

Flag-lowering ceremony cancelled

Owing to the thunderstorm warning, the flag-lowering ceremony to be conducted at Golden Bauhinia Square, Wan Chai at 6pm today (September 1) will be cancelled.

Suspicious mobile applications related to Airstar Bank Limited

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Airstar Bank Limited on suspicious mobile applications (Apps), which has been reported to the HKMA. Hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#) for ease of reference by members of the public.

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information to the Apps concerned or has conducted any financial transactions through the Apps should contact the bank concerned using the contact information provided in the press release, and report to the Police or contact the Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

HAD to open temporary night heat shelters

The Home Affairs Department will open 19 temporary night heat shelters tonight (September 1) for people in need of the service.

The shelters will be open from 10.30pm until 8am tomorrow.

For further information, please call the department's hotline before midnight on 2572 8427.

The 19 night heat shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall
3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex,
2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre
3/F, 7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –

Wan Chai Activities Centre
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

Kowloon City –

Hung Hom Community Hall
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices,
42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –

Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –

Shek Kip Mei Community Hall
G/F, Block 42, Shek Kip Mei Estate, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –

Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –

Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories Districts:

Islands –

Tung Chung Community Hall
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –

Kwai Shing Community Hall
Podium, Block 6, Kwai Shing West Estate, Kwai Chung

North –

Cheung Wah Community Hall
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –

Hang Hau Community Hall
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –

Hin Keng Neighbourhood Community Centre
5 Hin Wo Lane, Sha Tin

Tai Po –

Tai Po Community Centre
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –

Shek Wai Kok Community Hall
Shek Wai Kok Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –

Butterfly Bay Community Centre
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –

Long Ping Community Hall
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

Yuen Long –

Tin Yiu Community Centre
Tin Yiu Estate, Tin Shui Wai

Provisional statistics of retail sales for July 2020

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (September 1).

The value of total retail sales in July 2020, provisionally estimated at \$26.5 billion, decreased by 23.1% compared with the same month in 2019. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in June 2020 decreased by 24.7% compared with a year earlier. For the first seven months of 2020 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales decreased by 32.1% compared with the same period in 2019.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in July 2020 decreased by 23.9% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in June 2020 decreased by 25.3% compared with a year earlier. For the first seven months of 2020 taken together, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales decreased by 33.5% in volume compared with the same period in 2019.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing July 2020 with July 2019, the value of sales of food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco decreased by 12.9%. This was followed by sales of other consumer goods, not elsewhere classified (-7.2% in value); jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts (-53.7%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods, not elsewhere classified (-5.6%); commodities in department stores (-28.8%); wearing apparel (-42.5%); medicines and cosmetics (-50.9%); motor vehicles and parts (-13.1%); books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (-41.0%); Chinese drugs and herbs (-26.5%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (-53.6%); and optical shops (-37.0%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of commodities in supermarkets increased by 26.5% in July 2020 over a year earlier. This was followed by sales of fuels (+3.8% in value); and furniture and fixtures (+0.3%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales increased by 16.9% in the three months ending July 2020 compared with the preceding three-month period, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales increased by 18.6%.

These retail sales statistics measure the sales receipts in respect of goods sold by local retail establishments and are primarily intended for gauging the short-term business performance of the local retail sector. Data on retail sales are collected from local retail establishments through the Monthly Survey of Retail Sales (MRS). Local retail establishments with and without physical shops are covered in MRS and their sales, both through conventional shops and online channels, are included in the retail sales statistics.

The retail sales statistics cover consumer spending on goods but not on services (such as those on housing, catering, medical care and health services, transport and communication, financial services, education and entertainment) which account for over 50% of the overall consumer spending. Moreover, they include spending on goods in Hong Kong by visitors but exclude spending outside Hong Kong by Hong Kong residents. Hence they should not be regarded as indicators for measuring overall consumer spending.

Users interested in the trend of overall consumer spending should refer to the data series of private consumption expenditure (PCE), which is a major component of the Gross Domestic Product published at quarterly intervals. Compiled from a wide range of data sources, PCE covers consumer spending on both goods (including goods purchased from all channels) and services by Hong Kong residents whether locally or abroad. Please refer to

the C&SD publication "Gross Domestic Product (Quarterly)" for more details.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that the year-on-year decline in retail sales remained notable in July despite a lower base of comparison, as the surge of local COVID-19 cases and the resultant tightening of social distancing measures in that month further disrupted consumption activities.

The spokesman further pointed out that while the recent stabilisation in the local epidemic situation may help improve consumption sentiment, the business environment of the retail trade will continue to be very difficult in the near term as inbound tourism remains at a standstill. The Government will monitor the developments closely.

Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures on value index and value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for June 2020 as well as the provisional figures for July 2020. The provisional figures on the value of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet as well as the corresponding year-on-year changes for the first seven months of 2020 taken together are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on volume index of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for June 2020 as well as the provisional figures for July 2020. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first seven months of 2020 taken together are also shown.

Table 3 shows the movements of the value and volume of total retail sales in terms of the year-on-year rate of change for a month compared with the same month in the preceding year based on the original series, and in terms of the rate of change for a three-month period compared with the preceding three-month period based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The classification of retail establishments follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales". Users can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=B1080003). Alternatively, the historical series of retail sales statistics can be downloaded in the form of a statistical table at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp320.jsp?productCode=D5600089).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of C&SD (Tel.: 3903 7400; email: mrs@censtatd.gov.hk).

Health risk category for Air Quality Health Index may reach "Serious" level

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has recorded higher than normal pollution levels since this morning (September 1). According to the EPD's forecast, it is expected that the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) at some general and roadside air quality monitoring stations may reach the "Serious" level later today.

Under the influence of the outer circulation of Tropical Cyclone Maysak, the weather in Hong Kong today is fine and very hot. Hong Kong is affected by a continental airstream with high background pollution. The sunshine enhances photochemical smog activity and the rapid formation of ozone and fine particulates in the Pearl River Delta region. The high level of ozone has promoted the formation of nitrogen dioxide in parts of the urban areas and at the roadside.

According to the Hong Kong Observatory, the weather in Hong Kong will remain fine and very hot with light winds in the next couple of days. It is expected that the pollution level will remain higher than normal until the wind speed strengthens.

With a health risk category in the "Very High" range or above, children, the elderly and persons with existing heart or respiratory illnesses are advised to reduce physical exertion and outdoor activities to a minimum or avoid such activities. The general public is advised to reduce, or reduce to a minimum, outdoor physical exertion, and to reduce time staying outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. As health effects of air pollutants may vary for individuals, persons who are in doubt or experience discomfort should seek advice from health-care professionals. The public may visit the Centre for Health Protection's website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/content/9/460/3557.html) for more information on health effects of air pollution and relevant health advice.

The Education Bureau (EDB) urges all schools to visit the EDB's website for appropriate measures to safeguard students' health and take note of changes in the index. The relevant hyperlink is as follows: www.edb.gov.hk/en/sch-admin/admin/about-activities/sch-activities-guidelines/index.html.

When the AQHI is at the "Very High" level, employers of outdoor workers performing heavy manual work are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health of their employees, such as reducing outdoor physical exertion and the time of their stay outdoors, especially in areas with heavy traffic. At the "Serious" level, employers of all outdoor workers are advised to assess the risk of outdoor work and take appropriate preventive measures to protect the health

of their employees.

Members of the public can check the current AQHI readings at the EPD's website (www.aqhi.gov.hk/en.html) or by calling the hotline 2827 8541.