

Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service to hold hearings to receive oral evidence from invited parties

The following is issued on behalf of the Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service:

The Independent Review Committee on Hong Kong's Franchised Bus Service will hold hearings to receive oral evidence from the invited parties as follows:

Date/Time	Venue	Invited Parties
September 24 (Monday) (10am to 5.30pm, with a break between 1pm and 2.30pm)	Auditorium of the Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar	Representatives of the Hong Kong Police Force
September 27 (Thursday) (9am to 3.30pm, with a break between 1pm and 2.30pm)	Auditorium of the Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar	Mr Mike Weston, an expert appointed by the Committee

The Committee's rules of procedure for the receipt of oral evidence and notice to the public attending the hearings to receive oral evidence are available on the Committee's website (www.irc-bus.gov.hk/eng/press.html).

Having received and considered written submissions from various interested parties, and in order to obtain further information, the Committee is in the process of inviting specific interested parties to give oral evidence to the Committee through nominated representatives. Thirteen hearings have been held so far to receive oral evidence from:

(A) Representatives of:

- the Transport and Housing Bureau;
- the Transport Department;
- Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited and Long Win Bus Company Limited;
- the New World First Bus Services Limited and Citybus Limited;
- the New Lantao Bus Company (1973) Limited;
- Tai Po, Sha Tin and Sham Shui Po District Councils;

- ZF Friedrichshafen AG and Openmatics s.r.o.;
- the Community for Road Safety;
- the Motor Transport Workers General Union, including its sub-unions of Citybus Branch, KMB Branch, Long Win Bus Branch, New Lantao Bus Branch and New World Bus Branch;
- The Federation of Bus Industry Trade Unions, including its members of KMB Staff Union, New World First Bus Company Staff Union and Citybus Limited Employees Union;
- the KMB Employees Union;
- the Staff Rights Association of KMB;
- the Monthly-Rated Drivers Union; and
- the Part-time Drivers Union

(B) Former employees of the KMB:

- Mr Alok Jain; and
- Mr Raymond Cheng

(C) Employees of the KMB:

- Ms Debby Wong; and
- Mr Kelvin Yeung

(D) Expert appointed by the Committee:

- Professor John Stanley

A transcript of that evidence (and a translation in Chinese) is available on the Committee's website (www.irc-bus.gov.hk/eng/transcripts.html).

The Committee wishes to invite family members of the victims and passengers on board the bus involved in the fatal incident on Tai Po Road, and other recent serious incidents involving franchised bus services, to attend the hearings, and invites them to contact the Secretariat in advance of the hearings if they wish to attend. Except for seats reserved for such persons as well as the media and specifically identified interested parties, all available seats in the hearing venues will be open to the public on a first-come, first-served basis. A registration counter will open at 9.30am on September 24 and 8.30am on September 27.

Enquiries regarding the hearings may be directed to the Secretariat of the Committee at 2867 5324.

Suspected MERS case reported

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (September 20) reported a suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), and again urged the public to pay special attention to safety during travel, taking due consideration of the health risks in the places of visit. The case is detailed below:

Sex	Female
Age	25
Affected area involved	Kuwait
High-risk exposure	Nil
Hospital	Princess Margaret Hospital
Condition	Stable
MERS-Coronavirus preliminary test result	Negative

"Travellers to the Middle East should avoid going to farms, barns or markets with camels; avoid contact with sick persons and animals, especially camels, birds or poultry; and avoid unnecessary visits to healthcare facilities. We strongly advise travel agents organising tours to the Middle East to abstain from arranging camel rides and activities involving direct contact with camels, which are known risk factors for acquiring MERS Coronavirus (MERS-CoV)," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Locally, the CHP's surveillance with public and private hospitals, with practising doctors and at boundary control points is firmly in place. Inbound travellers and members of the public who recently visited the Middle East and developed fever or lower respiratory symptoms within 14 days will be classified as suspected MERS cases. They will be taken to public hospitals for isolation and management until their specimens test negative for MERS-CoV.

