so widespread and social-media penetration is so deep, if you do something, how could nobody know? And once we know, how could we not enforce the law?" Law said. She said the Travel Industry Authority would step up inspections during the May Day holiday period. She encouraged tourists to come forward if they experienced any problems. "Any tourist who suspects forced shopping can complain to us – complain to the authority – and we will immediately handle it very seriously," Law said. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Buying and selling of illicit fuel 'not rampant'](#) (2026-04-25 03:01)

Commissioner of Customs and Excise Chan Tsz-tat on Saturday said that current regulatory prohibitions against fuel smuggling and penalties are sufficient to deter any surge in crime that may result from the high oil prices caused by the current Middle East stand-off. His comments came after his department, in joint operations with the Fire Services Department and the police, carried out 18 raids on illegal fuelling stations and suspects engaged in illegal fuel transfers in the first three months of the year. The raids resulted in the arrest of 14 people and the seizure of 8 vehicles. Chan said such crimes were not "rampant" at the moment and that most illegal fuel stations operated in the rural parts of the SAR. "The offenders are not only subject to criminal sanctions, including prosecution," he said after appearing on a radio programme. "

Connected vehicles will be seized, and we will apply to the courts for the confiscation of those vehicles. "Buying illicit fuel, which is a dutiable commodity, is a criminal offence in Hong Kong. "They will be subject to criminal prosecution... they may also be subject to prison sentences." Chan also said strengthening public awareness of the offence of buying illicit fuel was of utmost importance. Last month, Security Minister Chris Tang said officials were studying tougher penalties for those purchasing illegal fuel. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [CityU chief Boey cites personal reasons for quitting](#) (2026-04-24 10:25)

City University of Hong Kong announced on Friday that its president, Freddy Boey, had resigned due to personal reasons. In a statement, the university said a global recruitment effort would be launched shortly to fill the vacancy. The university council expressed its gratitude to Boey for his contributions to the Kowloon Tong institution during his tenure. The executive committee of the council has appointed provost and deputy president Lee Chun-sing as acting president with immediate effect. Lee, chair professor in both the chemistry and materials science and engineering departments, has served as provost and deputy president since 2023, overseeing academic affairs and strategic development. The council said it would provide full support to ensure stability during the transition. In response to media enquiries regarding the resignation, a spokesperson for the Education Bureau said the government respected Boey's personal wish and decision and thanked him for his contributions to the university during his tenure. "The recruitment of the president is part of the university's institutional autonomy and is taken care of by the CityU Council under the authority conferred on it by the CityU Ordinance," the spokesperson said. "The government has full confidence in the CityU council in selecting the most suitable candidate for the post based on the university's long-term interests and development needs." Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Hearing resumes on paediatric medical complaint](#) (2026-04-24 10:20)

The Medical Council on Friday resumed looking into allegations of doctor negligence back in 2009 after an earlier probe was delayed so much it was dropped, prompting the government to come up with changes to how the watchdog operates. A mainland couple previously filed a complaint to the council in 2010, alleging that their newborn son developed cerebral palsy and quadriplegia because a Baptist Hospital paediatrician was too slow to act on warnings from nurses about the baby's condition. Despite the family's initial complaint, scheduling delays resulted in the matter dragging on until October last year, when the council's inquiry panel decided that too much time had passed for the doctor to get a fair hearing. But last November, the council said it would look into the issue once again after Secretary for Health Lo Chung-mau ordered a review of its disciplinary mechanism. The father expressed hope the council could handle the matter fairly and conclude the case within this month. "We hope the hearing can make a fair and impartial judgement on this case and provide a fair opinion as soon as possible, to give us justice," he told reporters. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK Electric confirms mid-year spike in fuel charge](#) (2026-04-24 08:49)

Hongkong Electric on Friday said its fuel-clause charge would come down in May but confirmed it would rise "significantly from mid-year" following a sharp surge in international oil and natural-gas prices resulting from heightened tensions in the Middle East since March. The charge for May will be 26 HK cents per unit of electricity, representing a further decrease of 4.4 cents compared with April, which the utility said is mainly attributable to the "deferred effect" under a monthly adjustment mechanism that calculates the charge based on average actual fuel costs incurred in the first three months. Customers, it said, received a "certain buffer" in the relatively lower fuel costs recorded in the first two months, along with adjustments to the fuel mix and fuel-supply arrangements made in response to the Middle East's situation, even though fuel prices had risen sharply since March. The charge would rise significantly in mid-year, it said, as a result of the "unavoidable" impact of the sharp and substantial rise in fuel costs following the outbreak of the Middle East conflict. A spokesperson stressed the power giant recovers "only the actual fuel costs incurred without making any profit from the increased fuel-clause charge", which is determined under a transparent "pass-through" mechanism. Hongkong Electric said it would continue to closely monitor developments in the energy market and fuel supply and will prudently manage fuel inventory, generation operations and statutory emission requirements to ensure a stable and reliable electricity supply. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Wang Fuk victim retrieves late father's belongings](#) (2026-04-24 08:41)

