

A mild and dry February

With the northeast monsoon over southern China generally weaker than normal for most of the time in the month, February 2024 was much warmer than usual in Hong Kong. The monthly mean minimum temperature of 17.6 degrees, monthly mean temperature of 19.4 degrees and monthly mean maximum temperature of 21.9 degrees were 2.3 degrees, 2.3 degrees and 2.5 degrees above their corresponding normals and respectively the fourth, the fifth and one of the seventh highest on record for February. Together with the well above normal temperatures in December 2023 and January 2024, the winter from December 2023 to February 2024 was exceptionally warm in Hong Kong. The mean minimum temperature of 16.9 degrees and mean temperature of 18.8 were both the second highest on record for the same period. The mean maximum temperature of 21.3 degrees was the third highest on record for the same period. The month was also drier than usual with a total rainfall of only 4.1 millimetres, about 11 per cent of the normal figure of 38.9 millimetres. The accumulated rainfall recorded in the first two months of the year was 10.8 millimetres, about 85 per cent below the normal figure of 72.1 millimetres for the same period.

Under the influence of a humid maritime airstream, the weather of Hong Kong was foggy with a few light rain patches in the morning and at night on the first two days of the month. The visibility in the harbour fell to below 1 000 metres on the night of February 1. It was also warm with sunny periods during the day on these two days. A fresh easterly airstream affected Hong Kong on February 3 and there was coastal mist in the morning and sunny intervals during the day. The weather was mainly cloudy with a few rain patches and coastal fog the next day. The visibility at Waglan Island once fell to around 200 metres.

A weak cold front crossed the coast of Guangdong on the morning of February 5. Under the influence of the associated northeast monsoon, local weather was mainly cloudy with a few rain patches on February 5 and 6. There was also coastal fog on the morning of February 5 and the visibility at Waglan Island once fell to around 100 metres. Temperatures dropped slightly on February 6. With the arrival of an intense replenishment of the northeast monsoon, temperatures over Hong Kong fell appreciably on February 7 and it became cold on February 8 and 9. The temperatures at the Observatory fell to a minimum of 11.0 degrees on the morning of February 9, the lowest of the month. A broad band of rain and clouds also brought a few rain patches to the territory during February 7 to 9.

While the weather still remained cold with a few rain patches on the morning of February 10, with the departure of the cloud band covering the coastal areas of Guangdong, the weather of Hong Kong turned fine and dry in that afternoon and remained so on the next three days. Under clear skies, the temperatures in the New Territories were significantly lower than the urban areas on the mornings of February 11 and 12. With the moderation of the northeast monsoon, the weather was warm during the day on February 14 and 15, and temperatures over most parts of Hong Kong rose to 25 degrees or above. A cold front moved across the coastal areas of Guangdong on the morning of

February 16. While local weather was fine at first, with a band of clouds covering the coastal areas of Guangdong, it became cooler with a few light rain patches on the afternoon of February 16 and remained so the next day.

With the northeast monsoon affecting the coastal areas of Guangdong being gradually replaced by a warm and humid maritime airstream, local weather was warm with sunny periods during the day on February 18 to 22. With plenty of sunshine on February 21, the temperatures at the Observatory rose to a maximum of 27.8 degrees on that afternoon, the highest of the month. It was also foggy on the mornings of February 19 to 22. The visibility in the harbour fell below 500 metres on February 19. Another cold front moved across the coast of southern China on the night of February 22. Under the influence of the associated northeast monsoon, the weather turned mainly cloudy and cooler with a few light rain patches in the morning and at night on February 23 to 28. With the strengthening of the northeast monsoon affecting the coast of southern China, the weather of Hong Kong became cool appreciably in the later part of the afternoon on the last day of the month.

There was no tropical cyclone over the South China Sea and the western North Pacific in February 2024.

Details of issuance and cancellation of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal for February are tabulated in Table 2.

[Land Registry releases statistics for February](#)

The Land Registry today (March 4) released its statistics for February 2024.

Land registration

* The number of sale and purchase agreements for all building units received for registration in February was 3 189 (-27.5 per cent compared with January 2024 and -46.7 per cent compared with February 2023)

* The 12-month moving average for February was 4 602 (4.8 per cent below the 12-month moving average for January 2024 and 8.1 per cent below that for February 2023)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements of building units in February was \$22.6 billion (-32.9 per cent compared with January 2024 and -48.5 per cent compared with February 2023)

* Among the sale and purchase agreements, 2 375 were for residential units (-31.7 per cent compared with January 2024 and -44.5 per cent compared with February 2023)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in respect of residential units was \$19.1 billion (-31.3 per cent compared with January 2024 and -47.9 per cent compared with February 2023)

Statistics on sales of residential units do not include sale and purchase agreements relating to sales of units under the Home Ownership Scheme, the Private Sector Participation Scheme, the Tenants Purchase Scheme, etc, unless the premium of the unit concerned has been paid after the sale restriction period.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months, the year-on-year rate of change and breakdown figures on residential sales have also been released.

