



# HONG KONG SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

## AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: April 27, 2026 - May 04, 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.

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# Security Analysis Report: Hong Kong (April 27, 2026 - May 04, 2026)

## Executive Summary

During the period of April 27 to May 04, 2026, Hong Kong's security landscape was primarily shaped by ongoing efforts to bolster cybersecurity and counter-terrorism capabilities, alongside persistent geopolitical tensions. The city launched its first major cybersecurity drill and continued to implement a stringent national security framework, drawing international criticism while asserting its stability. Regionally, significant military exercises in the South China Sea and the volatile situation in the Strait of Hormuz underscored broader strategic challenges that indirectly impact Hong Kong's economic and security outlook. Internally, authorities reported a notable increase in fraud cases, highlighting persistent domestic security concerns.

## Key Security Developments

- **Cybersecurity Drill Launched Amidst Rising Threats**

On an unspecified date within the reporting period, Hong Kong initiated its first major cybersecurity drill, emphasizing the government's commitment to promoting high-quality economic development and building a smart city. This proactive measure comes in response to a significant increase in cyberattacks, with 16,182 technology crime cases reported in the first half of 2024, resulting in losses of approximately US\$341.8 million. The Protection of Critical Infrastructure (Computer System) Bill, expected to be enacted by early 2026, aims to impose stringent security requirements on essential infrastructure operators.

- **"Hong Kong Cybersecurity Outlook 2026" Highlights AI and Supply Chain Risks**

The Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centre (HKCERT) released its "Hong Kong Cybersecurity Outlook 2026" report on January 29, 2026, revealing a record high of 15,877 cybersecurity incidents in Hong Kong in 2025, a 27% year-on-year increase. The report identified AI-related attacks and supply chain vulnerabilities as the top five key cybersecurity risks for 2026, underscoring the evolving and sophisticated nature of cyber threats.

- **Regional Counter-Terrorism Exercise "STEALTHNET" Concludes**

On April 16, 2026, the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), in collaboration with Interpol and police forces from Macao, Singapore, and South Korea, successfully concluded the Counter Cyber and Physical Terrorism Joint Exercise 2026, codenamed "STEALTHNET." The exercise, involving over 380 participants, simulated terrorist financing and cross-border cyber and physical attacks against critical financial, aviation, and healthcare systems across the participating jurisdictions, enhancing regional cooperation and preparedness against hybrid terrorist threats.

- US "2026 Hong Kong Policy Act Report" Condemned by China

On April 16, 2026, the US State Department released its "2026 Hong Kong Policy Act Report," which was met with strong condemnation and firm opposition from the Commissioner's Office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong. The report was criticized for "smearing 'one country, two systems'," discrediting Hong Kong's democracy, freedom, and human rights, and slandering its national security laws, with China viewing it as an attempt by the US to "use Hong Kong to contain China."

- Hong Kong Reaffirms Trade Hub Status Amidst Geopolitical Shifts

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po stated on April 27, 2026, that the ongoing restructuring of global geopolitics represents an evolution rather than a threat to Hong Kong's status as a major trade center. He emphasized Hong Kong's unique value as a "super-connector" in bridging different economies and markets as global supply chains become more regionalized.

- Tightening of National Security Law Powers

Amendments to Hong Kong's national security framework, introduced in March 2026, expanded police investigative powers to include demanding passwords and decryption information for electronic devices from individuals under investigation in national security cases. Refusal to comply can lead to up to one year in prison and a fine of HK\$100,000, further broadening the scope for asset confiscation for national security offenses.

- Increase in Fraud Cases Reported

On May 3, 2026, police reported that Hong Kong recorded 9,427 fraud cases in the first quarter of the year, with losses amounting to HK\$1.85 billion. This represents an 18.6 percent increase from the same period last year, with elderly victims and related losses seeing sharp rises, mainly driven by investment scams.

- Routine Military Firing Practices Conducted

Military firing practices were scheduled throughout April 2026 at two military sites: the San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range and the Tsing Shan Firing Range. Specific dates within the reporting period included April 27, 28, 29, and 30, with red flags or lamps hoisted at the firing areas for safety.

- Regional Military Drills in South China Sea

The Balikatan 2026 exercise, involving approximately 17,000 troops from seven countries (including the US and Philippines), was held from April 20 to May 8, 2026, in the Philippines, with a key counter-landing live-fire exercise on April 27. China responded by conducting live-fire drills in waters near Luzon, indicating heightened military tensions in the South China Sea.

- Global Maritime Security Concerns in Strait of Hormuz

The "Iran War" and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz since late February 2026 continued to generate global geopolitical uncertainty, rising oil prices, and disruptions to international trade. On May 4, 2026, the US announced "Project Freedom" to safely guide stranded ships out of the Strait, threatening forceful intervention against any interference. These developments have indirect but significant economic and security implications for Hong Kong as a global trade hub.

## Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Hong Kong's security posture is inextricably linked to broader geopolitical shifts, particularly those involving China and major global powers. The strong condemnation by China of the US State Department's "2026 Hong Kong Policy Act Report" on April 16, 2026, underscores the ongoing diplomatic friction between Beijing and Washington over Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights. China views such reports as interference in its internal affairs and attempts to "contain China". This diplomatic tension creates an environment of uncertainty, potentially impacting Hong Kong's international standing and its role as a global financial center, despite the Financial Secretary's assertion that geopolitical shifts are an opportunity for evolution rather than a threat to its trade hub status.

The heightened military activities in the South China Sea, exemplified by the Balikatan 2026 exercise and China's responsive live-fire drills, directly contribute to regional instability. While Hong Kong is not a direct party to these military maneuvers, the South China Sea is a critical maritime route for global trade, and any escalation there could disrupt supply chains and economic stability, impacting Hong Kong's economy. The presence of a Chinese naval task force near Luzon in response to the Balikatan drills highlights the strategic competition in the region, which could have ripple effects on Hong Kong's security calculations and its relationship with neighboring states.

Furthermore, the ongoing "Iran War" and the volatile situation in the Strait of Hormuz present a significant global security concern with indirect consequences for Hong Kong. The effective closure of this critical chokepoint has led to disruptions in global energy markets and rising oil prices, which Hong Kong's Financial Secretary acknowledged as a challenge. The US announcement of "Project Freedom" on May 4, 2026, to guide stranded ships out of the Strait, coupled with threats of forceful

intervention, indicates a potential for further escalation that could impact global trade and shipping, thereby affecting Hong Kong's economy and its role as a maritime logistics hub.

## Military and Defense Analysis

Hong Kong's defense is primarily managed by the People's Liberation Army Hong Kong Garrison, and as such, significant independent military and defense policy shifts are not typically observed. The routine military firing practices conducted at the San Wai/Tai Ling Firing Range and Tsing Shan Firing Range in April 2026 are standard training activities for the garrison, maintaining operational readiness. These exercises are indicative of the PLA's continued presence and training within the Special Administrative Region, ensuring its capacity for defense and internal security.

While there were no specific reports on new defense acquisitions or modernization programs \*for Hong Kong\* during this period, the broader context of China's defense spending and modernization efforts would naturally extend to the forces stationed in Hong Kong. The focus for Hong Kong's security apparatus, as highlighted by the "STEALTHNET" counter-terrorism exercise, is on enhancing inter-agency and regional cooperation, particularly in addressing hybrid threats that combine cyber and physical elements. The participation of Interpol and regional police forces in this exercise demonstrates a focus on collaborative defense capabilities against non-traditional security threats rather than conventional military expansion.

The tightening of the national security framework, including expanded police investigative powers and asset confiscation, represents a strategic shift in internal defense policy, aimed at safeguarding national security within the city. This legal framework, while not military in nature, significantly impacts the operational environment for security forces and defines the scope of their activities in maintaining order and stability.

## Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months): In the immediate future, Hong Kong is likely to continue its strong emphasis on cybersecurity, with the Protection of Critical Infrastructure (Computer System) Bill expected to progress towards enactment. We can anticipate further drills and initiatives aimed at strengthening resilience against AI-driven attacks and supply chain vulnerabilities, as highlighted by the HKCERT report. The national security framework will remain a central pillar of Hong Kong's internal security, with continued enforcement and potential further refinement of its

provisions. Diplomatic tensions with Western nations, particularly the US, are expected to persist, with ongoing criticisms regarding Hong Kong's autonomy and human rights.

