

# Labour Department highly concerned about fatal work accident that happened yesterday

The Labour Department (LD) is highly concerned about the work accident that happened at Mai Po, New Territories, yesterday (February 25), in which a male worker, while inflating a tyre of a container truck, was hit by a blast of air when the tyre burst suddenly. He was sent to hospital and passed away later. The LD is saddened by the death of the worker and has expressed its deepest sympathy to the victim's family.

The LD's spokesman said, "We commenced immediate on-site investigation as soon as we were notified of the accident and issued a suspension notice to the employer involved, suspending the tyre inflation work. The employer cannot resume the work process until the LD is satisfied that measures to abate the relevant risk have been taken."

The spokesman added, "We will complete investigation as soon as possible to identify the cause of the accident, ascertain the liability of the duty holders and recommend improvement measures. We will take actions pursuant to the law if there is any violation of the work safety legislation."

The general duty provisions of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance require employers to provide safe working environments, safe plant and safe systems of work for their employees. Those who contravene the above provisions are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for six months.

In regard to yesterday's accident, the LD will issue a Work Safety Alert through its website and email, giving a brief account of the accident concerned to duty holders, workers' unions, professional bodies of safety practitioners and others, and reminding the industry of the importance of following safety precautionary measures to prevent recurrence of similar accidents.

The LD will also remind the employer concerned of the liability for employees' compensation under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance, assist family members of the deceased to claim employees' compensation and closely follow up on the case. For those with financial difficulties, the LD will assist them to apply for appropriate emergency funds. Subject to the needs and wishes of family members of the deceased, the LD will also liaise with the Social Welfare Department for financial or other assistance.

For the sake of securing the safety and health of employees at work, the LD appeals to employers to provide plant and systems of work that are safe and without risks to health. Employees should co-operate with their employers, adopt all safety measures and use personal protective equipment provided properly to avoid endangering their own work safety and that of

other workers.

---

## Record of discussion of meeting of Exchange Fund Advisory Committee Currency Board Sub-Committee held on January 17

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

(Approved for Issue by the Exchange Fund Advisory Committee on January 31)

Report on Currency Board Operations (October 9 – December 31, 2018)

---

The Sub-Committee noted that the Hong Kong dollar (HKD) exchange rate traded within a range of 7.8062 – 7.8459 against the US dollar (USD) during the review period. The HKD firmed against the USD since November, due to unwinding of interest carry positions as liquidity conditions tightened amid year-end funding demand. Towards the year-end, the HKD eased again, partly associated with repatriation of proceeds raised in initial public offerings, note-issuance activities ahead of holidays, and some re-building of interest carry positions. During the review period, the HKD interbank interest rates generally picked up, reflecting the expectation of US rate hikes and anticipated funding needs towards the year-end.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Aggregate Balance remained little changed during the review period. The Monetary Base increased to HK\$1,632.87 billion, mainly driven by an increase in the Certificates of Indebtedness.

The Sub-Committee further noted that, in accordance with the Currency Board principles, all changes in the Monetary Base had been fully matched by changes in foreign reserves.

The Report on Currency Board Operations for the period under review is at the Annex.

### Monitoring of Risks and Vulnerabilities

---

The Sub-Committee noted that in the US, uncertainties over the monetary policy outlook and US-China trade tensions could point to heightened financial market volatility ahead.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Europe, economic policy and political

uncertainties (e.g. Brexit) could aggravate the region's waning cyclical growth momentum to increase the risks of a sharper-than-expected economic slowdown.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Mainland China, the renminbi rebounded following the US-China agreement to step back from additional tariffs. However, its growth momentum weakened and outlook became more uncertain.

The Sub-Committee noted that in Hong Kong, the economy slowed further in recent months amid heightened uncertainty stemming from the US-China trade tensions and the pace of US interest rate normalisation. The property market declined during the period and could face a number of headwinds in the near term.

#### An Event Study on the Linked Exchange Rate System (LERS) Operations

The Sub-Committee noted a study which investigated the effects of the triggering of the weak-side Convertibility Undertaking and the additional issuances of Exchange Fund Bills on the HKD exchange rate and interest rates. The study provided empirical support that the LERS had been functioning according to its design.

