

Intangible Cultural Heritage Office's new roving exhibition introduces ICH items about local food culture (with photos)

The Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) Office launched today (January 4) a roving exhibition titled "Taste of Intangible Cultural Heritage". With the theme of local food culture, the exhibition introduces nine ICH items about food and food utensils. Members of the public can learn more about the history and culture about daily meals.

The roving exhibition features nine ICH items of Hong Kong, including blown sugar technique, preserved fruit making technique, cha kwo (steamed sticky rice dumpling) making technique, Chinese dim sum making technique, Chiu Chow marinated food making technique, steamer making technique, Hong Kong-style milk tea making technique, pineapple bun making technique and egg tart making technique. In addition to graphic explanations, the exhibition also brings ICH to the public in a lively and interesting way through the display of miniature models, interactive multimedia programmes, videos and "check-in" spots for photo taking so as to enhance the public's knowledge and awareness about ICH and the need for their preservation and transmission.

The roving exhibition is presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, organised by the ICH Office, with the venue supported by the Wealth Union Company Limited and Cityplaza. It will run from today until January 24 on level one, TKO Plaza (1 Tong Tak Street, Tseung Kwan O, Sai Kung) and from February 27 to March 22 on the ground floor, Cityplaza (18 Tai Koo Shing Road, Quarry Bay, Eastern District) respectively. The exhibition will be open from 11am to 8pm. Admission is free. For details of the exhibition, please visit www.icho.hk/en/web/icho/taste_of_ICH.html, or call 2851 6134 for enquiries.





Provisional statistics of retail sales for November 2023

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (January 4).

The value of total retail sales in November 2023, provisionally estimated at \$34.2 billion, increased by 15.9% compared with the same month in 2022. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in October 2023 increased by 5.8% compared with a year earlier. For the first 11 months of 2023 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales increased by 17.1% compared with the same period in 2022.

Of the total retail sales value in November 2023, online sales accounted for 9.3%. The value of online retail sales in that month, provisionally estimated at \$3.2 billion, decreased by 16.1% compared with the same month in 2022. The revised estimate of online retail sales in October 2023 increased by 9.0% compared with a year earlier. For the first 11 months of 2023 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of online retail

sales decreased by 2.7% compared with the same period in 2022.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales in November 2023 increased by 12.4% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in October 2023 increased by 2.9% compared with a year earlier. For the first 11 months of 2023 taken together, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales increased by 14.7% in volume compared with the same period in 2022.

Analysed by broad type of retail outlet in descending order of the provisional estimate of the value of sales and comparing November 2023 with November 2022, the value of sales of electrical goods and other consumer durable goods not elsewhere classified increased by 0.8%. This was followed by sales of jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts (+60.8% in value); other consumer goods not elsewhere classified (+29.0%); wearing apparel (+54.1%); commodities in department stores (+15.0%); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (+6.3%); medicines and cosmetics (+38.7%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (+24.4%); Chinese drugs and herbs (+33.7%); books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (+11.1%); and optical shops (+17.8%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of commodities in supermarkets decreased by 5.0% in November 2023 over a year earlier. This was followed by sales of motor vehicles and parts (-22.9% in value); fuels (-12.8%); and furniture and fixtures (-13.1%).

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales decreased by 2.9% in the three months ending November 2023 compared with the preceding three-month period, while the provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales decreased by 3.2%.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that the value of total retail sales increased visibly in November over a year earlier alongside the revival of inbound tourism.

Looking ahead, the spokesman added that an expected further recovery of inbound tourism should continue to benefit the retail sector. Continued improvement in household income, as well as various promotional campaigns and activities launched by the Government and the industry should also provide support.

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 October 2023 as well as the provisional figures for November 2023. 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 11 months of 2023 taken together are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on value of online retail sales for October 2023 as well as the provisional figures for November 2023. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first 11 months of 2023 taken together 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 October 2023 as well as the provisional figures for November 2023. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first 11 months of 2023 taken together 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).

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

[Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan](#)

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt, and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on January 3 to noon today (January 4), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 140 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website

(www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 23 358 samples of food imported from Japan (including 15 538 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 6 616 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, January 4, 2024 is 104.2 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).

Notes exchange service and electronic lai-see for Chinese New Year

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

As the Chinese New Year draws near, the Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) and the three note-issuing banks (The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited and Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited) today (January 4) announced that new notes and good-as-new notes, i.e. used notes which are in good condition and suitable for use as lai-see, will be available for exchange at branches of the three note-issuing banks from January 25 (Thursday) to February 9 (Friday).

The HKMA encourages the public to use electronic channels including the Faster Payment System available via online or mobile banking, or other e-wallet services for giving lai-see. Giving electronic lai-see is simple and convenient, and will contribute to sustainable development by reducing the usage of physical red packets and banknotes. Major banks and electronic payment operators will encourage giving electronic lai-see by various promotional programmes. The public may refer to the details of these programmes as and when announced by banks and operators.

The three note-issuing banks will put in place appropriate measures to facilitate the notes exchange, including:

1. Advancing the opening hour to 8am on the first 3 days of the service period, i.e. January 25 (Thursday) to January 27 (Saturday), and

dedicating the aforesaid additional operation hours, i.e. 8am to 9am, exclusively for providing the notes exchange service;

2. Offering online booking service for both new notes and good-as-new notes starting from January 18 (Thursday), details of which will be announced by individual note-issuing banks within next week; and
3. Putting in place crowd management measures such as distributing physical tickets and implementing queue management when needed.

Members of the public who desire to use cash for giving lai-see may wish to check for any remaining stock of new notes or good-as-new notes at home before going to a bank. Also, there is no need to rush to exchange for new notes and good-as-new notes during the first few days of the service period as banks will ensure the supply of these notes throughout the service period.