**Critical flashpoints and risk areas:** A critical flashpoint remains the Strait of Hormuz, where the US "Project Freedom" to clear stranded ships, coupled with threats of forceful response, could escalate tensions in the Middle East. Any major disruption there would have significant economic repercussions for Hong Kong due to its reliance on global trade and energy imports. Regionally, the South China Sea remains a potential flashpoint, with ongoing military exercises by various powers increasing the risk of miscalculation or accidental confrontation, which could impact regional stability and maritime security for Hong Kong. Internally, the rising trend of fraud cases, particularly those targeting the elderly, indicates a persistent domestic security challenge that will require sustained law enforcement efforts.

**Indicators to monitor:** Key indicators to monitor include the implementation and enforcement of the Protection of Critical Infrastructure (Computer System) Bill and the overall trend in cybersecurity incidents. Any further amendments or significant enforcement actions related to the National Security Law will be crucial. On the diplomatic front, observe the rhetoric and actions of the US and other Western powers concerning Hong Kong, as well as China's responses. Economically, track global oil prices and shipping disruptions related to the Strait of Hormuz, and their impact on Hong Kong's trade figures. Regionally, monitor the frequency and scale of military exercises in the South China Sea and any diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions.

**Strategic recommendations:** Hong Kong should continue to invest heavily in cybersecurity infrastructure and talent development, focusing on public-private partnerships to address the evolving threat landscape, particularly from AI-driven attacks. Proactive public awareness campaigns are essential to combat the rising tide of fraud. Diplomatically, Hong Kong should continue to articulate its position on national security and economic development, seeking to mitigate external criticisms while fostering international cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as trade and counter-terrorism. Regionally, while Hong Kong's direct military role is limited, it should advocate for peaceful resolution of maritime disputes and support initiatives that promote stability and freedom of navigation in critical waterways.

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## ANNEX: COLLECTED ARTICLES BY SOURCE

### Source: HK Free Press

- [Over 60% of homeless unfamiliar with medical waiver applications amid higher hospital fees, NGO survey finds](#) (2026-05-04 05:09)

Over 60 per cent of Hong Kong's homeless are unfamiliar with how to apply for medical waivers, and nearly three-fifths are reducing medical visits due to increased public hospital fees, an NGO has found. ImpactHK, which serves the city's homeless, surveyed 120 people between February and March to understand how medical fee reforms were affecting [...]

- [Hong Kong gov't and Reporters Without Borders trade barbs over press freedom ranking](#) (2026-05-04 03:42)

The Hong Kong government and legislature have condemned Reporters Without Borders (RSF) after the city was ranked low in the NGO's annual press freedom index. They also hit out after German public broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW) awarded jailed media tycoon and Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai a press freedom prize. In RSF's 2026 global press [...]

- [Tourists flock to Hong Kong countryside as city records 600,000 arrivals in first 2 days of Golden Week](#) (2026-05-03 23:30)

Hong Kong's countryside has seen an influx of tourists with the start of the Labour Day Golden Week in mainland China, recording over 600,000 arrivals in the first two days of the five-day-long holiday. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said on Saturday that ecological hotspots were crowded on Friday, the first day of [...]

- [Sri Lanka arrests 37 Chinese nationals at suspected scam centre: police](#) (2026-05-03 15:22)

Sri Lankan police have arrested 37 Chinese nationals suspected of running a cyberscam centre in the capital Colombo, a spokesman said on Sunday, in the latest crackdown on foreign-run online fraud. The suspects, aged between 23 and 44 and including one woman, were arrested after a tip-off, the police spokesman said. "They had entered the [...]"

- [Taiwan leader makes delayed visit to Eswatini after China objections](#) (2026-05-03 02:51)

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te on Saturday announced his arrival in Eswatini — Taipei's only diplomatic ally in Africa — after an earlier trip was cancelled when several countries revoked overflight permits. Those various African nations withdrew overflight permission following "intense pressure" from Beijing, one of Lai's closest advisers said at the time, forcing cancellation of [...]

- [Press Freedom Day 2026: 25 reasons to support HKFP's independent newsroom](#) (2026-05-03 02:00)

As we mark Sunday's UN World Press Freedom Day, ahead of HKFP's 11th anniversary next month, our team of seven are soldiering on. We remain on the ground despite unprecedented political and financial pressure last year, including threats and harassment, scrutiny from multiple government departments, pressure on our corporate partners, and false complaints to the authorities. [...]

- [Chinese swimmer Sun Yang reports cyberbullying to police](#) (2026-05-02 04:39)

Three-time Chinese Olympic champion swimmer Sun Yang filed a police report after being subjected to "large-scale" cyberbullying, his team said Friday. Sun, 34, returned to competition in 2024 after a four-year ban for smashing vials of blood during a 2018 doping test, the circumstances of which he still disputes. His team said Friday that false [...]

- ['Clearly me': Chinese AI drama accused of stealing faces](#) (2026-05-02 02:00)

By Sophia Xu and Purple Romero Christine Li is a model and influencer, but not an actor, so when she saw herself playing a cruel character in a Chinese microdrama she felt bewildered, then angry and afraid. The 26-year-old is one of two people who told AFP their likenesses were cast without consent in the [...]

- [China urges US to preserve 'stability' in ties, warns Taiwan is 'risk point'](#) (2026-05-01 05:16)

China's foreign minister on Thursday urged the United States to maintain "stability" between the two powers and warned that Taiwan posed the biggest risk, weeks before President Donald Trump visits Beijing. In a call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Beijing and Washington should "safeguard the hard-won stability" [...]

- [Taiwan economy grows at fastest pace since 1987](#) (2026-05-01 02:00)

Taiwan's economy expanded at its fastest pace in nearly 39 years thanks to robust demand for artificial intelligence technology, data showed Thursday, despite concerns over the Middle East crisis. The island is a global powerhouse in the manufacturing of semiconductor chips, which power AI, and its economy has been growing at a fast clip in [...]

- [HKFP Lens: 'Bodies in Motion, Bodies at Rest' – Gareth Brown's 19 years of dance photography](#) (2026-05-01 01:00)

Hong Kong photographer Gareth Brown has spent the past 19 years working on a personal project called "Bodies in Motion, Bodies at Rest" – using dance to showcase the city's unique spots. For what he called a "very personal passion project," he photographed ballerinas, contemporary and traditional dancers, as well as artistic swimmers and aerialists, [...]

- [‘Not good enough’ : Key points from gov’ t departments’ testimony at Tai Po fire inquiry](#) (2026-05-01 00:00)

In the second half of April, the public inquiry into the deadly Tai Po blaze heard from multiple government departments about authorities’ oversight during a major renovation at Wang Fuk Court before the tragedy unfolded. In the first 10 days of the hearings, residents gave damning testimony of how their complaints about potential fire hazards [...]

- [China’ s April factory activity expands despite Middle East war](#) (2026-04-30 09:46)

China’ s factory activity grew for a second straight month in April, official data showed Thursday, showing resilience despite surging energy prices and shipping disruption caused by the war in the Middle East. The manufacturing purchasing manager’ s index -- a key measure of industrial activity — was 50.3 in April, according to the National Bureau of [...]

- [Urban Renewal Authority did not consider bid-rigging risks at Wang Fuk Court, fire inquiry hears](#) (2026-04-30 08:02)

The authority that oversaw tender applications for the renovation work at the fire-hit Wang Fuk Court had not considered the risks of illegal tendering practices, a case manager has told an inquiry into the deadly blaze. Testifying on Thursday, Matthew Chan, a case manager for the Urban Renewal Authority (URA), said the semi-government body had [...]

- [Australia foreign minister says China agrees to collaborate on jet fuel exports](#) (2026-04-30 06:55)

Australia’ s foreign minister said Wednesday that China has agreed to work together to facilitate exports of jet fuel, in an attempt to ease supply disruptions caused by the war in the Middle East. The conflict and closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world’ s crude oil transits, have caused fuel [...]

