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## Switzerland

### **Hong Kong court upholds not guilty verdict on Swiss photographer**

HK court upholds not guilty verdict on Swiss photographer Marc Progin accused of aiding protest assault. The photographer, now 74, was arrested in October 2019. He was accused of assisting an attack on a mainland Chinese man who shouted "We are all Chinese" during a protest. [HKFP](#), Apr 29

### **Swiss top banker who put strip club visits on expenses jailed in high-profile fraud case**

Ex-Raiffeisen Switzerland CEO Pierin Vincenz's misuse of company expenses was exposed as he faced charges for pocketing millions through illicit deals. He claimed the strip club bill was business-related, as was a claim for his dinner with a woman he met on Tinder. [SCMP](#), Apr 14

## Foreign Policy / International Relations

### **EU monitored 81 court hearings of opposition activists in Hong Kong last year**

The European Union has revealed it monitored 81 court hearings of opposition activists in Hong Kong last year amid what it characterized as a continuing erosion of democracy and weakening of civil liberties in the financial hub. The 27-member bloc also stressed that one of its priorities during the past year was to offer 'support to civil society, academia and the media' as the government continued its 'dismantling of the one country, two systems principle'. The Beijing-led electoral reforms has further weakened the city's 'already modest democratic elements'. The bloc said the National Security Law had created a 'chilling effect on the exercise of previously protected rights and freedoms', citing the arrest of journalists and the closure of independent media as examples. [SCMP](#), Apr 21

### **Government rejects claims in US report on human rights**

For the second time in two weeks, the US State Department accused China of having undermined HK's autonomy and freedoms, one of a slate of charges against Beijing in the department's annual global human rights report. A HK government spokesperson rebutted claims made by the United States in relation to the city's electoral system, the National Security Law introduced in 2020, academic freedoms, freedom of speech and of the press, and the disbandment of specific organizations in Hong Kong. In a statement, the spokesperson said that they strongly oppose the various unfounded allegations against the HKSAR Government and human rights are fully protected by law in HK. They strongly urge the US to immediately stop breaching the international law based on its biased political interests to intervene in HK matters, which are purely the internal affairs of the People's Republic of China. In another statement from the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Hong Kong office was in response to a tweet from US State Department spokesman Ned Price, who urged local authorities to release journalist Allan Au, who was arrested on Monday over allegation of conspiring to publish seditious materials, and everyone else 'imprisoned for exercising their fundamental freedoms'. Beijing has denounced such remarks as 'unreasonable, boring political shows'. The number of Americans in the city dropped to 70,000 from 85,000 on year. [RTHK](#) [SCMP](#) [SCMP1 Government's Statement](#), Apr 1, 12 & 13

### **Commissioner's Office says any interference in Hong Kong affairs will come to naught**

The UK has found the city's political and legal system to have deteriorated beyond an acceptable point for British judges to sit on the city's top appeal court, the country's foreign minister has said in her latest six-monthly report. Meanwhile the spokesperson of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China firmly rejected and strongly condemned the so-called 'six-monthly report on HK of the British government, the 'HK Policy Act Report' of the US government, and the article published by some British politician in the South China Morning Post. They meddled with HK affairs, slandered the successful practice of 'one country, two systems'. [SCMP](#) [Global Times](#) [OCMFA statement](#), Apr 1

### **'Deteriorating liberties' report on Hong Kong outlines 'truth': US top envoy**

The United States' top envoy to Hong Kong has maintained that his country's latest report painting a bleak picture of deteriorating liberties in the city does not amount to a confrontational approach, insisting the findings were outlining 'the truth'. [SCMP](#), Apr 1

### **Withdrawal of judges underlines UK's resolve to stand up for rights and freedoms of HK people**

UK foreign minister Liz Truss said the withdrawal of judges underlines UK's continued determination to stand up for the people of Hong Kong against violations of their rights and freedoms. [SCMP](#), Apr 1

## Mainland

### **Ex-senior official of Beijing's Hong Kong office installed as think tank chief**

The Chinese Association of Hong Kong and Macau Studies, the semi-official mainland Chinese think tank on politics concerning Hong Kong and Macao, endorsed Deng Zhonghua (鄧中華), aged 60, as the new president during a recent council meeting. Deng is an expert in international law and was previously the deputy director of the State Council's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office. Professor Lau Siu-kai

