

Cluster of Influenza A cases in Princess Margaret Hospital

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

The spokesperson for Princess Margaret Hospital (PMH) made the following announcement today (January 30):

Six patients (two males and four females, aged 33 to 90) of a mixed medical and geriatric ward in Lai King Building had presented with respiratory symptoms since January 25. Appropriate viral tests had been arranged for the patients and their test results were positive to Influenza A. All of them are under isolation with stable condition.

Under the activation of Emergency Response Level in all public hospitals, visiting arrangement has been suspended. Infection control measures have already been stepped up according to established guidelines. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The cases have been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow-up.

HAD opens temporary cold shelters

In view of the cold weather, the Home Affairs Department has opened 18 temporary shelters today (January 30) for people in need of the service.

The temporary shelters will remain open during the daytime tomorrow (January 31) when the cold weather warning is still in force.

To ensure that cold shelter users can rest in a quiet and undisturbed environment, members of the public or agencies wishing to make donations to shelter users are requested to register with the staff of the shelter first. Donors will then be directed to place the donated items at a specified indoor location. The staff will help notify the shelter users to collect the items on their own.

Anyone seeking temporary refuge or with any questions about the donation arrangements at the cold shelters may call the department's hotline 2835 1473 for more information.

The 18 temporary cold 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:

Nam Cheong District Community Centre

1 Cheong San Lane, 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:

Islands:

Tung Chung Community Hall

G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,

39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing:

Tai Wo Hau Estate Community Centre
15 Tai Wo Hau Road, 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:

Lung Hang Estate Community Centre
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po:

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

Tsuen Wan:

Lei Muk Shue Community Hall
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue 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

Government Logistics Department clarifies rumours

In response to rumours circulating on the Internet that the Government provides face masks to the public free of charge at its warehouse and that starting from yesterday (January 29) the public could collect the masks by way of real name registration, a spokesman of the Government Logistics Department clarified today (January 30) that the rumours are totally false. The spokesman appealed to the public to stay vigilant and not hastily believe in rumours.

Police clarify rumours

Ill-intentioned people have once again spread false information online, claiming that district police stations are giving out free face masks to the public. These rumour-mongers have also claimed that the Government will supply a large amount of face masks to the family members of Police officers. Police must squash such misinformation and remind the public not to be misled.

The Hong Kong Police Force pledges to stand firm and join hands with people from all walks of life to fight this battle against the epidemic.

External merchandise trade statistics for December 2019

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (January 30) the external merchandise trade statistics for December 2019. In December 2019, the value of Hong Kong's total exports of goods increased by 3.3%, whereas the value of imports of goods decreased by 1.9% over a year earlier.

In December 2019, the value of total exports of goods increased by 3.3% over a year earlier to \$351.3 billion, after a year-on-year decrease of 1.4% in November 2019. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 1.9% over a year earlier to \$383.8 billion in December 2019, after a year-on-year decrease of 5.8% in November 2019. A visible trade deficit of \$32.5 billion, equivalent to 8.5% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in December 2019.

For 2019 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods dropped by 4.1% over 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 6.5%. A visible trade deficit of \$426.8 billion, equivalent to 9.7% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in 2019.

Comparing the fourth quarter of 2019 with the preceding quarter on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 0.5%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods decreased by 1.6%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing December 2019 with December 2018, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 10.2%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular the mainland of China (the Mainland) (+15.7%), Taiwan (+7.8%), Malaysia (+7.0%) and India (+6.8%). On the other hand, decreases were recorded in the values of total exports to Thailand (-18.2%), Korea (-16.5%), Japan (-13.9%) and Singapore (-13.3%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular the USA (-22.5%), Germany (-12.1%) and the United Kingdom (-2.0%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular the USA (-21.6%), Malaysia (-11.4%), India (-10.9%) and the Mainland (-4.9%). Concurrently, increases were recorded in the values of imports from Vietnam (+55.9%), Taiwan (+21.1%) and Singapore (+6.8%).

For 2019 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular the USA (-14.8%), India (-12.0%), Germany (-8.9%), Japan (-6.4%) and the Netherlands (-4.4%). The value of total exports to the Mainland also decreased by 3.3%. However, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to Singapore (+4.1%) and Taiwan (+2.4%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Korea (-20.9%), India (-19.0%), Malaysia (-14.3%), the USA (-7.9%) and Singapore (-7.5%). The value of imports from the Mainland also decreased by 5.9%. On the other hand, the value of imports from Vietnam increased by 18.5%.

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing December 2019 with December 2018, increases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$23.5 billion or 19.4%) and "power generating machinery and equipment" (by \$3.9 billion or 64.1%). However, decreases were registered in the values of total exports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$9.4 billion or -13.3%) and "articles of apparel and clothing accessories" (by \$1.5 billion or -16.6%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$6.9 billion or -17.6%), "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$3.7 billion or -5.7%) and "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$2.5 billion or -17.4%). However, an increase was registered in the value of imports of "electrical machinery, apparatus and

appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$15.3 billion or 11.4%).

For 2019 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$48.0 billion or -10.7%), "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$41.2 billion or -5.3%) and "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$18.1 billion or -10.4%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of total exports of "power generating machinery and equipment" (by \$22.8 billion or 39.5%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$86.1 billion or -4.9%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$68.2 billion or -16.1%) and "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$51.5 billion or -6.9%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of imports of "power generating machinery and equipment" (by \$18.0 billion or 23.5%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the value of merchandise exports resumed a modest year-on-year growth of 3.3% in December 2019, mainly due to a visible increase in exports to the Mainland upon a low base of comparison. Exports to the major advanced economies remained weak, whereas those to other major Asian markets were mixed. For 2019 as a whole, the value of merchandise exports fell by 4.1%, the largest annual decline since 2009.

Looking ahead, Hong Kong's export performance is still subject to high uncertainties in the near term. While global economic conditions showed some signs of stabilisation in the latter part of last year, partly helped by reduced trade tensions between the US and the Mainland, external uncertainties are still high including those associated with lingering trade disputes among major economies, elevated geopolitical tensions and the development of Brexit. Particular attention should also be paid to the development of the novel coronavirus infection as it may weigh on economic performance of some Asian economies and disrupt economic activities in Hong Kong. The Government will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Further information

Table 1 at the annex presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for December 2019. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2016 to December 2019, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for December 2019 are shown in Table 4, whereas the values of imports of goods from 10 main suppliers are given in Table 5.

Tables 6 and 7 show the values of total exports and imports of 10 principal commodity divisions for December 2019.

All the merchandise trade statistics described here are measured at current prices and no account has been taken of changes in prices between the periods of comparison. A separate analysis of the volume and price movements of external merchandise trade for December 2019 will be released in mid-February 2020.

The December 2019 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in December 2019 and will be available in mid-February 2020. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp).

Enquiries on merchandise trade statistics may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel.: 2582 5042).