- [Hong Kong gov’ t steps up measures at ecological hotspots ahead of Golden Week visitor surge](#) (2026-04-30 06:23)

The Hong Kong government has introduced a string of measures to manage ecotourism hotspots in Sai Kung and Lantau Island, as a surge in visitors is expected during China’ s upcoming Golden Week holiday. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said in a statement on Wednesday that it would deploy drones and additional staff to [...]

- [Hong Kong remains at 140th on global press freedom index as NGO highlights Jimmy Lai’ s 20-year jail term](#) (2026-04-30 04:00)

Hong Kong remains at 140th place on Reporters Without Borders’ (RSF) global press freedom index of 180 countries and territories, with the NGO highlighting the 20-year sentence handed down to Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai earlier this year. The press freedom watchdog released its annual index on Thursday, ahead of World Press Freedom Day on [...]

- [Hongkongers now face fines, jail time if caught carrying vapes in public](#) (2026-04-29 23:40)

Hongkongers caught carrying more than five vape pods or 100 heat sticks in public will face up to six months behind bars and a HK\$50,000 fine from Thursday. Cases involving smaller quantities will attract fines of HK\$3,000. The rules cover alternative tobacco products such as vapes, herbal cigarettes and electronic smoking products. They are part [...]

- [Diesel, LPG subsidies for Hong Kong public, commercial vehicles amid fuel price hikes](#) (2026-04-29 11:54)

The Hong Kong government has announced it will provide diesel and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) subsidies for public and commercial vehicles, amid higher fuel prices due to the ongoing Middle East war. The diesel subsidy of HK\$3 per litre will run for two months, from 12am on Thursday to 11.59pm on June 29, finance chief [...]

- [China to ban drone sales in capital over security fears](#) (2026-04-29 11:29)

China will ban the sale of drones in Beijing and require users to apply for permission for all flights in the capital under strict regulations that enter force on Friday. Officials have cited public security for the new rules, which also forbid bringing unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or their core components into Beijing. E-commerce platforms [...]

- [Hong Kong Disneyland records 36% drop in profit despite higher hotel occupancy, guest spending](#) (2026-04-29 11:15)

Hong Kong Disneyland Resort has recorded a 36 per cent drop in net profit in its latest fiscal year, although other figures, including hotel occupancy rate and guests' per capita spending, trended upwards. The theme park announced its results for its 2024-25 fiscal year, ending in September 2025, on Monday. Amid rising costs, Disneyland saw [...]

- [Domestic worker arrested for allegedly putting 2 toddlers in dog cage](#) (2026-04-29 10:29)

A domestic worker has been arrested on suspicion of child abuse after allegedly putting her employer's two toddlers in a dog cage on two occasions. Police said they received a report on Tuesday from the children's mother, who alleged that the Indonesian domestic worker had put the two boys, aged two and three years, in [...]

- [US leads new call condemning China's actions in Panama Canal dispute](#) (2026-04-29 09:10)

The United States led a group of regional countries in calling China's actions during a dispute over the Panama Canal a "threat," prompting backlash from Beijing on Wednesday. Washington and Beijing accuse each other of seeking to control the Panama Canal, a vital trade link between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. Panama took control of [...]

- [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 [...]

## Source: RTHK English News

- [Female passenger, 62, dies after HZMB car crash](#) (2026-05-04 04:02)

A female passenger died in the early hours of Monday, after the private car she was travelling in crashed on the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. Police said at about 4.41am, the vehicle was approaching Hong Kong when it was suspected to have lost control and flipped on its side after ramming into a number of traffic cones and a kiosk. Both the male driver, 67, and the passenger, 62, were trapped inside the car and had to be rescued by first responders. The woman sustained multiple injuries and was unconscious when taken to hospital, where she was certified dead. The driver meanwhile, hurt his limbs and was conscious when taken to hospital. The police's New Territories South special traffic investigation team is probing the case. Edited by Aaron Tam

- ['Camping doesn't hurt HK's hotel sector'](#) (2026-05-04 03:01)

A tourism sector representative on Monday said the surge in mainland tourists camping in Hong Kong's countryside would not hurt the city's hotel industry. Speaking to RTHK, the

executive director of the Hong Kong Tourism Association Timothy Chui said the overall occupancy rate at local hotels reached more than 90 percent during the Labour Day GoldenWeek holiday. As for campers, Chui said that some of them were not staying outdoors for their entire trip, instead, they booked hotel rooms for part of their stay and continued spending money in the city. “Campers might sleep at the camping site for one night and opt for a hotel on the following night. Hong Kong offers this option, it allows tourists to switch between a short time period. They may go camping one day and then continue dining, shopping and having fun in the urban areas the next,” he said. “This is exactly Hong Kong’s strength.” Chui also pointed out that about half of all hotel guests booked for one night, while the other half stayed for a longer period. He noted that hotel prices increased by 10 percent compared with holidays in the past, adding that some tourists would only decide their accommodation at the last minute. “For example, some visitors who have arrived in Hong Kong might not have booked a hotel. They can either stay in Hong Kong or return to Shenzhen or Zhuhai for accommodation, especially since the transport within the Greater Bay Area is very convenient,” he said. “It’s easy for tourists to leave Hong Kong, even in the early morning. So visitors’ decision on whether they would stay in Hong Kong was made late.” Meanwhile, Edward Leung, chairman of the Hong Kong Feast and Retreat Association, told the same programme that catering businesses at tourist areas saw a 15 to 20 percent boost. However, restaurants at districts near the border recorded a slight drop in business as many Hong Kong residents headed to the mainland during the Labour Day holiday. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [HK commemorates May 4 Movement anniversary](#) (2026-05-04 02:51)

Senior officials attended a flag raising ceremony on Monday to mark the 107th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement and the 90th anniversary of the Red Army’s Long March victory. Chief Secretary Eric Chan, deputy director of Beijing’s Liaison Office Sun Shangwu, deputy commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong Li Yongsheng, were among those who attended the event at the Golden Bauhinia Square in Wan Chai at 8am. About 1,200 members from uniformed groups, as well as primary and secondary schools attended the event. Meanwhile, 20 youth representatives made a declaration, saying that they were willing to take up responsibilities, protect the nation and love the SAR. The May Fourth Movement began in Beijing in 1919, and was a youth-led campaign which protested against the decision to allow Japan to retain territories in Shandong province that had been previously seized from China by Germany. The demonstrations sparked nationwide protests and saw a surge in nationalistic fervour which resulted in the flowering of new political movements and ideas. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Scam reports stabilise but more elderly falling prey](#) (2026-05-04 00:48)

Hong Kong has seen a rise in the number of older people falling victim to online scams, even as the overall figure for such crime remains stable. Police say they recorded more than 9,400 scam cases between January and March this year, largely unchanged from the same period in 2025. But the number of over 60s being taken in by scams rose to 1,264, up from 952. Between them,

they lost HK\$530 million to fraudsters, according to the force's commercial crime bureau. Superintendent Theodora Lee said the single biggest amount stolen was HK\$84 million, with the victim a 67-year-old man who thought he was investing in cryptocurrency. Lee said the man had struck up a romantic relationship online with a fraudster claiming to be an expert in investments. "The victim had downloaded a fake investment app and transferred a total of HK\$84 million crypto assets to the wallets designated by the scammer," the superintendent said. "Finally, when the victim tried to get the profits and failed, then he realised he had been scammed." Lee said many elderly people are coming across fake investment apps and tutorial videos made by criminals on social media platforms. Those with the most education and experience in investing are the most likely to fall for the scams, she said. "We believe that's because they have greater confidence in their investment decisions and because the scammers will use some very general and very true investment products to lure them into investing," Lee said. "The scammer would share real investment tips for them, so they would have built the trust with them." Since March, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority has required banks to assess whether their customers could be in danger of being conned. It is also building a machine-learning model to check for potential stooge accounts which criminals use to process illicit funds, executive director Chan King-wang said. "We have already started collecting the account opening data from 11 banks. We are in the process of developing that model based on the historical data, as well as the confirmed real account cases data provided by the police. The model is already there, but the power of the model to predict whether an account is a real account has yet to be fully tested," he said. Chan added that the HKMA hopes to finalise the model as soon as possible. Edited by Altis Wong

- [Mixed reaction among Wang Fuk Court returnees](#) (2026-05-03 09:40)

Emotions were mixed among Wang Fuk Court residents who returned home to collect their belongings on Sunday, the second to last day of the first round of homecoming. A woman, surnamed Tse, said the three hours given to her family was enough to take everything they wanted from their Wang Shing House flat. She said they only took a few things of sentimental value, and won't really miss their ruined home. "We won't go up for a second time again. There's nothing else to pack up, we didn't take away many things," she told reporters. "It's hard to come back to live here again. It would be like going through a nightmare again. And you'd have to wait for like more than 10 years, why bother?" Another woman, surnamed Ho, was noticeably upset by how badly damaged her flat was, saying she's packed about a third of her belongings in 21 large bags and plans to make another trip back. "My friend told me it's time to declutter and say goodbye, but that made me feel upset," she told reporters. The government has indicated that arrangements will be made for those who want to return to their fire-hit flats a second time. Other families, meanwhile, still held out hope that officials would rebuild the estate on-site. One man living in the same block, surnamed Liu, said his home was largely untarnished by the blaze. He saw his bed looked the same before the fire, and his nephew's homework was still lying on the desk. He also said it's regrettable and disappointing if they won't be allowed to live there again. "We've lived here for more than three decades after all.

