

Provisional statistics of retail sales for June 2018

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

The value of total retail sales in June 2018, provisionally estimated at \$37.8 billion, increased by 12.0% over the same month in 2017. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in May 2018 increased by 12.9% over a year earlier. For the first half of 2018, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales increased by 13.4% over the same period in 2017.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in June 2018 increased by 9.8% over a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in May 2018 increased by 11.5% over a year earlier. For the first half of 2018, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales increased by 11.8% in volume over the same period in 2017.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing June 2018 with June 2017, the value of sales of jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts increased by 27.8%. This was followed by sales of commodities in supermarkets (+1.1% in value); wearing apparel (+5.4%); medicines and cosmetics (+18.3%); commodities in department stores (+15.0%); other consumer goods, not elsewhere classified (+14.9%); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (+8.9%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods, not elsewhere classified (+0.4%); motor vehicles and parts (+11.3%); fuels (+13.9%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (+11.4%); furniture and fixtures (+8.9%); books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (+3.1%); Chinese drugs and herbs (+10.3%); and optical shops (+6.9%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales decreased by 0.2% in the second quarter of 2018 compared with the preceding quarter, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales decreased by 0.1%.

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. They 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 indicated that retail sales value sustained double-digit growth over a year earlier in June, as local consumer sentiment stayed favourable amid a tight labour market while visitor arrivals continued to record solid growth.

Looking ahead, favourable job and income conditions and buoyant inbound tourism should continue to provide support to the retail sector in the near term. Yet, we need to closely monitor how the heightened external uncertainties might affect consumption sentiment going forward.

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 May 2018 as well as the provisional figures for June 2018. 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 half of 2018 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 May 2018 as well as the provisional figures for June 2018. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first half of 2018 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 the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7400; Email : mrs@censtatd.gov.hk)

Film Archive's "Hidden Treasures" features unsung heroes of Hong Kong cinema (with photos)

The Hong Kong Film Archive of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (HKFA) will present "One-Man Entertainment Machine: Chan Cheuk-sang and His United Film" as the launch of the "Hidden Treasures" series, which will recognise neglected forerunners of Hong Kong cinema. Six films that are significant in Chan Cheuk-sang's career as the owner of United Film will be screened on September 1, 8 and 9 at the HKFA Cinema. Post-screening talks will also be arranged for all the screenings.

Chan entered the film industry by accident. He first landed a job at the World Theatre through his elder brother, and then later, by starting a restaurant business, Chan got to know the Kwan Family, who owned several important theatre chains. He then began distributing films for second runs. Chan was active in the 1950s and '60s and owned his film companies United Film and Ngai Sing, producing films financed by the theatre chains. He even took up numerous roles himself, including producing, directing, scriptwriting and shooting film stills, to save on expenses. Chan and his wife Wong May-yee worked closely to operate their film business, which produced and distributed over 200 titles across different film genres. Chan died in 2017 at the age of 95.

The Chinese New Year film "As You Desire" (1952) was Chan's first foray into filmmaking and starred the biggest draws of Cantonese cinema. The film was a blockbuster in Hong Kong and Macao at the time, bringing about a good start for Chan's over 20-year-career in producing. In the story, a miser (Ma Si-tsang) plans to arrange a marriage between his son (Sun Ma Si-tsang) and a rich girl, while an heir (Leung Sing-por) forces her younger sister (Hung Sin Nui) to marry a tycoon. The film is the only existing narrative film starring both Ma and Sun Ma, which makes it a rare gem to witness these two geniuses playing off each other.

Sing-song films were very popular in the '50s, and the genre was a major one produced by United. The contemporary sing-song comedy "Sing Her a Love Song" (1955) features three operatic giants – Sun Ma Si-tsang, Yam Kim-fai and Pak Suet-sin – who sing about the struggles in living and love of ordinary folks. Yam and Pak are a lovesick pair in the film and Sun Ma is Yam's ex-schoolmate who entertains the audience with his messiness.