(劉兆佳), a Hong Kong-based political scientist, said the change in leadership would have no impact on the work and development direction of the association. [SCMP](#), Apr 3

## Domestic Policy / Politics

### Foreign Correspondents' Club cancels awards, cites legal risks

A day after the Foreign Correspondents' Club (FCC) put its annual Human Rights Press Awards on hold, Chief Executive Carrie Lam attributed the public's concerns to misunderstandings over the extent constitutional safeguards covered media freedom, labelling it and the departure of outspoken political commentator Chung Kim-wah as 'isolated incidents'. She added that press freedom is enshrined in the Basic Law, and it has always been safeguarded and upheld in the SAR since the handover. This year's Human Rights Press Awards will be canceled to avoid the 'unintentional violation' of any laws, the Foreign Correspondents' Club announced yesterday. The club's president and head of the University of Hong Kong's journalism school, Keith Richburg, said it had been suspended given 'significant areas of uncertainty.' The decision was made - according to Reuters citing sources - to shield the club's staff and members from the legal risks of presenting four awards and five merits to the pan-democratic media outlet Stand News, which shut down in December after several of its editors were held for sedition. [The Standard](#), [SCMP](#) [RTHK](#) [The Standard 2](#) Apr 26

### Largest journalist group holds meeting to discuss its future

Hong Kong Journalists Association held a special meeting online on Saturday to discuss the organization's future. Chairman Ronson Chan said the organization would still operate for the 'foreseeable future but confirmed that the topic of disbandment was brought up. The meeting, which lasted for more than three hours, concerned whether the association's constitution should be amended to allow the 54-year-old group to disband amid mounting political pressure. Chan also expressed his willingness to meet the chief executive hopeful John Lee. In response, Lee said any contact would have to wait until a government inquiry into the group is completed. When asked if he would defend press freedom, he said that the freedom of press always exists in Hong Kong and there is no need to 'defend' this principle [SCMP](#), [SCMP](#) Apr 23

### Opposition activist Tam Tak-chi jailed for 40 months over sedition

Former People Power vice-chairman Tam Tak-chi, known as 'Fast Beat', was given a 40-month prison sentence and a penalty of HK\$5 000 (EUR 587) after he was found guilty of seven counts of sedition. The 50-year-old activist was the first person to stand trial and be convicted under a colonial-era sedition law since the 1997 handover. Tam was earlier found guilty of chanting seditious slogans such as 'Liberate Hong Kong' on several occasions from January to July 2020. His lawyers had pleaded for a lenient sentence, saying Tam has never advocated violence and was only using 'extreme remarks' to express his emotions. But District Court Judge Stanley Chan, a judge hand-picked by Carrie Lam to oversee national security proceedings, said a deterrent sentence was needed, because some of the offences were committed after the national security law came into force, and while Tam was out on bail. [SCMP](#) [RTHK](#) [HKFP](#) [The Standard](#), Apr 20 & 21

### Secretary for Justice criticises editorials of FT and WSJ on the judges' resignations

FT and WSJ published editorials on 1 April and 3 April respectively opining that the judges' resignations symbolized the weakening of Hong Kong's rule of law. Secretary for Justice Teresa Cheng wrote in the letter to FT denouncing UK's 'ulterior motive or wishful thinking' that the arrangement furthers British colonialism and stating that no one in Hong Kong could possibly have agreed to that. As for the letter to WSJ, Cheng stressed that the city's rule of law remains strong and 'there has never been any pressure, let alone from the Central Authorities, on our judiciary.' Cheng hit back at WSJ's 'bold statement' and insisted that local judges 'remain free to decide cases independently and impartially based only on law and evidence. [The Standard](#), Apr 7

### Fifth Covid wave delays Carrie Lam's plan for government overhaul

Chief Executive Carrie Lam grand plan of overhauling the government has been derailed by the city's worst coronavirus outbreak, with sources indicating that the revamp will now have to be left to the next administration. The shake-up, the first in 15 years and announced by Lam in January, affected roughly half the current government bureaus and needed Beijing's endorsement. [SCMP](#), Apr 4

## Economy / Finance

### Hong Kong exports surprisingly plunge 8.9%

Figure for March shows first decline since October 2020 as HK exports plunge 8.9% due to disruption of flow of goods over mainland China border caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Imports also fell by 6 per cent from a year ago after an increase of 6.2 per cent in February. [SCMP](#), [Bloomberg](#) Apr 28

