

Land Registry releases statistics for December 2019

The Land Registry today (January 3) released its statistics for December 2019.

Land registration

* The number of sale and purchase agreements for all building units received for registration in December was 3,908 (-41.7 per cent compared with November 2019 but +28.6 per cent compared with December 2018)

* The 12-month moving average for December was 6,234 (1.2 per cent above the 12-month moving average for November 2019 but 5.5 per cent below that for December 2018)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in December was \$35.0 billion (-43.0 per cent compared with November 2019 and -18.6 per cent compared with December 2018)

* Among the sale and purchase agreements, 3,184 were for residential units (-44.7 per cent compared with November 2019 but +54.6 per cent compared with December 2018)

* The total consideration for sale and purchase agreements in respect of residential units was \$31.3 billion (-34.6 per cent compared with November 2019 but +29.9 per cent compared with December 2018)

Statistics on sales of residential units do not include sale and purchase agreements relating to sales of units under the Home Ownership Scheme, the Private Sector Participation Scheme and the Tenants Purchase Scheme unless the premium of the unit concerned has been paid after the sale restriction period.

Figures on sale and purchase agreements received for the past 12 months, the year-on-year rate of change and breakdown figures on residential sales have also been released.

As deeds may not be lodged with the Land Registry until up to 30 days after the transaction, these statistics generally relate to land transactions in the previous month.

Land search

* The number of searches of land registers made by the public in December was 365,773 (-5.3 per cent compared with November 2019 but +3.6 per cent compared with December 2018)

The statistics cover searches made at the counter, through the self-service terminals and via the Integrated Registration Information System Online Services.

Labour Department alerts public to fake social media page

The Labour Department (LD) today (January 3) alerted the public to a fake social media page bearing the LD's name and logo.

A spokesman for the LD said, "The social media page (www.facebook.com/Labour-Department-170985126964417) has not been launched, nor is it maintained, by the department. Members of the public are urged to be discerning when dealing with online information."

The LD has reported the case to the Police for investigation. For enquiries, please call the LD's enquiry hotline 2717 1771 or send an email to enquiry@labour.gov.hk.

FarmFest 2020 opens at Fa Hui Park in Mong Kok

The three-day FarmFest 2020 is being held at Fa Hui Park in Mong Kok from today (January 3) to January 5 to showcase a variety of local agricultural and fisheries products and other related goods.

Jointly organised by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), the Vegetable Marketing Organization and the Fish Marketing Organization, FarmFest is the largest outdoor farmers' market in Hong Kong and local producers can directly promote their products to consumers at the event. FarmFest accommodates more than 380 stalls, about 200 of which offer local produce for sale. Booths selling local delicacies, organic/healthy food, kitchenware and household goods are also available.

Premium local produce is always well received by consumers. In view of the market demand, the AFCD has been actively supporting the local agricultural and fisheries sectors to increase productivity and to enhance the quality and marketing of local produce to facilitate sustainable development of the industry. To enable consumers to learn more about the

production of premium produce, exhibits are set up at FarmFest featuring seasonal crops and the technologies used in production. The theme of the exhibition this year is agriculture and fisheries technologies. The agricultural zone focuses on promoting "Precision Agriculture" and introduces the "Vegetable Factory" and "Smart Greenhouse", including the grow light system with tunable spectrum and the nano-bubble technology to enhance plant growth. It also illustrates how farmers can monitor real-time conditions in greenhouses through smart phone applications and remotely control facilities in greenhouses. The fisheries zone introduces the deep sea cage culture model, a real-time phytoplankton monitoring system and pearl farming.

FarmFest also offers various fringe activities such as music and cultural performances, cooking demonstrations and interactive games for the enjoyment of people of all ages. Admission is free. The event is open from 10am to 8pm. A free shuttle bus service is available to and from Shek Kip Mei MTR Station Exit B1 located at Woh Chai Street.

To tie in with advice of the Green Event Guidebook by the Environmental Protection Department and the Business Environment Council, this year's FarmFest provides recycling facilities and a reusable tableware rental service in order to achieve waste reduction and clean recycling, thus enhancing the overall environmental performance of the event.

The AFCD has also produced a series of short videos introducing the features of local agricultural and fisheries products. The videos and details of the event can be viewed at www.farmfest.hk or www.facebook.com/farmfesthk.

Recipients of social security payments, Working Family Allowance and Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy to get one-off extra allowance starting from January 7

The Government announced today (January 3) that recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), recipients of the Old Age Allowance (OAA) (including the Guangdong (GD) Scheme and the Fujian (FJ) Scheme), the Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) and the Disability Allowance (DA) under the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme, and recipients of the Working Family Allowance (WFA) and Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (I-WITS) will receive a one-off extra allowance starting from January 7. This is part of a series of measures to support enterprises, safeguard jobs and relieve people's burden as announced by the Financial Secretary on

August 15, 2019.

A Government spokesman said that recipients who were eligible for the above social security payments on December 6, 2019 (the date the Legislative Council Finance Committee approved the funding proposal), would be eligible for the one-off extra allowance. The Social Welfare Department (SWD) has been allocated \$3,888 million for implementing the arrangements and will credit the payment to the designated bank accounts of the eligible recipients without the need to make an application.

For CSSA recipients, the amount of the one-off extra allowance is equivalent to one month's standard rate payable to different categories of recipients under the CSSA Scheme. Recipients of OAA (including the GD Scheme and the FJ Scheme), OALA and DA will receive an additional one month's allowance. The level of payments is as follows:

CSSA Scheme Category of recipients	Additional payment (\$)	
	Single person	Family member
Elderly person (Able-bodied/different degree of disability)	3,585 – 6,095	3,375 – 5,590
Adult (Able-bodied/different degree of disability)	2,525 – 6,095	1,810 – 5,590
Child (Able-bodied/different degree of disability)	3,035 – 6,535	2,015 – 6,035
SSA Scheme		
OAA	1,385	
Normal OALA	2,675	
Higher OALA	3,585	
Normal DA	1,770	
Higher DA	3,540	

The measure will benefit about 1.33 million eligible persons, including 320 000 CSSA recipients, 570 000 OALA recipients, 290 000 OAA (including GD Scheme and FJ Scheme) recipients and 160 000 DA recipients.

For enquiries, recipients of social security payments may call the SWD hotline (2343 2255) or contact the respective Social Security Field Unit.

For the WFA/I-WITS Schemes, recipients eligible for the extra allowance are those whose applications were made in the period from June 1 to December 6, 2019 (the date the Legislative Council Finance Committee approved the funding proposal), and eventually approved. The extra allowance is equal to the average monthly amount of approved months payable to the corresponding recipients in their most recently submitted (and eventually approved) applications in the above period. The amount varies from case to case. They are not required to make separate applications.

The Working Family Allowance Office (WFAO) of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency has been allocated \$136 million and \$19 million for the one-off extra allowance to recipients of WFA and I-WITS respectively. It is estimated that the measure would benefit 57 000 WFA households and 32 000 I-WITS recipients.

For enquiries, recipients of WFA and I-WITS may call the hotline of the WFAO (2558 3000) or visit the WFAO's enquiry counters at 9/F, 181 Hoi Bun Road, Kwun Tong, or visit the website of WFAO (www.wfsfaa.gov.hk/wfao).

Proposed road works in Sai Kung gazetted

The Government gazetted today (January 3) the proposed road works at Hiram's Highway between Marina Cove and Sai Kung Town in Sai Kung to relieve traffic congestion, accommodate anticipated traffic growth and cope with unexpected incidents in the area.

Details of the proposal are set out in the Annex. The plans and scheme of the works are available for public inspection at the following government offices during office hours:

Central and Western Home Affairs Enquiry Centre,
G/F, Harbour Building,
38 Pier Road, Central, Hong Kong

Sai Kung Home Affairs Enquiry Centre,
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O, New Territories

District Lands Office, Sai Kung,
3/F, Sai Kung Government Offices,
34 Chan Man Street, Sai Kung, New Territories

The gazette notice, scheme, plans, resumption plan and location plan will be available at
www.thb.gov.hk/eng/psp/publications/transport/gazette/gazette.htm.

Any person who wishes to object to the works or the use, or both, is required to address to the Secretary for Transport and Housing an objection in writing, which can be submitted via the following means:

- By post or by hand to the Transport and Housing Bureau's drop-in box No. 6 located at the entrance on 2/F, East Wing, Central Government Offices, 2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong. The box is available for use between

8am and 7pm from Monday to Friday (except public holidays);

- By fax to 2868 4643; or
- By email to gazettethb@thb.gov.hk.

A notice of objection should describe the objector's interest and the manner in which he or she alleges that he or she will be affected by the works or the use. Objectors are requested to provide contact details to facilitate communication. A notice of objection should be delivered to the Secretary for Transport and Housing not later than March 3, 2020.