Now that we're forced to leave, we're not very happy. "Why can't [the authorities] renovate the place to allow us to live here again? Or they can rebuild the place, I can wait for nine, 10 years to live here again." The government has said that it does not plan to rebuild Wang Fuk Court on-site, citing cost-effectiveness and technical difficulties. Inspecting the operation in Tai Po, Deputy Chief Secretary Warner Cheuk met with some residents as well as social workers and clinical psychologists assisting them. He spoke to Wang Tai House residents waiting to move their belongings onto vans, and learned about the use of temporary storage space nearby. The minister offered his gratitude to all parties involved in helping the residents return to their homes. \_\_\_\_\_ Last updated: 2026-05-03 HKT 18:39 Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Senior officials should report problems to others'](#) (2026-05-03 08:16)

Secretary for the Civil Service Ingrid Yeung on Sunday said government department heads are responsible for reporting systemic loopholes after spotting them. If senior officials noticed a problem beyond the scope of their own department's authority, they should report it to other departments or bureaux, or discuss it during internal meetings, Yeung told a TVB programme. "I believe department heads have the responsibility, apart from focusing on their own departments' work, that when there is a problem that cannot be handled, they should report it and bring it to a higher level of the government," she said. "If they fail to do that, they should be held accountable." Yeung said the Heads of Department Accountability System proposed by the government aimed to enhance departments' execution abilities. Investigations under the system, which will be divided into two tiers based on severity of issues, will cover all people involved instead of department heads only, she said. "After the investigation, we would follow an existing mechanism to handle. Whether it's the permanent secretary, department head or frontline civil servant, if they are incompetent or have committed misconduct, we would handle it using the same mechanism and there will be same consequences," she said. Asked if issues mentioned in the Wang Fuk Court inferno inquiry would affect pay rise for civil servants, Yeung said the government would consider all relevant factors. Edited by Edmond Fong

- [Observatory issues hail warning](#) (2026-05-03 07:23)

The Observatory said on Sunday afternoon that hail may affect the city shortly. Bad weather has been hitting Hong Kong, with forecasters saying violent gusts reaching 90 kilometres per hour or above may affect the SAR. The Observatory said members of the public should seek safe shelter immediately. The Amber Rainstorm Warning was issued at 2.20pm. Edited by Edmond Fong

- ['Local restaurants to see 10pc revenue growth'](#) (2026-05-03 05:54)

A representative from the catering industry on Sunday forecast that local restaurants would see revenues rise by 10 percent year-on-year during the Labour Day Golden Week holiday. In an interview with RTHK, Simon Wong, president of the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants and

Related Trades, said the growth was mainly driven by a surge of mainland visitors. "Since we have close to half a million visitors coming to Hong Kong for the first two days on the Golden Week, we saw that the catering industry for these two days has been very good," he said. "I would estimate that there would be an increase of about 10 percent in our business and even for some busy districts with a lot of tourist attractions, the business enjoyed about 15 to 20 percent increase in their business," Wong added. Wong explained that restaurants in busy areas like Tsim Sha Tsui, Yau Ma Tei, and Jordan stayed open till midnight due to high demand during the holiday, resulting in higher expected growth. Despite a large number of locals leaving for the Greater Bay Area or Shenzhen, he noted that a 13 percent year-on-year increase in mainland visitors helped fill in the gap. Wong also forecast the industry would record a daily turnover of around HK\$280 million to HK\$300 million on average during the holiday. "Compared to Mother's Day or Christmas holiday, the record can be HK\$350 million, or even record high of around HK\$400 million, but with HK\$300 million for the Labour Day per day business is already quite well," he said. As of 10am on Sunday, the third day of the holiday, the Immigration Department recorded more than 189,000 inbound and outbound visitors. There were around 111,000 inbound visitors, with mainland tourists accounting for over 61,000, while more than 78,000 people left Hong Kong, of which about 53,000 were Hongkongers. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Strong GDP growth expected in Q1: FS](#) (2026-05-03 05:36)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Sunday said Hong Kong is expected to see the strongest quarterly growth in nearly five years. His remarks came as the government gets ready to release the advance estimates of the city's gross domestic product for the first quarter of 2026 on Tuesday. Writing in his weekly blog, Chan said GDP growth is expected to accelerate, thanks to improvements in private consumption and good performances in exports and fixed investments. Local consumption has been recovering over the past year, with mega events held by the government attracting more tourists, he said. Chan said the number of visitors to Hong Kong reached over 14.3 million in the first quarter, while the tourist volume for the whole year was expected to exceed an earlier estimate of 53.8 million, driving tourism-related spending to over HK\$240 billion. During the Labour Day Golden Week holiday, Hong Kong recorded more than 600,000 visitor arrivals on the first two days of May, marking a six percent increase year-on-year, he said. Chan added that some restaurants and stores were expecting business to be strong during the holiday. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Motorists give thumbs-up to new Fanling Bypass](#) (2026-05-03 04:52)

The new Fanling Bypass opened on Sunday morning — the first major piece of transport infrastructure in the Northern Metropolis development project that has come into service. The four-kilometre, Eastern Section of the bypass takes vehicles from the edge of Tai Po on Fanling Highway to a new town in Fanling North. Officials said the route would save commuters around 10 minutes during peak hours. Civil Engineering and Development Department chief engineer, Pakin Cheung, said operations were smooth. "It's Sunday, so most residents might have been

testing the new bypass out, to head towards the urban areas in Kowloon. They benefited from using the bypass to reach the Fanling Highway quicker, he told RTHK. "As for Monday, the first working day of the week, we expect the traffic to be busier, so motorists may need more time to get used to new entries and exits along the bypass." DAB lawmaker Yiu Ming, representing New Territories North, said drivers need to be careful about new signage, as some sections that used to allow drivers to change lanes now have solid lines. A number of motorists who tried out the new route said they enjoyed the experience, but added there might need to be some adjustments. One of them was a driver surnamed Man, who lives in Ping Che. "The new road is quite good, but maybe it's brand new so there are some rocks around. I find the signage to be clear," he said. "It saved some time, because you don't need to go through the old routes that have a lot of traffic lights. So I very much look forward to the first working day, hopefully this bypass can help residents in the district." Other drivers said while they personally won't use the bypass much for now, they believe it will be a very important route down the line when an influx of residents is expected later with the development of the Northern Metropolis. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [IOMed set for inaugural high-level summit](#) (2026-05-02 09:48)