Residents of Wang Fuk Court displaced by last November's deadly inferno on Friday continued to return to their homes to salvage what they could. The returnees were from Wang Cheong and Wang Yan blocks. One of them, surnamed Kwok, who injured his left leg, used a crutch to assist him in going upstairs. "After I went inside my flat, I stopped using the crutch and used my hands to guide myself along the wall. It felt like I was actually home, even though the place was without electricity, dark, and covered in ashes," he said. He found several items that had special meaning to him including a merry-go-round clock and his late father's glass ashtray. "My father used to live here before he passed away. The flat contains many of my memories of him. After he passed, I didn't throw away many of his things he used in his daily life. It creates the feeling that he's still around," he added. Yip Ka-kui, whose wife was one of the 168 lives taken by the inferno, is scheduled to return to his own home in Wang Tai House next week. But before that, he accompanied his son — who used to live in Wang Cheong House — to collect what was left. "We do not plan to go up and down. We will place everything outside first. I heard that some members of the Civil Aid Service will help us move items. I do not know exactly what it will be, but I will try not to waste time going up and down," he said. Another resident, a woman surnamed Wu, said three hours was not enough time to salvage everything. She hoped the government would arrange a second visit. "At least my parents might be able to go up as well. Then, our whole family can gather inside our home and bid our farewell comfortably," she said. "I hope we can spend time together so I can play my piano one last time. I won't be able to take it with me, but we can recall the memories we had throughout the years." An elderly woman surnamed Chan, who had lived on the eighth floor of Wang Cheong House since its inception, hoped to salvage the dolls she bought in Xizang. She also prepared flowers for her

neighbours who passed away in the November tragedy. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Competition challenge awaits barrister in new calling](#) (2026-04-24 08:10)

The government on Friday announced that the chief executive had appointed Jat Sew-tong to succeed Samuel Chan at the reins of the Competition Commission for a term of two years from May 1. Seven new members were also appointed and eight incumbents were reappointed by the chief executive. Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Algernon Yau said Jat has a strong legal background and extensive experience in public service. A barrister, he had chaired both the Independent Police Complaints Council and the Minimum Wage Commission. "I am confident that under his leadership, the commission will continue to spare no effort in safeguarding competition in Hong Kong to enhance economic efficiency and promote free trade, thereby benefiting consumers and all sectors," Yau said. The commerce minister expressed gratitude to Chan, the outgoing chairman, for his contributions in leading the commission over the past six years with his dedication to promoting market competition and maintaining a fair business environment. Yau also thanked other outgoing members for their contributions to the work of the commission. Alongside Jat, the seven new members are Kelly Cheng, Terence Chong, Kwock Yin-lun, Michael Lai, Eric Sun, Winnie Tung and Judith Yu. Reappointed incumbent members are Nicholas Chan, Calvin Chan, Fong Yuk-fai, Sabrina Ho, Matthew Lam, Billy Mak, Webster Ng and Symon Wong. Their membership of the commission will also be effective from May 1. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Close communication key among govt depts, probe hears](#) (2026-04-24 08:04)

Fire service officials and building authorities both have statutory powers to oversee the use of polystyrene panels and temporary moveable boards installed at emergency staircases during renovation works, an independent committee probing the Wang Fuk Court blaze has heard. Friday's hearing delved into the duties of different government bodies such as the Fire Services Department (FSD), with its chief Andy Yeung testifying that authorities should work together better when it comes to fire safety. Committee lead counsel Victor Dawes cited a judicial review in which the applicant — a mini-storage operator — claimed the FSD had overstepped its authority in issuing a fire hazards abatement notice, when it should have been followed up by the Buildings Department instead. The ruling had accepted that the fire department was duty-bound to give advice on fire protection measures and fire hazards, and Dawes questioned whether it contradicted previous testimonies by fellow officers that the use of materials such as foam boards at the Tai Po estate was outside the department's jurisdiction. Yeung, the highest-ranking official to testify to date, said more efforts were required back then for cooperation between fire and building authorities, but now the two bodies have an established division of labour mechanism over construction issues. The fire service chief said both departments have statutory powers to oversee the use of foam boards and temporary openings on emergency staircases, while emphasising that collaboration between the two was essential before taking action. "The overall fire safety does not only concern one department or two departments. It involves collaboration between departments to

complement each other,” Yeung said. He noted that his department is seeking to amend existing legislation, with a bill expected to be submitted to the legislature for consultation next month. The department has tightened its scrutiny of shutdown notices, Yeung said, asking contractors to explain any deactivation of fire services installations to determine if it’s necessary. The fire service director also revealed that his department had added 30 more phone lines to answer emergency calls, with another 30 expected in around two months. Yeung said a fourth generation mobilising system, which was originally scheduled for launch in 2022, has entered the testing stage. He said the new system would look into the issue of handling repeated emergency calls “with caution”, as some might be made by different people regarding the same address. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Untrue to say patients skip meds due to fee rise'](#) (2026-04-24 04:51)

