

Response to media enquiries on value of total retail sales for April

In response to media enquiries on the release of the value of total retail sales for April today (May 31), a Government spokesman gave the following response:

The year-on-year decline in the value of total retail sales in April this year was affected by various factors, including:

(1) The Easter holidays rendered the effects of the changing consumption pattern of residents more visible. During this year's Easter holiday period from the end of March to early April, there was a notable increase in the number of residents' departures compared to the Easter holidays in the preceding year. When residents made outbound trips, it not only affected their local consumption during their time away but also could have reduced consumption in the days before and after the trips.

(2) The base of comparison of the total retail sales value in the same period last year is relatively high. In April 2023, local consumption sentiment was rather buoyant, as Hong Kong just returned to normalcy after the pandemic and with the Government's disbursement of consumption vouchers, etc. In addition, in the initial period of normal travel resumption, the length of stay of inbound visitors was longer and their per capita spending was also higher. As a result, excluding the months of Lunar New Year and Christmas, the value of total retail sales in April 2023 was the highest since June 2019.

Besides, the unstable weather conditions in April this year, with higher-than-usual rainfall, also had some impact. Looking ahead, the changing consumption patterns of visitors and residents would continue to present challenges to the retail sector. Nevertheless, the increase of visitor arrivals, rising employment earnings, and the recent stabilisation of asset markets, would provide support to the retail sector and the overall economy of Hong Kong. In addition, the Government's strenuous efforts to promote a mega event economy and boost market sentiment would also help.

The Government will continue to monitor the situation and introduce measures to boost Hong Kong's economy in a timely manner.