

# 17 killed, damage widespread in wake of Typhoon Hato

Relief workers on Thursday began the arduous task of recovery in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao after Hato – the strongest typhoon to hit the country this year – made landfall on Wednesday, causing 17 deaths and major damage.

The Macao government stepped up its post-typhoon relief work on Thursday after Typhoon Hato left eight people dead and over 150 injured and cut power and water supplies to some parts of the special administrative region.

Two transformer stations in Zhuhai, which were damaged and cut power to Macao about noon on Wednesday, resumed operation about 9 pm on Thursday. Backup facilities were used during the repair process, according to China Southern Power Grid Co.

Macao Chief Executive Fernando Chui Sai-on apologized for insufficient actions taken by the Macao government in response to the typhoon. He and 14 other senior officials of the Macao government, expressed condolences to the victims and their families. The government will offer a total of 1.35 billion MOP (\$167 million) for emergency relief to those who were affected by the disaster.

Meanwhile, Fong Soi-kun, the SAR's Meteorological and Geophysical Bureau director, resigned on Thursday.

In Hong Kong, the airport operated overnight to ease air traffic to and from Hong Kong after Hato forced the cancellation of 480 flights on Wednesday. Hong Kong's Airport Authority estimated that it would have to handle more than 1,200 flights on Thursday alone.

Guangdong Party chief Hu Chunhua visited a hospital, a village, a residential community and a water plant in Zhuhai on Thursday, urging all agencies and businesses to make greater efforts to safeguard people's lives and property and to bring life and production back to normal.

There were touching moments in some areas struck by Hato, as professional rescuers were joined by volunteers in rescuing and relief efforts.

Ten military divers sent by a brigade of the Southern Theater Command rescued on Wednesday three people trapped in underground garages submerged by muddy seawater in residential complexes in Zhuhai, the People's Liberation Army Daily reported.

Twelve SWAT police officers and an armored vehicle were dispatched Wednesday morning to bring back more than 80 people who were unable to move in fierce winds or unable to get out from the bus as their vehicles were stranded by fallen electrical cables and poles and capsized trucks on Zhuhai Bridge.

Food deliverer Yuan Zuzhuo and two of his colleagues helped clear fallen

trees in roads, as soldiers, police officers, urban managers and sanitation workers cleaned up roads blocked by fallen trees and items blown from buildings and structures.

A store owner surnamed Yuan in Jida, Zhuhai, handed out 20,000 steamed buns free to local residents before dinnertime on Wednesday. "We found most supermarkets, stores and markets were closed. There was no power or water supply. We thought that many people would not have enough food. They don't cost much but can fill the stomach," he said.