

External merchandise trade statistics for May 2018

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 26) the external merchandise trade statistics for May 2018. In May 2018, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year increases, at 15.9% and 16.5% respectively.

In May 2018, the value of total exports of goods increased by 15.9% over a year earlier to \$351.4 billion, after a year-on-year increase of 8.1% in April 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 16.5% over a year earlier to \$394.6 billion in May 2018, after a year-on-year increase of 11.1% in April 2018. A visible trade deficit of \$43.2 billion, equivalent to 11.0% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in May 2018.

For the first five months of 2018 as a whole, the value of total exports of goods rose by 10.7% over the same period in 2017. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods increased by 11.9%. A visible trade deficit of \$219.8 billion, equivalent to 11.9% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in the first five months of 2018.

Comparing the three-month period ending May 2018 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods increased by 3.5%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods increased by 4.0%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing May 2018 with May 2017, total exports to Asia as a whole grew by 15.8%. In this region, increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in particular Singapore (+43.9%), Malaysia (+43.6%), the Philippines (+25.5%), the mainland of China (the Mainland) (+19.2%), Thailand (+18.6%) and Japan (+13.0%). On the other hand, decreases were recorded in the values of total exports to India (-21.7%) and Taiwan (-1.9%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, increases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular Germany (+16.7%), the USA (+12.5%) and the United Kingdom (+6.7%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+69.7%), Korea (+44.1%), Taiwan (+22.3%), Singapore (+20.3%), the Philippines (+18.8%) and the Mainland (+18.4%). Concurrently, a decrease was registered in the value of imports from India (-39.5%).

For the first five months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to most major destinations, in

particular Singapore (+16.9%), the Mainland (+14.0%), Germany (+12.8%), Taiwan (+12.2%), the USA (+9.4%) and Thailand (+7.1%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports to India (-20.9%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Malaysia (+91.2%), Korea (+21.8%), Taiwan (+18.1%), the Philippines (+10.4%), the Mainland (+10.4%) and Singapore (+8.4%). On the other hand, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports from India (-21.4%).

Analysis by major commodity

Comparing May 2018 with May 2017, increases were registered in the values of total exports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$24.8 billion or 22.8%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$9.8 billion or 32.7%) and "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$5.6 billion or 10.0%). However, a decrease was registered in the value of total exports of "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$2.0 billion or -13.2%).

Over the same period of comparison, increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$30.3 billion or 25.3%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$10.0 billion or 38.5%) and "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$5.3 billion or 10.0%). However, a decrease was registered in the value of imports of "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$1.3 billion or -5.5%).

For the first five months of 2018 as a whole, year-on-year 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 \$102.5 billion or 20.0%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$32.5 billion or 22.0%) and "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$18.0 billion or 23.1%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of total exports of "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$13.6 billion or -15.9%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports of most principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$109.9 billion or 18.8%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$35.3 billion or 28.2%) and "petroleum, petroleum products and related materials" (by \$8.0 billion or 27.1%). However, a year-on-year decrease was registered in the value of imports of "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$2.3 billion or -0.8%).

Commentary

A Government spokesman noted that external trade sustained robust performance so far in 2018, thanks to sturdy global demand. Merchandise exports continued to grow strongly over a year earlier in May, with many major markets showing double-digit gains.

The spokesman commented further that, looking ahead, the current momentum of the global economy should remain supportive to Hong Kong's exports in the near term. Yet, external uncertainties have increased markedly of late, as a result of the escalation of trade conflicts between the US and the Mainland. This might weigh on the prevailing global economic sentiment and trade expansion going forward. 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 May 2018. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2015 to May 2018, 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 2018 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 2018.

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 2018 will be released in mid-July 2018.

The May 2018 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in May 2018 and will be available in mid-July 2018. 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).

Employers and employees should take precautions against heat stroke

As the Hong Kong Observatory has issued the Very Hot Weather Warning, the Labour Department (LD) reminds employers and employees to take

appropriate precautions to prevent heat stroke when working in a hot or humid environment.

Heat stroke could occur if an employee works in a hot or humid environment for prolonged periods of time, as the body may fail to regulate its temperature by effective heat dissipation through sweating.