---

## [External merchandise trade statistics for January 2019](#)

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (February 26) the external merchandise trade statistics for January 2019. In January 2019, the values of Hong Kong's total exports and imports of goods both recorded year-on-year decreases, at 0.4% and 6.0% respectively.

In January 2019, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 0.4% over a year earlier to \$348.7 billion, after a year-on-year decrease of 5.8% in December 2018. Concurrently, the value of imports of goods decreased by 6.0% over a year earlier to \$359.0 billion in January 2019, after a year-on-year decrease of 7.0% in December 2018. A visible trade deficit of \$10.3 billion, equivalent to 2.9% of the value of imports of goods, was recorded in January 2019.

Comparing the three-month period ending January 2019 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the value of total exports of goods decreased by 5.9%. Meanwhile, the value of imports of goods decreased by 7.3%.

Analysis by country/territory

Comparing January 2019 with January 2018, total exports to Asia as a whole dropped by 3.6%. In this region, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular India (-35.2%), Taiwan (-18.6%), Vietnam (-7.9%) and the mainland of China (the Mainland) (-3.9%). On the other hand, increases were recorded in the values of total exports to Malaysia (+25.6%), the Philippines (+24.4%), Singapore (+17.9%) and Thailand (+14.5%).

Apart from destinations in Asia, decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations in other regions, in particular the USA (-5.8%) and Germany (-1.1%). Concurrently, an increase was registered in the value of total exports to the United Kingdom (+10.7%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports from most major suppliers, in particular Korea (-36.0%), India (-34.6%), Switzerland (-17.5%), Japan (-14.2%), Taiwan (-11.0%) and the USA (-9.5%). The value of imports from the Mainland also went down by 1.6%.

Comparing the three months ending January 2019 with the three months ending January 2018, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports to some major destinations, in particular India (-34.6%), Vietnam (-10.1%), Taiwan (-8.0%), the Mainland (-5.9%) and Germany (-5.9%). However, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of total exports to Singapore (+22.8%) and the Netherlands (+21.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports from some major suppliers, in particular Korea (-28.5%), India (-24.0%), Taiwan (-19.1%), Japan (-10.2%), Thailand (-8.6%) and the Mainland (-1.6%). On the other hand, year-on-year increases were registered in the values of imports from Malaysia (+13.0%) and Singapore (+6.3%).

#### Analysis by major commodity

Comparing January 2019 with January 2018, decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$4.1 billion or -23.9%), "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$3.1 billion or -8.0%) and "articles of apparel and clothing accessories" (by \$0.1 billion or -1.3%).

Over the same period of comparison, decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$14.8 billion or -10.8%), "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$3.6 billion or -21.4%) and "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$3.1 billion or -4.9%).

Comparing the three months ending January 2019 with the three months ending January 2018, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of total exports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$17.6 billion or -31.5%), "electrical

machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$6.6 billion or -1.7%) and "office machines and automatic data processing machines" (by \$5.4 billion or -4.6%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of total exports of "power generating machinery and equipment" (by \$2.9 billion or 20.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, year-on-year decreases were registered in the values of imports of some principal commodity divisions, in particular "electrical machinery, apparatus and appliances, and electrical parts thereof" (by \$32.5 billion or -7.5%), "telecommunications and sound recording and reproducing apparatus and equipment" (by \$15.1 billion or -7.1%) and "non-metallic mineral manufactures" (by \$8.8 billion or -16.8%). However, a year-on-year increase was registered in the value of imports of "miscellaneous manufactured articles (mainly jewellery, goldsmiths' and silversmiths' wares)" (by \$2.1 billion or 3.2%).

#### Commentary

A Government spokesman said that the value of merchandise exports recorded a marginal year-on-year decline in January 2019. It should be noted that the trade figures for January might have been distorted by the difference in timing of the Lunar New Year, which fell in early February this year but mid-February last year. It is thus more meaningful to analyse the trade figures for January and February combined, when available, for a clearer picture of the underlying situation.

