

Update on cluster of Adenovirus cases in Caritas Medical Centre

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

Regarding an earlier announcement about a cluster of patients in the Developmental Disabilities Unit of Caritas Medical Centre infected with Adenovirus, the spokesperson for Caritas Medical Centre made the following update today (June 25):

One more patient in the unit (aged 17) has presented with upper respiratory symptoms. Appropriate viral tests were arranged for the patient and the results were positive for Adenovirus. The patient is being treated under isolation, with stable condition.

The hospital has informed relatives of the patients about the situation. Infection control measures of the ward have been enhanced. All other patients in the ward are under close surveillance.

The case has been reported to the Hospital Authority Head Office and the Centre for Health Protection for necessary follow up.

Exchange Fund Bills tender results

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

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: June 25, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q1926
Issue date	: June 26, 2019
Maturity date	: September 25, 2019
Amount applied	: HK\$77,147 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$43,411 MN
Average yield accepted	: 2.16 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 2.28 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 78 PCT
Average tender yield	: 2.26 PCT

Tender date	: June 25, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills

Issue number	: H1955
Issue date	: June 26, 2019
Maturity date	: December 27, 2019
Amount applied	: HK\$26,142 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$9,000 MN
Average yield accepted	: 1.93 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 1.98 PCT
Pro rata ratio	: About 65 PCT
Average tender yield	: 2.13 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning July 1:

Tender date	: July 2, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q1927
Issue date	: July 3, 2019
Maturity date	: October 2, 2019
Tenor	: 91 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$56,574 MN

Tender date	: July 2, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: H1956
Issue date	: July 3, 2019
Maturity date	: January 2, 2020
Tenor	: 183 Days
Amount on offer	: HK\$16,600 MN

External merchandise trade statistics for May 2019

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 25) the external merchandise trade statistics for May 2019. In May 2019, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year decreases, at 2.4% and 4.3% respectively.

In May 2019, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 2.4% over a year earlier to \$343.1 billion, after a year-on-year decrease of 2.6% in April 2019. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 4.3% over a year earlier to \$377.8 billion in May 2019, after a year-on-year

decrease of 5.5% in April 2019. A visible trade deficit of \$34.7 billion, equivalent to 9.2% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in May 2019.

For the first five months of 2019 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods dropped by 2.5% over the same period in 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 3.8%. A visible trade deficit of \$188.8 billion, equivalent to 10.6% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first five months of 2019.

Comparing the three-month period ending May 2019 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 6.3%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 6.6%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing May 2019 with May 2018, total exports to Asia as a whole went down by 2.6%. In this region, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular Thailand (-14.0%), Malaysia (-11.6%), Singapore (-9.5%) and the mainland of China (the Mainland) (-4.1%). On the other hand, increases were recorded in the values of total exports to Korea (+24.5%), the Philippines (+12.1%) and India (+8.9%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular Germany (-16.9%) and the USA (-15.0%). Concurrently, an increase was registered in the value of total exports to the United Kingdom (+9.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular Korea (-29.6%), India (-18.6%), Japan (-10.6%), Malaysia (-4.2%) and the Mainland (-4.0%). Concurrently, increases were recorded in the values of imports from Switzerland (+22.0%) and the USA (+2.1%).

For the first five months of 2019 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular India (-19.6%), the USA (-12.0%), Taiwan (-11.7%), the Mainland (-5.0%) and Germany (-5.0%). However, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to Singapore (+13.9%) and the Netherlands (+10.9%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Korea (-26.7%), India (-18.8%), Taiwan (-12.5%), Malaysia (-7.0%) and Thailand (-6.7%). The value of imports from the Mainland also decreased by 1.4%. On the other hand, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of imports from Switzerland (+5.1%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing May 2019 with May 2018, decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$6.2 billion or -15.7%), "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$2.7 billion or -2.0%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$1.6 billion or -7.1%). However, an increase was registered in the value of total exports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$1.8 billion or 2.9%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$7.9 billion or -5.3%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$5.1 billion or -14.3%) and "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$2.4 billion or -4.1%). However, an increase was registered in the value of imports of "photographic apparatus, equipment and supplies, optical goods, watches and clocks" (by \$0.6 billion or 6.5%).

For the first five months of 2019 as a whole, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$22.1 billion or -12.3%), "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$15.6 billion or -2.5%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$5.0 billion or -5.3%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of total exports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$12.6 billion or 4.4%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$49.7 billion or -7.1%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$17.3 billion or -10.8%) and "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$5.0 billion or -5.9%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of imports of "power generating machinery and equipment" (by \$5.8 billion or 19.7%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that merchandise exports remained subdued in May, affected by the weaker global economy and US-Mainland trade tensions. The situation was similar to that in many other Asian economies.

Looking ahead, the near-term outlook for Hong Kong's exports will continue to be clouded by various external uncertainties, including notably the evolution of US-Mainland trade relations. The Government will stay vigilant.

Further information

Table 1 at the annex presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for May 2019. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2016 to May 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 May 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 May 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 May 2019 will be released in mid-July 2019.

The May 2019 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in May 2019 and will be available in mid-July 2019. 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).

Chinese Medicine Development Fund launched today

The Chinese Medicine Development Fund (CMDf) was rolled out today (June 25) for application by the Chinese medicine trade and relevant organisations.

