

Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in September 2019

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for September 2019 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (November 14) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

In September 2019, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods decreased by 7.8% over September 2018. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 11.0%.

Comparing the first nine months of 2019 with the same period in 2018, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods decreased by 5.9%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 7.9%.

Comparing the third quarter of 2019 with the preceding quarter on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods decreased by 0.2%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 1.6%.

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

Comparing September 2019 with September 2018, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 0.6%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods increased by 0.8%.

As regards price changes in the first nine months of 2019 over the same period in 2018, the prices of total exports of goods and imports of goods both increased by 1.6%.

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 decreased by 0.2% in September 2019, whereas it remained virtually unchanged in the first nine months of 2019.

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

Comparing September 2019 with September 2018, double-digit declines were recorded for the total export volume to the USA (-23.6%) and India (-10.7%). Concurrently, the total export volume to the mainland of China (the Mainland) (-5.9%) and Japan (-4.9%) also decreased. On the other hand, the total export

volume to Taiwan increased by 13.7%.

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to the Mainland and Japan increased by 1.6% and 0.6% respectively. On the other hand, the total export prices to the USA (-0.4%), Taiwan (-0.8%) and India (-1.7%) decreased.

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

Comparing September 2019 with September 2018, double-digit declines were recorded for the import volume from Korea (-24.8%), Singapore (-17.8%) and the Mainland (-10.6%). Concurrently, the import volume from Japan also decreased by 2.1%. On the other hand, the import volume from Taiwan increased by 4.1%.

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from the Mainland (1.6%), Japan (0.8%) and Singapore (0.3%) increased. On the other hand, the import prices from Taiwan (-1.4%) and Korea (-1.6%) decreased.

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the September 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).

"Thematic Household Survey Report No. 68" published

The Thematic Household Survey Report No. 68 is published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) today (November 14).

This publication contains key findings of the Thematic Household Survey conducted during November 2018 to February 2019. The survey collected information on various topics, including the utilisation of health services, medical benefits provided by employers/ companies, coverage of individually purchased medical insurance and views on organ donation of Hong Kong residents.

Findings of the 2018/19 survey revealed that some 1 523 200 persons (21.5%) had consulted a doctor during the 30 days before enumeration. While 89.6% of them had consulted practitioners of Western medicine, 14.6%

consulted practitioners of Chinese medicine, including practitioners of Chinese medicine (general practice), bone-setters and acupuncturists, during that period.

At the time of enumeration, some 3 610 700 persons (51.1%) were entitled to medical benefits provided by employers/companies or were covered by individually purchased medical insurance or had both kinds of medical protection. Among them, 1 114 900 (30.9%) were entitled to medical benefits from employers/companies only, including 306 800 persons (8.5%) entitled to medical benefits provided by Civil Service/Hospital Authority only. While another 1 318 900 persons (36.5%) were covered by individually purchased medical insurance only, the remaining 1 176 900 (32.6%) had both kinds of medical protection.

Of the 3 610 700 persons, the most commonly cited type of medical protection which they had was hospitalisation (91.4%), followed by consultation with practitioners of Western medicine (64.1%), dental consultation (33.4%), consultation with practitioners of Chinese medicine (22.1%) and medical check-up (10.6%).

Of the remaining 3 461 800 persons (48.9%) who were not entitled to any medical benefits provided by employers/companies and were not covered by individually purchased medical insurance, 38.0% were economically active persons, 28.0% were retired persons, 17.2% were students and 13.4% were home-makers.

Among some 4 818 000 persons aged 18 to 64 covered in the survey, some 1 527 500 persons (31.7%) were willing to donate their organs after death whereas about 593 900 persons (12.3%) were not willing; and over half of them (56.0%) had not yet decided/ considered to do so or refused to answer questions on organ donation. Respondents aged 18 to 64 in the survey were asked whether they were informed of the wish of family member on organ donation after death. Among those who had answered this question (covering 4 392 700 persons), the majority (76.6%) were not informed of the wish whereas about one-fifth (19.8%) were informed of the wish; and 3.6% expressed that they did not know/could not remember whether they were informed of the wish.