Looking ahead, the external environment is still challenging. Moderating economic growth in many of our key trading partners will likely weigh on Hong Kong's merchandise exports in the near term. While the US-Mainland trade negotiations have reportedly been making progress, the Government will continue to monitor the situation closely and stay alert to various external uncertainties.

#### Further information

Table 1 at the annex presents the analysis of external merchandise trade statistics for January 2019. Table 2 presents the original monthly trade statistics from January 2016 to January 2019, and Table 3 gives the seasonally adjusted series for the same period.

The values of total exports of goods to 10 main destinations for January 2019 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 January 2019.

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 January 2019 will be released in mid-March 2019.

The January 2019 issue of "Hong Kong External Merchandise Trade" contains detailed analysis on the performance of Hong Kong's external merchandise trade in January 2019 and will be available in mid-March 2019. Users can download the publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp230.jsp](http://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).

---

## **Annual Report on the Consumer Price Index 2018 published**

The Annual Report on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) 2018 was published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) today (February 26). The report provides a detailed analysis on the movements of the Composite CPI, CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C) in 2018. These series of CPIs reflect the impacts of consumer price changes on households in different expenditure ranges. The report also presents charts and tables showing movements of the CPIs analysed by commodity/service section and their contributions to the overall change in the indices.

When analysing the CPIs, Hong Kong has all along adopted a classification system which has evolved over time to meet user needs and local situation. To facilitate international comparison, statistical tables of CPIs based on the Classification of Individual Consumption According to Purpose (COICOP) developed by the United Nations are also presented in the report.

Apart from statistics on the CPIs, the report contains detailed explanations of the concepts and compilation methods of the CPIs.

User can download this publication free of charge at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=B1060002](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp270.jsp?productCode=B1060002)).

Enquiries concerning the report can be made to the Consumer Price Index Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7374, fax: 2577 6253 or email: [cpi@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:cpi@censtatd.gov.hk)).

---

## **EPD successfully prosecutes five**

## importers for illegal import of hazardous electronic waste (with photos)

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) successfully intercepted five cases of illegal import of hazardous electronic waste (e-waste) from Peru, Egypt, the Philippines and the Mainland at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals. The five importers concerned, namely Fu Yang Agency Limited, Guang Yi Company Limited, Hong Kong Heng Da Technology Limited, Liquid International (HK) Limited and Leung Kee Recycle Limited, were convicted on February 12 and 19 and today (February 26) at Fanling Magistrates' Courts for contravening the Waste Disposal Ordinance (WDO) and fined a total of \$213,000.

The EPD has all along been taking strict enforcement action in combating illegal import of hazardous e-waste. With the assistance of the Customs and Excise Department, the EPD intercepted six marine containers at the Kwai Chung Container Terminals in July and August last year. The containers were claimed to contain waste plastics, computer parts and monitors, and more. After inspection, they were found to be loaded with hazardous e-waste including waste printed circuit boards (PCBs), waste flat panel displays (FPDs) and waste batteries, with a total market value of about \$1.3 million. The EPD immediately returned the intercepted containers to their places of origin and notified the foreign enforcement authorities concerned about the return shipments. The department also instigated prosecutions against the five importers concerned in accordance with the WDO.

An EPD spokesman stressed that waste PCBs, FPDs and batteries are hazardous e-waste, containing various heavy metals and other toxic chemical substances. They are classified as chemical waste and are regulated under the existing laws on chemical waste disposal. The EPD will continue to rigorously combat the illegal import and export activities of hazardous waste to protect the environment.

The spokesman reminded importers of the waste recycling trade not to illegally import (including import into or transshipment through Hong Kong) or export hazardous waste. According to the WDO, it is an offence for anyone to import or export hazardous waste without obtaining a valid permit beforehand. First-time offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and six months' imprisonment. For subsequent offences, offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and two years' imprisonment.

Members of the public may visit the EPD's website for more information about the control of chemical waste:

[www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide\\_ref/guide\\_cwc.html](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/english/environmentinhk/waste/guide_ref/guide_cwc.html).