As deeds may not be lodged with the Land Registry until up to 30 days after the transaction, these statistics generally relate to land transactions in the previous month.

Land search

* The number of searches of land registers made by the public in February was 276 910 (-25.7 per cent compared with January 2024 and -35.2 per cent compared with February 2023)

The statistics cover searches made at the counter, through the self-service terminals and via the Integrated Registration Information System Online Services.

Over 1 000 musicians bring beautiful music in 2024 Fiesta of Music Office Bands, Choirs and Orchestras series

More than 1 000 young musicians from 17 bands, choirs and orchestras of the Music Office of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will jointly present a variety of Chinese and Western classics at five concerts of the series of 2024 Fiesta of Music Office Bands, Choirs and Orchestras (Fiesta) in April.

The New Territories Youth Strings, the Hong Kong Youth Strings, the Island Youth Strings and the Kowloon Youth Strings will perform at the string orchestras' concert "Let's Dance!" to be held at 3pm on April 4 (Thursday) at

the Tuen Mun Town Hall Auditorium. They will perform lively dance music including Béla Bartók's "Romanian Folk Dances", "Waltz" from Leonard Bernstein's "Divertimento", Perry Fletcher's "Folk Tune and Fiddle Dance" and "Jig" from Gustav Holst's "St. Paul's Suite, Op. 29" to mark the opening of the Fiesta.

The second concert, "Wishes of Our Hearts!", will be held at 7.30pm on April 7 (Sunday) at the Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall. There, the Music Office Children's Choir, the Music Office Youth Choir and the Music Office Junior Symphony Orchestra will perform choral and symphonic works including the lyrical Jacob Narverud's "Lunar Lullaby", Mark Burrows' "A Light of Hope, A Song of Peace", Joseph Haydn's "Symphony No.99 in E-flat major, 1st movement" and "Orpheus in the Underworld Overture" by Jacques Offenbach.

The Chinese orchestras' concert "Martial Arts     Heroes" will be held at 3pm on April 21 (Sunday) at the Sha Tin Town Hall Auditorium. The Music Office Children's Chinese Orchestra, the Island Youth Chinese Orchestra, the New Territories Youth Chinese Orchestra and the Kowloon Youth Chinese Orchestra will present all-time Chinese music favourites, including the stirring and passionate Lei Zhenbang's "Chinese Martial Arts", legendary composer Joseph Koo's "A Medley of Themes from Television Drama Series (1)" and his "The Love is Strong within Our Hearts" for the television drama "The Return of the Condor Heroes", as well as "Decree of the Sichuan General", which vividly depicts hero figures, to share with the audience the Chinese musical gems in pop culture. This concert is one of the programmes of the Hong Kong Pop Culture Festival 2024 and the Chinese Culture Promotion Series.

The bands' concert "Sounds of Asia", which will feature the Music Office Youth Brass Band, the Kowloon Youth Symphonic Band and the New Territories Youth Symphonic Band, will be held at 7.30pm on April 27 (Saturday) at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium Arena. They will perform Paul Voet's "Far Eastern Dream", Benjamin Yeo's "Legend of the Ancient Hero" and Satoshi Yagisawa's "Sunshine on Hill in Spring", showcasing fascinating band music full of Asian flavours.

The finale concert "Musicland", featuring the Music Office Junior Chinese Orchestra, the Hong Kong Children's Symphonic Band and the Music Office Junior Symphonic Band, will be held at 3pm on April 28 (Sunday) at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium Arena. The young musicians will perform Chinese orchestral and symphonic band works filled with cheerful buoyancy, including Peng Xiuwen's "Moon Dance of Axi", Scott Watson's "Extraordinary Machines of Clockwork and Steam" and Dmitri Shostakovich's "Folk Dances".

Tickets of the string orchestras' concert "Let's Dance!" are now available at URBTIX (www.urbtix.hk). Tickets for "Wishes of Our Hearts!" and "Martial Arts     Heroes" will be available one month before the concert dates, while tickets for the "Sounds of Asia" and "Musicland" will be available starting March 27. Tickets are priced at \$55, \$65 and \$75. For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries, please call 2796 7523 or 3842 7784 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/mo/activities/traineesevents/musicconcert/2024-Fies

[Hong Kong and Bahrain enter into tax pact \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong yesterday (March 3, Manama time) signed a comprehensive avoidance of double taxation agreement (CDTA) with Bahrain, signifying the sustained efforts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government in expanding Hong Kong's CDTA network, in particular with tax jurisdictions participating in the Belt and Road Initiative.

â€‹ This CDTA is the 49th agreement that Hong Kong has concluded. It sets out the allocation of taxing rights between the two jurisdictions and will help investors better assess their potential tax liabilities from cross-border economic activities.