The Fund provides Chinese medicine practitioners and the Chinese medicine drug sector with financial support to jointly promote the development of Chinese medicine and enhance the overall standard of the industry, including nurturing talent for the Chinese medicine industry and the Chinese medicine hospital, promoting Chinese medicine-related studies and scientific research, and providing assistance to local Chinese medicine traders for improving the quality and standards of production and registration of proprietary Chinese medicines in accordance with statutory requirements. It is also intended to enhance public knowledge and understanding of Chinese medicine.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, noted at the CMDF launch ceremony that the Government announced the establishment of the \$500 million dedicated fund in the Policy Address last year to further promote and boost the development of Chinese medicine. The Fund, consisting of various subsidy programmes, benefits stakeholders at different levels of the Chinese medicine practitioner and Chinese medicine drug sectors in a bid to foster the overall development of the trade.

Members of the Chinese medicine industry have offered valuable advice on the subsidy programmes under the Fund. Having taken into account views from the industry, two programmes, namely the Industry Support Programme and the Enterprise Support Programme, have been set up under the CMDF.

The Industry Support Programme provides funding for non-profit-making organisations, professional bodies, trade and academic associations and research institutions to support training programmes and courses to facilitate the development of Chinese medicine, conduct applied or policy research and studies on Chinese medicine, and organise various Chinese medicine promotional activities. Some programmes under the Industry Support Programme are open for application from today and the closing date for the first batch of applications will be August 9 this year. It is expected that the first batch of approved subsidies will be released in the fourth quarter of this year at the earliest.

The Enterprise Support Programme provides matching funds for individual Chinese medicine practitioners and clinics, members of the Chinese medicine industry and Chinese medicine drug traders, to enhance their professional and manufacturing standards as well as their management quality. Application details will be announced in due course.

Professor Chan expressed her gratitude to the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on the CMDF, Mr Douglas So, as well as to the members of the committee and the industry for their valuable advice and recommendations on the management and operation of the Fund. She said she hoped that the CMDF would facilitate development of the local Chinese medicine industry in multiple aspects including nurturing talents in Chinese medicine, encouraging research in Chinese medicine, enhancing public knowledge of Chinese medicine, and creating favourable conditions for promoting Chinese medicine to other places.

The Hong Kong Productivity Council serves as the implementation partner and Secretariat for the CMDF. Further information about the CMDF is available on its website at www.cmdevfund.hk. In addition, a Chinese medicine resources platform has been established under the Fund to consolidate reference materials on Chinese medicine for the trade's reference and to provide a variety of resources to facilitate information exchange and the development of the industry. Details are available on its website at www.cmresource.hk.

Make prior work arrangements for rainstorms

The Labour Department (LD) today (June 25) reminded employers to make prior work arrangements for staff during and after rainstorms.

"To avoid disputes and confusion, employers should make prior work arrangements for staff and contingency measures during and after rainstorms," an LD spokesman said.

"In working out and enforcing the arrangements, employers should give prime consideration to employees' safety both in the workplace and during their journeys to and from work, and adopt a flexible approach. Whenever possible, they should consult their staff."

The work arrangements should cover the following matters:

- * Whether employees are required to report for duty when different rainstorm warnings are issued;
- * How wages and allowances will be calculated for staff who are required to report for duty, as well as those who are late for work or absent from work during rainstorms;
- * For employees who are required to travel to and from workplaces during rainstorms, whether transport facilities will be provided for them and, if so, the arrangements; and
- * The time for staff who have not reported for duty to resume work after a rainstorm warning is cancelled, and other relevant arrangements as well as contingency measures.

"Employers should make realistic assessments of the requirements for staff and require only absolutely essential staff to report for duty in adverse weather conditions. If an Amber, Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is issued during working hours, employees working indoors should remain on duty as usual and stay where they are unless it is dangerous to do so. Supervisors of employees working outdoors in exposed areas should suspend outdoor duties as soon as practicable. They should arrange for their employees to take shelter temporarily and resume duty when weather conditions permit. When the Black Rainstorm Warning is issued, those employees should not resume duty until the warning is lowered and weather conditions permit. If the Black Rainstorm Warning remains in force at the end of working hours, for safety reasons, employers should provide employees with an area in the workplace as temporary shelter for them to stay if they want to.

"If possible, employers should provide transport services for employees who are still required to travel to and from workplaces when the Black Rainstorm Warning is in force, or give them a special travelling allowance as encouragement.

"For staff who have practical difficulties in resuming work on time upon cancellation of a rainstorm warning, employers should give due consideration to the circumstances of individual employees and handle each case flexibly.

"As rainstorms are natural occurrences that cannot be avoided, employers should not deduct wages of employees who are absent from or late for work because of inclement weather. Neither should employers dismiss an employee summarily based on these grounds," he said.

The spokesman also reminded employers to observe the statutory liabilities and requirements under the Employment Ordinance, the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance, the Employees' Compensation Ordinance and the Minimum Wage Ordinance.

Employers should not deduct the annual leave, statutory holidays or rest days employees are entitled to under the Employment Ordinance so as to compensate for the loss of working hours resulting from employees' failure to report for duty upon the announcement of a Black Rainstorm Warning. An employer who without reasonable excuse fails to comply with relevant provisions under the Employment Ordinance is liable to prosecution.

Employers should also note that they have an obligation to maintain a safe workplace for their employees under the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance.

"If employees are required to work in times of rainstorms, employers should ensure that the risks at work are properly controlled and reduced to levels that are as low as reasonably practicable," the spokesman said.

Under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, employers are liable to pay compensation for deaths or injury incurred when employees are travelling by a direct route from their residence to their workplace, or from their workplace back to their residence after work, four hours before or after working hours on a day when Typhoon Signal No. 8 or above or a Red or Black Rainstorm Warning is in force.

To provide practical guidelines and samples of work arrangements for the reference of employers and employees, the LD has issued the booklet "Code of Practice in times of Typhoons and Rainstorms". The booklet can be obtained from branch offices of the Labour Relations Division or downloaded from the department's webpage (www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/wcp/Rainstorm.pdf).