Travellers to affected areas should maintain vigilance, adopt appropriate health precautions and take heed of personal, food and environmental hygiene. The public may visit the MERS pages of the [CHP](#) and its [Travel Health Service](#), MERS statistics in [affected areas](#), the CHP's [Facebook Page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#), and the World Health Organization's [latest news](#) for more information and health advice. Tour leaders and tour guides operating overseas tours are advised to refer to the CHP's [health advice on MERS](#).

Consumer Price Indices for August 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (September 20) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for August 2018. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 2.3% in August 2018 over the same month a year earlier, slightly smaller than the corresponding increase (2.4%) in July 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 August 2018 was 2.6%. This increase was also slightly smaller than that in July 2018 (2.7%), mainly due to the smaller increases in the charges for package tours. Also relevant was the decreases in inbound and outbound transport fares.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of increase in the Composite CPI for the three-month period from June to August 2018 was 0.2%, the same as that for the three-month period from May to July 2018. 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 June to August 2018 was 0.2%, the same as that for the three-month period from May to July 2018.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.5%, 2.2% and 2.0% respectively in August 2018, as compared to 2.5%, 2.3% and 2.3% respectively in July 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%, 2.6% and 2.3% respectively in August 2018, as compared to 2.8%, 2.7% and 2.6% respectively in July 2018.

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

Amongst the various CPI components, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in August 2018 for food (excluding meals bought away from home) (4.5% in the Composite CPI and 4.2% in the CPI(A)); electricity, gas and water (3.4% in the Composite CPI and 3.8% in the CPI(A)); meals bought away from home (3.0% in the Composite CPI and 3.1% in the CPI(A)); housing (2.3% in the Composite CPI and 2.6% in the CPI(A)); alcoholic drinks and tobacco (2.3% in the Composite CPI and 2.5% in the CPI(A)); clothing and footwear

(1.9% in the Composite CPI and 2.3% in the CPI(A)); miscellaneous services (1.5% in the Composite CPI and 1.2% in the CPI(A)); miscellaneous goods (1.4% in the Composite CPI and 1.8% in the CPI(A)) and transport (1.4% in the Composite CPI and 1.2% in the CPI(A)).

On the other hand, year-on-year decrease in prices was recorded in August 2018 for durable goods (-1.9% in the Composite CPI and -1.6% in the CPI(A)).

Taking the first eight 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%, 2.5% and 2.4% respectively in the first eight months of 2018 over a year earlier.

For the three months ended August 2018, the Composite CPI rose by 2.4% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.5%, 2.3% and 2.2% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 2.6%, 2.9%, 2.7% and 2.5% respectively.

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

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the underlying inflationary pressure held largely steady in recent months. On a year-on-year basis, the underlying inflation rate eased slightly in August, thanks largely to the smaller increase in the charges for package tours and the decrease in inbound and outbound transport fares, which slightly outweighed the faster increase in the private housing rent component.

Looking ahead, inflationary pressure is expected to increase modestly in the coming months, alongside the gradual rise in global inflation and continued feed-through of earlier rises in fresh-letting residential rentals. Yet, the inflation rate 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 August 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 August 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).

Employment and vacancies statistics for June 2018

According to the figures released today (September 20) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), total employment in the private sector surveyed increased by 1.4% or 40 100 persons in June 2018 compared with a year earlier. The total number of vacancies was 79 200, representing an increase of 14% or 9 610 over the preceding year.

Employment statistics

In June 2018, the selected industries as a whole employed 2 871 500 persons. The import and export trade engaged 477 600 persons, followed by the professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services) engaging 301 600 persons, the retail trade 272 100 persons, and the food and beverage services 249 900 persons.

Employment increased in many surveyed industries compared with a year earlier. Increases in employment were mainly recorded in the industries of accommodation services (covering hotels, guesthouses, boarding houses and other establishments providing short term accommodation) (4.5% or 1 700

persons), human health services (3.4% or 4 300 persons), professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services) (3.3% or 9 500 persons), food and beverage services (3.0% or 7 300 persons), and construction sites (manual workers only) (2.9% or 3 300 persons). On the other hand, employment decreased mainly in the industries of manufacturing (-3.8% or -3 600 persons), and cleaning and similar services (-1.6% or -1 300 persons). Employment figures for selected major industries are shown in Table 1.

