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A1: Lam to reveal surprise ban on e-cigarettes

Hong Kong is set to impose a complete ban on e-cigarettes and other new tobacco products in an unexpected U-turn by the government, which had previously proposed only to restrict their sale to minors.

The move will be announced by Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor in her policy address on Wednesday, as she responds to myriad social concerns with nearly 250 initiatives aimed at tackling issues such as housing, land supply, health care, welfare and livelihood.

Until now, the government had committed only to regulating e-cigarettes in the same way as conventional tobacco products, but health minister Sophia Chan Siu-chee had left the door open for "more stringent measures" depending on what medical evidence had to say about health effects.

A1: Global growth to take a hit, IMF predicts

A further escalation of the trade war between the United States and China would take a major toll on economic growth in both countries next year, with China the bigger casualty, according to an economic analysis released by the International Monetary Fund yesterday.

Assuming the US slaps tariffs on all Chinese imports, as US President Donald Trump has threatened to do, the effect on consumer and business confidence combined with the negative financial market reaction would probably cut the GDP of the United States by more than 0.9 per cent in 2019, while Chinese economic output would be 1.6 per cent lower than it otherwise would be, the IMF said.

A4: Migrant workers paying a high price for progress

On a rainy summer day, 52-year-old Wang Zhaogang paused to catch his breath after every four or five steps. He was wrapped up against the elements, since even a common cold could be enough to kill him, and his laboured breath emitted a deep wheezing sound.

So frail that his heartbeat was visible beneath skin stretched across his rib cage, Wang, from Hunan province in central China, had lost 15kg (33lbs) over the previous year and weighed only 40kg. Still, he has travelled alone five times this year from his hometown in Sangzhi – one of the 10 poorest counties in China – to the southern city of Shenzhen to campaign for the city's government to recognise and help workers like him.

SCMP Young Post

P1 Games, gold, glory

Asian Games gold mediallist Salon Yiu Kam-shing went back to hi old school to talk the current students about his path from teen athlete to international rugby superstar, writes Kelly Ho

Not every school athlete goes on to become an international sports superstar, but Salom Yiu Kam-shing did. The Hong Kong rugby player, who was on the team that won god at the 2018 Asian Games in Auguest, graduated from Fung Kai Liu Man Shek Tong Secondary School in 2018.

P4 More China uni choices

Local DSE candidates can enroll in 109 higher education institutes on the mainland next year, writes Nicola Chan

The number of higher education institutes on the mainland that Hong Kong students can apply to enroll in next year has been increased to 109, China's Ministry of Education said yesterday.

"compared to 2018, there are seven more institutions participating in the scheme, namely the Central Convervatory of Music, the Central Academy of Drama, the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Hubei University , Guangdong Ocean University Chang'an University , and Lanzhou University," said a spokesman for Hong Kong's Education Bureau (EDB).

P6 Air pollution 'destroying lives and crops

Air pollution form smog-inducing ozone – a gas that occurs both in the Earth's atmosphere and at ground level – and fine particles may be cutting an estimated 267 billion yuan (HK$302 billion) off China's economy each year in the form of early deaths and lost food production, a new study has found.

Researchers from Chinese University came up with the figure by calculating the social costs of air pollution attributed to the impact on public health and reduced crop yields. "this is a fairly large and significate figure, considering that it amounts to about 0.7 per cent of national GDP [gross domestic product],"