

Director of Hong Kong Observatory highlights HKO's latest services and annual weather outlook (with photo)

The Director of the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO), Dr Chan Pak-wai, hosted a press briefing today (March 18) to recap the weather in 2024 and elaborate on the weather outlook for Hong Kong this year as well as the HKO's latest services.

Dr Chan said that 2024 was the warmest year on record globally according to the assessment of the World Meteorological Organization (Note). The past 10 years (2015 to 2024) were also the 10 warmest years on record globally. Locally, with a total of 11 months being warmer than usual, including the record-breaking monthly mean temperatures in April and October, 2024 was the warmest year on record with the annual mean temperature reaching 24.8 degrees, 1.3 degrees above the 1991-2020 normal. The annual mean minimum temperature of 22.8 degrees and annual mean maximum temperature of 27.3 degrees were respectively the highest and second highest on record.

Looking ahead to 2025, the tropical cyclone season in Hong Kong is expected to start in June or earlier and cease in October or later this year. There will likely be about five to eight tropical cyclones coming within 500 kilometres of Hong Kong during the year, which is normal to above normal. As the climate warming continues, the annual mean temperature in Hong Kong is expected to be above normal this year. The annual rainfall in Hong Kong is expected to be near normal, ranging from 2 100 millimetres to 2 700mm. However, Hong Kong would still be affected by rainstorms and localised heavy rain. Members of the public are reminded to be prepared for the rain and tropical cyclone seasons.

Dr Chan highlighted the continual enhancement of the HKO's various services. With the rainy season approaching, the radar and satellite imagery services on the Observatory's website and "MyObservatory" mobile application will be enhanced. The update frequency of radar images covering 128km and 256km ranges will be increased from the current 12 minutes to every 6 minutes. In addition to the current rainfall rate imagery at 3km above sea level for the 64km range, new imagery at a height of 2km will be added, allowing the public to better grasp the rainfall situation in the lower atmosphere. Furthermore, the update frequency of the Fengyun-4B satellite images covering western Asia will be increased from hourly to every 15 minutes. "All-day Visible" satellite imagery and aerosol optical depth imagery from the Republic of Korea's GK-2B satellite will also be introduced to enhance the monitoring of weather and visibility conditions over southern China and the northern part of the South China Sea.

To strengthen dissemination of weather information to enable the public to prepare for weather changes in advance, the HKO will add graphical rainfall information for various districts in Hong Kong and will, on a trial

basis, use video in which forecasters will explain future weather changes on camera this year. The graphical rainfall information will be launched on the "MyObservatory" mobile application and website in the next couple of months, while videos of forecasters explaining future weather changes will be provided in some of the Weather Notes articles published in the second half of this year.

Moreover, weather information for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area was launched at the end of last year on the "MyObservatory" mobile application to assist citizens with travelling in the area to obtain the latest official weather information. Meanwhile, the "Dr. Tin" chatbot also supports a voice function on the "MyObservatory" mobile application. Members of the public may update to the latest version to enjoy the new features.

With the rapid development of AI, the HKO added the forecasting products of two AI-powered models as well as upper-air forecast charts on the ["Earth Weather" webpage](#) last year. The HKO will continue to enhance the "Earth Weather" webpage this year with the addition of more computer model forecast products, including the forecasting of chances of thunderstorms, to enable the public to understand the weather changes more comprehensively.

The HKO's open day activities this year will be conducted on March 22 and 23 (Saturday and Sunday) with the World Meteorological Day's theme "Closing the Early Warning Gap Together". It will provide a brief overview of the long-standing collaboration between the Observatory and meteorological authorities around the world over the years, and showcase how the HKO applies the latest technology to provide various services, enhancing the public's understanding and awareness of climate change and extreme weather. Apart from participating in person with a valid admission ticket, members of the public can also visit the virtual tour on the Hong Kong Observatory Open Day 2025 webpage, which will be launched on March 22, to learn more about the HKO's work and services.

Dr Chan's speech at the press briefing is available on the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/dhko/voice/files/speech20250318e.pdf).

Note: The annual average global temperature in 2024 was 1.55 degrees above pre-industrial levels, marking it as the first year the 1.5 degrees level was exceeded. Although an individual year surpassing the 1.5 degrees level does not mean that the long-term temperature goals of the Paris Agreement are not achievable, it indicates the urgent need for a significant reduction in global carbon emissions to avoid the further worsening of climate change impacts.



[Polling dates for 2025 Legislative Council General Election and 2025 Election Committee Subsector By-elections](#)

A Government spokesperson said today (March 18) that the Chief Executive has specified December 7, 2025, as the date for holding the general election for the eighth term Legislative Council (LegCo). The decision has taken into consideration the relevant electoral legislation and the practice adopted in past elections. As regards the Election Committee Subsector By-elections to be held before the LegCo General Election, the date will be September 7, 2025.

The polling date of the LegCo General Election will be published in the Gazette on March 21.

