

CSSA caseload for February 2024

The overall Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) caseload in February showed a drop of 279 cases, representing a decrease of 0.1 per cent compared with that of January, according to the latest CSSA caseload statistics released by the Social Welfare Department today (March 18).

The total CSSA caseload at the end of February stood at 199 662 (see attached table), with a total of 272 162 recipients.

Analysed by case nature, low-earnings cases registered a month-to-month decrease of 1.4 per cent to 1 546 cases. Single parent cases dropped by 0.5 per cent to 20 290 cases. Old age cases, permanent disability cases and unemployment cases all decreased by 0.1 per cent to 111 879 cases, 17 146 cases and 17 053 cases respectively.

Ill-health cases registered an increase of 0.1 per cent to 27 846 cases.

Arrangement of LegCo Committee meetings

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The following Committee meetings originally scheduled for tomorrow (March 19) have been rescheduled.

- Bills Committee on Nurses Registration (Amendment) Bill 2023
 - Bills Committee on Electronic Traffic Enforcement (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2023
 - Panel on Commerce, Industry, Innovation and Technology
 - Panel on Home Affairs, Culture and Sports
 - Subcommittee to Study Policy Issues Relating to the Harbourfront
 - Subcommittee to Follow Up Issues Relating to Benefits for Civil Servants, Retired Civil Servants and Eligible Persons
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Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in January 2024

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for January 2024 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (March 18) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

In January 2024, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 28.6% and 16.9% respectively over January 2023. The trade flows in January and February of each year tend to show considerable volatilities due to the difference in timing of the Lunar New Year holidays.

Comparing the three months ending January 2024 with the three months ending January 2023, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 11.3% and 8.2% respectively.

Comparing the three-month period ending January 2024 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 3.2% and 1.3% respectively.

Changes in volume of external merchandise trade are derived from changes in external merchandise trade value with the effect of price changes discounted.

Comparing January 2024 with January 2023, the prices of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 3.8% and 3.9% respectively.

Price changes in external merchandise trade are reflected by changes in unit value indices of external merchandise trade, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, specific price data.

The terms of trade index is derived from the ratio of price index of total exports of goods to that of imports of goods. Compared with the same period in 2023, the index decreased by 0.1% in January 2024.

Changes in the unit value and volume of total exports of goods by main destination are shown in Table 1.

Comparing January 2024 with January 2023, increases were recorded for the total export volume to all main destinations: the mainland of China (the Mainland) (47.5%), India (44.2%), Taiwan (38.7%), Vietnam (23.8%) and the USA (6.4%).

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to all main

destinations increased: Taiwan (6.0%), India (5.6%), the USA (5.2%), the Mainland (4.7%) and Vietnam (4.3%).

Changes in the unit value and volume of imports of goods by main supplier are shown in Table 2.

Comparing January 2024 with January 2023, increases were recorded for the import volume from the USA (37.4%), the Mainland (33.4%) and Korea (21.7%). On the other hand, the import volume from Singapore (-2.2%) and Taiwan (-11.0%) decreased.

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from all main suppliers increased: Singapore (9.4%), Korea (7.0%), Taiwan (4.4%), the Mainland (4.0%) and the USA (0.2%).

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the January 2024 issue of "Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Index Numbers". Users can browse and download the report at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1020006&scode=230).

Enquiries on merchandise trade indices may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4918).

[Unemployment and underemployment statistics for December 2023 – February 2024](#)

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for December 2023 – February 2024) released today (March 18) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stood at 2.9% in December 2023 – February 2024, same as that in November 2023 – January 2024. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0% in the two periods.

Comparing December 2023 – February 2024 with November 2023 – January 2024, movements in the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) and underemployment rate in different industry sectors varied, but the magnitudes were generally not large.

Total employment decreased by around 2 300 from 3 697 000 in November 2023 – January 2024 to 3 694 700 in December 2023 – February 2024. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 2 700 from 3 799 700

to 3 797 000.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) in December 2023 – February 2024 was 102 300, about the same as that in November 2023 – January 2024 (102 600). Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons decreased by around 1 200 from 38 800 to 37 600.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stayed at 2.9% in December 2023 – February 2024, same as November 2023 – January 2024. The underemployment rate also remained unchanged at 1.0%. Both the labour force and total employment saw narrowed declines, decreasing by 2 700 and 2 300 to 3 797 000 and 3 694 700 respectively. The number of unemployed persons stayed low at 102 300."

The unemployment rates of various sectors stayed low in December 2023 – February 2024, mostly showing only small changes compared with the preceding three-month period.

Looking ahead, Mr Sun said, "The labour market is expected to stay tight in the near term along with continued growth of the local economy."

On large-scale job fairs, the Labour Department (LD) will organise the "Exploring New Opportunities Job Fair" at MacPherson Stadium in Mong Kok on March 26 and 27, 2024. Over 55 employers will participate, offering a large number of vacancies.

In December 2023 – February 2024, LD recorded a monthly average of 76 502 vacancies from the private sector, representing a year-on-year decrease of 17.4% and a decrease of 8.5% over the average figure in November 2023 – January 2024. Job-seekers may make use of the LD's online platforms, such as the Interactive Employment Service website, for obtaining such vacancy information.

Further information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization. The employed population covers all employers, self-employed persons, employees (including full-time, part-time, casual workers, etc.) and unpaid family workers. Unemployed persons by industry (or occupation) are classified according to their previous industry (or occupation).

The survey for December 2023 – February 2024 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 68 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong

Kong. Labour force statistics compiled from this sample represented the situation in the moving three-month period of December 2023 to February 2024.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode200.html). More detailed analysis of the labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the report contains statistics for the quarter October – December 2023 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2024 will be available by end May 2024. Users can also browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the General Household Survey Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Tung Chung Swimming Pool temporarily closed](#)

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible and repeat it at regular intervals:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (March 18) that Tung Chung Swimming Pool in Islands District has been temporarily closed for cleaning and superchlorination following the discovery of a small amount of vomit in the pool.

It will be reopened at 8pm today.

The department appeals to swimmers to be considerate and to keep the swimming pools clean. They are advised not to swim after a full meal and should use the toilet facilities if necessary before swimming.