

Temporary traffic arrangements for tram track maintenance works in Western District from next Monday

The Transport Department (TD) today (August 21) reminded the public that to facilitate tram track maintenance works at Des Voeux Road West, parts of the fast lane of Des Voeux Road West westbound near Kwan Yick Building Phase I will be temporarily closed from about 10am next Monday (August 27) to 6pm next Saturday (September 1).

Appropriate traffic signs will be erected on-site to guide motorists.

The TD anticipates that traffic in the vicinity of the above road section will be relatively busy. Motorists should exercise tolerance and patience in case of traffic congestion. Members of the public are advised to stay alert to the latest traffic news through the media or the department's website (www.td.gov.hk).

Accident bulletin on Ozone Alpina 3 paraglider released

The investigation team of the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) today (August 21) released Accident Bulletin 4/2018 in relation to the accident involving an Ozone Alpina 3 paraglider that crashed at Sunset Peak, Lantau, on July 22.

A spokesperson for the CAD said that the bulletin contains information relating to the accident as determined up to the time of issue, and must be regarded as tentative.

"The investigation team will continue with the investigation and will conduct more in-depth analysis of the relevant data and information collected in order to determine the circumstances and causes leading to the accident," the spokesperson said.

The full Accident Bulletin 4/2018 is available for download from the CAD webpage (www.cad.gov.hk/english/reports.html).

Consumer Price Indices for July 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (August 21) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for July 2018. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 2.4% in July 2018 over the same month a year earlier, remaining virtually unchanged as compared to June 2018. 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 July 2018 also remained virtually unchanged at 2.7% as compared to June 2018.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of increase in the Composite CPI for the three-month period from May to July 2018 was 0.2%, and that for the three-month period from April to June 2018 was 0.1%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the average monthly rate of increase in the Composite CPI for the three-month period from May to July 2018 was 0.2%, the same as that for the three-month period from April to June 2018.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.5%, 2.3% and 2.3% respectively in July 2018, as compared to 2.6%, 2.3% and 2.2% respectively in June 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 2.8%, 2.7% and 2.6% respectively in July 2018, as compared to 2.9%, 2.7% and 2.5% respectively in June 2018.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the three-month period from May to July 2018, the average monthly rates of increase in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were all 0.2%. The corresponding rates of increase for the three-month period from April to June 2018 were 0.2%, 0.1% and 0.1% 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 May to July 2018 were all 0.2%, and the corresponding rates of increase for the three-month period from April to June 2018 were 0.3%, 0.2% and 0.2% respectively.

Amongst the various CPI components, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in July 2018 for food (excluding meals bought away from home) (4.8% in the Composite CPI and 4.5% in the CPI(A)); electricity, gas and water (4.2% in the Composite CPI and 4.5% in the CPI(A)); meals bought away from home (2.9% in the Composite CPI and 3.0% in the CPI(A)); clothing and footwear (2.4% in the Composite CPI and 2.2% in the CPI(A)); housing (2.2% in the Composite CPI and 2.4% in the CPI(A)); transport (2.2% in the Composite CPI and 1.6% in the CPI(A)); miscellaneous services (1.8% in the Composite CPI and 1.0% in the CPI(A)); miscellaneous goods (1.4% in the Composite CPI and 1.9% in the CPI(A)) as well as alcoholic drinks and tobacco (0.6% in both the Composite CPI and CPI(A)).

On the other hand, year-on-year decrease in prices was recorded in July 2018 for durable goods (-2.1% in the Composite CPI and -2.0% in the CPI(A)).

Taking the first seven months of 2018 together, the Composite CPI rose by 2.3% over a year earlier. The corresponding increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.5%, 2.2% and 2.2% respectively. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the Composite CPI, CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.5%, 2.7%, 2.4% and 2.4% respectively in the first seven months of 2018 over a year earlier.

For the three months ended July 2018, the Composite CPI rose by 2.3% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.5%, 2.2% and 2.1% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.6%, 2.8%, 2.6% and 2.4% respectively.

For the 12 months ended July 2018, the Composite CPI was on average 2.0% higher than that in the preceding 12-month period. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.2%, 1.9% and 2.0% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.1%, 2.3%, 2.0% and 2.1% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that underlying inflation pressure held largely steady in July, with the year-on-year rate of change in the underlying Composite CPI staying unchanged at 2.7%. In view of the edging up of global inflation and continued feed-through of earlier rises in fresh-letting residential rentals, local underlying consumer price inflation in the months ahead may remain somewhat higher than in the first half of 2018, when it averaged 2.4%. Yet, inflation should stay within a moderate range for 2018 as a whole. The Government will continue to 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 July 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 July 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).

Senior appointment (with photos)

The Government announced today (August 21) that Mr Lam Sai-hung, Director of Civil Engineering and Development, will assume the post of Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) on October 13, 2018, succeeding Mr Hon Chi-keung, who will proceed on pre-retirement leave.

Commenting on the appointment of Mr Lam, the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, said, "Mr Lam is an experienced senior civil servant with profound knowledge and rich experience in the works field. He also possesses effective leadership and management skills. I have every confidence that he will continue to serve the community with professionalism in his new capacity."

On the retirement of Mr Hon, Mr Law said, "Mr Hon has rendered 35 years of dedicated public service to the community and has made tremendous contributions in the many different professional areas of works and engineering. I wish him a fulfilling and happy retirement."

Brief biographical notes of the two officers are set out below:

Mr Hon Chi-keung

Mr Hon joined the Government as an Assistant Engineer in August 1983. He was promoted to Chief Engineer in May 1999, to Government Engineer in July 2005, and to Principal Government Engineer in November 2008. He was Project Manager of the Hong Kong Island and Islands Development Office in the Civil Engineering and Development Department from March 2008 to January 2011 and Director of Civil Engineering and Development from January 2011 to April 2015, and has been Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) since April 2015.

Mr Lam Sai-hung

Mr Lam joined the Government as an Assistant Engineer in August 1986. He was promoted to Chief Engineer in August 2009, to Government Engineer in April 2012, and to Principal Government Engineer in May 2014. He was Project Manager of the Hong Kong Island and Islands Development Office in the Civil Engineering and Development Department from June 2015 to August 2016. He has been Director of Civil Engineering and Development since September 2016.



Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, August 21, 2018 is 104.1 (down 0.3 against yesterday's index).