

A mild and dry February

With the northeast monsoon over southern China generally weaker than normal for most of the time in the month, February 2024 was much warmer than usual in Hong Kong. The monthly mean minimum temperature of 17.6 degrees, monthly mean temperature of 19.4 degrees and monthly mean maximum temperature of 21.9 degrees were 2.3 degrees, 2.3 degrees and 2.5 degrees above their corresponding normals and respectively the fourth, the fifth and one of the seventh highest on record for February. Together with the well above normal temperatures in December 2023 and January 2024, the winter from December 2023 to February 2024 was exceptionally warm in Hong Kong. The mean minimum temperature of 16.9 degrees and mean temperature of 18.8 were both the second highest on record for the same period. The mean maximum temperature of 21.3 degrees was the third highest on record for the same period. The month was also drier than usual with a total rainfall of only 4.1 millimetres, about 11 per cent of the normal figure of 38.9 millimetres. The accumulated rainfall recorded in the first two months of the year was 10.8 millimetres, about 85 per cent below the normal figure of 72.1 millimetres for the same period.

Under the influence of a humid maritime airstream, the weather of Hong Kong was foggy with a few light rain patches in the morning and at night on the first two days of the month. The visibility in the harbour fell to below 1 000 metres on the night of February 1. It was also warm with sunny periods during the day on these two days. A fresh easterly airstream affected Hong Kong on February 3 and there was coastal mist in the morning and sunny intervals during the day. The weather was mainly cloudy with a few rain patches and coastal fog the next day. The visibility at Waglan Island once fell to around 200 metres.

A weak cold front crossed the coast of Guangdong on the morning of February 5. Under the influence of the associated northeast monsoon, local weather was mainly cloudy with a few rain patches on February 5 and 6. There was also coastal fog on the morning of February 5 and the visibility at Waglan Island once fell to around 100 metres. Temperatures dropped slightly on February 6. With the arrival of an intense replenishment of the northeast monsoon, temperatures over Hong Kong fell appreciably on February 7 and it became cold on February 8 and 9. The temperatures at the Observatory fell to a minimum of 11.0 degrees on the morning of February 9, the lowest of the month. A broad band of rain and clouds also brought a few rain patches to the territory during February 7 to 9.

While the weather still remained cold with a few rain patches on the morning of February 10, with the departure of the cloud band covering the coastal areas of Guangdong, the weather of Hong Kong turned fine and dry in that afternoon and remained so on the next three days. Under clear skies, the temperatures in the New Territories were significantly lower than the urban areas on the mornings of February 11 and 12. With the moderation of the northeast monsoon, the weather was warm during the day on February 14 and 15, and temperatures over most parts of Hong Kong rose to 25 degrees or above. A cold front moved across the coastal areas of Guangdong on the morning of

February 16. While local weather was fine at first, with a band of clouds covering the coastal areas of Guangdong, it became cooler with a few light rain patches on the afternoon of February 16 and remained so the next day.

With the northeast monsoon affecting the coastal areas of Guangdong being gradually replaced by a warm and humid maritime airstream, local weather was warm with sunny periods during the day on February 18 to 22. With plenty of sunshine on February 21, the temperatures at the Observatory rose to a maximum of 27.8 degrees on that afternoon, the highest of the month. It was also foggy on the mornings of February 19 to 22. The visibility in the harbour fell below 500 metres on February 19. Another cold front moved across the coast of southern China on the night of February 22. Under the influence of the associated northeast monsoon, the weather turned mainly cloudy and cooler with a few light rain patches in the morning and at night on February 23 to 28. With the strengthening of the northeast monsoon affecting the coast of southern China, the weather of Hong Kong became cool appreciably in the later part of the afternoon on the last day of the month.

There was no tropical cyclone over the South China Sea and the western North Pacific in February 2024.

Details of issuance and cancellation of various warnings/signals in the month are summarised in Table 1. Monthly meteorological figures and departures from normal for February are tabulated in Table 2.