Health officials on Friday dismissed claims that large amounts of patients have stopped collecting their medication after visits to public hospitals and clinics because of fee rises since the start of the year. During a Legislative Council session on Wednesday, DAB chairman Gary Chan and lawmaker Chan Hoi-yan, a former health official, were among the lawmakers who said they had come across many cases in which patients decided not to pay for the medication or asked for fewer pills because they couldn't afford it. In a statement issued early on Friday, the Hospital Authority (HA) said the claims were not true. It said in the first quarter of this year, around 2.4 percent of patients didn't collect their medication, representing only a slight change from the 2.2 percent observed for the entire year last year. The HA added that frontline staff and feedback from patients indicated that since the changes to the fee structure took effect, patients are now more aware they shouldn't overstock medication at home, especially for meds that should be taken only when necessary. It noted that during consultation, doctors will assess a patient's meds profile, such as how much medicine they still have at home and their medication habits. The authority said in the first two months of this year, more than 70 percent of the uncollected prescriptions were due to doctors needing to complete their records of a patient's medicinal history. "The record is important because for the doctor who meets the patient next time, he or she has to know what should be checked as far as special medication for the patient," said Maria Leung, the chief manager of the HA's primary and community services. "So we would put the prescription record down, but the patient actually doesn't need to collect the meds, and these would count under the uncollected prescription category." A spokesperson for the HA added: "Some patients have also proactively requested doctors to reduce prescriptions of such medication to avoid wastage. "In the first quarter of 2026, demand for 'as needed' medication was about seven percent lower than the same period in 2025." The spokesperson said in the event that patients have enough medication, such as pills for chronic diseases or painkillers at home, the doctors would discuss and advise patients that they don't need to collect the same meds from the pharmacy again to reduce waste. The HA went on to say that it would ensure that no patient is denied medical care due to a lack of means, saying this fundamental principle would not change. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Grander hopes as Central waterfront gets new operator](#) (2026-04-24 03:46)

The Harbourfront Commission believes the public will get to enjoy the Central Harbourfront Event Space more often now that a new operator is set to take over. A Henderson Land Development joint-venture company – Central Grand – has won a five-year contract to start managing the space beginning on July 1. Under the terms of the tenancy, it must open part of the space if at least one third of the area is either unused or not rented out for at least three consecutive days. Commission chairman Ivan Ho told an RTHK radio programme this new stipulation came after past experience showed the venue had not been fully utilised. "In the past, when mega events were held at Central Harbourfront, it was bustling," he said. "But in between events, it was always left idle, and the public was unable to use it as well." The company is required, under the Development Bureau's efforts to broaden the operator's area of responsibilities, to closely monitor the progress of preparations for events and assess the background of their organisers. This came after passenger rides at the AIA International Hot Air Balloon Fest at the Central Harbourfront last year were banned after the organiser failed safety tests, which Ho described as not good. By widening Central Grand's operational responsibilities, as well as requiring it to report regularly on its plans, he said that would allow the government as well as the event-space operator to intervene quickly in the event of an incident. Ho said he is looking forward to seeing Central Grand creating stronger synergies when hosting mega events at Central, given that Henderson Land Development has a lot of commercial outlets. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [HK unis shine in Times Higher Education rankings](#) (2026-04-23 14:25)

Eight Hong Kong universities have made it to the top 100 of the Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2026, including the debut of the Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK) and Lingnan University. Professor John Lee, president of EdUHK, said being ranked 37th on the list affirms the university's commitment to impactful research and a dynamic international learning community. "Going forward, we will continue to enhance our research capacity as well as learning and teaching quality, strengthen collaborations across local, regional, and global networks, and translate academic knowledge into meaningful benefits for learners and society," he said. Lingnan University also appeared in the rankings for the first time at No. 87. The University of Hong Kong led all local institutions by remaining in 6th place; the Chinese University of Hong Kong dropped one place to 10th; the University of Science and Technology stayed at 12th; City University rose two places to 14th; Polytechnic University remained 18th; and Baptist University climbed 10 spots to 40th. Education Secretary Christine Choi said on social media that the strong showing by local universities in international rankings reflects the government's continued investment and efforts to boost education competitiveness. The Times Higher Education Asia University Rankings 2026 evaluated more than 900 universities from 36 countries and territories. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Garden art in full bloom thanks to Monet, Zhang Daqian](#) (2026-04-23 12:08)