â€‹ The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui, said, "Bahrain is one of the economies participating in the Belt and Road Initiative. I have every confidence that this CDTA will further promote economic and trade connections between Hong Kong and Bahrain, and offer additional incentives for the business sectors of both sides to do business or make investments. Hong Kong will continue to negotiate with trading and investment partners with a view to expanding its CDTA network. This could enhance the attractiveness of Hong Kong as a business and investment hub, and consolidate the city's status as an international economic and trade centre."

â€‹ Under the Hong Kong-Bahrain CDTA, Hong Kong companies can enjoy double taxation relief in that any tax paid in Bahrain, whether directly or by deduction, in accordance with the CDTA will be allowed as a credit against the tax payable in Hong Kong in respect of the same income, subject to the provisions of the tax laws of Hong Kong.

â€‹ The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Algernon Yau, who was on an official visit to Manama, signed the CDTA with Bahrain on behalf of the HKSAR Government. Representing the Government of Bahrain was the Minister of Finance and National Economy of Bahrain, Shaikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa.

â€‹ This CDTA will come into force after the completion of ratification procedures by both jurisdictions. In the case of Hong Kong, it will be implemented by way of an order to be made by the Chief Executive in Council under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). The order is subject to negative vetting by the Legislative Council.

â€‹ Details of the Hong Kong-Bahrain CDTA can be found on the Inland

Revenue Department website
(www.ird.gov.hk/eng/pdf/Agreement_Bahrain_HongKong.pdf).



[Lead healthy lifestyle in support of World Obesity Day](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (March 4) appealed to members of the public to be aware of obesity and develop a healthy lifestyle in support of [World Obesity Day](#).

World Obesity Day has been observed on March 4 since 2020 to stimulate and support practical actions that will help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight and reverse the global obesity crisis. Having the theme of "Let's Talk About Obesity And...", World Obesity Day in 2024 urges the community to start cross-cutting conversations.

A spokesman for the DH said, "Obesity is a major risk factor for a number of chronic diseases, including hypertension, heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes mellitus, cancer, musculoskeletal disorders and sleep apnoea."

In Hong Kong, a body mass index (BMI) of adults from 23 to less than 25 is regarded overweight, while a BMI equal to or greater than 25 is considered obesity. Furthermore, having excess body fat around the waist may also bring health problems. Waist circumference of men who are 90cm or above, and that of women are 80cm or above, are considered centrally obese. For students, [overweight](#) (including obesity) is defined as weight exceeding 120 per cent of the median weight-for-height (applicable to male students with height below 175cm and female students with height below 165cm).

According to the [Population Health Survey \(PHS\) 2020-22](#) conducted by the DH, among persons aged between 15 and 84, 32.6 per cent of them are obese, 22 per cent of them are overweight and 37.8 per cent were classified as

centrally obese. The PHS also revealed some common unhealthy lifestyle in Hong Kong. About one quarter of persons aged 18 or above performed an insufficient level of physical activities, and about 98 per cent of persons aged 15 or above reported an inadequate intake (i.e. an average of less than five servings) of fruit and vegetables per day.

The DH's Student Health Service provides free annual health assessment service for eligible primary and secondary school students. A total of 233 000 primary school students and 97 000 secondary school students attended the Student Health Service Centres for annual health assessment in the 2022/23 school year. The detection rates of being overweight (including obesity) among primary and secondary school students were 19.5 per cent and 20.5 per cent respectively.

Leading a healthy lifestyle reduces the risk of obesity. "The fundamental cause of obesity is more calories are consumed than expended. To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, members of the public are encouraged to eat a balanced diet, be physically active and reduce the amount of time spent being sedentary," the spokesman stressed.

The DH has been promoting a healthy lifestyle through a life-course and setting-based approach. People eating out and ordering takeaway food are common in Hong Kong. The DH has been enlisting the support of restaurants to provide healthier dishes to members of the public through the [EatSmart Restaurant Star+](#) campaign. Furthermore, in collaboration with relevant government bureaux/departments and the public, private and non-governmental sectors, the DH has also launched the [StartSmart@school.hk](#), [EatSmart@school.hk](#) campaigns, and the [Joyful@Healthy Workplace Programme](#) to encourage healthy eating and physical activity in order to create an environment conducive to a healthy lifestyle in pre-primary institutions, primary schools and workplaces.

Furthermore, with an aim to advocate members of the public to lead an active lifestyle, the DH has launched "[10 000 Steps a Day](#)" Campaign since 2022 to arouse members of the public to integrate walking, which is a simple form of physical activity, into their daily life. The Walking Challenge last year further invited people to form groups with family members and friends to support each other to walk 10 000 steps a day.

The Government is committed to halt the rise of obesity. The DH will continue to step up efforts to enhance public awareness about the importance of healthy living and increase people's health literacy, as well as working in close partnership with other government departments and community partners to foster a health-enhancing environment.