Secretary for Justice Paul Lam said the International Organization for Mediation (IOMed) will hold its first high-level summit next week. The event, which will focus on dispute resolution, marks a major milestone for the organisation, which began operations just last year. Speaking on a radio programme, Lam said the biennial Mediation Week will run from May 4 to 7, followed by the first-ever Global Mediation Summit, hosted by IOMed on May 8 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. According to Lam, this summit represents the organisation's first high-level meeting since its launch. Chief Executive John Lee is expected to attend, and a number of experienced, influential figures have been invited to speak on the latest developments in international, commercial and investment mediation. Over 1,000 participants from more than 60 countries have already registered, either to attend in person or join online. Lam also shared his hope that mediation culture would serve not only nations and large commercial institutions but also the public. "Regarding the mediation week schedule, the first four days will be more focused on people's livelihood and down-to-earth matters, centred on our local Hong Kong context – regardless of age group or type," he said. "Because what I really want to say is that the culture of mediation needs to be very down to earth. "While there should be high-level international elements, mediation is not only about serving between nations, nor only about serving large commercial institutions – it must also help the general public." Lam expressed confidence that the establishment of IOMed in Hong Kong would create a "magnet effect" that attracted a wider range of international organisations to the city for talent exchanges. He also revealed that the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank planned to set up an office in Hong Kong, with progress described as good and hopes high for the matter to be finalised within this year. Additionally, the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law is expected to open its Asia-Pacific liaison office in Hong Kong by the end of 2026. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Metropolis to look north for infrastructural direction](#) (2026-05-02 09:24)

Secretary for Development Bernadette Linn said on Saturday that the government will make improvements to infrastructure and industrial layout plans for the Northern Metropolis to ensure they are aligned with the country's 15th Five-Year Plan. Officiating at an opening ceremony a day ahead of the commissioning of the first major transport infrastructure project in the metropolis, she said the four-kilometre Fanling Bypass (Eastern Section) would serve residents in Fanling North's first public housing project, due to be completed this year. Linn also said land acquisition and infrastructure development in North District had entered the final stages and that authorities would make improvements to various developments in the Northern Metropolis. "The commencement of the bypass is just the beginning," she said. "The government will continue to improve the industrial layout, transport network and community amenities at the Northern Metropolis. "We will do our best to develop the Northern Metropolis into a new engine that would drive Hong Kong's development, to inject new economic vitality and create a better living environment for residents." The bypass stretches from Kau Lung Hang, Tai Po, connecting to Shek Wu San Tsuen in North District and the Fanling North New Development Area. Motorists can save approximately 10 minutes during peak hours by using the bypass to travel between Lung Yeuk Tau, Luen Wo Hui and Fanling Highway. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Confidence high Wang Chi owners will accept buyout bid](#) (2026-05-02 06:42)

Authorities remain confident that owners of Wang Chi House will agree to sell their flats by the end-of-June deadline with the deployment of special engagement teams to ensure they fully understand the acquisition scheme. The government has announced that it is considering expanding its buyout plan for Wang Fuk Court to include Wang Chi House – the only building in the residential estate not affected by November's deadly fire. The move came after homeowners in the block showed a high level of consensus on one of the government's rehousing options, with around 77 percent of them having expressed preliminary support for selling. For the offer to become binding, at least 75 percent of owners must sign a letter of acceptance by June 30, officially confirming their interest. Speaking on a radio programme on Saturday, Deputy Financial Secretary Michael Wong, who also heads the task force on emergency accommodation arrangements for those displaced by the Wang Fuk Court fire, pointed out that the engagement team's role is to help residents understand the pros and cons of the acquisition scheme, not to act as a "sales team". "From the very beginning, I personally briefed the team members," Wong said. "I told them that they don't need to meet any targets. The most important thing is to present the scheme clearly. "There is no pressure to get every owner you meet to agree to sell. That is very clear." Wong emphasised that the scheme is voluntary and based on mutual agreement. "If 10 or 20 percent say they don't intend to sell, I respect that and won't criticise them," he said. However, Wong noted that owners who opt out must understand that their flats would, if Wang Chi House doesn't reach the threshold for compulsory sale, then fall back into the normal market mechanism – complete with unresolved land lease and deed of mutual covenant issues, as well as estimated repair

costs of at least HK\$30 million. He also revealed that the team has encountered residents still struggling emotionally with the impact of the fire. "Some say their psychological trauma is huge," Wong said. "Although their block was not directly affected by the fire, it's right next door. Going back makes them very uncomfortable. They don't want to live there again." According to Wong, formal acceptance proposal letters will be sent to all Wang Chi Houseowners within the next two weeks. Owners who wish to sell, he said, simply need to sign and return the letter, after which the government will proceed to the next step. Edited by ThomasMcAlinden

- [Public vaping ban 'won't dim HK allure to tourists'](#) (2026-05-02 03:56)

The Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office said on Saturday this week's expansion of the smoking ban would not deter tourists from visiting Hong Kong. As of April 30, the use of alternative smoking products – including e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products, and herbal cigarettes – in public spaces is banned. Public possession alone brings a HK\$3,000 penalty. More serious breaches, including the importation or sale of these items, mean a fine of up to HK\$50,000 and up to six months in jail. As of 5pm yesterday, the office's inspectors had conducted 216 operations and issued four penalty notices. Speaking on an RTHK programme, control office head Manny Lam pointed out that the ban on the importation of alternative smoking products had been in force for four years and that such regulations are not unique to Hong Kong. "If we look at the whole world, more than 30 countries and regions have imposed similar laws, including Singapore and Thailand, which rolled out such regulations in 2014 and 2018, respectively," he said. "We have not seen any impact on their tourist numbers following such bans. Lam said his office had been informing tourists about the ban since the beginning of the year. He said this involved collaborating with Customs, the Tourism Board, the Travel Industry Authority, and airlines. As for the January 1 expansion of the smoking ban to within three metres of doorways of places like hospitals and government clinics, schools, residential-care homes and child-care centres, Lam said more than 11,000 inspections had been carried out in the first quarter. They resulted in more than 2,100 fixed-penalty notices being issued, including 23 for smoking in the newly stipulated areas. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Uber says acquiring e-hail taxi startup FlyTaxi](#) (2026-05-01 21:26)

Uber says it is acquiring the Hong Kong e-hail taxi start-up FlyTaxi. Launched 13 years ago, locally-built FlyTaxi was one of the first meter taxi platforms in Hong Kong. In a statement, Uber said FlyTaxi would continue to operate as normal and there would be no change for drivers and riders using the FlyTaxi or Uber apps. It said the move was part of its commitment to growing the taxi industry and providing greater economic opportunities to drivers. FlyTaxi's founder Simon Siu said joining forces with Uber was a proud milestone. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Labour of lore as tourists hit all the high spots](#) (2026-05-01 08:58)

Mainlanders began flocking to Hong Kong on Friday as the five-day Labour Day Golden Week holiday kicked off. Many of them visited the former Yau Ma Tei Police Station, saying they

wanted to experience the historical landmark in person after having seen it used as a location in local films. A woman surnamed Li, who is from Chengdu, said she was thrilled as she enjoys the dramatic fare that Hong Kong films conjure up on the silver screen. “I have only been seen [the building] on screen and never come close to it,” she said. “But now that I’m here, it’s like all those scenes – those exciting, thrilling movies, the chase scenes with all the handsome police officers – are being replayed in my mind,” she said. Another tourist said the former police station had been popular as a tourist spot among travellers online so she came to take photographs of the landmark fixture in Hong Kong’s film history. With some heading for some of the more popular tourist hotspots such as Victoria Harbour, Hong Kong Disneyland and Ocean Park, the slightly more intrepid went to Sai Kung’s Sharp Island for the unique natural scenery and rich coral outcrops of Unesco Global Geopark. “I am from Shanghai and I like the outdoors a lot, but there is no such unique spot that encompasses the sea and mountain there, and it takes a few hours to drive to go somewhere distant, so I think it is quite convenient there,” a woman surnamed Shen said. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department staff will be deployed in strength to ensure that the 1,000 mainland visitors expected to head there on all five days of the holiday are on their best behaviour. They will also implement various measures, such as distributing leaflets to boost environmental protection awareness as well as guiding kayakers and snorkellers in as well as out of the water in some instances. A woman surnamed Wang from Shenyang told RTHK that the measures are useful, as not all people are aware of the right thing to do in certain circumstances. She added that violators could be fined to ensure a deterrent effect. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Quota scheme set for mega bridge travel between SARs](#) (2026-05-01 08:43)

