

Public housing residents and applicants convicted by court for making false statement

A spokesman for the Housing Department (HD) today (June 20) reminded residents of public rental housing (PRH) estates and applicants of PRH to declare truthfully their income and assets.

A PRH resident living at Hoi Lai Estate in Sham Shui Po declared in an Income and Assets Declaration Form in 2022 that she had no domestic property ownership in Hong Kong and her total household net asset value did not exceed 100 times the prevailing PRH Income Limit i.e. \$1,960,000. Subsequent investigation revealed that this resident owned a domestic property in Hong Kong and the estimated market value was \$4,130,000 at the material time.

This resident was prosecuted for neglecting to furnish information specified in the declaration form, contrary to Section 27(a) of the Housing Ordinance. She was convicted by the presiding magistrate in the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts yesterday. Given the gravity of the offence, the defendant was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) and to a fine of \$12,000. The tenancy of the PRH unit had also been terminated by the HD.

In another case, a PRH applicant did not declare the net asset value of his land in an application form submitted to the HD in 2018. Subsequent investigation revealed that he owned a piece of land in the New Territories with estimated market value at \$1,400,000, which had exceeded the asset limit of this family at \$440,000.

The applicant was prosecuted for knowingly making a false statement, contrary to Section 26(1)(c) of the Housing Ordinance. He was convicted by the presiding magistrate in the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts yesterday. Given the gravity of the offence, the defendant was sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) and to a fine of \$5,000. The PRH application had also been cancelled by the HD.

The spokesman of the HD said that households living in PRH should complete their Income and Assets Declaration Forms accurately, as doing so provides the foundation for the assessment of rent and their eligibilities for continuing residence. Before furnishing particulars specified in the requisition required by the Hong Kong Housing Authority, households should read the content and completion guidelines of the Income and Assets Declaration Forms carefully and compute their income and assets in accordance with the methods specified. Otherwise, they may be prosecuted for making a false statement knowingly, contrary to Section 26(1)(a) of the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and imprisonment for six months), or be prosecuted for neglecting to furnish information as specified in a declaration form, contrary to Section 27(a) of

the Housing Ordinance (if convicted, the maximum penalty is a \$25,000 fine and imprisonment for three months). The HD will take action to recover the undercharged rent incurred due to the inaccurate information or even recover their PRH units.

The spokesman also reminded all PRH applicants that if they are convicted by the court for making a false statement knowingly during the application for a lease for PRH, contrary to Section 26(1)(c) of the Housing Ordinance, the maximum penalty is a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months, while the PRH application will also be cancelled, and any allocated PRH unit will be recovered by the HD.

[Mastermind of syndicate arranging bogus marriages jailed for conspiracy to defraud](#)

The Special Investigation Section (SIS) of the Immigration Department (ImmD) has smashed a bogus marriage syndicate. A 53-year-old female mastermind pleaded guilty to five counts of conspiracy to defraud at the District Court and was sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment yesterday (June 19).

The ImmD has been gravely concerned about non-local residents obtaining residencies by means of contracting bogus marriages with Hong Kong residents. The SIS previously probed a target case of a suspected bogus marriage, meaning that it carried out an in-depth intelligence analysis, which resulted in a discovery of more than 20 pairs of suspected bogus marriages, and identified a crime syndicate recruiting Hong Kong residents to engage in bogus marriages with non-local residents. After an in-depth investigation, the ImmD successfully smashed the syndicate. During the operation, a total of 28 persons (13 males and 15 females) including the mastermind, aged 27 to 56, were arrested. Twenty-three of them were Hong Kong residents and five were Mainland residents. Apart from the mastermind, who was sentenced to imprisonment yesterday, six persons involved were sentenced to 10 to 16 months' imprisonment, while some are pending sentencing or trial by court. The operation is ongoing and more arrests may be made.

"The ImmD has been aware that crime syndicates have continually advertised the opportunity to 'make quick cash' via newspapers, instant messaging software and social networking mobile applications to induce local residents to engage in bogus marriages for huge remuneration. The syndicates would also provide a one-stop service including the provision of assistance in applying for marriage-related documents and accompanying local residents for marriage registrations. The syndicates even offer rewards to those who

are already involved to recruit any new members to the illicit business," an ImmD spokesman said.