The Government will continue to liaise closely with the Electoral Affairs Commission, and actively prepare for the two aforesaid elections according to the relevant electoral legislation and actual circumstances to ensure that the elections are conducted smoothly in a fair, just, honest, safe and orderly manner. Details of the electoral arrangements will be announced later this year.

[Government announces appointments to Board of Directors of Hong Kong](#)

Investment Corporation Limited

The Government today (March 18) announced the appointment of Professor Harry Shum and Professor Francis Chan as new non-official members of the Board of Directors (the Board) of the Hong Kong Investment Corporation Limited (HKIC), and the reappointment of four non-official members, namely Dr Victor Fung, Professor Lawrence Lau, Dr James Lin and Mr Carlson Tong. The term of appointment for non-official members is two years.

The Government also announced the appointment of the Secretary for Health as a new official member of the Board.

The HKIC extended its gratitude to the outgoing Board member, Deputy Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority Mr Howard Lee, for his contributions during his tenure.

The Board primarily formulates the HKIC's investment strategies and mandate, makes decisions on investment projects as well as ensures and upholds the good governance of the HKIC. To assist the Board in discharging its duties, the Board has established the Investment Committee, the Remuneration Committee and the Audit Committee.

As "patient capital", the HKIC carries a dual mandate, namely to support the growth of innovation and technology and strategic industries in Hong Kong, with a view to enhancing the long-term competitiveness and economic vitality of Hong Kong; and to seek reasonable financial return over the medium to long term. The HKIC also plays a vital role in creating synergy among the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, industry, academia as well as research and investment sectors. To date, the HKIC has invested in over 90 projects in different development stages.

The composition of the Board can be found at the Annex.

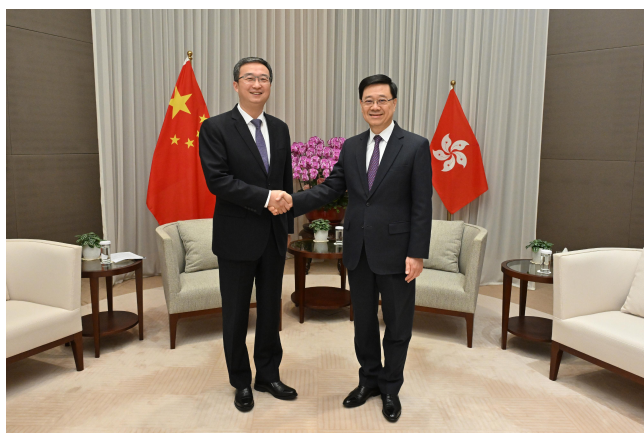
CE meets Secretary of CPC Dongguan Municipal Committee (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met with the Secretary of the CPC Dongguan Municipal Committee, Mr Wei Hao, today (March 18) to exchange views on deepening Hong Kong's co-operation with Dongguan and promoting the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Also attending the meeting were the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai; the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Ms Carol Yip; and the Head of Chief Executive's Policy Unit, Dr Stephen Wong.

Mr Lee welcomed Mr Wei and his delegation to Hong Kong. Mr Lee noted that Hong Kong and Dongguan enjoy close geographical and cultural ties, and the two cities have long maintained close co-operation in various areas, including economics, trade, and shipping. As Dongguan is a renowned global manufacturing hub, Hong Kong will continue to give full play to its advantages as a bridge between the Mainland and the world, as well as its dual roles in going global and attracting foreign investment, offering services to assist Dongguan enterprises in expanding and developing international markets.

Mr Lee highlighted the successful collaboration between Hong Kong and Dongguan in operating the logistics park in Dongguan under the "sea-air intermodal cargo-transshipment" mode. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the Dongguan Municipal Government are jointly advancing the development of the Hong Kong International Airport Dongguan Logistics Park as a permanent facility, as well as expanding its scope and capacity. Combining Hong Kong's strengths in aviation and logistics with Dongguan's advantages in land and manpower resources, the project aims to create a model of successful co-operation within the GBA. This initiative will further enhance the logistics connectivity within the GBA and boost the international competitiveness of the GBA's manufacturing and import-export industries.

Mr Lee expressed confidence that Hong Kong and Dongguan will continue to leverage their complementary advantages and promote co-operation between the two places at a higher level, making greater contributions to the development of a world-class bay area.



[CSSA caseload for February 2025](#)

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in February showed a rise of 188 cases, representing an increase of 0.1 per cent compared with that of January, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (March 18).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of February stood at 195 775 (see attached table), with a total of 262 513 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 1.1 per cent to 1 354 cases. Single parent cases dropped by 0.3 per cent to 19 025 cases. Permanent disability cases declined by 0.1 per cent to 16 704 cases.

Old age cases registered an increase of 0.2 per cent to 110 943 cases. Unemployment cases increased by 0.1 per cent to 16 069 cases. Ill-health cases remained steady at 27 762 cases.