

Provisional statistics of retail sales for April 2024

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest figures on retail sales today (May 31).

The value of total retail sales in April 2024, provisionally estimated at \$29.6 billion, decreased by 14.7% compared with the same month in 2023. The revised estimate of the value of total retail sales in March 2024 decreased by 7.0% compared with a year earlier. For the first 4 months of 2024 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total retail sales decreased by 4.7% compared with the same period in 2023.

Of the total retail sales value in April 2024, online sales accounted for 8.2%. The value of online retail sales in that month, provisionally estimated at \$2.4 billion, increased by 11.4% compared with the same month in 2023. The revised estimate of online retail sales in March 2024 decreased by 4.0% compared with a year earlier. For the first 4 months of 2024 taken together, it was provisionally estimated that the value of online retail sales decreased by 5.8% 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 April 2024 decreased by 16.5% compared with a year earlier. The revised estimate of the volume of total retail sales in March 2024 decreased by 8.7% compared with a year earlier. For the first 4 months of 2024 taken together, the provisional estimate of the total retail sales decreased by 6.4% 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 April 2024 with April 2023, the value of sales of commodities in supermarkets decreased by 3.0%. This was followed by sales of other consumer goods not elsewhere classified (-13.2% in value); jewellery, watches and clocks, and valuable gifts (-28.7%); wearing apparel (-23.6%); medicines and cosmetics (-7.1%); food, alcoholic drinks and tobacco (-12.2%); electrical goods and other consumer durable goods not elsewhere classified (-26.5%); commodities in department stores (-21.5%); fuels (-9.6%); furniture and fixtures (-23.0%); footwear, allied products and other clothing accessories (-26.3%); books, newspapers, stationery and gifts (-4.5%); Chinese drugs and herbs (-25.1%); and optical shops (-23.1%).

On the other hand, the value of sales of motor vehicles and parts increased by 58.5% in April 2024 over a year earlier.

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of the value of total retail sales increased by 0.2% in the three months ending April 2024 compared with the preceding three-month period, while the

provisional estimate of the volume of total retail sales decreased by 0.3%.

Commentary

A government spokesman said that the value of total retail sales declined notably in April from a year earlier, partly because the Easter holidays rendered the effects of the changing consumption pattern of residents more visible. A large number of residents made outbound trips during the Easter holidays. This not only affected their local consumption during their time away but also could have reduced consumption in the days before and after the trips. Besides, the unstable weather conditions in April this year, with higher-than-usual rainfall, also had some impact. The relatively high base of comparison, attributable to buoyant consumer sentiment in the same period last year supported by the return to normalcy after the pandemic and the Consumption Voucher Scheme, was also relevant.

Looking ahead, the spokesman added that the changing consumption patterns of visitors and residents would continue to present challenges to the retail sector. Nevertheless, the revival of inbound tourism, rising employment earnings, and the recent stabilisation of asset markets would provide support. 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.

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 March 2024 as well as the provisional figures for April 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 4 months of 2024 taken together are also shown.

Table 2 presents the revised figures on value of online retail sales for March 2024 as well as the provisional figures for April 2024. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first 4 months of 2024 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 March 2024 as well as the provisional figures for April 2024. The provisional figures on year-on-year changes for the first 4 months of 2024 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).

Residential mortgage survey results for April 2024

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority announced the results of the residential mortgage survey for April 2024.

The number of mortgage applications in April increased month-on-month by 11.7 per cent to 9,629.

Mortgage loans approved in April increased by 52.4 per cent compared with March to HK\$29 billion. Among these, mortgage loans financing primary market transactions increased by 64.8 per cent to HK\$11.1 billion and those financing secondary market transactions increased by 64.2 per cent to HK\$15.3 billion. Mortgage loans for refinancing decreased by 12.7 per cent to HK\$2.6 billion.

Mortgage loans drawn down during April increased by 9.9 per cent compared with March to HK\$13 billion.

The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to HIBOR decreased from 93.1 per cent in March to 93 per cent in April. The ratio of new mortgage loans priced with reference to best lending rates decreased from 2.5 per cent in March to 2.2 per cent in April.

The outstanding value of mortgage loans remained virtually unchanged in April, standing at HK\$1,853.2 billion at end-April.

The mortgage delinquency ratio remained unchanged at 0.09 per cent and the rescheduled loan ratio remained unchanged at nearly 0 per cent.

