

Consumer Price Indices for December 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (January 22) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for December 2018. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 2.5% in December 2018 over the same month a year earlier. The increase was slightly smaller than that in November 2018 (2.6%), mainly due to the smaller increases in private housing rentals and the costs for meals bought away from home. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rate of increase in the Composite CPI (i.e. the underlying inflation rate) in December 2018 was 2.9%, remaining virtually unchanged as compared to November 2018.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of increase in the Composite CPI for the three-month period from October to December 2018 was 0.2%, and that for the three-month period from September to November 2018 was 0.3%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding rates of increase were also 0.2% and 0.3% respectively.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 3.0%, 2.4% and 2.2% respectively in December 2018, as compared to 3.0%, 2.4% and 2.3% respectively in November 2018. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 3.3%, 2.8% and 2.5% respectively in December 2018, as compared to 3.3%, 2.8% and 2.6% respectively in November 2018.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the three-month period from October to December 2018, the average monthly rates of increase in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 0.1%, 0.2% and 0.3% respectively. The corresponding rates of increase for the three-month period from September to November 2018 were 0.3%, 0.2% and 0.3% respectively. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding average monthly rates of increase in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) for the three-month period from October to December 2018 were 0.1%, 0.2% and 0.3% respectively, and the corresponding rates of increase for the three-month period from September to November 2018 were 0.3%, 0.2% and 0.3% respectively.

Amongst the various CPI components, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in December 2018 for electricity, gas and water (3.8% in the Composite CPI and 4.2% in the CPI(A)); food (excluding meals bought away from home) (3.8% in the Composite CPI and 3.7% in the CPI(A)); miscellaneous services (3.4% in the Composite CPI and 2.4% in the CPI(A)); housing (2.9% in the Composite CPI and 4.2% in the CPI(A)); alcoholic drinks and tobacco (2.8% in the Composite CPI and 2.9% in the CPI(A)); meals bought away from home (2.5% in the Composite CPI and 2.6% in the CPI(A)); transport (1.8% in both

the Composite CPI and CPI(A)) and miscellaneous goods (1.2% in the Composite CPI and 1.4% in the CPI(A)).

On the other hand, year-on-year decreases in prices were recorded in December 2018 for durable goods (-2.3% in the Composite CPI and -2.2% in the CPI(A)) as well as clothing and footwear (-1.5% in the Composite CPI and -1.9% in the CPI(A)).

In the fourth quarter of 2018, the Composite CPI rose by 2.6% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 3.1%, 2.4% and 2.3% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.9%, 3.3%, 2.8% and 2.6% respectively.

For 2018 as a whole, the Composite CPI was on average 2.4% higher than that in the preceding 12-month period. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.7%, 2.3% and 2.2% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.6%, 2.9%, 2.6% and 2.4% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the underlying inflation rate held largely stable at 2.9% in December 2018. For 2018 as a whole, the underlying inflation rate averaged 2.6%.

In the near term, the upside risks to inflation should be contained, as imported inflation has stayed moderate and as pressures on local rentals have weakened somewhat of late. The Government will monitor the situation closely, particularly the impact on the lower-income people.

Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for December 2018 are shown in Table 1. The time series on the year-on-year rates of change in the CPIs before and after removing the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures are shown in Table 2. For discerning the latest trend in consumer prices, it is also useful to look at the changes in the seasonally adjusted CPIs. The corresponding time series on the average monthly rates of change during the latest three months for the seasonally adjusted CPIs are shown in Table 3. The rates of change in the original and the seasonally adjusted Composite CPI and the underlying inflation rate are presented graphically in Chart 1.

More detailed CPI data (including year-on-year comparison, month-to-month comparison, seasonally adjusted data series and the CPIs by the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP)) are available in the monthly reports. Users can download the December 2018 issue of the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index"

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=B1060001), the time series of CPIs at detailed level

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600001), the time

series of CPIs at COICOP division level (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600002) and the time series of CPIs after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=D5600003) free of charge at the website of the C&SD.

For enquiries about the CPIs, please contact the Consumer Price Index Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7374 or email: cpi@censtatd.gov.hk).

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, January 22, 2019 is 104.1 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Appeal for information on missing man in Tsuen Wan (with photo)

Police today (January 22) appealed to the public for information on a man who went missing in Tsuen Wan.

Mok Nam, aged 84, went missing after he left an elderly home on On Yat Street yesterday (January 21) night. Staff of the elderly home made a report to Police on the same day.

He is about 1.6 metres tall, 68 kilograms in weight and of fat build. He has a round face with yellow complexion and grey short hair. He was last seen wearing a dark long-sleeved windbreaker, a grey sweater, dark-coloured trousers, dark blue slippers with white stripe pattern and carrying a white plastic bag.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing man or may have seen him is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1176 or 9689 7445 or email to rmpu-nts-2@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[SLW visits training centres for domestic helpers in Jakarta \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, visited two training centres for Indonesian domestic helpers this morning (January 22) before concluding his visit to Jakarta, Indonesia.

Dr Law toured the centre's facilities, including simulated households and simulated home care facilities, and observed the practical skills training provided for Indonesians to work overseas as domestic helpers and carers. He also observed trainees attending language classes and met with the centre's trainers and staff to discuss tailor-made training across professions and collaboration with employment agencies.

Speaking to the centre's management, Dr Law said that Hong Kong had launched a Pilot Scheme on Training for Foreign Domestic Helpers (FDHs) on Elderly Care in March 2018 to strengthen their skills in taking care of frail elderly persons, so as to enhance the quality of life of elderly people in the community and support ageing in place. A total of 300 free training places are provided, and two-thirds of trainees recruited are Indonesians.

Dr Law added that, in view of positive responses from FDHs and their employers, the Government is planning to extend the Pilot Scheme to other districts, with around 800 training places in total starting from the third quarter upon completion of the training courses under the Pilot Scheme by May this year.

Yesterday, Dr Law had a dinner gathering with Hong Kong people doing business in Indonesia. Dr Law encouraged them to look at the opportunities brought about by the country's Belt and Road Initiative as well as the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area when considering their business strategies. He added that with the unique strengths of "one country, two systems" and an excellent environment for doing business, Hong Kong is well positioned to help them tap such business opportunities.

Dr Law concluded his visit and set off for Hong Kong this afternoon.



Temporary closure of some LCSD leisure and sports facilities

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) announced today (January 22) that the following leisure and sports facilities will be temporarily closed:

(a) The Amphitheatre at Tai Po Waterfront Park in Tai Po District will be

temporarily closed from January 23 to June 21 for refurbishment works.

(b) The facilities located on the seventh floor of Quarry Bay Sports Centre in Eastern District, including the arena and two squash courts, will be temporarily closed from February 18 to June 16 for improvement works, while the facilities on the sixth floor will remain open. During the closure period, the public may use similar facilities at Java Road Sports Centre, Island East Sports Centre, Sai Wan Ho Sports Centre, Siu Sai Wan Sports Centre or Chai Wan Sports Centre in the same district.

For the most up-to-date closure schedules of the above leisure and sports facilities, the public may refer to the notices at the venues or contact venue staff directly.