All permanent residents as well as companies registered in Hong Kong can soon apply to use the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to travel by car between the two special administrative regions. This came as the Transport Department said on Friday that an open category for these two categories of applicants would be set up as part of an attempt to make cross-boundary travel more efficient. There will be a quota of 200 for applicants in each category when applications open on Thursday. “These new open quotas will provide additional convenience for Hong Kong residents to drive to Macao for work, business, visiting families or sightseeing, thereby strengthening ties between the two places,” a spokesman said. Currently, only permanent residents and firms meeting specific requirements can apply. Besides these, another quota of 1,000 – half of them new and the rest reallocated – will be set aside for existing eligible applicants in the upcoming round. Under the quota scheme, drivers are entitled to multiple entries into Macao using the mega bridge starting from mid-July until it expires in 2029. However, the department stressed, current holders of quotas issued after September 2023 are not eligible to apply this time around. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Early queues in Wang Fuk race to retrieve belongings](#) (2026-05-01 08:01)

Long queues formed at Wang Fuk Court in Tai Po in the early hours of Friday as more people returned to retrieve belongings they were forced to leave behind when the deadly inferno tore

through most of their residential estate. In the latest phased arrangement, five floors in Wang Tai House and 10 floors in Wang Kin House were opened up. By just before 9am, dozens of people had lined up outside Kwong Fuk Community Hall to register and receive the protective gear they had to don before they were allowed to go into the buildings. Many were seen toting large red-white-blue canvas bags, pulling handcarts or wheeling suitcases. A woman surnamed Chan who lived in Wang Tai House, one of two buildings that were severely damaged in the blaze, said she hoped to retrieve what mattered most to her family. "I definitely want to retrieve valuables and sentimental items like photos," she said. "My mother will not be going up with me, but my older sister and two friends will. My mother is already 85 years old, so walking up 14 floors is way too difficult." A woman surnamed Kwan said she owned three high-floor units in Wang Kin House, which she had been using for both self-occupation and rental. She said she had managed to put the fire incident out of her mind for a while but that her mood turned heavy again when she learned she could finally go upstairs. "Most important is that I can get my son's photos and certifications. I also want to grab my own awards from work," Kwan said. "I heard from my social worker that it is a good thing if we don't get advance photos to give us an idea of our unit's condition. If we don't get photos, it means the condition of our home isn't too bad. "I hope the condition of Wang Kin House is better than what we expect it to be." A man surnamed Siu, who had been living in Wang Kin House, said his parents were among the first batch of owners and that their greatest wish had been to move back into their unit. He added that though his father is reluctant to part with the flat, he knows he has to let go. Siu also said the family believes the government has been very considerate of their situation. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Employers 'missing out on MPF offset subsidies'](#) (2026-05-01 07:58)

Lawmaker Lam Chun-sing has called on the government to step up its publicity promotional efforts for a subsidy scheme that helps employers deal with the abolition of the mandatory provident fund offsetting arrangement a year ago. His remarks came after the government said it had received more than 20,000 applications for the subsidy that aims to assist employers to adapt to the policy change and processed more than 16,000 of them. Speaking on an RTHK programme on Friday, Lam, who chairs the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions, said the number of applications was lower than expected. "Some employers may not be aware of the scheme," he said. "Even if they are, they may not know the application procedure and just skip it thinking it only involves a small amount of money. "I hope the government can enhance its promotion to small and medium enterprises. "Since the government has reserved HK\$33.2 billion for subsidies over 25 years – and only disbursed HK\$40 million so far – I think this resource should be used to support SMEs." Lam also said many of the applications had been lodged by employers in the construction and catering sectors. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Cabbies, fares told go extra mile on e-payment options](#) (2026-05-01 07:33)

The Taxi Drivers and Operators Association has called on cabbies and passengers to avoid potential confusion over electronic payments by communicating clearly with each other. The call on Friday came a month to the day after it became mandatory for taxi drivers to provide at least two e-payment options. The Transport Department has received 65 complaints as of April 17, with the grouses mainly about cabbies failing to offer electronic payment methods and certain platforms charging passengers transaction fees. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme, association secretary-general Wong Tai-hoi said most of the complaints arose as a result of a lack of communication. “For example, I may provide two electronic payment options, but a passenger may use something else,” he said. “[They would say] why can't you provide, say, the credit card payment option, why don't you have it? Aren't you supposed to provide it?” Wong pointed out that even though there are stickers on taxis showing which e-payment methods are available, drivers working different shifts might offer different options without changing the stickers. He urged drivers to make it a practice to make it clear to customers when they board which two payment options they offer. Passengers, Wong added, should at the same time also keep cash in hand in spite of the availability of e-payment options, Wong added. He also pointed out that while Octopus Card Hong Kong has waived handling fees for cabbies using its app for business purposes, it is uncertain whether the arrangement is permanent. The cost of using e-payment methods, Wong stressed, is very high for drivers. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Four people fined on day one of expanded smoking ban](#) (2026-05-01 07:30)

Four fixed-penalty notices were issued on Thursday, the first day Hong Kong's new tobacco-control regulations effectively banned the use of alternative smoking products in public places, according to the head of the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office. As of April 30, a total ban on alternative smoking products – including e-cigarettes, heated tobacco products and herbal cigarettes – has been in place in public spaces. Offenders caught possessing, using, importing or selling these items face penalties of up to HK\$50,000 and six months in jail, while public possession alone can result in a HK\$3,000 fine. Speaking on an RTHK radio programme on Friday, Manny Lam, head of the control office, said that as of 5pm on the first day of enforcement, his office had issued four penalty notices under the relevant law. He added that inspections would continue across various locations, particularly in areas with high pedestrian traffic. Lam noted that the low number of violations was largely expected. "This is largely in line with our expectations," he said. "First, these products such as e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products have already had their import, sale, promotion and manufacturing banned for four years. "In fact, there is no legal way to obtain these products in society." Lam also credited public awareness campaigns for the low number of infractions. "Given our extensive publicity work recently, we expected that the number of these penalty notices issued would not be very serious," he said. Lam emphasised that ongoing publicity efforts aim not only to encourage public understanding and compliance with the law but also to raise awareness about the dangers of alternative smoking products. "Publicity work is never perfect or completely sufficient, but even though we have done a lot, we will keep doing it," he said. "We hope that

through publicity, besides helping people understand and comply with the law, the public will also truly understand what the hazards of these products are." Lam reiterated that alternativesmoking products contain nicotine, are not "harm-reduction" tools, and do not help peoplequit smoking. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Two Sai Kung cabbies nabbed for allegedly overcharging](#) (2026-05-01 02:45)

Two taxi drivers have been arrested in Sai Kung in an undercover operation for alleged overcharging a day prior to the start of the Labour Day Golden Week. The men, aged 43 and 66, were suspected of charging about HK\$300 and HK\$540, about twice the original fare. They were also alleged to have failed to ensure their taxi driving licences and meters were openly displayed. Police said their taxis had been impounded for further investigations. Last Saturday, Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism Rosanna Law said authorities were determined to clamp down on taxi drivers' misbehaviour, including overcharging. The government would not tolerate any misconduct that affects the SAR's tourism reputation, she added. Offenders face a fine of up to HK\$10,000 and six months in prison for a first conviction for overcharging. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Public hospitals set to extend non-acute ward visiting](#) (2026-04-30 23:10)

Visiting hours will be extended in around 20 percent of wards at public hospitals by the end of July to allow for greater flexibility, the Hospital Authority announced. For paediatric wards, visiting hours will be extended from four hours to 24-hour, around-the-clock access. As for rehabilitation, convalescent, infirmary, palliative and hospice wards, visiting time will increase from four hours to nine hours. However, there will be no extension for acute wards, where visiting time remains capped at four hours per day. The limit of two visitors per patient at any one time also remains unchanged. Dr Danny Tong, the authority's chief manager of nursing, said that the authority is "playing it safe" before considering further extensions. "In acute settings, the clinical condition is not stabilised yet. And we have to have the proper, accurate diagnosis and treatment plan," he said. There is also an established mechanism to make special visiting arrangements for patients with specific care needs in acute wards, he added. Citing the experience of several public hospitals that have already extended visiting time, Dr Tong stressed that extended hours actually reduce the workload for frontline nurses. "For the traditional or prevailing arrangement, we have to fix the period of time to facilitate visiting, like two hours in the noontime and two hours in the evening. And then it creates a scenario that all visitors sort of pack into this narrow visiting time period," he said. "From our experience, it's like diverting the workload, spread evenly in the wider window period. And that's why, from our experience, there's no specific pressure, so in case that we have to make a very stringent or specific manpower arrangement to entertain this kind of request." The Kowloon Central Cluster will be the first to fully implement the changes on May 2, followed by the New Territories West Cluster on May 4. The authority expects the new arrangements to be in effect territory-wide by the end of July. Edited by Robert Kemp

