





## 戰加風政府應推解困措施



美費飼 上加用料

消費者委員會昨日發表過去一年的物價變動指數,十二類超市貨品包 括糧油、罐頭、奶類及清潔用品等平均加價百分之六點八,其中多款暢銷 罐頭及雞蛋的加幅更逾兩成,反映漲風勁吹下,市民生活開支增加及深感

眼前這一股物價漲風,已經持續了超過一年時間,而且波及的層面十 分廣泛,原因也相當複雜。昨日消委會發表的主要是來自三大超市的統 計,其實,其他零售層面如街市、士多、藥房、小食店,加幅同樣也不 小;過去普羅市民嫌超市東西貴可以改去光顧街市,但今次這股加風卻無 所不在、避無可避

眼前,最足以反映這股強勁加風的例子,相信非牛肉莫屬。自去年中 以來,內地供港牛隻的批發價即不斷上升,原因包括飼料價格上漲、本銷 需求增加、運輸費用激增等多個環節,累積下來,迄今超市、街市牛肉的 零售價已貴了近四成,澳紐、南美、美加、日本等外地入口的高級牛肉基 於同樣原因,售價亦拾級而上。

正是「平有平加、貴有貴加」,令到牛肉這一本港市民的基本肉食已 幾乎成爲奢侈品;過去一碟菜心炒牛肉被視爲家常小菜,今天,不少基層 主婦在街市牛肉檔前只能問問價、搖搖頭或索性繞道而去,「三月不知牛 肉味 | , 在基層家庭已非誇張之詞。

在無情加風之下,基層市民生活已感受到頗大壓力,如何維持長者生 活質素不至進一步下降,以及少年兒童成長發育所需營養不至缺乏,更成 了突出的問題,亟須特區政府正視和給予援手。

本月初,俗稱「雙倍生果金」的長者生活津貼二千二百元首次發放, 連同過去四個月的「補水」四千四百元,對不少清貧長者來說,確有「久 早甘霖」之欣悅。梁振英關顧弱勢社群,上任第一件事就是力推「長 津 | ,但是,眼前這股加風,很快就會把老人家這一點「意外之財」也吞

同樣,去年特首首份施政報告發表後,一度偃旗息鼓的「扶貧委員 會」重新成立,由政務司司長林鄭月娥掛帥,醞釀已久的訂立「貧窮線」 議題亦再次提上議事日程。還有由政府與商界「對口」成立的「關愛基 金」,亦繼續推動政府主流計劃以外的扶貧工作。那麼,眼前正是特區政 府、扶貧委員會、關愛基金大顯愛心、大展拳腳的時候了

而所謂「遠水難救近火」,儘管政府衛生及福利局、扶貧委員會和關 愛基金都有很多長、短、中期的工作在做,都在致力於爲弱勢社群解決各 種生活問題,但眼前對基層和弱勢市民來說,沒有比應對物價上漲更爲具 體、迫切的問題了,特別是不少扶貧、關愛項目重點在長期脫貧,但物價 這匹「脫韁野馬」不會等人,每日去超市街市的兩餐飯錢菜錢以及各種家 庭用品開支是要「現兜兜」拿現錢去買回來的

因此,過去曾經有人建議過,在通脹等「非常時期」,政府向弱勢社 、基層市民按照「長津」、綜援及老幼人口等標準,每月發放一定數額 的「生活津貼」或「購物券」,是一個比較切實可行的建議,值得當局認 眞考慮

「通脹生活津貼」只是一項權宜之計,有別於其他長遠扶貧措 施,只宜推行一個短時期,目的是幫助基層市民和弱勢社群緩一口氣,渡 過眼前的物價難關。此議如經有關部門研究認爲可行,應盡早予以推行, 以解燃眉

## Government should launch relief measures in face of inflation

The Consumer Council yesterday published its 2012 Annual Supermarket Price Survey. Overall, the aggregate average price of products in 12 main categories - including rice and cooking oil, canned food, milk and cleaning supplies - rose 6.8% in 2012 over 2011, with prices of many popular-brand canned foods and eggs even soaring up by 20%. This well shows that, with inflation showing no sign of abating, consumers increasingly feel helpless in face of diminishing purchase power to meet household needs.