Art lovers are in for a treat as a garden art exhibition opens at the Hong Kong Museum of Art (HKMoA) on Friday, featuring more than 100 sets of Chinese and Western garden artwork,

including French Impressionist master Claude Monet's original works. "Blooming: The Art of Gardens in East and West" is the first show in Hong Kong featuring artworks from four institutions at the same time -- the Palace Museum in Beijing, the Art Institute of Chicago in the United States, the Palace of Versailles in France and HKMoA. It features works from renowned artists such as Monet, Zhang Daqian, Wen Zhengming and Ju Lian. Some of the highlights include Monet's "Water Lillies" and "Water Lily Pond", as well as Zhang's "Entrance of Bade Garden". The exhibition also features an digital interactive education corner, where visitors can interact with a virtual wine cup to see different flowers blooming. Hong Kong is the last stop of the exhibition which was also held in Beijing, Suzhou and Ningbo. Twiggy Au, a curator at HKMoA, said 70 percent of the 106 pieces of artwork are on display exclusively in Hong Kong. "The exhibition is free admission because we hope to enable audience of all ages, genders, and backgrounds to appreciate garden aesthetics," Au said. With an expected surge in visitors during the upcoming Labour Day Golden Week, Au said special crowd-control measures may be implemented and museumgoers are advised to follow updates on HKMoA's website and social media. The show will run through July 29. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['More subsidised housing is a healthy scenario'](#) (2026-04-23 10:23)

Researchers at the Our Hong Kong Foundation have projected an increase in the supply of subsidised housing in the next few years. "We are seeing that the supply of subsidised housing is going to increase in the upcoming five to 10 years, and for those who are in need, we see that this is also a healthy scenario because they will have more to choose from in the future," said Jason Leung, the foundation's assistant research director. Leung's comments came a day after the Housing Authority announced that applications for three subsidised housing schemes would open at the same time. Applications for the latest batch of Home Ownership Scheme units, as well as the latest phases of the Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme and White Form Secondary Market Scheme, would be accepted from April 30 to May 20. "I think the aim of launching all these three schemes in one go is to increase the number of affordable home ownership opportunities for those who are in need, and also to lower the complexity of the different schemes," Leung said. "The way of doing this all in one go is that you can handle the different schemes together, which means you don't have to repeat the process, and also make it easier and clearer to those who are interested in applying." Leung also spoke about the need to redevelop ageing public housing estates. "We must... place significant importance on the social impacts arising from the development process, ensuring that renewal plans remain people-centric and proceed in a stable, orderly manner." As for the private housing market, the foundation said it's experiencing a gradual recovery, with average annual supply reaching 17,100 units through 2030. Leung added that the government could boost land supply by including more plots in its land-sale programme. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['No Wang Fuk mobile alert sent over response fears'](#) (2026-04-23 08:20)

A senior fire services official has defended the decision not to activate Hong Kong's city-wide emergency alert system during November's Wang Fuk Court blaze, citing fears of

unpredictable responses from the Tai Po residential estate's inhabitants at the time. Deputy fire services director Derek Chan told the inquiry probing the inferno on Thursday that there were no other ways available to alert residents inside the estate's flats, whose windows had been covered as a result of the major-renovation work being carried out then, when the buildings' internal fire-alarm system had not been switched on. Chan explained that he ultimately decided against using the emergency alert system – which allows government departments to warn mobile service users about dangers – as it would have taken an hour to send out the message and there was a lack of public education about the system itself. “We couldn’t predict the responses of residents,” he said, adding that it could have been more dangerous for them to leave their homes at the time. Chan also testified that the department had deployed more manpower than required for a level-five alarm at a time when the blaze was classified as a No. 4 alarm. The independent committee heard that Chan had decided to upgrade the status of the fire to a level-five alarm, which involved a switch in command strategies for the main part. Committee lead counsel Victor Dawes pointed to comments questioning why officials did not further upgrade the fire, which ultimately reached a level-five alarm, to the highest “disaster” level. Chan said reaching such a level would have meant the available resources of all departments had been mobilised and “may involve support from the People’s Liberation Army”. The disaster alarm is reserved for citywide incidents or multiple simultaneous emergencies, he added. The inquiry also heard that the breathing apparatus used by the firefighter, who perished in the inferno, Ho Wai-ho, was found to be damaged. Divisional officer Tung Wing-kei testified that it was “very rare” for the gas cylinder valve and its connected handwheel to be damaged. While such damage could have been the result of a strong impact, the department was unable to ascertain the exact cause as the device storing usage data had suffered water damage. Wrapping up the day’s hearing, committee chairman David Lok commended the efforts of firefighters in tackling the Tai Po estate’s blaze. “In the hearings, the Fire Services Department has been criticised. We urge that firefighting efforts be viewed separately from other fire-prevention issues,” Lok said. He added officers had to make “difficult decisions” during the blaze, particularly highlighting Chan’s decision to assign two senior officers to oversee operations for each building as “the right call”. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Nine arrested over suspicious travel insurance claims](#) (2026-04-23 08:14)