Vacancies statistics

Among the 79 200 private sector vacancies, 12 060 were from the industry of food and beverage services, 7 980 from retail trade, 7 870 from professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services), 6 440 from import and export trade, and 6 210 from financing and insurance.

Vacancies increased in majority of the selected industries in June 2018 over a year earlier. Increases were mainly observed in the industries of human health services (1 980 or 111%); professional and business services (excluding cleaning and similar services) (1 110 or 16%); transportation, storage, postal and courier services (1 100 or 31%); food and beverage services (910 or 8%); and retail trade (900 or 13%). On the other hand, vacancies decreased mainly in the industry of construction sites (manual workers only) (-930 or -62%). Job vacancies figures for selected major industries are shown in Table 2.

Analysed by major occupation category, private sector vacancies were observed mainly in the categories of service and sales workers (21 750 vacancies), associate professionals (15 660 vacancies), elementary occupations (15 190 vacancies), and clerical support workers (9 430 vacancies). Job vacancies figures by major occupation category are shown in Table 3.

Seasonally adjusted statistics

For discerning the latest trend in employment and vacancies in the private sector, it is useful to look at changes over a three-month period in the respective seasonally adjusted figures. Compared with March 2018, the seasonally adjusted total employment and total vacancies in the surveyed industries increased by 0.4% and 3.5% respectively in June 2018. The changes over three-month periods in the seasonally adjusted series of employment and vacancies are shown in Table 4.

Other information

The above employment and vacancies statistics were obtained from the Quarterly Survey of Employment and Vacancies and the Quarterly Employment Survey of Construction Sites conducted by the C&SD. In the former survey, some economic activities (e.g. those dominated by self-employment, including taxi operators and hawkers) are not covered. Therefore, the respective employment and vacancies figures relate only to those selected industries

included in the survey. In the latter survey on construction sites, employment and vacancies figures relate to manual workers only.

A detailed breakdown of the above statistics is published in the following reports:

"Quarterly Report of Employment and Vacancies Statistics, June 2018"
(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp452.jsp?productCode=B1050003)

"Quarterly Report of Employment and Vacancies at Construction Sites, June 2018"
(www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp452.jsp?productCode=B1050004)

Users can download these publications free of charge at the website of the C&SD.

Enquiries on more detailed employment and vacancies statistics can be directed to the Employment Statistics and Central Register of Establishments Section, C&SD (Tel: 2582 5076; fax: 2827 2296; email: employment@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in July 2018](#)

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for July 2018 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (September 20) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

In July 2018, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods increased by 7.5% over July 2017. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods increased by 11.5%.

Comparing the first seven months of 2018 with the same period in 2017, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods increased by 6.8%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods increased by 8.4%.

Comparing the three-month period ending July 2018 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods increased by 0.6%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods increased by 0.1%.

Changes in volume of external merchandise trade are derived from changes

in external merchandise trade value with the effect of price changes discounted.

Comparing July 2018 with July 2017, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.4%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods increased by 2.6%.

As regards price changes in the first seven months of 2018 over the same period in 2017, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.5%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods increased by 2.6%.

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 2017, the index decreased by 0.2% and 0.1% in July 2018 and in the first seven months of 2018 respectively.

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

Comparing July 2018 with July 2017, double-digit increases were recorded for the total export volume to Vietnam (+25.9%) and India (+14.2%). Concurrently, the total export volume to the mainland of China (the Mainland) and the USA increased by 9.3% and 6.5% respectively. On the other hand, the total export volume to Japan decreased by 9.4%.

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to the USA, the Mainland and Japan increased by 3.7%, 3.3% and 2.4% respectively. On the other hand, the total export prices to Vietnam and India decreased by 2.1% and 4.1% respectively.

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

Comparing July 2018 with July 2017, a double-digit growth of 18.4% was recorded for the import volume from Korea. Concurrently, the import volume from Taiwan, Japan, the Mainland and Singapore increased by 9.6%, 8.0%, 7.1% and 1.0% respectively.

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from Korea, the Mainland, Japan and Singapore increased by 7.8%, 2.8%, 2.8% and 2.4% respectively. On the other hand, the import prices from Taiwan decreased by 0.4%.

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the July 2018 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).