

Hong Kong & Mainland China News –June-2017

HK retail sales rise for second consecutive month

By news.rthk.hk

Thursday, June 1, 2017

Retail sales in Hong Kong have risen for a second consecutive month following an almost 2-year contraction.

But the increase in April was insignificant. Government data showed sales grew 0.1 percent during the month from a year earlier, after an increase of 3 percent in March.

For the first four months of 2017, sales were down 1 percent when compared with same period a year ago.

Bay area plan to be released

By www.news.gov.hk

Thursday, June 1, 2017

The development plans for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area will be outlined by the Government during its current term.

Chief Executive CY Leung made the statement to legislators today, saying the bay area's development will bring benefits to the young generation.

Mr Leung said the next-term government, including the Chief Executive-elect, has been involved in the development plan.

He said it will facilitate the flow of people, goods, capital and information between Hong Kong and the bay area cities, boosting Hong Kong's economy.

The Commission on Strategic Development and the Economic Development Commission will submit development proposals to the Government, he added.

SAR stays top of the world

By www.thestandard.com.hk

Friday, June 2, 2017

Hong Kong retained its spot as the world's most competitive economy for the second consecutive year, according to the annual world competitiveness report released by the Switzerland-based International Institute for Management Development World Competitiveness Center.

However, Hong Kong came second last in the prices/living costs ranking of the report, one spot above Venezuela.

Hong Kong came first among 63 economies. Switzerland, Singapore, the United States and Netherlands made up the first five. China ranked 18th, up seven places.

Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said the report was a recognition of our robust financial system and fiscal discipline.

"I am delighted to see Hong Kong has been ranked as the world's most competitive economy in 2017 again," said Chan

He said Hong Kong will strive to uphold its competitive edge by opening up new markets and new industries.

Economies were assessed on economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency and infrastructure.

Hong Kong came first in government efficiency and business efficiency and 20th in infrastructure. On economic performance, Hong Kong fell from fifth in the previous year to 11th.

Hong Kong ranked 62nd in prices/ living cost, one of the sub-factors of economic performance, with home and office rents the highest.

Mainland's May exports, imports beat forecasts

By news.rthk.hk

Thursday, June 8, 2017

The mainland posted a forecast-busting surge in exports and imports in May, official data showed on Thursday, signalling improvement in the world's number two economy.

Exports rose 8.7 percent to US\$191 billion while imports jumped 14.8 percent to US\$150.2 billion year-on-year.

Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg News had forecast a 7.2 percent rise in exports and 8.3 percent increase in imports. The trade surplus rose to US\$40.8 billion, up US\$2 billion from April.

The readings will come as a relief to China-watchers after a series of weak readings suggesting a recent pick-up in the economy could be fizzling, while there are also lingering concerns about US President Donald Trump's protectionist rhetoric.

An independent survey of factory activity indicated the manufacturing sector contracted in May for the first time in almost a year, hinting at deteriorating conditions for the mainland producers. (AFP)

HK, Ireland sign tax deal

By www.news.gov.hk

Thursday, June 8, 2017

Hong Kong has signed an agreement with Ireland to allow the automatic exchange of financial account information in tax matters from 2018.

The move brings the number of Hong Kong's tax data exchange partners to 12.

The other partners are Belgium, Canada, Guernsey, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa and the UK.

HK becomes AIIB member

By www.news.gov.hk

Tuesday, June 13, 2017

Hong Kong has been admitted as a new member of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, the Government announced today.

The admission was confirmed after the Legislative Council Finance Committee approved funding for the subscription of 7,651 shares of the bank's capital in May.

Financial Secretary Paul Chan said Hong Kong is well placed to help the bank raise funds to finance infrastructure projects.

"Our experience and expertise in the design, construction, operation and management of major infrastructure have been well proven internationally," he said.

"Hong Kong's professional services and financial services sectors can certainly contribute to the success of the AIIB, while Hong Kong's participation in the AIIB can also create new opportunities for the sectors."

Mr Chan will lead a delegation to attend the second annual meeting of the bank's Board of Governors in Korea from June 16 to 18.

HK, Indonesia sign tax deal

By www.news.gov.hk

Friday, June 16, 2017

Hong Kong has signed an agreement with Indonesia to allow the automatic exchange of financial account information in tax matters.

The move brings the number of Hong Kong's tax data exchange partners to 13.

The other partners are Belgium, Canada, Guernsey, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, the Netherlands, Portugal, South Africa and the UK.

FS signs CEPA upgrades

By www.news.gov.hk

Wednesday, June 28, 2017

Financial Secretary Paul Chan and Vice Minister of Commerce Gao Yan signed two agreements under the Mainland & Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) framework today.

They are the Investment Agreement and the Agreement on Economic & Technical Co-operation (Ecotech Agreement).

Chief Executive CY Leung witnessed the signing.

The agreements make CEPA a comprehensive free trade pact by broadening its scope to cover trade in goods, trade in services, investment, and economic and technical co-operation.

The Investment Agreement is the Mainland's first investment deal with pre-establishment national treatment commitments made for the advocacy of investment adopting a negative listing approach.

It will be implemented on January 1.

Its Most-Favoured Treatment provision specifies that any preferential treatment the Mainland accords to investments and investors from other countries or regions will be extended to Hong Kong investments and investors.

The agreement will also cover admission of investments outside the scope of the Agreement on Trade in Services, including manufacturing sectors, mining sectors and investment in assets.

The Ecotech Agreement, which comes into immediate effect, consolidates and updates the economic and technical co-operation activities set out in CEPA and its supplements, taking into account the development trends and needs of Hong Kong and the Mainland.

It also incorporates co-operation in the economic and trade aspects of the Belt & Road Initiative and Sub-regional Co-operation into CEPA framework, thereby providing Hong Kong businesses opportunities to participate in national development strategies.

Since the implementation of CEPA 14 years ago, the Hong Kong products that have been imported into the Mainland tariff-free have enjoyed total tariff savings of RMB6 billion.

In addition, 1,800 local enterprises have successfully applied for certificates to enter the Mainland market with CEPA benefits.