Police on Thursday said they arrested six men and three women over suspected fraudulent travel insurance claims totalling HK\$1.7 million. Officers said the arrestees were suspected to have worked under a crime syndicate, filing some 70 claims over trips they made last year, when in fact they never left Hong Kong during the period. Seven of them are suspected to have filed claims using forged documents such as flight tickets, hotel receipts and hospital attendance records, while the other two are suspected of helping the syndicate. Lam Ho-lim, a senior inspector from the force's commercial crime bureau, said the claimants reported they had suffered from minor problems, and some of the suspects are current or former insurance agents. “The suspects claimed that between April and November last year, they had visited countries like Vietnam, Japan, Italy and Singapore,” he told reporters. “They said they suffered

from similar symptoms or injuries and visited the same hospitals in those countries. They then filed the suspicious insurance claims to agencies." Lam said the arrestees are suspected to have used phone numbers provided by the syndicate and opened accounts at designated banks, taking out cash after the claims were approved. He said the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers helped in the force's investigation by providing documents for officers to probe and analyse. Officers said each claim in this case ranged from several thousand to tens of thousands of dollars. The force stressed the public shouldn't think they can get away with gaining small amounts of money through deception, as the maximum penalty for fraud is 14 years behind bars. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Over 9,000 affected in ransomware attack on club](#) (2026-04-23 08:03)

A private club failed to take all practicable steps to protect the personal data of its members following a ransomware-related data breach that affected more than 9,000 people, the Privacy Commission said following an investigation. The probe was launched after the club had lodged a data-breach notification with the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data on October 31. The more than 9,000 people affected included Yau Yat Chuen Garden City Club's 1,553 active members, supplementary card holders, former members and former supplementary card holders, the commission said on Thursday releasing its investigation report. Personal details taken in the breach included full names, identity card and passport numbers, dates of birth, email addresses, contact numbers and addresses. Commissioner Ada Chung said the breach stemmed from the club's customer management system, which was rendered inoperable after an attack encrypted system files stored on a server. She said the club retained some former supplementary card holders and former members' personal data for longer than necessary – seven years after membership or the validity of cards expired. Assistant privacy commissioner Alex Chan said the breach was linked to multiple security weaknesses, including outdated remote-access software with a known vulnerability, lack of user authentication for remote access, outdated antivirus and firewall protections, and weak organisational security measures. "The vulnerability enabled the threat actors to compromise the account credentials used by the service provider to access the software," Chan said. "This was further facilitated by the servers being left in a locked-in state without the implementation of additional authentications control." Chung said the club had contravened the privacy law and been given an enforcement notice that required it to take remedial actions. In response, the club said it has initiated remedial measures, including updating antivirus, firewall and the remote access software in the latest version of its system. In a statement issued to members, the club said there was, to date, no evidence to suggest that any personal data has been leaked or disclosed to the public as a result of the breach. "Nevertheless, we remain vigilant and advise all members to exercise caution regarding any suspicious messages, emails or telephone calls," it said. The club said it had stepped up security measures, such as disabling for good the remote access software in question and having its designated personnel authorise remote technical support sessions. It added that personal data stored in its servers was now encrypted, its hardware and cybersecurity protocols were upgraded and that it was in the process of changing

its data retention policies. Chung also urged organisations handling large volumes of personal data to regularly update software as soon as possible, use strong authentication, conduct security assessments and adopt clear data-retention policies. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Wang Fuk Court salvage operation enters Day 4](#) (2026-04-23 04:54)

The second batch of displaced residents from Wang Fuk Court returned to their homes on Thursday to salvage what they could. The returnees are residents of units across five floors of Wang Cheong House and 10 floors of Wang Yan House. This comes after residents of Wang Sun House — who formed the first phase of returnees from the estate's seven fire-damaged blocks to be allowed back to their homes — completed their visits on Wednesday. One of the returnees on Thursday, a man surnamed Cheung, who used to live on the fourth floor of Wang Yan House, wanted to bid farewell to a place he had called home for more than four decades.

“I want to say thank you and goodbye. I had lived here from a young age. I have very fond memories of the place. I hate to say goodbye. It’s like losing your family member,” he said. He brought along two large backpacks and hoped to be able to visit his flat again on another day. Another resident, a man surnamed Lau, who was scheduled to visit his own unit in Wang Cheong House this Sunday, came on Wednesday to help his parents and sister salvage belongings from their home in Wang Yan House. He was among those injured in the blaze last November. “We will first check if anything is missing,” he said. “Then we will retrieve documents and photos. The most complicated item to recover will be the title deed.” “I suffered a 7.5 percent burn injury while escaping. Recovery is going alright. Hong Kong’s healthcare is decent. But still, I had to experience the pain,” Lau added. Asked how he felt about returning to the family home, he said, “I can’t really think of anything; I just can’t wait.” Another resident, surnamed Lee, who lived on the eighth floor of Wang Yan House, said she had given up her spot to an elderly resident, as only four people are permitted to enter a unit at one time. Kong Cheung-fat, a former member of the Wang Fuk Court owners' corporation management committee, was also among the returnees on Thursday. He said he had requested to reschedule his visit in order to attend a hearing of the independent committee probing the fire. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Govt to arrange Wang Fuk residents to go home again](#) (2026-04-23 03:16)