Other information

The survey successfully enumerated target respondents in some 10 000 households in accordance with a scientific sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong.

Detailed findings of the survey, together with the population coverage and concepts/definitions of key terms, are presented in the publication. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp140.jsp?productCode=B1130201).

Enquiries about the contents of the publication can be made to the Social Surveys Section (2) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 0592 or email: thematic@censtatd.gov.hk).

Police appoint Special Constables to enhance manpower

In response to media enquiries, a Government spokesman said today (November 14) that the Commissioner of Police has, in accordance with section 40 of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245), appointed a batch of officers of the Correctional Services Department (CSD) as Special Constables to enhance the Police's manpower and strength.

For concerted efforts to stop violence, the various disciplined services of the Government (including the Customs and Excise Department, the Fire Services Department, the Government Flying Service, the Immigration Department and the CSD) have made the greatest possible effort within their respective purview to support the Police in stopping violence and curbing disorder in accordance with the law.

The spokesman said, "The ongoing riots over the past few months, with their massive scale, simultaneous occurrence in various districts and grave severity of violence, make it necessary to strengthen the support for the Police's front-line officers. After consideration, the Government takes the view that making use of the appointment mechanism under section 40 of the Public Order Ordinance to arrange appropriate officers of other disciplined services to share part of and participate in the Police's work would help strengthen the manpower and strength of the Police."

The Police have, as a pilot, arranged to appoint not more than 100 CSD officers as Special Constables. These officers are familiar with the use of anti-riot equipment, are responsible for related duties in their routine work, and are willing to take up appointment as Special Constables.

"As a pilot run, in accordance with the operational needs of the Police, the CSD officers appointed as Special Constables on this occasion will be mainly responsible for guarding government premises as specified by the Commissioner of Police. The work includes such areas as anti-riot operations and handling of emergencies," the spokesman added.

During their appointment as Special Constables, the relevant CSD officers will be temporarily on loan to the Police from the CSD on a part-time basis to discharge the duties of Special Constables. For this, the CSD will flexibly deploy its work to cope with the relevant arrangements.

Depending on the Police's manpower needs and development of the social events, the Government does not preclude the appointment of officers of other local disciplined services as Special Constables in the future to alleviate the burden of the Police.

Twenty-nine building plans approved in September

The Buildings Department approved 29 building plans in September, with nine on Hong Kong Island, nine in Kowloon and 11 in the New Territories.

Of the approved plans, 11 were for apartment and apartment/commercial developments, eight were for commercial developments, four were for factory and industrial developments, and six were for community services developments.

In the same month, consent was given for works to start on 14 building projects which, when completed, will provide 328 886 square metres of gross floor area for domestic use involving 5 583 units, and 112 272 sq m of gross floor area for non-domestic use. The department has received notification of commencement of superstructure works for seven building projects.

The department also issued 36 occupation permits, with 12 on Hong Kong Island, seven in Kowloon and 17 in the New Territories.

Of the buildings certified for occupation, the gross floor area for domestic use was 250 823 sq m involving 4 085 units, and 71 745 sq m was for non-domestic use.

The declared cost of the new buildings completed in September totalled about \$10 billion.

In addition, five demolition consents involving five building structures were issued.

The department received 2 334 reports about unauthorised building works (UBWs) in September and issued 1 243 removal orders on UBWs.

The full version of the Monthly Digest for September can be viewed on the Buildings Department's homepage (www.bd.gov.hk).

LegCo committee meetings

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) House Committee will hold a special

meeting at 2.30pm tomorrow (November 15) in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex to continue the election of the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the House Committee for the 2019-2020 session.

Meanwhile, the meeting of the LegCo Finance Committee originally scheduled at 3pm tomorrow in Conference Room 1 of the LegCo Complex will be held at 4pm.