

Calendar of Events 2021

January

- 11 The Contact Tracing Office under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health commences operation to step up contact tracing of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

In view of the latest developments of COVID-19, all schools including kindergartens continue to suspend face-to-face classes and school activities until the Lunar New Year holidays but primary and secondary schools are allowed to arrange for no more than one-sixth of the total number of students to return for classes or examinations on a half-day basis.

Mr Andrew Cheung Kui-nung assumes the office of the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal, following the retirement of Mr Geoffrey Ma Tao-li.

- 14 The government asks the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to establish a panel, in accordance with the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism, to consider the dispute with respect to the United States' new requirement on origin marking for Hong Kong products. The WTO Dispute Settlement Body agreed at its meeting on 22 February to establish the panel.

- 15 The Director of Health issues the first isolation orders for entire residential blocks, prohibiting people from entering or leaving four buildings in Yau Ma Tei, to facilitate contact-tracing work following a number of confirmed COVID-19 cases related to the buildings.

The Civil Service Bureau promulgates the requirement for civil servants appointed before 1 July 2020 to take an oath or sign a declaration that they will uphold the Basic Law, bear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China, be dedicated to their duties and be responsible to the HKSAR Government.

- 18 The government unveils a strategy to transform Ocean Park into a resort and leisure destination focusing on conservation and education, with new operating and pricing models to achieve business sustainability.

- 23 About 7,000 people in a specified 'restricted area' in Jordan are required to stay in their premises and be tested for COVID-19 in the first 'restriction-testing declaration' under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation. The exercise is completed in under 48 hours and 13 confirmed cases are identified. Similar operations are subsequently conducted throughout the year in response to risk of infection in different districts.

- 25 The Secretary for Food and Health authorises the Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine by Fosun Pharma/BioNTech for emergency use in Hong Kong. The first batch of about 1.34 million doses of the Comirnaty vaccine is delivered to Hong Kong in two shipments on 27 February and 7 March.
- 26 The Hospital Authority launches the Special Chinese Medicine Programme for COVID-19 In-patients at the community treatment facility at AsiaWorld-Expo to provide an additional treatment option. The service later relocates to North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre.
- 27 The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, makes her annual work reports to President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang separately via video conferencing on the latest economic, social and political situation in Hong Kong.
- 31 The government no longer recognises the British National (Overseas) passport as a valid travel document and proof of identity as the United Kingdom Government has altered the nature of the passport by introducing a route for Hong Kong people holding the passport to reside and obtain citizenship in the UK.

February

- 2 The Chief Executive in Council adopts the recommendation of the Minimum Wage Commission to maintain the statutory minimum wage rate at \$37.50 per hour.
- 3 The Education Bureau announces that schools are allowed to arrange for no more than one-third of the total number of students to return to campuses for classes on a half-day basis after the Lunar New Year holidays.
- 4 The Education Bureau issues guidelines on school administration and education in relation to upholding national security to help schools maintain a safe and orderly learning environment and promote national security education.
- 8 The government announces the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035 with the vision 'Waste Reduction • Resources Circulation • Zero Landfill', outlining the strategies, goals and measures for waste management up to 2035.
- 12 The free trade agreement and investment agreement between Hong Kong and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) come into effect for Cambodia, signifying the full entry into force of the two agreements signed between Hong Kong and the 10 member states of ASEAN.
- 18 The Secretary for Food and Health authorises the COVID-19 vaccine by Sinovac for emergency use in Hong Kong. The first batch of 1 million doses of the Sinovac vaccine arrives in Hong Kong on 19 February.

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2021

- 24 The Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan Mo-po, delivers the 2021-22 Budget, unveiling initiatives to revive Hong Kong's economy and measures costing over \$120 billion to relieve people's burden, which include distributing electronic consumption vouchers worth \$5,000 to eligible Hong Kong residents.
- 26 The COVID-19 Vaccination Programme launches with about 6,000 people receiving vaccinations on the first day. At year-end, more than 9.93 million doses have been administered and more than 72 per cent of the eligible population have received at least one dose.
- The North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre commences service, providing 816 isolation beds in six ward buildings to admit COVID-19 confirmed patients with mild or moderate clinical conditions.
- 28 The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for December 2020 to February 2021 rises to 7.2 per cent, the highest since 2004.