### **Survey finds drop in HK multi-millionaires**

A new survey suggests Hong Kong has seen a 15 percent drop in the number of multi-millionaires, to 434,000. Citibank on Tuesday said it arrived at this number after carrying out a telephone survey in the final few months of last year involving 3,786 people aged between 21 and 79. [RTHK](#), Apr 26

### **HKEX to launch yuan stocks trade in second half of year**

Hong Kong is ready to launch yuan-denominated stock trading to cater to investors in Shanghai and Shenzhen, with final clearances from regulators in mainland China expected in the second half of the year, according to people familiar with the matter. The city's own infrastructure is largely ready to accommodate trading of shares in the Chinese currency via the southbound Stock Connect link, but bourses in the mainland and clearing houses need more time for testing and final preparations, sources said. The move would give incoming Hong Kong leader John Lee potentially his first financial achievement after he's installed in July. [The Standard](#), Apr 27

### **Unemployment rate surged to 5%, the highest level in nine months**

The latest unemployment rate rose to 5% and the number of unemployed citizens increased by around 26 900 to 188 500 for the three months ended March, according data released by the Census and Statistics Department. The jobless rate was the worst since a 5.4% reading in June 2021 as the economy was battered by a brutal wave of Covid infections and the strict measures to contain them. 'Almost all major economic sectors' recorded a rise in the unemployment rate, as well as the underemployment rate, which hit 3.1% in the January-March period. [Bloomberg](#), April 21

### **Property prices fallen more than 6% and no recovery in sight**

Hong Kong home prices have fallen more than 6% since a peak in August, with no quick recovery in sight as residents leave the city at record rates. Some analysts are predicting another 20% slump by 2025 due to rising mortgage rates and a slowing economy. Sales activity has dripped to a two-year low, and Covid-19 restrictions have put a damper on viewings. [Bloomberg](#), Apr 13

### **Hong Kong to sell up to \$2.55 billion retail green bond this month**

Financial Secretary Paul Chan said in his blog post on 10 April that Hong Kong will re-launch its inaugural retail green bond this month as the coronavirus pandemic eases to raise as much as HK\$20 billion (EUR 2.34 billion). The three-year green bond issue, which includes a quota from the new financial year that started in April, will be worth HK\$15 billion, and it can be increased to up to HK\$20 billion upon over-subscription. The bond will have a rate of 2.5%, up from 2% for the planned sale in March, Chan added, and will be open for subscription by the end of this month. [Reuters](#) [Chan's blog](#), Apr 10

### **Local economic slump deepens as China outbreak hits output**

Hong Kong's private-sector economic activity slid further into contraction in March as lockdowns in mainland China added more pressure to businesses already under strain. The S&P Global purchasing managers' index fell to 42 in March from 42.9 in February, as the gauge continued to fall to levels not seen since April 2020. It was also the third consecutive month that the index was below 50, the level separating expansion from contraction. [Bloomberg](#), Apr 6

## **COVID-19 / Health & Environment**

### **Non-residents can enter HK but mandatory Covid hotel quarantines remain a key sticking point**

Hong Kong is making a cautious but welcome return to something approaching normal life after enduring a Covid-19 crisis that has, in total, cost more than 9,000 lives. Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor announced that some social distancing rules would be lifted, but others remain in place. Restaurant dining until 10 pm is back, along with visits to gyms and cinemas. But beaches and swimming pools remain closed. Residents stranded overseas are returning after the removal of flight bans, but are still experiencing delays as Covid-19 cases among passengers prompt route suspensions. After months of criticism, the government is also loosening a policy that suspends passenger flights for bringing in Covid-19 cases. It is also allowing all non-residents to enter the city for the first time in more than two years. [Bloomberg](#), Apr 27

### **Hong Kong researchers develop device that can detect COVID-19 faster and more accurate**

University researchers in Hong Kong have developed a device that can test for the coronavirus in people and the environment, with results delivered on the spot in just 40 minutes. The new method is said to be more accurate than rapid tests while faster than PCR examinations Results can be delivered on the spot without the need for a laboratory. [SCMP](#), Apr 12

