

## [Judiciary alerts public to phishing email](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary today (May 3) called on the public again to stay vigilant to a phishing email sent from the email account "Hong Kong High Court – noreply@judiciary.hk <noreply-hk-judiciary-com-autonotifservice-f4904c-89abe09z0@githner.com.mx>". The email falsely claims that it was issued by the High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and is suspected of containing a malicious link. The Judiciary has reported the case to the Police.

Members of the public are reminded to stay alert to suspicious emails and refrain from opening them. Anyone who has provided personal information to the email sender or clicked the link in the email is advised to contact the Police immediately.

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## [Postal services to France return to normal](#)

Hongkong Post announced today (May 3) that, as advised by the postal administration of France, mail delivery services previously impacted by protests have returned to normal.

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## [Provisional Statistics of Retail Sales for March 2024](#)

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (May 3).

The value of total retail sales in March 2024, provisionally estimated at \$31.2 billion, decreased by 7.0% compared with the same month in 2023. The revised estimate of the combined value of total retail sales in January and February 2024 increased by 1.4% compared with the same period a year earlier. For the first quarter of 2024, it was provisionally estimated that the value

of total retail sales decreased by 1.3% compared with the same period in 2023.

Of the total retail sales value in March 2024, online sales accounted for 7.8%. The value of online retail sales in that month, provisionally estimated at \$2.4 billion, decreased by 4.7% compared with the same month in 2023. The revised estimate of the combined value of online retail sales in January and February 2024 decreased by 13.4% compared with the same period a year earlier. For the first quarter of 2024, it was provisionally estimated that the value of online retail sales decreased by 10.7% compared with the same period in 2023.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in March 2024 decreased by 8.6% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the combined volume of total retail sales in January and February 2024 decreased by 0.4% compared with the same period a year earlier. For the first quarter of 2024, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales decreased by 3.1% in volume compared with the same period in 2023.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing March 2024 with March 2023, the value of sales of jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts decreased by 17.7%. This was followed by sales of commodities in supermarkets (-3.4% in value); wearing apparel (-17.5%); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (-11.3%); commodities in department stores (-14.1%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods not elsewhere classified (-15.5%); fuels (-14.5%); furniture and fixtures (-3.3%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (-10.7%); Chinese drugs and herbs (-5.8%); and optical shops (-10.1%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of other consumer goods not elsewhere classified increased by 8.7% in March 2024 over a year earlier. This was followed by sales of medicines and cosmetics (+8.9% in value); motor vehicles and parts (+7.6%); and books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (+6.8%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales increased by 0.3% in the first quarter of 2024 compared with the preceding quarter, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales increased by 0.7%.

## Commentary

A government spokesman said that the value of total retail sales turned to a fall in March, partly due to a high base of comparison for visitor spending and the Easter holidays. For the first quarter as a whole, total retail sales value saw a mild decrease of 1.3% from a year earlier. On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter basis, the value of total retail sales increased by 0.3%.

Looking ahead, the spokesman added that further revival of inbound tourism and rising household income should remain supportive to the retail sector. The Government's efforts to promote a mega event economy and boost sentiment should also help. Yet, the changing consumption patterns of visitors and residents may continue to pose challenges. The Government will continue to monitor the situation.

#### 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 February 2024 as well as the provisional figures for March 2024. 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 quarter of 2024 are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on value of online retail sales for February 2024 as well as the provisional figures for March 2024. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first quarter of 2024 are also shown.

Table 3 presents the revised figures on volume index of retail sales for all retail outlets and by broad type of retail outlet for February 2024 as well as the provisional figures for March 2024. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first quarter of 2024 are also shown.

Table 4 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.

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. Data on retail sales are collected from local retail establishments through the Monthly Survey of Retail Sales (MRS). Local retail establishments with and without physical shops are covered in MRS and their sales, both through conventional shops and online channels, are included in the retail sales statistics.

The retail sales statistics 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.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Monthly Survey of Retail Sales". Users can browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD

([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080003&scode=530](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080003&scode=530)).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of C&SD (Tel. : 3903 7400; E-mail : [mrs@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:mrs@censtatd.gov.hk)).

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## [Interest rate of the fourth interest payment for the series of retail green bonds due 2025](#)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority, as representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, announced today (May 3) the relevant per annum interest rate for the fourth interest payment of the series of retail green bonds due 2025 (Issue Number: 03GR2505R; Stock Code: 4252) (the Retail Green Bonds) issued under the Government Green Bond Programme.

According to the Issue Circular dated April 26, 2022 for the Retail Green Bonds, the fourth interest payment of the Retail Green Bonds is scheduled to be made on May 20, 2024, and the relevant interest rate is scheduled to be determined and announced on May 3, 2024 as the higher of the prevailing Floating Rate and Fixed Rate.

On May 3, 2024, the Floating Rate and Fixed Rate are as follows:

Floating Rate: +2.25 per cent (Annex)

Fixed Rate: +2.50 per cent

Based on the Floating Rate and Fixed Rate set out above, the relevant interest rate for the fourth interest payment is determined and announced as 2.50 per cent per annum.

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## Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (May 3) released the latest grading of water quality for 39 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (see Note 2).

Twenty-two beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 12 as Fair (Grade 2), four as Poor (Grade 3) and two as Very Poor (Grade 4).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach*	Middle Bay Beach
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach*	Pui O Beach*
Chung Hom Kok Beach	Repulse Bay Beach*
Clear Water Bay Second Beach*	Shek O Beach*
Deep Water Bay Beach*	South Bay Beach*
Hap Mun Bay Beach*	St. Stephen's Beach
Hung Shing Yeh Beach*	Stanley Main Beach*
Kiu Tsui Beach	Tai Po Lung Mei Beach*
Kwun Yam Beach	Tong Fuk Beach
Lo So Shing Beach	Turtle Cove Beach
Lower Cheung Sha Beach	Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Butterfly Beach*	Golden Beach*
Cafeteria New Beach	Kadoorie Beach*
Cafeteria Old Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach*
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Silverstrand Beach*
Castle Peak Beach	Ting Kau Beach*
Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach	Trio Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Approach Beach	Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Casam Beach*	Lido Beach*

Grade 4 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach\*

Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach\*

Compared with the grading released last week, Shek O Beach has been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1. Cafeteria New Beach, Cafeteria Old Beach, Golden Beach, Kadoorie Beach, Silver Mine Bay Beach, Silverstrand Beach and Trio Beach have been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2, Approach Beach, Casam Beach, and Hoi Mei Wan Beach from Grade 2 to Grade 3, and Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 4.

"We observed water quality deterioration at several beaches in Tsuen Wan District, which was largely due to the prolonged unstable weather in the past two weeks. We will continue to closely monitor the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a tropical cyclone or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality ([www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach](http://www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach)) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666. Members of the public can also obtain the latest daily water quality forecast information for all beaches that are open for swimming through the Beach Water Quality Forecast mobile application (available for download from: [www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQApp](http://www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQApp)) or the dedicated beach water quality forecast page ([www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast](http://www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast)) on the EPD's beach thematic website.

Note 1: Lifesaving services are provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department at 22 gazetted beaches, marked with an asterisk (\*) above, from April 1. Due to the damage caused to the footpaths leading to Chung Hom Kok Beach by landslides, the beach is temporarily closed until further notice. For details, please refer to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Special Announcement ([www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/beach/index.html](http://www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/beach/index.html)).

Note 2: This refers to Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach which is a non-gazetted beach that has no lifesaving service.