The early symptoms of heat stroke include feeling thirsty, fatigue, nausea and headache. Later, the victim may experience shortness of breath, rapid and weak pulse, dizziness, confusion or even loss of consciousness and convulsion.

For example, construction workers, cleaning workers, kitchen workers and porters are more prone to heat stroke when working for long hours in such an environment, especially if appropriate preventive measures have not been taken.

The LD reminds employers to arrange for a suitable assessment of the risk of heat stress in the work environment and take appropriate preventive measures. The LD has produced two leaflets entitled "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Construction Sites" and "Checklist for Heat Stress Assessment at Outdoor Cleansing Workplaces" respectively. Employers engaged in construction or outdoor cleaning work are advised to refer to these checklists in assessing the risk of heat stress at their workplaces. As for heat stress assessment at a workplace in general, employers can refer to a booklet entitled "Risk Assessment for the Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work" produced by the LD.

The LD also reminds employers and employees to take the following precautions to prevent heat stroke:

Employers

- (1) Take heed of the weather report and adopt shift work arrangements for employees to reduce their exposure to the hot environment, or arrange appropriate rest breaks for them during very hot periods;
- (2) Avoid working under direct sunlight and set up temporary sunshade wherever possible;
- (3) Provide cool potable water for employees at all times during work. If necessary, provide drinks containing minerals for employees to replenish loss of electrolytes during profuse sweating;
- (4) Minimise physical demands by using tools or mechanical aids at work;
- (5) Increase air flow by enhancing ventilation or air-conditioning as appropriate;
- (6) Isolate heat-generating facilities at the workplace and use insulating materials to minimise heat dissipation to the other work areas; and
- (7) Provide relevant information and training for employees on heat stroke such as preventive measures and first aid treatment.

Employees

- (1) Wear clothing made of suitable materials (for example, cotton) that is loose-fitting and light-coloured to help heat dissipation, minimise heat absorption and allow sweat evaporation;
- (2) Wear a wide-brimmed hat when working outdoors;
- (3) Drink plenty of water or other appropriate beverages to replenish the fluids and electrolytes lost through sweating; and
- (4) Whenever there are any symptoms of heat stroke, inform supervisors and take appropriate actions immediately.

Some employees may have difficulty in adapting to a hot working environment owing to their own health conditions. Employers should take this into account and consider the recommendations of their doctors when assigning work to these employees.

In addition to the publications on risk assessment, the LD has produced a leaflet entitled "Prevention of Heat Stroke at Work in a Hot Environment" for the public. The publications can be obtained free of charge from the offices of the Occupational Health Service of the LD, or downloaded from the department's webpage at www.labour.gov.hk/eng/public/content2_9.htm.

The LD organises occupational health talks in public places and at its own training venues regularly to raise employers' and employees' awareness of occupational health. Details of health talks on the prevention of heat stroke at work in a hot environment in July to September are as follows:

(A)

Dates: July 9 and 24; August 2, 13 and 30; and September 13 and 24 (am)
July 5, 20 and 30; August 8 and 22; and September 5, 20 and 27 (pm)

Time: Half-day

Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Training Centre of the Labour Department, 13/F, Kolour Tsuen Wan I, 68 Chung On Street, Tsuen Wan, New Territories

(B)

Dates: July 13 and 27 and August 10 and 20

Time: Half-day, morning

Venue: Occupational Safety and Health Centre of the Labour Department, G/F, Kwun Tong Community Health Centre Building, 60 Hip Wo Street, Kwun Tong (MTR Kwun Tong Station Exit A1)

(C)

Date: August 13

Time: 3pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Lecture Hall, Hong Kong Space Museum, 10 Salisbury Road, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon (MTR Tsim Sha Tsui Station Exit E)

(D)

Date: July 16 and September 14

Time: 3pm to 4.30pm

Venue: Activity Room I, Hong Kong Central Library, 66 Causeway Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

(Opposite Victoria Park, MTR Tin Hau Station Exit B)

For enrolment or enquiries about these occupational health talks, please call 2852 4040 or 2361 8240 (for talks organised at the Occupational Safety and Health Centre). Moreover, the LD also provides an outreach health education service and occupational health nurses will, on invitation, disseminate occupational health information at workplaces at a convenient time. Please contact the nursing officer at 2852 4062 for details. All these health talks are free of charge.