Monetary Statistics for April 2024

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

According to statistics published today (May 31) by the Hong Kong Monetary Authority, total deposits with authorized institutions increased by 2.2 per cent in April 2024. Among the total, Hong Kong dollar deposits and foreign currency deposits increased by 0.5 per cent and 3.7 per cent respectively in April. In the year to end-April, total deposits and Hong Kong dollar deposits grew by 2.1 per cent and 0.7 per cent respectively. Renminbi deposits in Hong Kong increased by 15.2 per cent in April to RMB1,088.2 billion at the end of April, mainly reflecting fund flows of corporates. The total remittance of renminbi for cross-border trade settlement amounted to RMB1,257.0 billion in April, compared with RMB1,248.4 billion in March. It should be noted that changes in deposits are affected by a wide range of factors, such as interest rate movements and fund-raising activities. It is therefore more appropriate to observe the longer-term trends, and not to over-generalise fluctuations in a single month.

Total loans and advances decreased by 1.0 per cent in April, and decreased by 2.0 per cent in the year to end-April. Among the total, loans for use in Hong Kong (including trade finance) and loans for use outside Hong Kong decreased by 0.6 per cent and 2.3 per cent respectively in April. The

Hong Kong dollar loan-to-deposit ratio decreased to 82.1 per cent at the end of April from 83.2 per cent at the end of March, as Hong Kong dollar deposits increased while Hong Kong dollar loans decreased.

Hong Kong dollar M2 and M3 both increased by 0.5 per cent in April and both increased by 0.5 per cent when compared to a year ago. The seasonally-adjusted Hong Kong dollar M1 increased by 0.4 per cent in April while decreased by 9.9 per cent compared to a year ago, reflecting in part investment-related activities. Total M2 and total M3 both increased by 2.1 per cent in April. Compared to a year earlier, total M2 and total M3 increased by 5.5 per cent and 5.6 per cent respectively.

As monthly monetary statistics are subject to volatilities due to a wide range of transient factors, such as seasonal and IPO-related funding demand as well as business and investment-related activities, caution is required when interpreting the statistics.

Financial results for month ended April 30, 2024

The Government announced today (May 31) its financial results for April 2024, the first month of the current financial year.

Expenditure for the first month amounted to HK\$61.9 billion and revenue HK\$34.2 billion, resulting in a deficit of HK\$27.7 billion.

A Government spokesperson said that the deficit in April was mainly due to the fact that some major types of revenue including salaries and profits taxes are mostly received towards the end of a financial year.

The fiscal reserves stood at HK\$706.9 billion as at April 30, 2024.

Detailed figures are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

TABLE 1. CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT (Note 1)

	Month ended April 30, 2024 HK\$ million
Revenue	34,273.5
Expenditure	(61,934.9)

Deficit	(27,661.4)
Financing	
Domestic	
Banking Sector (Note 2)	25,949.6
Non-Banking Sector	1,711.8
External	–
Total	27,661.4

Government Debts as at April 30, 2024 (Note 3)

HK\$192,298 million

Debts Guaranteed by Government as at April 30, 2024 (Note 4)

HK\$144,518 million

TABLE 2. FISCAL RESERVES

	Month ended April 30, 2024 HK\$ million
Fiscal Reserves at start of period	734,585.4
Consolidated Deficit	(27,661.4)
Fiscal Reserves at end of period (Note 5)	706,924.0

Notes:

1. This Account consolidates the General Revenue Account and the following eight Funds: Capital Works Reserve Fund, Capital Investment Fund, Civil Service Pension Reserve Fund, Disaster Relief Fund, Innovation and Technology Fund, Land Fund, Loan Fund and Lotteries Fund. It excludes the Bond Fund, the balance of which is not part of the fiscal reserves. The Bond Fund balance as at April 30, 2024, was HK\$283,317 million.

2. Includes transactions with the Exchange Fund and resident banks.

3. These were the Green Bonds (equivalent to HK\$192,298 million as at April 30, 2024) issued under the Government Green Bond Programme. They were denominated in US dollars (US\$9,950 million with maturity from May 2024 to January 2053), euros (4,580 million euros with maturity from January 2025 to November 2041), Renminbi (RMB31,500 million with maturity from November 2024 to June 2033) and Hong Kong dollars (HK\$42,000 million with maturity from May

2025 to October 2026). They do not include the outstanding bonds with nominal value of HK\$237,026 million and alternative bonds with nominal value of US\$1,000 million (equivalent to HK\$7,826 million as at April 30, 2024) issued under the Government Bond Programme (with proceeds credited to the Bond Fund). Of these bonds under the Government Bond Programme (including Silver Bonds with nominal value of HK\$124,526 million, which may be redeemed before maturity upon request from bond holders), bonds with nominal value of HK\$1,500 million were repaid upon maturity on May 20, 2024; bonds with nominal value of HK\$67,421 million will mature within the period from June 2024 to April 2025 and the rest within the period from May 2025 to May 2042.

