

Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in February 2019

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for February 2019 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (April 16) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

As the trade flows in January and February of each year tend to show considerable volatilities due to differences in timing of the Lunar New Year holidays, it is useful to analyse the trade figures for these two months taken together. Comparing the first two months of 2019 with the same period in 2018, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods decreased by 4.8%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 6.7%.

In February 2019, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods decreased by 8.7% over February 2018. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 5.5%.

Comparing the three-month period ending February 2019 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods decreased by 8.2%. Concurrently, the volume of imports of goods decreased by 8.8%.

Changes in volume of external merchandise trade are derived from changes in external merchandise trade value with the effect of price changes discounted.

As regards price changes in the first two months of 2019 over the same period in 2018, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.1%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods also increased by 2.1%.

Comparing February 2019 with February 2018, the prices of total exports of goods increased by 2.2%. Concurrently, the prices of imports of goods increased by 2.3%.

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 2018, the index remained virtually unchanged in both February 2019 and the first two months of 2019.

Changes in the unit value and volume of total exports of goods by main

destination are shown in Table 1.

Comparing February 2019 with February 2018, double-digit declines were recorded for the total export volume to India (-41.0%), the USA (-22.8%) and Japan (-22.1%). Concurrently, the total export volume to the mainland of China (the Mainland) decreased by 7.4%. On the other hand, a double-digit growth of 16.4% was recorded for the total export volume to Singapore.

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to Japan, the USA and the Mainland increased by 3.7%, 3.7% and 2.4% respectively. On the other hand, the total export prices to India and Singapore decreased by 0.5% and 2.7% respectively.

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

Comparing February 2019 with February 2018, a double-digit decline of 12.7% was recorded for the import volume from the Mainland. Concurrently, the import volume from Taiwan decreased by 9.2%. On the other hand, the import volume from Japan, the USA and Singapore increased by 3.0%, 13.2% and 14.2% respectively.

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from all main suppliers increased: the Mainland (+3.4%), Japan (+3.1%), Singapore (+3.1%), the USA (+1.8%) and Taiwan (+0.6%).

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the February 2019 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).

Hong Kong Customs confiscates crime proceeds of car dealer convicted of cross-boundary money laundering

Hong Kong Customs today (April 16) successfully made its application to the District Court for a confiscation order granted under the Organized and Serious Crimes Ordinance (OSCO) to confiscate crime proceeds of about \$14 million from a local car dealer convicted of money laundering, including real

properties, vehicles and other realisable properties.

Hong Kong Customs collaborated with Mainland Customs in 2013 to combat a vehicle smuggling syndicate and identified a local car dealer who had taken part in smuggling vehicles into the Mainland from Hong Kong via Vietnam and had laundered about RMB 48 million in crime proceeds between 2012 and 2013. Following in-depth joint investigation with Mainland Customs, Hong Kong Customs arrested the car dealer in September 2013. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment at the District Court in April 2018 following his conviction for contravention of the OSCO.

According to the confiscation order granted today, an additional six years' imprisonment will be imposed if the car dealer fails to comply with the order.

Customs welcomes the order granted by the court and emphasises that money laundering is a serious crime.

Under the OSCO, a person commits an offence if he deals with any property knowing or having reasonable grounds to believe that such property in whole or in part directly or indirectly represents any person's proceeds of an indictable offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and imprisonment for 14 years, and the crime proceeds are subject to confiscation.

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

[Exchange Fund Bills tender results](#)

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

Exchange Fund Bills tender results:

Tender date	: April 16, 2019
Paper on offer	: EF Bills
Issue number	: Q1916
Issue date	: April 17, 2019
Maturity date	: July 17, 2019
Amount applied	: HK\$110,730 MN
Amount allotted	: HK\$59,577 MN
Average yield accepted	: 2.08 PCT
Highest yield accepted	: 2.20 PCT

Pro rata ratio : About 3 PCT
Average tender yield : 2.14 PCT

Tender date : April 16, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H1945
Issue date : April 17, 2019
Maturity date : October 16, 2019
Amount applied : HK\$45,755 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$16,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 2.02 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 2.07 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 91 PCT
Average tender yield : 2.13 PCT

Tender date : April 16, 2019
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Y1988
Issue date : April 17, 2019
Maturity date : April 15, 2020
Amount applied : HK\$14,455 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$3,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 1.90 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 1.99 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 23 PCT
Average tender yield : 2.10 PCT

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, April 16, 2019 is 103.4 (same as yesterday's index).

Illegal disposal of corrugated

asbestos sheets exposed by EPD's surveillance camera system

A truck driver was convicted and fined \$15,000 at the Fanling Magistrates' Courts today (April 16) for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation as a result of illegally disposing of corrugated asbestos sheets and construction waste in a public car park on Tai Po Road, Sha Tin, adjacent to Kam Shan Country Park.

In September last year, a surveillance camera system installed by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) inside a public car park on Tai Po Road (Piper's Hill) captured a truck driver unloading construction waste from his vehicle onto a footpath. EPD enforcement officers investigated at the scene and found that a large majority of the waste contained corrugated asbestos sheets. The EPD segregated the waste immediately and arranged for a licensed chemical waste collector to handle and remove the waste so as to safeguard the health of pedestrians. Subsequently, the department successfully traced the truck driver involved based on the truck's number plate captured by the surveillance camera system. After collecting evidence, the EPD prosecuted the truck driver under the above regulation and ordinance.

An EPD spokesman explained that exposed asbestos material could release very fine asbestos fibres. Inhalation of asbestos fibres can cause serious lung diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma. According to the Waste Disposal (Chemical Waste) (General) Regulation, asbestos waste is a type of chemical waste and should not be mixed with household waste, nor discarded at refuse collection points or public dumping areas.

The spokesman reminded all members of the renovation, construction and transportation sectors that they must properly deliver construction waste and commercial and industrial waste to the government waste management facilities in accordance with the law. Chemical waste must be collected by licensed chemical waste collectors for delivery to licensed chemical waste disposal facilities for treatment. It is unlawful to dispose of waste in public places or on the roadside. Under the WDO, first-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. A maximum fine of \$500,000 and six months' imprisonment may be imposed on second or subsequent convictions.

Members of the public can help combat illegal activities and safeguard the health of the public by making a report to the department if they witness any illegal disposal of waste from vehicles. They can record videos or take photos and call the EPD hotline at 2838 3111.