Fintech co-operation between Hong Kong Monetary Authority and Financial Services Regulatory Authority of Abu Dhabi Global Market (with photo)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the Financial Services Regulatory Authority (FSRA) of the Abu Dhabi Global Market (ADGM) signed a Co-operation Agreement today (June 26) to enhance fintech collaboration between the two authorities, with a view to encouraging and enabling innovation in financial services in both markets, and supporting innovative financial businesses in expanding to each other's jurisdictions.

The Co-operation Agreement was signed between the Chief Fintech Officer of the HKMA, Mr Nelson Chow, and the Chief Executive Officer of the FSRA of ADGM, Mr Richard Teng, today in Hong Kong. Under the Co-operation Agreement, the HKMA and the FSRA will collaborate on referring innovative businesses, information sharing, and joint innovation projects.

Mr Chow said, "We are pleased to establish a closer relationship with the FSRA so that both authorities could better support financial innovation in our jurisdictions. ADGM's commitment to the pursuit of innovation resonates strongly with Hong Kong's ambitions. The co-operation between the HKMA and the FSRA would strengthen the two authorities in their respective roles and initiatives in fintech. We are particularly pleased to start a dialogue with FSRA on the opportunity to build a cross-border trade finance network using distributed ledger technology."

Mr Teng said, "We are glad to further our collaboration with the HKMA by way of this fintech agreement. Hong Kong has remained a long-term strategic and economic partner of Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates. This co-operation augments ADGM's commitment in supporting the growth and financial

developments of Abu Dhabi and the Middle East, Africa and greater Asia regions. We look forward to working closely with the HKMA to support our fintech start-ups and our innovative businesses, from regulations to adoption, in advancing and applying their solutions to each of our respective financial markets and jurisdictions."



May's monthly ovitrap index for Aedes albopictus rises

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (June 26) announced that the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for May rose to 10.2 per cent from 1 per cent in April, indicating that mosquito infestation was slightly more extensive in the areas surveyed. The FEHD reminded the public to carry out effective prevention and control measures against mosquitoes as the hot and rainy weather of summer is favourable for massive mosquito breeding within a short period of time.

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"*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever (DF) and Zika virus. In view of the fact that Hong Kong recorded a confirmed local DF case, five local Japanese encephalitis (JE) cases and one imported case of Zika Virus Infection last year and DF is still highly prevalent in neighbouring areas, and that the rainy weather of summer is favourable for proliferation of mosquitoes, the community must work with the Government to continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention measures," an FEHD spokesman said.

Among the 52 areas surveyed last month, the Area Ovitrap Index (AOI) in nine areas reached or exceeded the alert level of 20 per cent. They were Tseung Kwan O North (32.8 per cent), Kowloon Bay (29.8 per cent), Sheung Shui (29.3 per cent), Fanling (25.9 per cent), Wong Tai Sin Central (23.4 per cent), Deep Water Bay and Repulse Bay (22.6 per cent), Tseung Kwan O South (21.3 per cent), Lok Fu West (21.3 per cent) and Lam Tin (20.4 per cent).

The spokesman said, "The FEHD is very concerned about mosquito infestation, and an inter-departmental anti-mosquito response mechanism has been activated in the above-mentioned areas for co-ordinating relevant departments and stakeholders to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures. In addition to the routine anti-mosquito programme, the FEHD has also cleared potential mosquito breeding grounds in the public places in the areas and applied appropriate larvicides to stagnant water if and when necessary. It has also handled mosquito complaints promptly and taken out prosecutions under the relevant ordinance against mosquito breeding. The FEHD set up four Pest Control Inspection Teams in May last year to step up inspection of construction sites and enforcement action against mosquito breeding. This year (as at June 17), the FEHD had instituted 64 prosecutions for mosquito breeding found in relevant premises under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), with all cases involving construction sites.

"The government departments concerned have also stepped up inspections and measures to enhance environmental hygiene in areas within their ambits to eliminate existing and potential mosquito breeding grounds. Relevant departments have individually notified the groups that had voluntarily subscribed to the ovitrap rapid alert system when the AOI reached the alert level of 20 per cent. Subscribers have been invited to post specially designed alert notices in the common parts of their premises to urge occupants and staff to carry out mosquito prevention and control measures promptly."

As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for May also rose to 2 per cent from 0.1 per cent in April.