"The ImmD will continue to spare no effort in combating bogus marriages and other related illicit activities. For people who have obtained their residence in Hong Kong by fraudulent means, their Hong Kong identity card and residence status will be invalidated according to the laws of Hong Kong. They will also be subject to removal back to their place of origin," the spokesman stressed.

The spokesman urged the public not to defy the law by participating in activities related to bogus marriages anywhere, and not to make a false oath before Immigration Officers for the purpose of procuring a marriage in Hong Kong. Those directing others to contract a bogus marriage may also be guilty of the offence of conspiracy to defraud.

Under the laws of Hong Kong, it is an offence to make a false representation to Immigration Officers. Offenders are liable to prosecution and to a maximum fine of \$150,000 and imprisonment for 14 years. Aiders and abettors are also liable to prosecution and the same penalties.

Any person who, for the purpose of procuring a marriage, or a certificate or license for marriage, knowingly and wilfully makes a false oath or makes or signs a false declaration shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable to, upon conviction, imprisonment for seven years and a fine. Anyone who commits the offence of conspiracy to defraud is liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, the maximum penalty is imprisonment for 14 years.

[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 20, 2023
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q2325
Issue date	: June 21, 2023
Maturity date	: September 20, 2023
Amount applied	: HK\$116,350 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$57,293 MN
Average yield accepted	: 4.31 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 4.37 PCT

Pro rata ratio* : About 89 PCT
 Average tender yield : 4.43 PCT

 Tender date : June 20, 2023
 Paper on offer : EF Bills
 Issue number : H2354
 Issue date : June 21, 2023
 Maturity date : December 20, 2023
 Amount applied : HK\$47,350 MN
 Amount allotted : HK\$11,000 MN
 Average yield accepted : 4.28 PCT
 Highest yield accepted : 4.30 PCT
 Pro rata ratio* : About 43 PCT
 Average tender yield : 4.38 PCT

*"Pro rata ratio" refers to the average percentage of allotment with respect to each tender participant's tendered amount at the "highest yield accepted" level.

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders to be held in the week beginning June 26, 2023:

Tender date : June 27, 2023
 Paper on offer : EF Bills
 Issue number : M2313
 Issue date : June 28, 2023
 Maturity date : July 26, 2023
 Tenor : 28 Days
 Amount on offer : HK\$2,000 MN

 Tender date : June 27, 2023
 Paper on offer : EF Bills
 Issue number : Q2326
 Issue date : June 28, 2023
 Maturity date : September 27, 2023
 Tenor : 91 Days
 Amount on offer : HK\$61,410 MN

 Tender date : June 27, 2023
 Paper on offer : EF Bills
 Issue number : H2355
 Issue date : June 28, 2023
 Maturity date : December 27, 2023

Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$19,800 MN

Consumer Price Indices for May 2023

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 20) the Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures for May 2023. According to the Composite CPI, overall consumer prices rose by 2.0% in May 2023 over the same month a year earlier, slightly smaller than the corresponding increase (2.1%) in April 2023. 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 May 2023 was 1.8%, the same as that in April 2023.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, the average monthly rate of change in the Composite CPI for the 3-month period ending May 2023 was 0.1%, and that for the 3-month period ending April 2023 was 0.0%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the corresponding rates of change were 0.2% and 0.0%.

Analysed by sub-index, the year-on-year rates of increase in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.2%, 1.9% and 2.0% respectively in May 2023, as compared to 2.2%, 2.0% and 2.1% respectively in April 2023. 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 1.9%, 1.6% and 1.8% respectively in May 2023, as compared to 1.9%, 1.7% and 1.8% respectively in April 2023.

On a seasonally adjusted basis, for the 3-month period ending May 2023, the average monthly rates of change in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 0.1%, 0.1% and 0.2% respectively. The corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending April 2023 were all 0.0%. Netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures, the average monthly rates of change in the seasonally adjusted CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) for the 3-month period ending May 2023 were all 0.2%, and the corresponding rates of change for the 3-month period ending April 2023 were all 0.0%.

Amongst the various components of the Composite CPI, year-on-year increases in prices were recorded in May 2023 for alcoholic drinks and tobacco (19.6%), electricity, gas and water (16.6%), clothing and footwear (5.8%), meals out and takeaway food (3.9%), miscellaneous services (2.7%), transport (1.5%), miscellaneous goods (1.2%), housing (0.5%), and basic food (0.5%).

On the other hand, year-on-year decrease in the component of the Composite CPI was recorded in May 2023 for durable goods (-3.7%).

Taking the first 5 months of 2023 together, the Composite CPI rose by 2.0% over a year earlier. The respective increases in the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) were 2.1%, 1.9% and 2.0% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.9%, 2.0%, 1.7% and 1.9% respectively.

For the 3 months ending May 2023, the Composite CPI rose by 1.9% over a year earlier, while the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) rose by 2.0%, 1.9% and 2.0% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.7%, 1.8%, 1.6% and 1.8% respectively.

For the 12 months ending May 2023, 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 2.5%, 1.9% and 2.0% respectively. The corresponding increases after netting out the effects of all Government's one-off relief measures were 1.8%, 1.9%, 1.7% and 1.9% respectively.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the underlying consumer price inflation held steady at a moderate level of 1.8% in May. Prices of energy-related items continued to increase sharply year-on-year, and those of clothing and footwear as well as meals out and takeaway food rose visibly. Price pressures on other major components remained broadly in check.

Looking ahead, overall inflation should stay moderate in the near term. While domestic cost pressures may increase alongside the economic recovery, external price pressures will likely see some moderation though remaining notable. The Government will continue to monitor the situation.

Further information

The CPIs and year-on-year rates of change at section level for May 2023 are shown in Table 1. The time series on the year-on-year rates of change in the CPIs before and after netting out 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 3 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 May 2023 issue of the "Monthly Report on the Consumer Price Index"

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1060001&scode=270), the time series of CPIs at detailed level

(www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=D5600001&scode=270), the

time series of CPIs at COICOP division level (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web_table.html?id=510-60003) and the time series of underlying CPIs (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web_table.html?id=510-60002) 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).

[Chain volume measures of Gross Domestic Product by economic activity for the first quarter of 2023](#)

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (June 20) the preliminary figures of chain volume measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by economic activity for the first quarter of 2023.

GDP figures by economic activity show the value of production in respect of individual economic activities. The value of production is measured by value added or net output, which is calculated by deducting intermediate input consumed in the process of production from the gross value of output. Volume measures of GDP by economic activity, expressed in terms of chain volume measures net of the effect of price changes, enable analysis of the output growth profiles of individual economic sectors in real terms.

According to the preliminary figures, overall GDP increased by 2.7% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, as against the 4.1% decrease in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Analysed by constituent services sector and on a year-on-year comparison, value added in respect of all the services activities taken together increased by 3.1% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, as against the 4.2% decrease in the fourth quarter of 2022. The Hong Kong economy improved visibly in the first quarter of 2023, led by the strong recovery of inbound tourism and domestic demand. Yet, the weak external environment continued to weigh on the performance of import/export trades.

Value added in the import and export, wholesale and retail trades sector dropped by 7.7% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 from a year earlier, after the decrease of 19.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the accommodation and food services sector increased by 83.2% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, as against the fall of 6.0% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the transportation, storage, postal and courier services sector increased by 32.0% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, compared with the increase of 1.0% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the information and communications sector increased by 0.7% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, similar to the growth of 0.8% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the financing and insurance sector decreased by 2.8% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 from a year earlier, as against the increase of 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the real estate, professional and business services sector registered an increase of 4.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, as against the decline of 2.4% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the public administration, social and personal services sector rose by 5.6% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, compared with the increase of 1.7% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

As for sectors other than the services sectors, value added in the local manufacturing sector rose by 3.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, as against the decrease of 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the electricity, gas and water supply, and waste management sector increased by 0.9% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 over a year earlier, as against the decrease of 2.2% in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Value added in the construction sector decreased by 5.0% in real terms in the first quarter of 2023 from a year earlier, as against the 8.0% increase in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Further information

The year-on-year percentage changes of GDP by economic activity in real terms from the first quarter of 2022 to the first quarter of 2023 are shown in Table 1. More detailed statistics are given in the report "Gross Domestic Product by Economic Activity". Users can browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1030004&scode=250). For enquiries about statistics on GDP by economic activity, please call the National Income Branch (2) of the C&SD at 3903 7005.

Figures of chain volume measures of GDP by economic activity for the first quarter of 2023 are only preliminary at this stage. When more data become available, the preliminary figures will be revised accordingly and can

be found at the C&SD website (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode250.html).