4. Includes guarantees provided under the SME Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2001, the Special Loan Guarantee Scheme launched in 2008, the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme launched in 2012, Loan Guarantee Scheme for Cross-boundary Passenger Transport Trade, Loan Guarantee Scheme for Battery Electric Taxis and Loan Guarantee Scheme for Travel Sector launched in 2023, and a commercial loan of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation.

5. Includes HK\$364,974 million, being the balance of the Land Fund held in the name of "Future Fund", for long-term investments up to December 31, 2030. The Future Fund also includes HK\$4,800 million, being one-third of the actual surplus in 2015-16 as top-up.

[S for Housing proceeds to Beijing to continue visit \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Housing, Ms Winnie Ho, departed Hangzhou and arrived in Beijing yesterday (May 30) to continue her visit, including to the China Railway Construction Corporation Limited (CRCC) and the China State Construction International Holdings Limited (CSCI) to deepen her understanding of the application of construction technologies by the companies, of which their group companies are respectively participating in the construction of a total of about 17 000 units of Light Public Housing (LPH). The group companies of the CSCI are also participating in the construction of five public housing projects with about 8 000 units under the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA).

Ms Ho yesterday led a delegation of representatives from the Housing Bureau (HB) and the Housing Department, and toured a steel module manufacturing plant of the CRCC to see for herself the latest developments of innovative construction technologies such as Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) and application of construction robotics. They also met with CRCC representatives and shared experiences on the research and development as well as application of these technologies.

Ms Ho and the delegation visited an in-situ redevelopment project of an old building in Beijing this morning (May 31). The project was undertaken by the CSCI and is the first building in the city constructed using concrete MiC. Ms Ho said the HKHA is exploring the adoption of MiC as a concrete construction approach in various projects to build a more pleasant living environment for its residents. She was pleased to see different cities actively developing and adopting this technology to tackle their challenges. The delegation visited the CSCI and its exhibition gallery afterwards, followed by an exchange session with company representatives. Ms Ho thanked the CSCI for its group companies taking up a very challenging LPH project and also a large number of public housing projects. She also thanked the project team for the completion of Cheung Ching Estate in Tsing Yi by phases, allowing an early intake of residents from early May onwards. She encouraged them to keep expediting the construction process whenever possible for the LPH and various public housing projects and exploring early handing over by phases.

The HB and the Architectural Services Department awarded two public works project contracts for the first batch of LPH projects in November last year to Chevalier – China Railway Joint Venture and China State Construction Engineering (Hong Kong) Limited respectively for the design and construction of the LPH projects at Yau Pok Road, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun Area 3A and Choi Hing Road, Ngau Tau Kok; and the one at Olympic Avenue, Kai Tak. Relevant works have commenced at full speed. The first batch of LPH projects comprises four projects, providing a total of around 17 000 units. Among them, the Yau Pok Road, Yuen Long, project will provide about 2 100 units, and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2025 at the earliest. The other three are expected to be completed in phases from the second quarter of 2025 to the third quarter of 2026.

Ms Ho continued that by manufacturing prefabricated modules in a highly automated and smart factory, the number of workers on-site can be greatly reduced. Together with the implementation of smart site, this not only can safeguard workers' safety and provide a better working environment, the construction time, construction waste, usage of water and electricity at the site can also be significantly reduced by carrying out work processes in parallel. The construction process will be more environmentally friendly with much less noise and dust. More sustainable development can be achieved through the application of green-building technologies, conserving resources and reducing carbon emissions. Also, to enhance the speed, efficiency, quantity and quality of increasing the public housing supply, the HKHA has been committed to promoting the adoption of various innovative construction technologies in its projects. With technologies like MiC becoming increasingly mature and continuously advancing, she is confident that there will be further application opportunities in public housing projects, which will greatly enhance the construction efficiency, quality and site safety.

Ms Ho called on the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council in the afternoon. She said that President Xi Jinping proposed the idea of developing "new quality productive forces" last

year to promote high-quality development. This will foster more proactive research and development as well as advancement of various innovative technologies, including building technologies, on the Mainland and in Hong Kong. This in turn helps to facilitate the upgrading and transformation of the construction industry. In the face of a tremendous increase in housing construction, it is both a challenge and a golden opportunity which provides practical application scenarios for implementing sustainable building construction. The HB and the HD team will spare no effort in seizing this opportunity.

Ms Ho and her delegation will return to Hong Kong this evening after the visit.