March

- 1 All government employees and members of the public are required to scan the venue QR code with the LeaveHomeSafe mobile app or register their contact numbers before entering government buildings or offices to assist contact tracing of confirmed COVID-19 cases.
- 11 The National People's Congress (NPC) passes the Decision on Improving the Electoral System of the HKSAR, aiming to ensure 'patriots administering Hong Kong' and that the principle of 'one country, two systems' is fully implemented.
- The government welcomes the contents relating to Hong Kong in the Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035 (National 14th Five-Year Plan) approved by the NPC, and says it will proactively integrate Hong Kong into national development.
- 17 The government announces the first Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles, which sets out the policy objectives and measures to promote the use of electric vehicles in Hong Kong including ceasing new registration of fuel-propelled and hybrid private cars by 2035.
- 26 The Education Bureau announces that schools are allowed to arrange for not more than two-thirds of the total number of students to return to campuses for face-to-face classes on a half-day basis after the Easter holidays.

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- 30 Subsequent to the NPC's decision on improving the electoral system of the HKSAR, the NPC Standing Committee adopts amendments to Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law on the methods for the selection of the Chief Executive and formation of the Legislative Council of the HKSAR.

April

- 2 Hong Kong's largest indoor public transport interchange opens at Yue Man Square, Kwun Tong. The two-storey facility with an area of 15,000 square metres, serving seven bus routes and 22 minibus routes, is equipped with the city's first air-conditioned indoor bus waiting area and artificial intelligence sensor-controlled bus boarding gates.
- 19-20 The Chief Executive attends the Boao Forum for Asia Annual Conference in Hainan.

May

- 11 The government announces it has for the first time bought broadcasting rights of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, allowing five television stations to show the games for free, particularly events featuring Hong Kong athletes.
- 13-16 The inaugural Union Cycliste Internationale Track Cycling Nations Cup is held in a 'safety bubble' behind closed doors at the Hong Kong Velodrome, the first major sports event held in Hong Kong since the start of the pandemic. Hong Kong athlete Sarah Lee Wai-size wins gold in the women's sprint and silver in the keirin.
- 17 Reverend Stephen Chow Sau-yan is named the new Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong and will take over on 4 December from Cardinal John Tong, who was appointed Apostolic Administrator following the death of the previous bishop, the Most Reverend Michael Yeung Ming-cheung, in 2019.
- 21 The Public Offices (Candidacy and Taking Up Offices) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2021 takes effect to implement the oath-taking requirements for five categories of public officers as stipulated in Article 104 of the Basic Law, as well as District Council members.
- 24 All schools fully resume face-to-face classes on a half-day basis.
- 31 The Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Ordinance 2021 comes into effect, implementing the improved electoral system of the HKSAR to ensure 'patriots administering Hong Kong' in accordance with the principle of 'one country, two systems'.

June

- 8 Hong Kong's first thematic marine park visitor centre, the Hoi Ha Visitor Centre, opens to promote public understanding of marine conservation.
- 9 The government welcomes the International Monetary Fund's *Financial System Stability Assessment Report* which reaffirms Hong Kong's position as an international financial centre with a resilient financial system, sound macroeconomic and prudential policies, and robust regulatory and supervisory frameworks.
- 22 The government announces that Hong Kong Baptist University has been awarded the service deed for operation of the Chinese Medicine Hospital in Tseung Kwan O, which is targeted to commence service in 2025.
- 23 The 2021 Population Census begins, collecting statistical data to aid with policy formation and the planning of social services and facilities citywide and at district level. The population census is conducted every 10 years.
- 25 Mr John Lee Ka-chiu is appointed Chief Secretary for Administration to replace Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung. Mr Tang Ping-keung is appointed Secretary for Security to replace Mr Lee and Mr Siu Chak-ye is appointed Commissioner of Police to replace Mr Tang.
- 27 The MTR's Tuen Ma Line is fully commissioned. Covering the former West Rail and Ma On Shan lines with 27 stations, the new 56-kilometre route becomes Hong Kong's longest railway line.

July

- 4 The Consumption Voucher Scheme, disbursing electronic vouchers totalling \$5,000 by instalment to more than 6.3 million eligible Hong Kong residents, opens for registration, with over 1.5 million people signing up on the first day. The first voucher is disbursed starting from 1 August and the second from 1 October.
- 6 The Candidate Eligibility Review Committee of the HKSAR, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, is appointed in accordance with the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Ordinance 2021. The committee is responsible for reviewing and confirming the eligibility of candidates for the office of the Chief Executive and members of the Election Committee and the Legislative Council.
- 16 The Chief Executive attends the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Informal Leaders' Retreat via video conferencing to exchange views with leaders of other economies on strategies to fight COVID-19 and accelerate economic recovery.

The Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 is gazetted to increase progressively the number of statutory holidays from 12 to 17 days by 2030.

- 23-8 Aug Forty-six Hong Kong athletes compete in 13 sports at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and create history with a record haul of one gold, two silver and three bronze medals. Fencer Cheung Ka-long wins gold in the men's foil individual, Hong Kong's first Olympic gold medal since the establishment of the HKSAR. Swimmer Siobhan Bernadette Haughey becomes Hong Kong's first multiple Olympic medallist, clinching two silvers in the women's 200m freestyle and 100m freestyle and setting new Asian records in both events. The bronze medal winners are Lee Ho-ching, Doo Hoi-kem and Minnie Soo Wai-yam in the table tennis women's team competition; Grace Lau Mo-sheung in the karate women's kata; and Sarah Lee in the women's sprint (track cycling).
- 30 In the first conviction under the national security law, a man is sentenced to imprisonment for nine years in total for incitement to secession and terrorist activities, after he drove a motorcycle into police officers on 1 July 2020 while carrying a flag with the slogan 'Liberate Hong Kong Revolution of Our Times'.

August

- 20 The Securities and Futures Commission announces the approval for Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited to launch the MSCI China A-share index futures contract in Hong Kong. The product is launched on 18 October.
- 23 The government holds a talk on the National 14th Five-Year Plan, at which officials from a Central Government delegation introduce to different sectors the national development strategy and opportunities for Hong Kong presented by the National 14th Five-Year Plan.

Phase one of the revitalised Central Market opens, providing more than 100 retail units, green open space and community spaces for exhibitions and cultural activities. The revitalisation work of the 80-year-old Grade 3 historic building started in 2017.

- 24-5 Sep The Hong Kong team clinches a total of five medals at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. Badminton players Chu Man-kai and Chan Ho-yuen win a silver and a bronze in the men's singles SH6 and WH2 respectively. Boccia players Leung Yuk-wing, Vivian Lau Wai-yan and Wong Kwan-hang claim a silver in the mixed pairs BC4. Leung Yuk-wing also bags a bronze medal in the mixed individual BC4 event. The other bronze winner is Wong Ting-ting in table tennis women's singles TT11.

- 26 The State Council agrees Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will jointly host the 15th National Games of the People's Republic of China in 2025.

The Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 is passed by the Legislative Council to pave way for the implementation of the municipal solid waste charging scheme.

The Candidate Eligibility Review Committee determines that 310 Election Committee ex-officio members are validly registered, 156 members of the Election Committee are validly nominated, and 1,015 candidates for Election Committee subsectors are validly nominated. The registration or nomination of two persons are determined as invalid, including that of Legislative Council member Mr Cheng Chung-tai. Following the determination, the government announces the immediate disqualification of Mr Cheng as a member of the sixth-term Legislative Council.

September

- 1 The Telecommunications (Registration of SIM Cards) Regulation takes effect, requiring all Subscriber Identification Module cards issued by Hong Kong telecommunications operators to have real-name registration within a specified period.

The Open University of Hong Kong is renamed Hong Kong Metropolitan University.

- 10-8 Oct Pursuant to the Public Offices (Candidacy and Taking Up Offices) (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2021, the government holds four oath-taking ceremonies for District Council members on 10 and 24 September and 4 and 8 October. A total of 197 members from the 18 District Councils take oaths that they will uphold the Basic Law and bear allegiance to the HKSAR. The oath administrator, the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui, determines that oaths taken by 147 members are valid and 49 are invalid while one member resigns.

- 10 The Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is launched, enabling residents in Hong Kong, Macao and nine cities in Guangdong Province to carry out cross-boundary investment in wealth management products in the area.

- 11 Tennis player Coleman Wong Chak-lam, 17, becomes Hong Kong's first boys' grand slam champion as he partners with France's Max Westphal to win the US Open boys' doubles in New York.