## **Macau**

### **Survey said 10% of SMEs expect to close soon**

The Federal General Commercial Association of Macau Small and Medium Enterprises said in a statement that according to its recent survey, 10% of the city's small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) expect to shut up shop for good soon. They survey was conducted in February and last month,

reflecting that over 85% of the SMEs said that their sales have been halved since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, while 44% believed that the government's planned curbs on the city's satellite casinos, could possibly lead to local small businesses closing down. [Macau Post Daily](#), Apr 20

### **Mass market results drop 9% sequentially in Q1**

The volume of gross gaming revenues represented by the mass market has dropped by 9% quarter-to-quarter to MOP 13 billion (EUR 1.48 billion) in the first three months of 2022, data published by the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau shows. The mass results considered included table games, slot machines and other forms of gambling in the SAR such as horse racing bets and sports betting. In total gross gaming revenue in Macao has dropped by 7% quarter-to-quarter to MOP 17.9 billion (EUR 2.04 billion). Last year reported a total of MOP 86.8 billion (EUR 9.91 billion) in gross gaming results, a 60% rise from a 2020 greatly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak. [Macau Business](#), Apr 19

### **GDP to grow by 15.5% in 2022, pre-pandemic levels only in 2025**

The International Monetary Fund has maintained its Macao SAR's gross domestic product 15.5% growth projection for 2022 driven by the gradual return of foreign tourists and the recovery of domestic demand. However, given the depth of the economic losses during the pandemic, the level of GDP is expected to surpass its pre-crisis level only in 2025. [Macau Business](#), Apr 19

### **Special Focus: Chief Executive Election Campaign**

#### **Sole candidate John Lee's manifesto will 'focus on housing, civil service reform'**

The Candidate Eligibility Review Committee chaired by Financial Secretary Paul Chan approved former No 2 official John Lee's candidacy for Chief Executive on 18 April, declaring him the sole candidate nominated for the 8 May poll. Lee said that his manifesto will focus on areas such as housing, care for the elderly, technology and civil service reform, with less emphasis on national security in a bid to soften his image. Presumptive chief executive John Lee Ka-chiu will step up the land supply through the two mega projects - Lantau Vision Tomorrow and Northern Metropolis - under his election manifesto that will be unveiled later on April 29, sources said. Sources said Lee could allow more people to be eligible for public housing by raising the wage cap so youngsters can join the queue. And property tycoons throw support behind John Lee's bid for the top job. [The Standard](#), [SCMP](#), Apr 7 & 18 & 29

#### **YouTube terminates John Lee's campaign channel**

Chief Executive candidate John Lee denounced a move by US internet giant Google to shut down his campaign channel on YouTube. His campaign team was told by Google, YouTube's parent company, that the channel was terminated in accordance with sanctions by the United States government. Lee described these as 'bullying acts' over his work in safeguarding national security. The former chief secretary and former security chief was among 11 Hong Kong and Chinese officials sanctioned by the US Department of the Treasury in August 2020 for 'Hong Kong's autonomy' and 'restricting the freedom of expression or assembly of the citizens of Hong Kong'. [The Standard](#) [HKFP](#), Apr 20 & 21

#### **Carrie Lam won't seek re-election and team Lee takes shape**

Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced on Monday that she is not seeking re-election for a second term in office, citing family reasons for her decision. Meanwhile, John Lee's team takes shape. Tam Yiu-chung, the sole Hong Kong delegate to the National People's Congress Standing Committee, is likely to be the director of Chief Executive hopeful John Lee's campaign while NPC delegate and former Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Raymond Tam will be the deputy. Lee has also appointed a three-member election campaign finance team to help him gather and manage funds. The trio comprise Sino Group deputy chairman Daryl Ng, former Legislative Council secretary general Pauline Ng and Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference delegate Eliza Chan, who were all members of Carrie Lam's campaign team in 2017. [The Standard](#), [SCMP](#), Apr 4 & 8

#### **China Backs Former Security Chief to Lead Hong Kong**

The former career police officer and Hong Kong's No. 2 official, John Lee, will be the only candidate to seek the city's top post, local media reported, as China looked to elevate one of the chief proponents of a sweeping crackdown on the local opposition. Prior to his position as the No.2, i.e. Chief Secretary, Lee served as outgoing Chief Executive Carrie Lam's security minister, overseeing a clampdown on the pro-democracy opposition and implementing a Beijing-drafted national security law. [Bloomberg](#), Apr 6

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