

A mild and wet February

February 2020 was much warmer than usual. The monthly mean maximum temperature was 21.4 degrees, 2.5 degrees above the normal figure of 18.9 degrees and the sixth highest on record for February. The monthly mean temperature of 18.5 degrees and the mean minimum temperature of 16.6 degrees were 1.7 degrees and 1.6 degrees above their corresponding normal figures respectively, both being the joint eighth highest on record for February. Moreover, the winter from December 2019 to February 2020 was exceptionally warm in Hong Kong. The mean maximum temperature of 21.5 degrees was the highest on record for the same period. The mean temperature of 18.7 degrees and the mean minimum temperature of 16.8 degrees were both the second highest on record for the same period. February 2020 was wetter than normal with a monthly rainfall of 79.8 millimetres, about 47 per cent above the normal figure of 54.4mm. The accumulated rainfall recorded in the first two months of the year was 94.6mm, about 20 per cent above the normal figure of 79.1mm for the same period.

Under the influence of the northeast monsoon, it was cool in the morning with sunny periods during the day on February 1. Affected by the cloud band spreading over southern China, local weather turned cloudier with rain patches from February 2 to 4. With the strengthening of an easterly airstream on February 5 and the subsequent replenishment of the northeast monsoon on February 7, Hong Kong was mainly cloudy with rain patches and cool mornings from February 5 to 11. As the northeast monsoon affecting southern China was gradually replaced by a maritime airstream on February 12, local weather became warm with sunny periods and coastal mist. The visibility at Chek Lap Kok once fell to around 1000 metres on that day.

Affected by an upper-air disturbance, the weather of Hong Kong turned cloudy with thundery showers on February 13 and 14. The showers were particularly heavy on the morning of February 13, which necessitated the issuance of the first Amber Rainstorm Warning in the year. This was also the second earliest Amber Rainstorm Warning since the rainstorm warning system commenced operation in 1992. More than 30mm of rainfall were recorded over Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, Lantau Island and Sai Kung. Under the influence of a humid maritime airstream, it was cloudy and foggy in Hong Kong on February 15 with the visibility at Waglan Island falling below 200 metres.

A cold front moved across the coast of Guangdong on the night of February 15. Locally, it was mainly cloudy with occasional rain and was appreciably colder on February 16. The associated intense but dry winter monsoon brought generally fine weather to the territory with cold mornings on February 17 and 18. Under a clear sky, the temperatures at the Hong Kong Observatory fell to a minimum of 10.3 degrees on the morning of February 17, the lowest of the month.

The dry northeast monsoon continued to bring generally fine weather to Hong Kong from February 19 to 23. With the moderation of the northeast

monsoon, local weather became mainly cloudy with sunny intervals during the day on February 24. Under the influence of a maritime airstream, it became warm with sunny periods on February 25. With plenty of sunshine on February 26, temperatures at the Hong Kong Observatory rose to the month's highest of 28.1 degrees in the afternoon, the second highest on record for February. Under the influence of a fresh to strong easterly airstream, the weather of Hong Kong became cloudier and slightly cooler on February 27. With the easterlies moderating and gradually replaced by a maritime airstream, it became warmer with sunny periods in Hong Kong on February 28 and 29.

There was no tropical cyclone over the South China Sea and the western North Pacific in February 2020.

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