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- 14 The Fraser Institute of Canada ranks Hong Kong as the world's freest economy in the *Economic Freedom of the World: 2021 Annual Report*, a title Hong Kong has held since the report's inception in 1996.
- 15-27 A total of 169 Hong Kong athletes participate in the 14th National Games of the People's Republic of China in Shaanxi and collect seven medals. Ms Sarah Lee and Ms Lee Sze-wing take gold in the women's sprint (track cycling) and women's individual (road cycling) respectively. Five bronze medals are won in cycling, karatedo and fencing. The Chief Executive attends the closing and flag handover ceremony as a representative of the joint hosts of the next National Games in 2025, together with Guangdong and Macao.
- 19 A total of 4,380 voters, representing a turnout rate of about 90 per cent, cast ballots in the 2021 Election Committee Subsector Ordinary Elections, the first elections held since improving the electoral system to implement the principle of 'patriots administering Hong Kong'. Under the amended Annexes I and II to the Basic Law, the Election Committee is expanded to 1,500 members and will return 40 members of the Legislative Council as well as elect the Chief Executive.
- 21 Water World Ocean Park Hong Kong opens to the public, with 27 attractions in five themed zones.
- Hong Kong and Russia sign agreements on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and transfer of sentenced persons.
- 24 The Southbound Trading under Bond Connect is launched, allowing Mainland investors to invest in Hong Kong's bond market through connection between the financial infrastructure services institutions of the two places. The Northbound Trading was launched in 2017.
- The government says it fully supports the issuance of a fact sheet by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that sets out the malicious acts of the United States in interfering in Hong Kong affairs and supporting anti-China, destabilising forces.
- 26 The Chief Secretary for Administration leads senior officials and experts to attend a meeting in Shenzhen with Mainland representatives, led by the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, to exchange views on anti-epidemic work and study the orderly resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong.
- 27 The government publishes the *Report on Hong Kong's Business Environment: A Place with Unique Advantages and Unlimited Opportunities*, which sets out Hong Kong's business environment and advantages, and gives an account of the opportunities available to Hong Kong under the country's new phase and pattern of development.

October

- 6 The Chief Executive delivers her fifth Policy Address, under the theme 'Building a Bright Future Together', and unveils plans to build a metropolis, driven by innovation and technology, in the northern New Territories which will become the most vibrant area for urban development and major population growth in the next 20 years.
- 8 The government announces Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050, setting out the vision of 'Zero-carbon Emissions • Liveable City • Sustainable Development', and outlining the strategies and targets for combating climate change and achieving carbon neutrality before 2050.
- The Personal Data (Privacy) (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 comes into effect to criminalise doxxing acts that are intrusive to personal data privacy.
- 9-10 No 8 Gale or Storm Signal is in force for 22 hours as Tropical Storm Lionrock skirts past at about 490km southwest of Hong Kong. It is the farthest tropical cyclone that necessitates the No 8 signal since 1961.
- 12 The Shenzhen Municipal People's Government issues a total of RMB5 billion bonds in Hong Kong, including green bonds, with tenors of two, three and five years. It is the first time a Mainland municipal government issues bonds outside the Mainland.
- 21 Ms Louise Ho Pui-shan is appointed Commissioner of Customs and Excise, following the retirement of Mr Hermes Tang Yi-hoi.
- The Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill 2019 is passed by the Legislative Council, banning the import, manufacture, sale, distribution and advertisement of alternative smoking products including electronic cigarettes, heated tobacco products and herbal cigarettes.
- The Medical Registration (Amendment) Bill 2021 passes through the Legislative Council, adding a pathway for qualified non-locally trained doctors to practise with a special registration in Hong Kong.
- 22-29 Twenty-three Hong Kong athletes compete in the 11th National Games for Persons with Disabilities and the 8th National Special Olympic Games of the People's Republic of China in Shaanxi, clinching 17 medals in total. In swimming, Wong Hon-yin wins five golds and Cheong Sui-kei claims four golds and one silver. Lee Ming-yip and Tong Chi-ming also win gold in table tennis men's doubles TT7. Six bronze medals are won in athletics, swimming and table tennis.
- 24 Hong Kong hosts its first mass participation sports event in almost two years as more than 18,000 runners take part in the Hong Kong Marathon.

- 28 The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Dubai begins operation. It is the government's 14th office overseas and the first in the Middle East region.