The government on Thursday said it was working on arrangements for Wang Fuk Court residents who want to make a second visit to their homes to salvage their belongings. This was according to Deputy Chief Secretary Warner Cheuk. On Monday, the initial phase of returnees saw residents start to retrieve their belongings from Wang Sun House while those who lived in Wang Cheong, Wang Yan and Wang Tao houses are part of the second phase of returnees. Those from Wang Cheong and Wang Yan houses were allowed to go home to begin the retrieval process on Thursday. Cheuk said residents who have not already expressed a need to go home for a second time, after their initial visit, can still raise their wishes to do so. “Six hundred residents already expressed their wish to us that they want to go home again. We will arrange that,” he said. “If residents who are returning home today did not express such a wish

before, they can tell their social workers, and we will actively arrange that.” He added the government would remain flexible in arranging for residents, who are not available at their designated timeslots, to head home at another session. Cheuk noted that November’s inferno had severely damaged Wang Cheong and Wang Tai blocks, which led to more deaths. He noted that residents of the two blocks would need more emotional and psychological support in particular. Therefore, he said, all residents going in and out of the two buildings would be accompanied by a police officer. As for units with fatalities, respective households will each have a clinical psychologist and social worker from the Social Welfare Department to accompany them the whole time, Cheuk added. He also said the government was delighted to see that residents were able to retrieve items that are valuable to them over the past few days. Residents from Wang Tai House, Wang Kin House and Wang Shing House will be the last batch to return to their homes between April 29 and May 4. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Worker dies at Kai Tak Hospital construction site](#) (2026-04-22 14:46)

A construction worker died on Wednesday after suffering head wounds in an industrial accident at a Kai Tak Hospital site. Police said the 59-year-old man was found lying on the ground unconscious after 5pm at the hospital's phase II main construction site. An initial investigation showed that he was hit on the head by bricks. The victim, who worked for the subcontractor, was rushed to United Christian Hospital where he was certified dead. The Hospital Authority (HA) expressed sorrow over the case and offered condolences to his family. The HA also told the project's main contractor, China State Construction Engineering, to thoroughly investigate the cause of the incident and to submit a report as soon as possible. "The main contractor has been urged to take the incident seriously and to adopt all necessary measures expeditiously to ensure site safety," the authority said in a statement. The HA said the company will also submit a report to the Labour Department, which sent officers to the scene to probe what happened and has launched its investigation. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [FSD vows better handling of fire safety complaints](#) (2026-04-22 08:04)

A senior fire services official on Wednesday vowed to step up referrals of fire safety hazard complaints that are outside the department's jurisdiction, saying previous practices might have left some issues unaddressed. Michael Yung, an assistant director at the Fire Services Department, also conceded that the division of labour among government bodies had not been written down in "black and white", during a hearing probing the deadly Wang Fuk Court blaze. According to an audio recording played during the hearing, a department responder told a Wang Fuk Court resident complaining about polystyrene boards that there were no regulations governing such materials on windows. Yung, who is responsible for fire safety, testified that the matter should have been followed up by the Housing Bureau's Independent Checking Unit (ICU). While there is a clear division of labour among different government bodies, Yung said, the complaint should have been referred to the unit. "We have reviewed our procedures [following the fire]. Regardless of complaints or inquiries from residents on fire safety issues, we will ask for the informant's consent and proactively refer the case to the relevant

departments," Yung said. The independent committee's lead counsel, Victor Dawes, presented written testimony from ICU staff member Andy Ku, who said the unit could not prosecute those who use foam boards as the materials were temporary. Dawes said that appeared to have created a "regulatory vacuum", but the fire department assistant director disagreed. The committee also heard that the fire department would not directly handle issues relating to temporary openings and movable boards installed at emergency stairwells, due to the established division of labour. Dawes pressed the assistant director on whether there were guidelines clearly stipulating the different duties of various government bodies "in black and white". Yung admitted that the division of labour was not stipulated in written documents, and that it was "based on the ongoing collaboration between departments". Liaison and communication among departments had not been ideal, Yung added, while agreeing with the lead counsel that each unit might have a different interpretation of their own responsibilities. Deputy chief fire officer Fok Chun-ming, separately, testified that staff members first need to determine whether a matter falls under the fire department's purview, and only cases within its remit will be dealt with as either complaints or inquiries. Cases linked to suspected breaches of fire service regulations would be listed as complaints and warrant inspections, Fok said, but others would be classified as inquiries, which the department does not usually follow up on. But the fire department does not prevent staff from conducting inspections and offering advice when it comes to inquiries, he added. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Legco begins three-day discussion on budget bill](#) (2026-04-22 07:59)