The ongoing price hikes have lasted for more than one year already. A great variety of consumer products are affected, and causes for the inflation are very complex. The statistics unveiled by the Consumer Council yesterday were mainly based on its survey on the three major supermarket chains. As a matter of fact, considerable price hikes are also seen on other retail venues such as wet markets, stores, pharmacy shops and cafeterias. In the past, grass-roots people could have instead gone shopping at a wet market if they thought products on supermarkets were too expensive. But the ongoing inflation seems to penetrate everywhere. There is no way to dodge it.

Right now, beef seems to be the best example showing how strong the current inflation is. Since mid-2012, wholesale price of live beef cattle imported from the Mainland has been going up steadily. The causes include price increase in cattle feed, growth in domestic demand for cattle and sharp increase in transport cost. By now accumulated beef price hike on supermarkets and wet markets has reached nearly 40% on average. For similar reasons, prices of high-end beef imported from Australia, New Zealand, South America, the United States, Canada and Japan have also steadily gone up. Price hikes of beef from low-end to high-end have turned this otherwise primary foodstuff for Hong Kong citizens into a luxury. In the past, fried beef with vegetable was regarded as a common family dish. But now, many grass-roots house wives would best stop at a beef stall to ask about prices and then shake their heads and go away, or even simply pass by it instead. It is now not an exaggeration to say that a grass-roots family could " not taste beef for three months.

Under such merciless price hikes, grass-roots citizens feel growing pressure on their daily lives. And a prominent problem now turns up: how to ensure elderly people's living standards not to further deteriorate and how to ensure children and teenagers to have sufficient nutrition for their growth? The SAR Government must address the problem and

Early this month, the government began to dispatch the monthly \$2,200 Old Age Living Allowance (OALA), popularly known as "Doubled Fruit Money (Old Age Allowance)". For this together with the \$4,400 "retroactive pay", many needy elderly people felt as happy as having "a good rain after a long drought". Leung Chun-ying cares about disadvantaged groups in society. The first thing he pursued after taking office was to push for the introduction of OALA. However, the ongoing price hikes will soon quickly swallow such a small "windfall".

Likewise, after the Chief Executive delivered his maiden Policy Address, the once-defunct Commission on Poverty was re-established with Chief Secretary Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor as its head. The long-debated topic of setting up a "poverty line" was once again placed on the agenda. The Community Care Fund jointly sponsored by the government and business sector also continued to help alleviate poverty outside the government's mainstream schemes. Right now, it is time for the SAR Government, Commission on Poverty and Community Fund to fully show their loving heart and fulfill their duties.

A saying has it that "Water afar off quencheth not fire." It is true that the government's Food and Health Bureau, Commission on Poverty and Community Care Fund are all doing a lot of long-, shortand medium-term works to help disadvantaged people solve problems in their daily lives. But right now, for grass-roots and disadvantaged people, nothing is more down-to-earth and urgent than how to cope with inflation. In particular, many poverty-alleviation schemes and Community Care Fund projects focus on long-term poverty alleviation, but such a "running wild horse" as inflation won't wait. People have to pay cash when they go to a supermarket a wet market to buy daily foodstuff and necessities.

Therefore, some people used to propose that, during "extraordinary times" such as inflation, the government should dispatch a certain amount of "living subsidies" or "shopping coupons" to disadvantaged and grass-roots people with a reference to OALA and Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) standards and family composition. This is a comparatively practical and feasible proposal worthy to be considered by authorities.

Needless to say, providing "living subsidies" is but a provisional measure, different from other long-term poverty alleviation measures. Thus it should just be adopted for a short period of time with an aim to help grass-roots and disadvantaged people gain a little breathing space and ride out the current predicament. If after careful studies, relevant authorities think this proposal is workable, it should be put into practice as early as possible to meet people's pressing need.

16 April 2013

### Words and Usage

Soar up (phrasal verb) - rise rapidly. ((急速)升高,上漲) Examples: 1. The US dollar is soaring up against the Japanese

2. The balloon soared up on a gust of wind. Not taste beef for three months - 借引自中國典故「三月不

知肉味 | 。見孔子《論語・述而》:「子在齊 閒《韶》,三月不知肉味。/意思是,孔子在 齊國聽到《韶》樂,三個月之內吃肉不覺得有 味道。比喻集中注意力於某一事物而忘記了其 他事情。也借用來形容幾個月不吃肉

Turn up (phrasal verb) - To appear or happen, especially unexpectedly.(出現,產生)

Examples: 1. You'll get another job: something is bound to turn up soon.

2. We turned up in Mr. Mitchell's class when he had a sub last week.

Windfall (noun) - A sudden, unexpected piece of good fortune or personal gain (like a ripened fruit that has been

blown down by the wind). (意外的收穫,橫財) Examples: 1. They received a windfall because of the tax cuts.

2. The money that my great-uncle left us was certainly

Water afar off quencheth not fire (proverb) - 遠水難救近火, 類似的英諺還有: Water after does not quench a fire at hand; Water after quench not fire等。中英文 中有不少諺語驚人地相似,不知是互相借鑑而來, 還是由於「心有靈犀一點通」而各自形成的。據 悉,此中文諺語最早出自明・西湖漁隱主人《歡喜 冤家》第九回:「只是遠水難救近火,可惜這間興

處店面沒有貨賣。 |

通貨膨脹,意指一般物價水準在某一時期 內,連續性地以相當的幅度上漲的狀態。與貨幣 貶値不同,整體通貨膨脹爲特定經濟體內之貨幣 價值的下降,而貨幣貶值爲貨幣在經濟體間之相 對價值的降低。前者影響此貨幣在使用國內的價 值,而後者影響此貨幣在國際市場上的價值。兩 者之相關性爲經濟學上的爭議之一

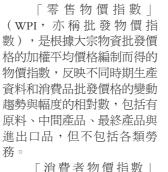
經濟學家對通貨膨脹有比較嚴格的定義,以 對整體經濟活動的影響程度,來界定通貨膨脹現 象:一般物價水準在某一時期內,連續性地以相 當的幅度上漲。由此可知要稱爲通貨膨脹,還得 符合一些要件:

- ●單一商品漲價,不是通貨膨脹。如果只是 某一種或某一類商品價格上漲,而其他商品的價 格沒有發生變化,這並不是通貨膨脹;因爲它對 整體經濟影響不大。但如單一商品價格上漲引起 其他商品價格普遍上揚,就可能形成通貨膨脹。 如石油作爲燃料和很多產品的重要生產原料,在 兩次石油危機時,其價格的調升引起了世界性的 通貨膨脹
- ●很多商品的價格上漲後就停下來,也不是 通貨膨脹;因爲這種「漲一次即停」的現象,對 經濟活動的衝擊不大。
- ●漲幅不大、也不是通貨膨脹。在現代經濟 社會,物價水準常有上揚的特性;多數情況下, 物價只升不降,這是「物價的僵固性」。但如果 許多商品的價格在某一段時間內,以一相當的幅 度,一波波、持續性的上漲,對整個經濟社會造 成困擾,就是通貨膨脹了。對漲幅多少,持續多 久才算是通貨膨脹,沒有一定的標準,各國的認

通貨膨脹,因國而異。不同經濟結構,不同 歷史背景下,各國對通貨膨脹的容忍程度也不 同。有時候,通貨膨脹只是一個相對的觀念。只 能粗略地以「超過正常的上漲幅度」界定之。

爲了計算物價上漲率,各國政府都有專門的 部門定期收集各種商品及勞務的價格資料,編制 「物價指數」。在現代經濟社會中,商品及勞務 的種類非常多,每種商品或勞務對不同的人都有 不同的重要性,其中最具代表性、最常被用來觀 察通貨膨脹的是「消費者物價指數」以及「零售 物價指數」兩種物價指數。

# 通貨膨脹



「消費者物價指數」 (CPI,亦稱居民消費價格指 數),是反映與一般居民日常 生活有關的各種商品及勞務的 零售價格統計出來的物價變動 指標。它是衡量通貨膨脹的主 要指標之一。一般超過3%為 通貨膨脹,超過5%就是較嚴 重的通貨膨脹。其演算法如下:

●選取和日常生活相關的商品及勞務,按照 不同重要性,計算加權平均價格;因爲不同商品 價格上漲的影響力也不同,如米、麵等主食價格 上漲比煙酒等,對一般人影響會更大;

●計算平均物價水準,不能以簡單的算術平 均法處理。在一般家庭支出中,房租佔了很大的 比例;

●選擇某一年爲基準年,將基準年的加權平 均物價水準當做100。新年度的加權平均物價除 以基準年的加權平均物價之後,再乘上100,即 得到新年度的物價指數

通貨膨脹產生的原因很複雜,常有以下幾

●需求拉動的通貨膨脹:商品及勞務的總供 給大過總需求,造成物價上揚;

●成本推動的通貨膨脹:工資上漲、石油等

原料價格上漲及企業壟斷等導致; ●結構性通貨膨脹:因產業發展不平衡、基

礎設施不足等導致;

●輸入性通貨膨脹:國外的進口品價格上漲 導致;

●通貨膨脹預期心理:物價上漲時,如果人 們預料物價繼續上漲,將搶購、囤積,致使物價

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▲作為消費者,應以正確、理性的消費行為,配合政府的努 力,共同維護經濟的穩定成長

上漲得更劇烈。

通貨膨脹會愈益嚴重,會引發惡性通貨膨 脹。價格上漲劇烈,人們對貨幣的信心蕩然無 存,不僅一國的經濟會瀕臨崩潰,政治、社會的 不安定也伴隨而來。發生通貨膨脹時,一個家庭 要維持原來消費水準,開銷會加大,甚至入不敷 支;商人短時收入增加,但若生產成本急速上揚 或消費者購買力劇降,企業利潤即受影響;房地 產價格上揚,擁有房地產的人財富增值,沒有房 地產的人更買不起;薪水階級、靠社會福利金、 退休金,以及依賴固定利息過日子的人,生活受 影響;債權人受損,但對債務人的影響剛好相 反。因此,使全體國民的所得及財富進行重分 配。通常,中、低固定收入且無自用住宅者,受 通貨膨脹爲害最重。

通貨膨脹一旦發生,便很難遏止;中央銀行 無時無刻不在密切觀察各種經濟現象,採取調整 重貼現率、存款準備率,以及進行公開市場操作 等,謹愼地控制資金的供應,維持物價的穩定, 使國家經濟活動能順利運作,嚴防通貨膨脹發 生。作爲消費者,應以正確、理性的消費行爲, 配合政府的努力,一方面共同維護經濟的穩定成 長,另一方面亦可確保自己的權益

## 冥界也通脹?

「清明|是中國農曆的24節氣(The 24 Solar Terms)之一。在中國大部分地區,每年清明前後是 多雨天氣;淸明傳統上又是孝子賢孫們掃墓祭祖的節 日。因此,「清明」在英文中除按音譯爲Ching Ming(粵語)和Qing Ming(普通話)外,也可意譯為 Tomb-sweeping Festival或Mourning Day

唐朝詩人杜牧的七絕詩《淸明》起首兩句「淸明 時節雨紛紛,路上行人欲斷魂」,形象地概括了這兩 個特點(也有人認爲此詩是南宋時託名之作)。此詩已 有許多英譯版本。綜合而言,這兩句可譯爲:(It drizzles ceaselessly during the Qing Ming season; On their way, tomb-sweepers look gloomy and miserable.) 的確,綿綿陰雨並沒有使掃墓者們卻步不前,反而增 添了他們的哀思

今年,香港的掃墓者也添了些許新愁。他們發 現,祭奠祖先用的紙紮品 (paper offerings) 價錢比去 年貴了5%至10%。商販說事來貨貴了,因爲人民幣不 斷升值(revalue或appreciate),而內地人工也不斷上 漲。的確,由於港幣與美元掛鈎(pegged)而對許多 貨幣相對貶值,香港不得不承受所謂的「輸入性通 脹 | (imported inflation)

但是,除非出國旅遊購物,大陸民衆並沒有感受 到人民幣升值的好處。相反,他們覺得手裡的錢在不 斷縮水(shrink),因爲這幾年來他們也深受通貨膨 脹之苦。他們可能聯想到冥界(the netherworld)也 會有通脹吧,所以想多燒些「陰司紙」(Hell Banknotes)給先人。據報道,今年大陸市場上出現 「面值」(face value)高達9,800億元一張的「陰司 紙」。用98開頭大概是取好意頭吧。而往年,「面 值」幾百億元一張的已算是「大鈔」了。

同樣,爲了使先人在冥界的「生活」跟上時代的 步伐(keep pace with the times),今年的紙紮品中 還有時髦的iPhone、iPad和大屏幕平板電視 (flat-screen TV),甚至還有各種「國際旅遊」的 套票。看來,清明祭祖的習俗也在與時俱進

亦 然