November

- 1 To further enhance contact tracing for COVID-19 cases, use of the LeaveHomeSafe mobile app to scan a venue's QR code is made mandatory for entering government buildings, offices and facilities such as libraries, swimming pools and markets. Only exempted people may register their personal details as an alternative.
- 5 The Film Censorship (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 comes into effect, enhancing the film censorship regulatory framework and explicitly requiring consideration be given to whether the exhibition of films would be contrary to the interests of national security.
- The Court of Final Appeal upholds the lawfulness and compatibility of the government's Small House Policy implemented since 1972 with the Basic Law.
- 12 M+, Asia's first global museum of contemporary visual culture, opens at the West Kowloon Cultural District with six thematic exhibitions featuring 1,500 works in its 33 galleries and other display spaces.
- The Chief Executive participates in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation 2021 Economic Leaders' Meeting via video conferencing.
- 15 The Chief Executive confers a posthumous gold medal for bravery on Ms Lam Yuen-yee, Chief Inspector of Police (Posthumous), in recognition of her gallantry and selflessness during an operation on 25 September.
- 19 The Candidate Eligibility Review Committee determines that 153 nominations for the 2021 Legislative Council General Election are valid and one candidate for the Medical and Health Services functional constituency is invalidly nominated.
- 20-23 Hong Kong's first two imported cases of COVID-19 involving the Omicron variant, which is designated as a 'variant of concern' by the World Health Organisation, are confirmed.
- A delegation of Mainland epidemic prevention and control experts visits Hong Kong to understand the local epidemic situation and anti-epidemic measures, with a view to studying the orderly resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong.
- 25 Snooker player Ng On-yee wins the Eden Women's Masters tournament in the UK, her first title on the World Women's Snooker Tour since early 2020.

- 29 The Chief Executive and the Secretary of the Communist Party of China Hubei Provincial Committee, Mr Ying Yong, leading the delegations of the governments of the HKSAR and Hubei respectively, hold the High-Level Meeting and First Plenary Session of the Hong Kong/Hubei Co-operation Conference in Wuhan.

December

- 1 The Contactless e-Channel, an automated immigration clearance service for Hong Kong residents, is launched at Hong Kong International Airport, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Shenzhen Bay and Kai Tak Cruise Terminal control points, providing a faster, more convenient and more hygienic clearance service.
- 3 The government launches the COVID-19 Mobile Vaccination Station to provide vaccination services for the public at different locations in the community.
- 3-5 A 32-member delegation of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games Mainland Olympians visits Hong Kong to attend sport demonstrations and a variety show.
- 7 Kai Tak Station Square (Phase I) and Kai Tak Avenue Park, located at the site of the north apron of the former Kai Tak Airport, open, providing a leisure space and recreational facilities for public use.
- 9 The Civil Service College of the HKSAR is established to enhance training for civil servants.
- Measures take effect making it mandatory to use the LeaveHomeSafe mobile app to scan the venue QR code before entering all catering and scheduled premises under regulation. Only exempt groups, such as the elderly, minors and people with disabilities, may fill in a form as an alternative.
- The Tsim Sha Tsui Clock Tower bell chimes for the first time in 71 years to mark the bell's centenary. The chime is brought back to report the time via a digital bell system, sounding hourly between 8am and midnight every day.
- 10 The Hong Kong Health Code system opens for registration, allowing the public to familiarise themselves with its functions and prepare for the resumption of normal travel between Guangdong, Macao and Hong Kong.
- 14 The Chief Secretary for Administration meets with Vice-Governor of Guangdong Province Mr Zhang Xin in Shenzhen to discuss the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong, which includes coordination and cooperation over the boundary control points, the health code systems and efforts to prevent and control the disease.

- 16 Ms Siobhan Haughey is the first Hong Kong swimmer to set a new world record as she wins gold in the women's 200m freestyle at the Fédération Internationale de Natation World Swimming Championships (25m) in Abu Dhabi with a time of 1 minute 50.31 seconds.
- 19 Hong Kong goes to the polls to elect the seventh-term Legislative Council of the HKSAR. A total of 1,350,680 electors in the geographical constituencies, 70,490 electors in the functional constituencies and 1,426 electors in the Election Committee constituency cast their votes to return 90 Legislative Council members.
- 20 The Central Government publishes a white paper titled *Hong Kong: Democratic Progress Under the Framework of One Country, Two Systems*, giving a historical account of Hong Kong's democratic development. The white paper points out that the Central Government has supported democratic development in the HKSAR since Hong Kong's return to the Motherland and will continue to develop and improve democracy in Hong Kong in line with the actual situation and in accordance with the Constitution, the Basic Law, and the relevant decisions of the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee.
- 22 The Chief Executive meets President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang separately on her duty visit to Beijing to brief the state leaders on the latest economic, social and political situation in Hong Kong.
- 29 The Chief Secretary for Administration unveils signature events to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, with the theme 'A New Era – Stability • Prosperity • Opportunity'.