"Ms Chan's Boat Chase" (1955) was made to commemorate the third anniversary of United, and was billed as an "All-Singing Story of the People", enabling the leads Yam and Pak as well as Leung Sing-por to unleash their respective signature operatic skills. The story was adapted from Zhang Henshui's novel "Autumn River" and takes reference to the opera favourite "The Jade Hairpin". Pak falls pregnant with Yam's baby but the duo are forced to separate, leaving Pak to perform on the street with Leung for a living.

The "Headless Empress" series was a remarkable work of United, and also a milestone in the acting career of Yu Lai-zhen. "The Headless Empress Bears a Son, Part 1" (1957) follows the pregnant Empress of East Palace (Yu) who is sent to the guillotine because of the scheming of the evil Empress of West Palace (Fung Wong Nui). Yu gives birth to a baby boy before she dies, and luckily the baby is rescued by a fairy and Yu becomes a ghost to look after her son.

Effects-driven martial arts fantasy surged in the '50s and '60s, but Chan faced constraints in technology and budget. As a result, he drew animation effects himself in "Monkey Saint Raids the Monastery" (1965) to fulfil audiences' expectations for excitement and novelty. The film tells of the schemes of the Spider Demon (Lee Hong-kum), who seduces the Dragon King to steal treasure and teams up with another demon (Yuen Siu-fai) to capture a monk – an action that puts the life of the powerful Money King (Yu Kai) at risk.

Sun Ma Si-tsang starred in Chan's first production, and Sun Ma's last film as the lead, "The Scores" (1969), was directed by Chan. With Tina Ti as the female lead, the film seems to be an erotic work but, by nature, is not lascivious. The story uncovers offences associated with pornography and money in society through the characters' experiences in job seeking and romance.

All films are in Cantonese and without subtitles.

Tickets priced at \$45 are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For credit card telephone bookings, please call 2111 5999. For programme enquiries, please call 2739 2139 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/HKFA/en_US/web/hkfa/programmesandexhibitions/2018ht-ccs/index.html.





Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, August 1, 2018 is 104 (up 0.1 against yesterday's index).

Ginseng and dried seafood shop and manager convicted of supplying Korean ginseng with false trade description

A ginseng and dried seafood shop and a manager were convicted and fined \$8,000 and \$4,000 respectively today (August 1) at Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts for supplying Korean ginseng to which a false trade description was applied, in contravention of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Hong Kong Customs earlier received information and conducted a test-buy operation at a ginseng and dried seafood shop in Sham Shui Po where a box of a Korean brand of Korean ginseng valued at \$2,800 was purchased.

The product was confirmed after examination as not being the brand of ginseng produced by the Korean manufacturer.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO and consumers to procure products at reputable shops.

Under the TDO, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any

goods for sale with a false trade description, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TD0 to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

CHP investigates food poisoning outbreak related to wild mushrooms

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (August 1) investigating a food poisoning outbreak related to the consumption of wild mushrooms, and urged the public not to pick and eat wild mushrooms.

The patients are two women aged 49 and 21 who developed abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea two to three hours after consuming wild mushrooms at home on July 23. Both were admitted to Yan Chai Hospital on the same day. They remained in a stable condition and have been discharged.

Initial investigations revealed that the wild mushrooms consumed by the patients were picked near Butterfly Beach in Tuen Mun on July 21. The CHP's investigation is ongoing.

"Members of the public should not pick wild mushrooms for consumption as it is difficult to distinguish edible mushroom species from inedible ones," a spokesman for the CHP said.

"Mushroom poisoning is generally acute. Common presentations include gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain appearing shortly after ingestion. Depending on the mushroom species, patients may also have other symptoms like profuse sweating, hallucination, coma or other neurological symptoms, as well as liver failure. Death may result in severe cases," he added.

"If mushroom poisoning is suspected, the patient should seek immediate medical attention and bring along any available remnant for identification," the spokesman said.