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The spokesman added that the FEHD and relevant government departments would continue to intensify their mosquito prevention and control work covering areas under their purview, and strengthen publicity and education campaigns. The FEHD will conduct a three-phase anti-mosquito campaign this year, with the second phase of the territory-wide campaign underway. During this period, mosquito prevention and control work is being enhanced by the FEHD and relevant government departments. The district offices of the FEHD have targeted areas which have drawn particular concern, such as public markets, cooked food centres and hawker bazaars, single-block buildings, streets and back lanes, common parts of buildings, village houses, construction sites, vacant sites and road works sites, and intensified mosquito prevention and control work at those places. The FEHD will, immediately after each phase of the campaign, conduct special territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control operations so as to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign.

As *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, the spokesman reminded members of the public to inspect their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, scrub vases and pot plant saucers at least once a week, properly dispose of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drill large holes in unused tyres. He also advised the public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and fill up all depressions

to prevent puddles from forming. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent compound at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

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In addition, rural areas and the vicinity of shrubby areas are the natural habitats for mosquitoes, other insects and animals. Members of the public living in rural areas may install mosquito screens on windows and doors if necessary. Those staying in the natural environment should follow appropriate personal protective measures against mosquitoes, such as avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time, wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying DEET-containing insect repellent. Members of the public are reminded to make reports to the government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

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The spokesman reiterated that effective mosquito control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The community must work together with the Government to carry out effective mosquito control measures.

The spokesman also reminded travellers to take the following precautionary measures when visiting areas where mosquito-borne diseases are prevalent during the summer holidays:

- * Wear light-coloured, long-sleeved clothes and trousers;
 - * Use insect repellents over exposed parts of the body when outdoors;
- and
- * Use mosquito screens or nets when a room is not air-conditioned.

Travellers returning from these places should seek medical advice if they have symptoms such as fever, severe headache or muscle and joint pain. They should also inform their doctor of their travel history.

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The ovitrap index is divided into four levels, reflecting the infestation level of *Aedes albopictus*. Level 1 (< 5 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is not extensive in the area surveyed. Level 2 (5 per cent – < 20 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito is slightly more extensive in the area surveyed. Level 3 (20 per cent – < 40 per cent) indicates that infestation of the mosquito exceeds one-fifth of the area surveyed. Level 4 (\geq 40 per cent) indicates that almost half of the surveyed area is infested with the mosquito. The Government will step up the scale of anti-mosquito operations according to the level of infestation as well as reports from front-line staff and the public.

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As *Aedes albopictus* can transmit DF and Zika virus, oviposition traps are set in 52 areas in Hong Kong for monitoring the breeding of *Aedes albopictus*, which is only one of the mosquito species commonly found in Hong Kong and is active only in the daytime. The index does not capture the activity of *Aedes albopictus* outside the 52 areas and it also does not measure the prevalence of other kinds of mosquitoes.

The ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the

department website at www.fehd.gov.hk.

Metal processing factory at Yuen Long Industrial Estate convicted for discharging substandard wastewater

The factory of Yau Sang Galvanizing (Hot-Dip) Company Limited at Yuen Long Industrial Estate directly discharged substandard wastewater into a communal sewer. It was fined \$15,000 by Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (June 26) for contravening the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (WPCO).

Having received a complaint last December about illegal discharge by the factory, Environmental Protection Department (EPD) staff conducted a night-time blitz inspection at the hot-dip zinc factory and found that the factory did not deliver wastewater to its sewage treatment facility for proper treatment. Instead, the industrial wastewater was being directly discharged into the communal sewer. The EPD staff then collected wastewater samples for analysis and the results showed that the concentrations of iron and zinc were 5 200 milligrams/litre and 4 400mg/L respectively, which exceeded the upper limits of the WPCO licence by 207 and 879 times. After investigation and evidence gathering, the EPD initiated prosecution against the company.

An EPD spokesman said that members of the industry should properly collect and treat industrial wastewater to ensure that the effluent discharge meets the standards as set out in the WPCO licence before being discharged into communal sewers. Discharging industrial wastewater with high heavy metal concentration will affect the operation of the Government's sewage treatment works. Under the WPCO, anyone who discharges commercial or industrial wastewater which exceeds the standard of the discharge licence into communal sewers commits an offence. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment.