

## Test results of microbiological quality of poon choi satisfactory (with photo)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (December 9) announced the test results of a recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on the microbiological quality of poon choi. All samples passed the tests.

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A CFS spokesman said, "As poon choi is popular for gatherings during winter, and there were previous cases of bacterial food poisoning associated with poon choi, the CFS has continued to conduct a seasonal food surveillance project this year to assess the microbiological quality of poon choi. A total of 30 poon choi samples were collected from different retailers (including online retailers) for testing of common food poisoning organisms including *Bacillus cereus*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Salmonella*, coagulase-positive staphylococci organisms and *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*."

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Despite the satisfactory results of the samples tested, the spokesman reminded members of the public to be careful when purchasing and enjoying this seasonal delicacy. He advised consumers to order poon choi from licensed and reliable shops, reheat poon choi thoroughly before consumption, consume the food as soon as possible or keep the food at temperatures above 60 degrees Celsius, avoid prolonged storage of poon choi at room temperature to reduce the risk of bacteria growth, and stop consuming the food if it tastes or smells abnormal.

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"The public should also maintain a balanced diet and avoid eating too much food with high levels of energy, sugar, salt or fat," the spokesman said.

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He also appealed to the food trade to plan thoroughly in advance to secure adequate manpower, space and equipment for making poon choi and not to entertain orders beyond handling capacity. A well-organised work procedure can help prevent cross-contamination. As such, before preparation of poon choi, temporary food handlers should be trained to make sure that they are familiar with the working environment and adhere to safe food preparation practices. Traders are also reminded to check the quality of food ingredients and ensure that the temperatures of chilled and frozen foods are appropriate when they are delivered to them. In addition, to reduce the risk of food poisoning, they should avoid preparing food too far in advance and take note of the temperature in storing, transporting and preparing food.

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"All food ingredients should be stored at safe temperatures while perishable items should be stored at 4 degrees C or below. The cooling time of cooked food should be reduced as far as possible. When transporting hot poon choi, it should be kept at above 60 degrees C, and for chilled poon

choi, it should be kept at 4 degrees C or below. Poon choi should be reheated thoroughly until the core temperature reaches 75 degrees C or above, or brought to boil before consumption. Poon choi of a larger portion requires more time to reheat before the food can be fully heated," the spokesman said.

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"There have been food poisoning cases related to improper handling of poon choi in Hong Kong. Traders should provide clear advice on the proper methods of storing and reheating of poon choi to consumers, such as putting a reminder on the food label to further reduce the risk of food poisoning due to improper handling," he added.

The CFS will continue its surveillance of poon choi available in the market to ensure food safety and protect the health of the public.



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## [Expansion of one-stop dataset of physical banking facilities of retail banks in Hong Kong](#)

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (December 9) that an additional spatial dataset is made available via Open Application Programming Interface (API) for public use starting from today.

The new dataset provides information on five types of self-service banking machines of 20 retail banks in Hong Kong, covering cash deposit machines, cheque deposit machines, integrated cash and cheque deposit machines, passbook update machines, as well as video teller machines. Together with the two datasets (Note) launched last year, the HKMA's website now provides a total of three one-stop datasets of physical banking facilities of retail banks.

Furthermore, the two existing datasets of physical branches and Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) have also been enriched with more information to make the database more comprehensive, such as the availability of barrier-free measures at branches as well as the currencies available for deposit and withdrawal through the ATMs.

The relevant datasets are available for download from the [HKMA's Open API portal](#). The HKMA welcomes apps developers, technology service providers and the public at large to make use of the open information to unleash more practical applications.

Note: Since September 29, 2023, two datasets of physical branches and ATMs of 20 retail banks in Hong Kong have been available on HKMA's Open API portal.

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## **CE meets with delegation of overseas government officials (with photo)**

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met with members of a visiting delegation of overseas government officials today (December 9) to exchange views on deepening co-operation and issues of mutual concern. The Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Ms Carol Yip, also attended the meeting.

Mr Lee expressed his gratitude for the thoughtful arrangements made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) for inviting high-profile government officials from 12 countries across Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Oceania to visit Hong Kong, enhancing exchanges and co-operation between Hong Kong and countries around the world.

During the meeting, Mr Lee introduced the advantages and development opportunities of Hong Kong to the members of the delegation. Mr Lee highlighted that Hong Kong has the distinctive advantage of enjoying the strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world under "one country, two systems", serving as an international financial, shipping, and trade centre. As the world's freest economy, Hong Kong boasts a highly internationalised, market-oriented, and friendly business environment, making it an ideal place for companies to expand their global operations. He welcomed businesses worldwide to use Hong Kong as a platform to explore overseas and Mainland markets, achieving mutual benefits.

Noting that Hong Kong has been expanding its global economic and trade networks, Mr Lee said that Hong Kong has signed 24 investment agreements covering 33 economies, as well as nine free trade agreements covering 21 economies to date, including the free trade agreement signed with Peru last

month. Mr Lee said he looks forward to strengthening co-operation with governments of various countries in the future to help businesses explore more opportunities and promote cultural exchanges.

The delegation is visiting Hong Kong from December 8 to 11, during which they will meet with Principal Officials of the HKSAR Government, Legislative Council Members, and representatives of other major institutions. The delegation will also visit the West Kowloon Cultural District and the Hong Kong Science Park to learn about the latest developments in Hong Kong.



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## Quarterly business receipts indices for service industries for third quarter of 2024

Business receipts in value terms of many major service industries showed increases of varying magnitudes in the third quarter of 2024 when compared with the third quarter of 2023, according to the provisional figures of business receipts indices released today (December 9) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD).

Comparing the third quarter of 2024 with the third quarter of 2023, double-digit increases were recorded in business receipts indices of the transportation (+17.3%), financing (except banking) (+13.7%) and insurance (+11.7%) industries. On the other hand, the accommodation services industry recorded a decrease of 10.2% in business receipts index during the same period.

Analysed by service domain, business receipts index of the computer and information technology services domain increased by 34.4% year-on-year during the same period, whereas that of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain decreased by 5.3% year-on-year.

On a seasonally adjusted quarter-to-quarter comparison, business receipts in value terms of around half of the major service industries recorded decreases of varying magnitudes in the third quarter of 2024 when compared with the second quarter of 2024. In particular, a double-digit decrease was recorded in business receipts index of the real estate (-10.6%) industry. On the other hand, business receipts index of the insurance industry increased by 7.0% during the same period.

Analysed by service domain, comparing the third quarter of 2024 with the second quarter of 2024 on a seasonally adjusted basis, business receipts index of the computer and information technology services domain increased by 13.4%, while that of the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain also increased by 11.5%.

#### Commentary

A Government spokesman said that business receipts of many service industries continued to increase in the third quarter of 2024 over a year earlier. In particular, business receipts of the transportation, financing (except banking), and insurance industries recorded double-digit increases.

Looking ahead, business of the service industries as a whole should continue to expand. The Mainland's various measures to boost the economy, together with the initiatives in the 2024 Policy Address that inject new impetus to the Hong Kong economy, will benefit various service industries, though some of them may be more affected by increased global economic uncertainties and escalation of trade conflicts.

#### Further information

Table 1 presents the business receipts indices and their corresponding year-on-year rates of change in respect of selected service industries and service domains for the recent five quarters, while Table 2 shows the corresponding quarter-to-quarter rates of change in the business receipts indices for the recent five quarters based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The revised figures of business receipts indices for the third quarter of 2024 will be released at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web\\_table.html?id=660-69001](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/web_table.html?id=660-69001)) on January 20, 2025.

Data for compiling the business receipts indices are mainly based on the Quarterly Survey of Service Industries conducted by the C&SD, supplemented by relevant data provided by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and the Hong Kong Tourism Board.

A service domain differs from a service industry in that it comprises those economic activities which straddle different industries but are somehow related to a common theme. It may include all activities carried out by all establishments in a service industry that is closely related to the domain. For a service industry that is less closely related, however, only a portion of the establishments in the industry or even only part of the economic activities of the establishments is related to the domain. Taking the tourism, convention and exhibition services domain as an example, it includes all services of convention and exhibition organisers, short-term accommodation services and services of travel agents, and some of the services (only those involving visitors as customers) of restaurants, retailers and transport operators.

The classification of service industries follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into relevant industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the report "Quarterly Business Receipts Indices for Service Industries, Third Quarter 2024". Users can browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080006&scode=520](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080006&scode=520)).

For enquiries about the business receipts indices, please contact the Business Services Statistics Section of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 7274 or email: [business-receipts@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:business-receipts@censtatd.gov.hk)).

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## **Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs to visit Laos and Vietnam**

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, will visit countries along the Belt and Road regions, namely Laos and Vietnam, tomorrow (December 10).

During her visit, Miss Mak will meet with officials and organisations responsible for youth policies and youth development of the two countries. She will also visit the field units of the United Nations (UN) Volunteers – Hong Kong Universities Volunteer Internship Programme organised by the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau, to meet and exchange views with representatives of the UN agencies and Hong Kong undergraduate students participating in the programme and learn about their volunteer work at the internship.

Miss Mak will return to Hong Kong on December 13. During her absence, the Under Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Mr Clarence Leung, will act as the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs.