Chit Chat Weather

香港天文台
HONG KONG OBSERVATORY

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The Observatory Won Four Awards in the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme

This year, the Hong Kong Observatory won two gold prizes and two bronze prizes in the Civil Service Outstanding Service Award Scheme. The Observatory team was highly motivated by the adjudicators noting that the Observatory, "continuously explores new frontiers, improves its services and provides timely responses." while the big data system, "has reduced costs significantly and improved work efficiency. It is designed to support the specific requirements of the colleagues and retains valuable knowledge of weather forecasting."

Mr Shun Chi-ming, Director of the Observatory (left), was presented with the Departmental Service Enhancement Award (Small Department Category) by Hon Kwok Wai-keung, JP (centre).

As proof of the high popularity and usage of the services provided by the Observatory, in 2016 there were over 100 billion page views of the online information services provided on the Observatory's website, and especially through the MyObservatory mobile app. With ongoing growth in popularity, the total page views is expected to exceed 150 billion this year.

With a wide range of needs from across the community, the Observatory has launched a variety of special services, and has designed a one-stop portal to provide information on the latest weather conditions. For example, the "Weather Information for Outdoor Photography" webpage is targeted at dedicated photographers, while "Hong Kong Weather Information for Tourists" allows tourists and travel industry practitioners to easily plan for trips. Both are well received by the public.

Gold Prize of the Team Award (Internal Service)

With an unrelenting commitment to excellence, the Observatory addresses the challenges posed by big data through its innovative use of technology. In order to effectively process and display a vast amount of weather information and support the operation of the Central Forecasting Office, the Observatory launched a series of services in the past two years, including the award-winning Intelligent Meteorological Monitoring Assistant and the Integrated Information Display System. The Intelligent Meteorological Monitoring Assistant is an innovative, expert system developed by the Observatory to process big data on weather, and provide appropriate practical guidelines for forecasters based on their varied needs.

The Integrated Information Display System is a display platform made specifically for the Central Forecasting Office. Comprising a large, high resolution touch screen, the display platform can illustrate weather information in various formats. It supports weather reporting and related analysis.

The "Integrated Information Display System" integrates various weather information in one platform.

Features

Super Typhoon Hato

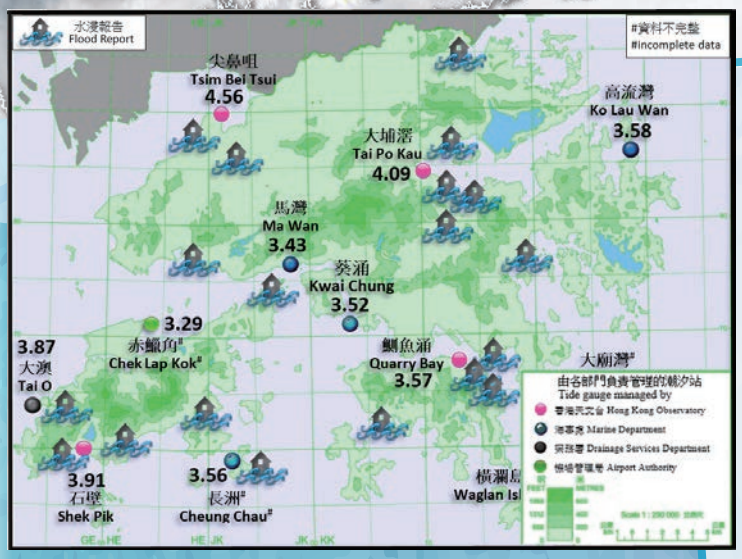
Choy Chun-wing

The Hurricane Signal No. 10 was issued for the first time since 2012 during the passage of Hato. Hato started to intensify significantly as it entered the northeastern part of the South China Sea, momentarily attaining super typhoon intensity over the sea areas south of Hong Kong. This was the first time that Hong Kong was being "direct hit" by a super typhoon since Hope in 1979.