Lawmakers kick-started discussions on the budget bill on Wednesday by recognising the government's focus on innovation and technology development. Debating the bill in the legislature, councillors said it was right to focus on artificial intelligence, new industries and developing the Northern Metropolis, as these could all help Hong Kong in the long run. Finance sector councillor Ronick Chan said the budget deserves recognition, as the government managed to achieve an operating account surplus earlier than expected despite the geo-political turbulence. "The budget this year spent long passages to focus on innovation and technology, finance, AI and the construction of the Northern Metropolis," he said. "These initiatives not only actively align with the key priorities of the country's 15th Five-Year Plan, they also lay the groundwork for Hong Kong's long-term competitiveness." Unionist lawmaker Lam Chun-sing, from the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions, agreed the budget had invested more resources in the future and he believes officials deserve recognition for their cost-cutting efforts. He expressed hope the government would provide more incentives to encourage people to have children, such as offering progressive child tax allowances and other subsidies. DAB chairman Gary Chan, for his part, said he agreed that the proactive and innovative ideas on economic development could help the SAR align with the country's 15th Five-Year Plan. But he also said officials could improve in terms of not letting spending cuts affect the grassroots, saying many residents had complained to his party about the rise in public healthcare fees. "One of my colleagues went to a public outpatient clinic for medication. He heard an elderly woman before him telling the nurse, 'Can I take fewer pills, so that it will be

cheaper? Why is the bill so expensive? I'm not taking so many pills,' he said in the chamber. " Our hearts sink when we hear this. It's not because the patient doesn't want to be cured, but she just couldn't afford it. This is a true story." Election Committee lawmaker Chan Hoi-yannoted that officials have earmarked more than HK\$1 billion on fire prevention, an annual increase of nearly 18 percent. She expressed hope that as the public becomes more concerned about fire safety following the deadly Tai Po blaze, there would be more resources allocated for community and school education, so as to enhance the public's ability to "save others and themselves" during disasters. The council has earmarked three days for the bill's discussions, with next Wednesday slated for officials to respond to queries. Edited by Tony Sabine

- ['Mega' trade events to lure first-time visitors to HK](#) (2026-04-22 05:37)

Seven 'mega' trade fairs set to kick off in Hong Kong next week will bring in thousands of exhibitors from around the world, including first-time participants from the Middle East and Central Asia. An executive councillor says that the organiser, Trade Development Council (TDC), has had to put some exhibitors on the waiting list, although some buyers are unable to attend this year because of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East. Still, Jeffrey Lam expected buying volume to go up for the fairs, which cover a range of products from houseware, printing and packaging and fashion. "The number of buyers may not decrease, but the...actual attendance here may decrease, because some are using middlemen to buy in Hong Kong," he told RTHK. "I'm confident that there are needs in the Middle East as well. There are needs for good merchandise everywhere." Lam also urged authorities to work closely with airlines to boost services to emerging regions, and facilitate Hong Kong's role as a "Super Connector". "There aren't too many direct flights to mid-Asia, Africa; South America may be a bit too long," he said. Lam's sentiment was echoed by TDC Deputy Executive Director Jenny Koo, who acknowledged headwinds brought by the Middle East conflict but felt the city's outlook as a trade hub remained bright. "There must be impact. But our fair is running on a hybrid mode," she said. "We also allow our exhibitors and buyers to connect with each other online if they have difficulty in travelling to Hong Kong." The events kick off at the Convention and Exhibition Centre next Monday and run for four days. Edited by Raymond Yeung

- [Departments urged to work together on smoking offences](#) (2026-04-22 05:15)

DAB lawmaker Chan Hok-fung on Wednesday called on the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office (TACO) to work closer with other government departments to better enforce smoking regulations. New tobacco control measures took effect at the start of the year, including a doubling of the fixed penalty for smoking offences and expanding no-smoking areas. Staff from the office have carried out extra inspections over the past three months, but Chan questioned the effectiveness of such checks. "From my perspective, I wonder whether the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office has enough inspectors to enforce properly," Chan said on RTHK's In The Chamber programme. "The range of non-smoking areas has increased significantly, including areas outside schools. If you are still using the same amount of staff... how well can the law be