- [Govt hopes to amend laws amid fuel smuggling rise](#) (2026-04-30 11:15)

Secretary for Security Chris Tang has announced that the government is actively amending laws in response to a sharp rise in illegal fuel smuggling activities. Speaking to reporters after a meeting of the Fight Crime Committee on Thursday, Tang said that the proposed changes are designed to close existing legal loopholes by raising penalties and clarifying the criminal liability of buyers. Under the new proposals, the maximum fine for selling illegal fuel would be increased from HK\$200,000 to HK\$3 million, and the maximum prison term would be raised from one year to three years – a move Tang said would serve as a stronger deterrent. In addition, authorities plan to expand the enforcement powers of the Fire Services Department. The department, he said, would be granted arrest powers in cases involving illegal refuelling, as well as the authority to stop, search and seize vehicles to improve enforcement efficiency. Tang also noted that the government is studying the legal liability of those who purchase illegal fuel. "The current provisions mainly target sellers. Buyers are not subject to any legal restrictions," he said. "In the absence of legal constraints on the demand side, this makes such crimes more likely to occur. We hope to clearly establish the criminal liability of buyers to plug this loophole." The security chief revealed that authorities have received 656 complaints related to illegal refuelling – twice the amount compared to the same period last year. The number of cases in urban areas, he said, has surged from ten in the first quarter of last year to 61 in the same period this year, a rise of 5.1 times. Tang highlighted several dangerous incidents in densely populated areas. "For example, a mobile illegal refuelling station in Cheung Sha Wan caused a vehicle fire that damaged several cars in February and led to two injuries," he said. "In March this year, in To Kwa Wan, we raided an illegal refuelling station located in a street-level shop, seizing approximately 850 litres of fuel. If that amount of fuel were ignited and exploded, the destructive force would be equivalent to 1,000 pounds of explosives. "The location is near residential buildings and even has an elderly home. If an accident were to occur, the consequences would be unimaginable." The government aims to submit a draft bill to the Legislative Council by the end of this year. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Authorities to crack down on illegal tour guides](#) (2026-04-30 09:59)

The Travel Industry Authority (TIA) on Thursday said it will "severely" crack down on illegal tour guides during the mainland's Golden Week holiday that runs from May 1 to May 5. In a statement, the authority noted it has already conducted inspections and publicity campaigns, alongside the Immigration Department, at various tourism hotspots over the past two days. It said they have visited popular areas such as the West Kowloon Cultural District and the Avenue of Stars to distribute leaflets urging people not to follow unlicensed tour guides. It reminded tourists to check on the business qualifications and licensing status of an agency before embarking on any of its tours. It also called on visitors to file a report to either the authority or the police if they are treated unfairly by merchants or encounter suspected illegal tour guides. The TIA also noted that unlicensed tour guides face fines of HK\$50,000 and up to a year in prison. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [URA not involved in Wang Fuk project consultant hiring](#) (2026-04-30 09:31)

The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) did not have any role in the tendering or hiring of a project consultant and registered inspector for Wang Fuk Court, an independent committee probing last November's deadly inferno at the estate heard on Thursday. Case manager Matthew Chan, the first URA official to testify, told the inquiry that he had been following up on the tendering for renovation works at the Tai Po estate since June 2019. He explained that the authority's role was limited to hosting the tender advertisement on its website and consolidating a summary table once the management committee received bids. However, Chan testified that the URA would not offer opinions on the tender evaluation criteria, to remain neutral. The committee's lead counsel, Victor Dawes, suggested that bid-rigging often involves manipulating evaluation criteria and described the authority's passive stance as a "major loophole." Dawes also pointed out a significant "discrepancy" in the bids for the project consultant role at Wang Fuk Court. The prices ranged from over HK\$2 million down to just HK\$45,000. Chan noted that some management committees consider price as the sole selection factor. He called the price gap a "normal industry practice" where less experienced firms underbid to gain a foothold in the market. Dawes also said that Hau Wa-kin, the director of the project's main contractor Prestige Construction and Engineering, was related to at least five companies that submitted bids for construction works at Wang Fuk Court. Questioned whether the URA was aware of these connections, Chan said the authority had relied on reports provided by the project consultant, adding that the authority did not conduct its own scrutiny. A director at the URA, Peter Wong, also testified and conceded that the authority is currently unable to take any action if a project consultant and contractors collude to carry out unnecessary works. But he stressed that a strengthened Smart Tender system will be launched later this year, featuring a new background check mechanism to assist management committees in evaluating tenders. Wong added that under the updated system, the URA will take a more active role by conducting its own tender evaluations and then picking the three best bids for residents to choose from. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Public transport drivers sit easier with LPG subsidy](#) (2026-04-30 04:54)

The Motor Transport Workers General Union said on Thursday that a plan to subsidise certain sectors running on liquefied petroleum gas would go a long way with drivers tasked with serving the public. Taxis, public minibuses and school buses are expected to get a subsidy of 50 Hong Kong cents per litre by the end of next month, not long after the ceiling price per litre of LPG is hiked up at dedicated filling stations by more than HK\$1 starting in May. The general union's first vice chairman, Chong Wing-tak, told an RTHK radio programme that drivers in these public transport sectors faced having to pay about HK\$30 more per shift per vehicle. "[The increment] isn't that great if you calculate it on a daily basis. It's only about HK\$30 a day. On a monthly basis, however, that's about HK\$1,000," he said. "That means drivers would be taking a monthly pay cut. As you know, taxi and minibus drivers are self-employed." Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan has said the decision to offer an LPG subsidy is expected to benefit operators of around 16,900 taxis, 3,440 minibuses and 170 school buses. The government's swift action in this regard, Chong added, can alleviate drivers' burden by

half. He also hopes the two-month subsidy can be extended if LPG price continues on an upward trajectory. Chong suggested the administration consider setting up a fuel surcharge mechanism for drivers in these sectors in the long run. The move comes in the wake of a HK\$3 per litre subsidy for vessels and commercial vehicles that run on diesel, with the relief measure starting on Thursday and ending on June 29. With firms having to submit a weekly report to the authorities to ensure that they do not increase the charges that they levy on the public while receiving the subsidy, the deputy general manager of a diesel distribution firm, Janet Lo, said the requirement has brought an extra workload. This is because they have to compile the information needed within a short time, and they also have to make sure that their customers are not using the fuel outside Hong Kong or reselling it, she added. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Inspections begin for people using vapes, e-cigarettes](#) (2026-04-30 04:29)

New tobacco control regulations targeting the use of alternative smoking products in public areas took effect on Thursday, with offenders facing a fine of up to HK\$50,000 and six months in jail. Anyone found with vapes, e-cigarettes or heated tobacco will be issued with a HK\$3,000 fixed penalty notice. Those found carrying large quantities of such products, such as more than five units of cigarette capsules or 100 units of heat sticks, will face criminal prosecution. The head of the Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office, Manny Lam, led spot checks in Admiralty, where two residents were caught carrying heated tobacco. Speaking to reporters afterwards, Lam said the office will enhance inspections over the next fortnight, specifically targeting crowded areas and commercial districts. “When our Tobacco and Alcohol Control Office inspectors find anyone possessing, smoking, or carrying e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products, we will issue the fixed penalty notice without prior warning,” he said. “We will review our tactics in the early phase of our inspection. We will conduct more inspections wearing uniforms with the purpose to enhance the awareness of the public about the new legislation.” Lam added that there would be no leeway for overseas visitors, saying the office will enhance publicity efforts to ensure tourists are aware of the rules. He noted that the sale or import of such products has been prohibited since 2022 and stressed that similar bans in places such as Thailand have not deterred tourists from visiting. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- ['Over HK\\$30m needed to repair Wang Chi House'](#) (2026-04-29 13:28)

