

SED to visit Guangdong

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, will pay a duty visit to Guangdong Province tomorrow (July 17).

Arriving in Guangzhou, Mr Yeung will first meet with officials of the Department of Education of Guangdong Province to exchange views on issues of mutual concern. He will then go to Nansha, where he will learn more about the campus construction plan of the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (Guangzhou) and meet the students participating in the Summer Camp for Sister Schools in the Greater Bay Area.

Mr Yeung will return to Hong Kong on the evening of the same day.

Secretary for Justice to visit Beijing

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, will leave for Beijing tomorrow afternoon (July 17).

During her stay, Ms Cheng will meet with representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Supreme People's Court and visit the Beijing Internet Court. She will also attend the second Belt and Road Joint Conference.

Ms Cheng will return to Hong Kong on the morning of July 20.

SCS visits Water Supplies Department (with photo)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, today (July 16) visited the Lung Cheung Road Mechanical and Electrical Workshop of the Water Supplies Department (WSD) to learn more about the work of front-line colleagues and meet with its management and staff of various grades to exchange views on matters of concern.

Accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Thomas Chow, Mr Law met with the Director of Water Supplies, Mr Wong Chung-leung, and the directorate staff to receive an update on the Department's work in providing a reliable water supply and enhancing water safety and security, as

well as the challenges confronting the WSD.

Mr Law then visited the Meter Testing Laboratory, where he was briefed on the accredited water meter accuracy testing service, which allows customers to witness the testing of their water meters. Later at the Telemetry and Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) Office and Workshop, he was briefed on how the smooth operation of various waterworks installations are maintained through remote control by the SCADA system.

Mr Law then visited the Electrical Workshop to understand colleagues' work in repairing and overhauling electrical equipment of pumping stations and water treatment works. He also watched a demonstration of a plumbing products surveillance test at the Material Testing Laboratory. Established in April last year, the laboratory enhances the surveillance of plumbing products quality with general acceptance by the WSD for use in plumbing works.

Before concluding his visit, Mr Law met with staff representatives of various grades at a tea gathering to exchange views on matters that concern them. He expressed his appreciation for colleagues' dedicated efforts and encouraged them to continue to provide quality water supply services to the public.

Hong Kong Customs combats unfair trade practices at education centre

Hong Kong Customs today (July 16) arrested a female director of an education centre suspected of applying a false trade description in the course of the sale of an education service, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Customs earlier received information alleging that an education centre claimed that customers would receive a certificate issued by a designated authority upon completion of a lactation course organised by the education centre. However, customers were eventually given only a certificate issued by the education centre.

After investigation, Customs officers today arrested a 38-year-old woman.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested woman was released on bail pending further investigation.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure services at reputable shops.

Under the TD0, any trader who applies a false trade description to a service supplied to a customer commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in May 2019

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for May 2019 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (July 16) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

In May 2019, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods decreased by 4.0% over May 2018. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 6.1%.

Comparing the first five months of 2019 with the same period in 2018, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods decreased by 4.1%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 5.7%.

Comparing the three-month period ending May 2019 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods increased by 5.9%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods increased by 5.8%.

Changes in volume of external merchandise trade are derived from changes in external merchandise trade value with the effect of price changes discounted.

Comparing May 2019 with May 2018, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.0%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods increased by 2.1%.

As regards price changes in the first five months of 2019 over the same period in 2018, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.1%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods also increased by 2.1%.

Price changes in external merchandise trade are reflected by changes in unit value indices of external merchandise trade, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, specific price data.

The terms of trade index is derived from the ratio of price index of

total exports of goods to that of imports of goods. Compared with the same periods in 2018, the index remained virtually unchanged in both May 2019 and the first five months of 2019.

Changes in the unit value and volume of total exports of goods by main destination are shown in Table 1.

Comparing May 2019 with May 2018, a double-digit decline of 16.2% was recorded for the total export volume to the USA. Concurrently, the total export volume to the mainland of China (the Mainland) and Japan decreased by 6.9% and 0.4% respectively. On the other hand, the total export volume to Taiwan and India increased by 4.5% and 12.2% respectively.

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to the Mainland, the USA and Japan increased by 3.1%, 2.6% and 2.4% respectively. On the other hand, the total export prices to India and Taiwan decreased by 0.2% and 0.8% respectively.

Changes in the unit value and volume of imports of goods by main supplier are shown in Table 2.

Comparing May 2019 with May 2018, double-digit declines were recorded for the import volume from Korea (-29.7%) and Japan (-11.9%). Concurrently, the import volume from the Mainland, Singapore and Taiwan decreased by 6.4%, 5.3% and 2.9% respectively.

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from all main suppliers increased: the Mainland (+2.9%), Singapore (+2.6%), Japan (+1.7%), Taiwan (+1.4%) and Korea (+0.5%).

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the May 2019 issue of "Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Index Numbers". Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp?productCode=B1020006).

Enquiries on merchandise trade indices may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4918).