enforced?” Chan also suggested there is a lack of coordination between government departments when it comes to enforcement. “We have heard of many cases where TACO inspectors declined to enforce the law because the area fell under the jurisdiction of the Housing Department or the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department,” he said. While the office should increase its manpower, Chan said other government staff should also step up enforcement in no-smoking areas under their jurisdiction. He called on the TACO to increase checks during non-office hours, adding that he had received complaints from residents that smoking offences went unaddressed over the weekend. Chan also said cigarette smuggling appears to be “out of control” despite government crackdowns. He suggested that enforcement agencies, including the Customs and Excise Department, should enhance intelligence collection and carry out more undercover operations. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Dengue fever transmission risk is moderate: CHP](#) (2026-04-22 04:38)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) said on Wednesday that the risk of local transmission of dengue fever is moderate, after the SAR logged its first local case this year. On an RTHK radio programme, the CHP's communicable disease branch head Albert Au said the other 12 cases recorded so far this year involved people catching the illness outside the city. “With the rise in temperatures and the rainy season approaching, such an environment is favourable for mosquito breeding. Moreover, the infection rate for mosquito-borne diseases in Southeast Asia and neighbouring regions remains high. So we think the risk of an outbreak cannot be neglected,” he said. “But so far, the overall risk is still preventable and manageable.” He went on to say that various government departments will continue their monitoring work and carry out preventative and control measures. A 21-year-old man is believed to have caught dengue fever after being bitten by mosquitoes at a construction site in Penny's Bay, Au said. The man is in a stable condition in hospital. Au said the CHP has advised the operator of the construction site to suspend work there until mosquito control measures are carried out. Meanwhile, Hong Kong has seen five measles cases this year, Au said. On top of a local case, two infections are linked to Indonesia, he said, and the remaining two are connected to one of these imported cases. Au noted that the city's two-dose measles vaccination rate has remained consistently high at above 95 percent, and annual tests also show that people across different age groups are highly immune to measles. Therefore there is a relatively low risk of an outbreak in Hong Kong, Au said. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Wang Fuk residents return home for the third day](#) (2026-04-22 04:16)

The final group of displaced residents from Wang Sun House are returning to their fire-ravaged flats to see what they could salvage. Residents whose flats are on the building's upper floors were given access on Wednesday, after those who lived on the lower floors were allowed to visit their homes in the preceding two days. A total of 79 households registered to enter their flats on Wednesday. Residents of Wang Sun House are the first to be allowed back into their Wang Fuk Court homes since a deadly blaze that claimed 168 lives tore through most of the estate

nearly five months ago. One 73-year-old resident, Ng, whose unit was on the 25th floor, said only her husband and children would go up due to her age. “Photos. They are the most important, alongside certificates. They are placed in the bedroom and living room. If there’s a scash that hasn’t been burnt, hopefully it can be retrieved. If it’s burnt, then so be it,” she said. Another resident on the same floor, Ho, said she would like to have a look at her home, regardless of how badly damaged it was. “I have been living here from the very beginning, since the building was completed. I lived here for 42 years. I hope to retrieve things that contain memories, and valuable items,” she said. Ho’s daughter, meanwhile, said she hopes to go up for a second time to bid farewell to her musical instruments. “I don’t have many luxury items. I have a cello and a piano, and they have accompanied my growth from a young age. But I don’t think I am able to retrieve them. So, I will just say goodbye,” she said. Tang, who lived one floor below, hoped to retrieve her wedding ring, photos, and a porcelain clock, as well as the ashes of her cat. “The ashes are in a stainless-steel container. Its melting point is over 1,500 degrees [Celsius], so it should not have melted,” she said. Those from Wang Cheong House, Wang Yan House and Wang Tao House will be able to visit their homes from Thursday until April 28. Residents from Wang Tai House, Wang Kin House and Wang Shing House will be among the last batch to return from April 29 to May 4. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Govt to publish a list of water seepage technicians](#) (2026-04-22 03:38)

The Buildings Department on Wednesday said it would publish a list of water seepage technicians ahead of streamlined measures for investigating leaks. Under the improved measures that are set to take effect by the middle of the year, homeowners suspected as the source of a leak have 28 days to carry out repairs after a notification letter is issued following inspections by the Joint Office for Investigation of Water Seepage Complaints that is formed by the food and environmental hygiene and buildings departments. Those failing to do so have to shoulder a fee of at least HK\$17,000 for government staff to carry out comprehensive and professional tests. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, Deputy Director of Buildings Pelene Ng noted the list of inspection and repair practitioners who are interested to take up relevant projects will make it simpler for flat owners to look for trained personnel. “Initially, the list will make it easier for people to look for one. In the long run, if the public begins using the list and offers us feedback, it could eventually turn into a white list. For instance, if a worker successfully completes the task and locates the source of the water seepage,” she said. “We may save the information and publish a white list later. But for now, there will only be workers who are interested in undertaking the project.” She went on to say that indicated prices will also be included on the list, so that homeowners can tell whether they are being charged within the normal range or not. Meanwhile, she said that officials have also expedited the approval process for loan scheme offers to homeowners for tackling water seepages. It will take applicants around five days to know if they are given preliminary approval, and they will receive the money within two weeks after signing the relevant documents, Ng added. As for the 28-day period, the deputy director said the time frame is reasonable, as water seepages from pipe leaks usually take up to two weeks to fix, while more complicated issues such as replacing a

waterproof layer take around four weeks. Homeowners who need more time after commencing the repair work can talk to the joint office, she added. Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene Donald Ng told the same programme that the joint office received around 46,000 complaints last year, adding that the figure has been on the rise in recent years.
Edited by Tony Sabine