The current property manager of Wang Fuk Court estimates that repair works at Wang Chi House – the only building at the estate in Tai Po not damaged by the inferno last November – will cost more than HK\$30 million and take at least nine months to complete. Hop On Management, which was appointed by the government to handle follow-up work for residents, added that it will hold a briefing for homeowners early next month to explain the details of the required repairs. In a statement published on Wednesday, the company noted that about two-thirds of the building's exterior walls require further waterproofing to rectify issues from renovations carried out before the fire. “With the rainy season approaching, there is a risk of water leakage and safety hazards in these areas. It is necessary to set up scaffolding or

suspended working platforms to handle them,” the statement read. The company also noted that additional time is required to construct emergency vehicle access routes to comply with fire safety regulations. “These works may involve private land ownership, and additional time may be required for completion,” it added. There is a need to inspect and repair vital infrastructure, the company said, such as the fire service system, drinking water tanks, and public pipelines. Meanwhile, the government said that a total of 111 households from Wang Tai House and Wang Kin House returned to their homes on Wednesday and spent around two hours and six minutes on average inside the buildings. There were five cases where police assistance was requested involving suspected lost property, such as watches, jewellery, cash and gold. Officers were able to find the missing belongings in one of the cases. One resident also sought help from authorities after feeling unwell. Edited by Aaron Tam

- [Green agenda, market potential attract firms to China](#) (2026-04-29 08:53)

Foreign firms from around the world are showcasing their innovative products in Hong Kong in a bid to use the city as a launchpad into the mainland market. Some 5,600 exhibitors from more than 30 countries and regions have been taking part in seven "mega" trade fairs in Hong Kong. Around 15 percent of them, or 820 exhibitors, focus on green and sustainable products, along with the use of innovative materials in compliance with environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards. Knishka Bahety, chief executive of Indian decoration and kitchenware firm, Crown Decor, said he hopes to secure more buyers from Asia, especially China, partly because of the country's growing emphasis on the environment. "One of our products are made out of laminated boards, which is antimicrobial and has all the properties of eco-friendliness. Definitely this is 'the product of the future'," he told RTHK. "Predominantly, we are very strong in the European market, but now with the [Iran war] we are looking for other markets so that we can spread our risks. "China is a big market. And of course, we do export one of our brands to the mainland, and now we plan to do this even more for the China and other Asian markets," he said. He added his firm, which joined the fairs in the SAR for the first time, hoped to widen its global reach as part of its strategy to hedge against trade disruptions. "The reason for us coming here is also because all the international customers from various parts of the world are here, so we decided to be here to reach maximum countries at this place," he said. Separately, Mohamed Alayat, founder of Dubai-based company, Alpha Art, which focuses on corporate gifts such as tech-enabled drinkware, was keen to explore the mainland market due to its "huge" consumer potential. "We have inquiries before with Huawei, and they are talking about [orders of] five million pieces, we never find this kind of numbers anywhere. The China market is a huge market," he said. The trade fairs, organised by the Trade Development Council, cover a wide range of industries, including houseware, fashion, printing and packaging, premium gifts, and intellectual properties. First-time exhibitors include those from Finland, Germany, Iceland, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, as well as India. Edited by Tony Sabine

- [Auditor finds eye-watering expenses at Tai Po hostel](#) (2026-04-29 08:31)

An audit report has found that a government-funded youth hostel in Tai Po spent excessively on furniture and equipment. Under the Youth Hostel Scheme introduced in the 2011–12 Policy Address, the government pays for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to construct youth hostels, which they then operate on a self-financing basis. In a report published on Wednesday, the Audit Commission noted that an NGO procured 78 thermo ventilators at total cost of HK\$903,000 for a hostel in Tai Po. However, audit research revealed that the retail price for the supply, delivery, and installation of the same model was between HK\$1,900 and HK\$2,300. In response, the NGO explained that the higher prices it paid were driven by several factors, including the requirement for certified installation personnel on construction sites, insurance, and a strict 21-day installation window. The report also highlighted that the hostel procured 76 toilet paper holders at a unit price of HK\$3,390 and 46 bathroom soap dispenser holders priced at HK\$2,390 each, but they were never put in use. The NGO explained that the toilet paper holders were found to be too difficult to use and that the soap dispenser holders could cause safety hazards. The commission also noted that the government had failed to deliver the 3,000 hostel units it promised the Legislative Council in 2012, as only around 1,300 were completed as of December last year. The commission urged the government to review the target of 3,000 units and speed up the implementation of approved youth hostel projects as far as practicable. The administration was also urged to strengthen controls over the procurement of furniture and equipment at youth hostels, for example by boosting competition as far as possible when there is a need to conduct restricted tendering. Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs Alice Mak agreed with the audit recommendations. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [Govt to offer diesel subsidy starting Apr 30](#) (2026-04-29 07:24)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Wednesday announced that the two-month subsidy for vessels and commercial vehicles running on diesel would start on Thursday. It will hand out the HK\$3 per litre subsidy to designated oil companies and distributors. Environment minister Tse Chin-wan said the government would ensure that motorists would directly benefit and not pay more than they need to, as oil firms and distributors must submit reports to authorities every week on information such as the sources of the fuel they purchase, sales volume and prices.

“After the scheme, they have to conduct an independent audit to verify all those information. Because the government, we know the price of the oil they buy from external sources, therefore [for] all the changes in the oil prices, we can monitor and we know what are the changes,” he said. “Therefore, with the reporting and the auditing system, we are very confident the oil companies will not be able to [counteract] the subsidy.” Meanwhile, the government is also considering a HK\$0.50 per litre subsidy next month for taxis, minibuses and school buses which run on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). The financial secretary said this was due to the fact that the ceiling price per litre of auto-LPG at dedicated filling stations would rise by more than a dollar starting in May. Secretary for Transport and Logistics Mable Chan said the decision to offer an LPG subsidy is expected to benefit about 16,900 taxis, 3,440 minibuses and 170 school buses. “Public minibuses and taxis are two important components of our public transport system. On the other hand, we have also minibuses providing student service,” the official

said. “In order to ensure that they will continue to maintain a steady service for the generalmembers of the public, we will deploy internal resources within the government in order toprovide the subsidy for petroleum suppliers companies.” The potential subsidy for LPGtransport vehicles is expected to cost around HK\$38 million, she added, and would run forabout two months. The details would be announced in due course, she said. Edited by TonySabine

- [Lawmakers approve budget bill as FS explains moves](#) (2026-04-29 06:47)

Financial Secretary Paul Chan on Wednesday dismissed concerns from some lawmakers that the financial cornerstone of the SAR will be shaken by the government's plan to use HK\$150 billion from the Exchange Fund for infrastructure spending. This came as lawmakers approved the budget bill, with some of them raising questions about the funds transfer plan. Chan described as "scaremongering" comments that issuing bonds for Northern Metropolis development would create financial crises for future generations. "[It would only be irresponsible] if we don't invest in the Northern Metropolis and create greater capacity for Hong Kong, seizing the opportunities to snatch companies and get them to set up here to develop our innovation and technology and a vigorous I&T ecosystem," he told lawmakers before the bill's passage. "It would only be irresponsible if we don't diversify the economic structure of Hong Kong and make the future economy more resilient, and allow young people and future generations to have more, and better, job opportunities." Chan stressed that the one-off transfer – to be carried out over two years – amounts to less than four percent of the overall reserves of the Exchange Fund. He added that the HK\$150 billion will come from the HK\$330 billion annual surplus, to support infrastructure development in the metropolis, as well as other projects. The minister also rejected arguments that the government is using money raised through bond issuance to cover other bond debts. He said the administration is issuing relatively shorter bonds of three to seven years, because doing so will mean lower interest commitments. He said given the market confidence in purchasing the bonds – due to the SAR government's sound financial situation – officials plan to keep issuing them. Chan went on to say that the administration plans to focus on developing artificial intelligence in Hong Kong to boost high-quality development of the local economy. Edited by Thomas McAlinden

- [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 Councilmember, stressed that CUHKMC has been recording a surplus since last November, eventhough it had suffered losses. "I can say it's purely 100 percent in consideration of the bestpublic interest and best CUHK interest," he said. He went on to say the decision was purelydetermined by the CUHK Council and the CUHKMC board. They believed the decision would bebest 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 toprovide loans or bank loan guarantees to the medical centre to pay back the loan. The moneywould not come from funds set aside for education purposes or other designated purposes, hesaid. 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 "Chinamaxxing" 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 Pongsarajanavit 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 simulation 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