With the subsidence effect ahead of the circulation of Hato, the temperature at the Hong Kong Observatory soared to an all-time record high of 36.6ºC on 22 August. During the morning of 23 August, winds consistently reached hurricane force over the southern part of the territory and on high ground. The storm surge brought by Hato coincided with an astronomical high tide, leading to extremely high water levels in many places, which resulted in serious flooding and damage in a number of coastal areas in Hong Kong. The water level at Quarry Bay rose to a maximum of 3.57 metres above Chart Datum, the second highest level recorded since instrumental records began in 1954 and – only lower than the recond set by Wanda in 1962.

To learn more about storm surge, you may watch an episode of "Cool Met Stuff" (in Chinese).

Typhoon hazards: Storm surge



Maximum sea level (metres above Chart Datum) recorded at various tide stations in Hong Kong and flood reports from government departments, news and social media on 23 August 2017.

Heng Fa Chuen

Sha Tin

Siu Sai Wan

Tai O

The storm surge caused by Hato resulted in serious flooding in various areas in Hong Kong (Photos courtesy of Steve Lee, Toni Lee, the Drainage Services Department and Charmaine Mok).

Mr Philip Yung Wai-hung (first from right), Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Commerce, Industry and Tourism) visited the Observatory on 6 September, and met the Observatory colleagues who were on duty in the Central Forecasting Office during the impact of Typhoon Hato on Hong Kong. He praised the colleagues for their unshaken commitment to work and professionalism during the typhoon, reducing the impacts brought by the storm to Hong Kong, and ensuring public safety by giving timely forecasts.

Milestones

Hong Kong Observatory Signs MOU with Thai Meteorological Department to Strengthen Meteorological Collaboration

Editorial Board

On 18 September, the Observatory signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on co-operation with the Thai Meteorological Department (TMD), to strengthen meteorological collaboration between Hong Kong and Thailand.

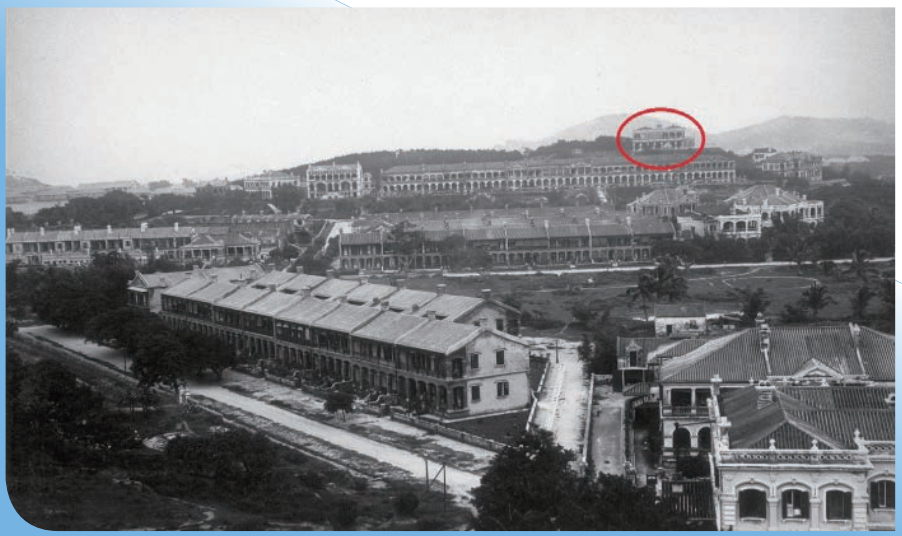
The Observatory and the TMD have a long history of co-operation, which can be traced back to 1970, with the establishment of the Hong Kong–Bangkok circuit for international exchanges of meteorological information within the Global Telecommunications System of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). At the high level meeting before the signing ceremony, both parties agreed to pursue collaboration in a number of areas including windshear detection, thunderstorm nowcasting, co-ordination in the issuance of significant weather warnings for aviation, and training meteorological personnel.

The Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, Mr Shun Chi-ming (left), with the Director-General of the Thai Meteorological Department, Mr Wanchai Sakudomchai, at the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding.

Hong Kong Observatory Headquarters Receives WMO's Recognition as Centennial Observing Station

Lee Tsz-cheung

The Director of the Observatory, Mr Shun Chi-ming (centre), receives the long-term observing station accreditation certificate from the Secretary-General of the WMO, Professor Petteri Taalas (second from right), at the certificate presentation ceremony in Geneva, Switzerland.



The Observatory headquarters (circled in red) in Tsim Sha Tsui, at the beginning of the 20th century (Photo courtesy of Mr Shun Chi-ming).

The Observatory headquarters located in Tsim Sha Tsui is among the first set of observing stations to receive the WMO's recognition as centennial observing stations. The Director of the Observatory, Mr Shun Chi-ming, received the accreditation certificate from the Secretary-General of the WMO on 18 October, and said the international recognition of the Observatory headquarters as a centennial observing station was an important milestone.

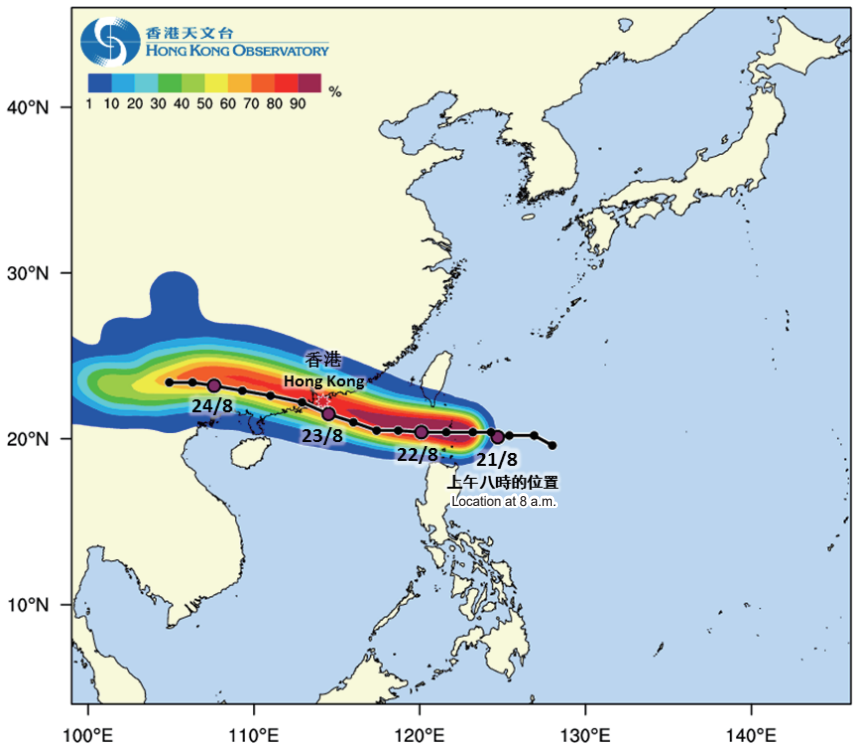
The Observatory has been conducting meteorological observations at the headquarters in Tsim Sha Tsui since 1884, and the long-term meteorological observational data serve as an invaluable reference source, notably for revealing the global warming trend in the past 130 years,. The Observatory headquarters is one of the oldest observing stations among the first set of centennial stations.

Long-term meteorological observations, in particular those from observing stations that provide continuous data for 100 years or more, are crucial for documenting and analysing long-term variations in the Earth's climate on multi-decadal and centennial timescales, thereby providing useful input for the development of climate research and services. In view of this, the WMO has established a recognition mechanism for long-term observing stations around the world that meet a set of objective assessment criteria, which in turn promotes WMO members' efforts to maintain high-quality meteorological observations.

The first set of recognised long-term observing stations includes a total of 60 stations around the world. The full list is available from the link on the right:

Tropical Cyclone Track Probability Forecast

Wong Wai-kin



Recently, the Observatory launched a beta version of the new "Tropical Cyclone Track Probability Forecast". This enables members of public to appraise trends in tropical cyclone movements.

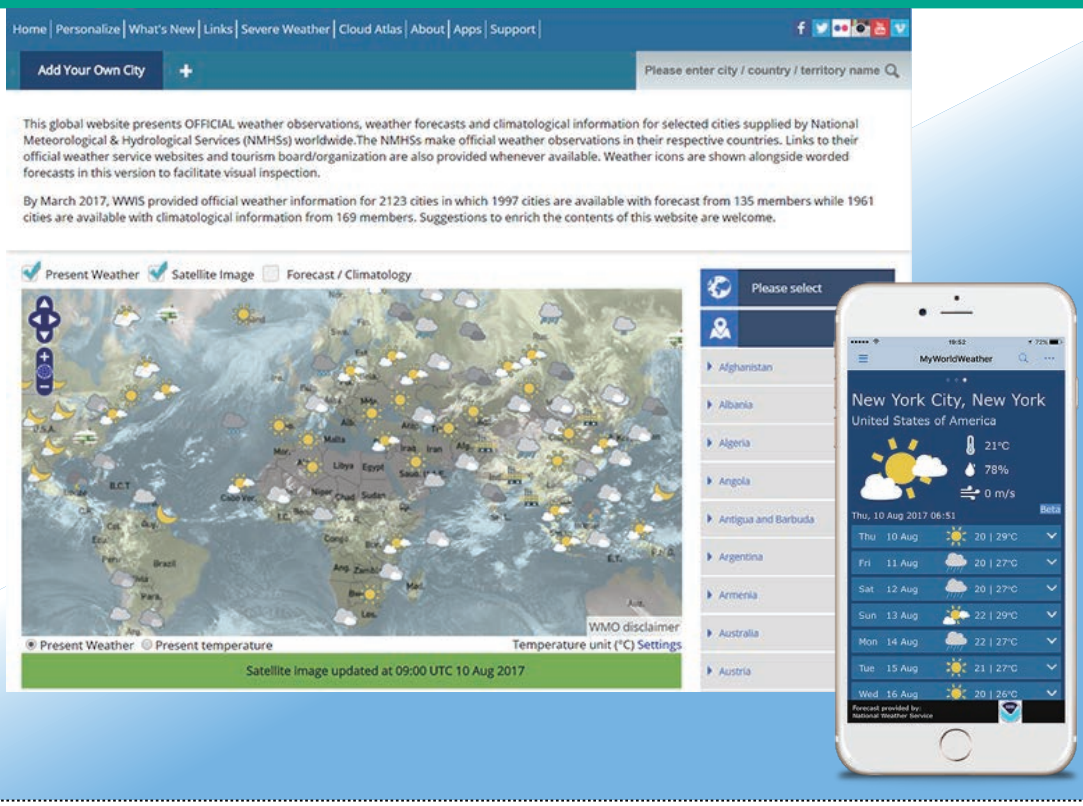
The Probability Forecast Map is automatically generated by computer, using data from the ensemble prediction system. Areas with warmer colours represent higher chances of a tropical cyclone crossing within 120 kilometres of a location in the forthcoming nine days. After the issuance of the Tropical Cyclone Track and Position by the Observatory, the Track Probability Forecast webpage will be automatically updated once a day, around noon.

The track probability forecast of tropical cyclone Hato, with the black lines and dots showing the final actual track of the cyclone.

Launch of a New Version of World Weather Information Service Website

Cheng Yuen-chung

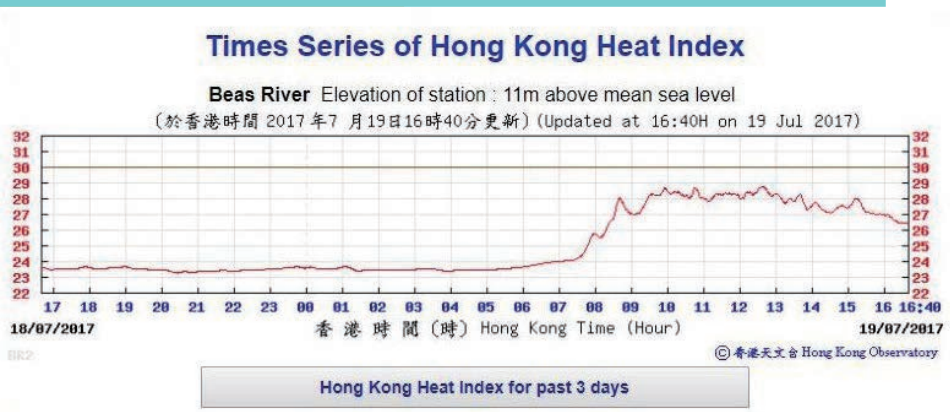
The Observatory has launched a new version of the World Weather Information Service (WWIS) website (https://worldweather.wmo.int), developed and operated for the WMO. It was enhanced with more content, including current weather, times of sunrise and sunset, as well as global satellite imageries. The website also features a new user interface, to facilitate quick search for cities, and adopts a responsive web design that provides a better browsing experience for mobile users. The MyWorldWeather app has also been updated, and includes new content.



Hong Kong Heat Index information Service Enhanced

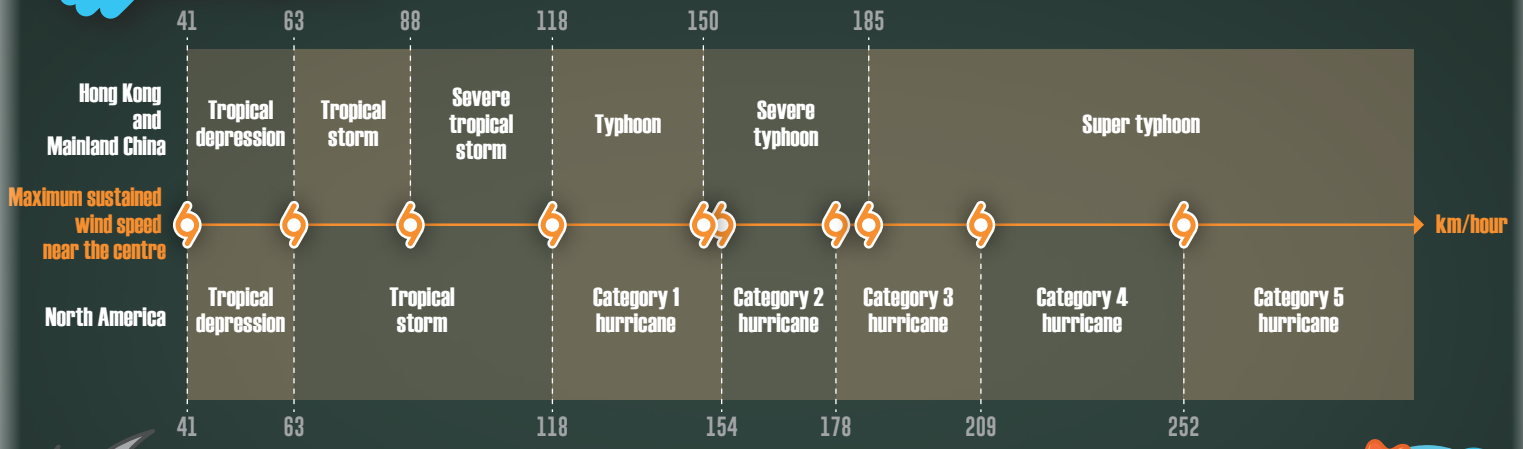
Lee Kwok-lun

The Observatory launched its enhanced Hong Kong Heat Index (HKHI) this summer. In addition to real-time data of the index at King's Park in the urban area, data at Beas River in Sheung Shui is also provided, for the public to gauge the heat situation in rural areas. Members of the public can obtain the real-time HKHI from the enhanced "Regional Weather in Hong Kong" or "Met on Map" webpages of the Hong Kong Observatory, or check the variations in the indices during the past 24 hours on the "Time Series of Hong Kong Heat Index" webpage.



Hong Kong Heat Index for past 3 days

Ask Dr Tin



In fact, "typhoon" and "hurricane" are the same in nature. When the strongest winds near the centre of a tropical cyclone average 118km per hour or above, the cyclone will be called a "typhoon" in the South China Sea and the western North Pacific, and a "hurricane" in the Atlantic and the eastern North Pacific.

HKO Sidelights

Staff Promotions

Mr Lun Siu-hung (first from left) and Ms Joanne Chan Yuk-hing (first from right) were promoted to Senior Experimental Officers on 15 August.

A team of seven experts led by the Civil Aviation Administration of China visited the Observatory during 4 to 7 July, to discuss details regarding the establishment of the Asian Aviation Meteorological Centre in Hong Kong.

The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization, Mr Kitack LIM (left), visited the Observatory on 5 September, to have meetings and discussions with the Director of the Observatory, Mr Shun Chi-ming.

On 10 September, assisted by Friends of the Observatory, the Observatory and various government departments joined the Celebrating National Day and the 20th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR Carnival, which was jointly organised by the Government Employees Association and the District Service Centre of the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions.

After taking part in the Interport Small Dragon Boat Race in Macau and the Cheung Chau Dragon Boat Festival Race, the Sky Dragon dragon boat team went on to compete in the Summer Vigor Mini Dragon Boat Races, held in Sai Kung during September.

On 8 October, guests and prize winners of the Multi-media Competition, jointly organised by the Observatory and the Disaster Preparedness & Response Institute, posed for a group photo after the event.

Secretary for the Environment Mr Wong Kam-sing (centre) and Permanent Secretary for the Environment Mr Donald Tong Chi-keung, together with colleagues in the Environmental Protection Department, visited the Observatory on 6 October. Plans for carbon reduction and policies regarding climate change were among the topics discussed.

On 8 October, the Director of the Observatory, Mr Shun Chi-ming (fourth from left) officiated the kick-off ceremony of "Go Hiking! 110 Hills Climb", an event organised by the Scout Association of Hong Kong to celebrate 110th anniversary of the World Scout Movement. After the ceremony, Mr Shun Chi-ming led the team of scouts to the Observatory's Tai Mo Shan Weather Radar Station, at the summit of Hong Kong's highest mountain.

Mr Ip Wing-sing, Senior Radar Specialist Mechanic of the Observatory (first from right) received the Chief Executive's Commendation for Government/Public Service on 21 October. He and Dr Cheng Cho-ming (first from left), Acting Director of the Observatory, are pictured with Mrs Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive, and Dr Lam Siu-por.

Staff Retirement

Senior Radar Specialist Mechanic Mr Yau Lai-kin (left, photo on the left), Senior Scientific Assistant Mr Chow Chi-hung (fifth from right, photo on the right) and Senior Scientific Assistant Mr Ng Tak-leung (fourth from left, photo on the right) retired on 9 September, 9 October and 10 October, respectively.

Observatory Staff Commended by the Public

Observatory staff who received words of thanks and commendation from the public or organisations from July to September 2017:

Mr Lee Kwok-lun (Scientific Officer)

Mr Lui Wing-hong (Chief Experimental Officer)

Mr Lau Dick-shum (Senior Experimental Officer)

Mr Chan Ho-sun, Mr Chan Wing-hang, Mr Wong Chau-ping (Experimental Officers)

Ms Chan Siu-yung, Ms Mak Man-yi (Senior Scientific Assistants)

Mr Chee Shiu-chung, Ms Lam Mei-sim, Mr Lo Chin-ming (Scientific Assistants)

For details of the activities, please visit:
http://www.hko.gov.hk/wisnew.htm
http://www.hko.gov.hk/hkonews/indexe.htm