

HKSAR Government prepares for approach of tropical cyclone

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) said today (September 1) that Saola continues to edge closer to Hong Kong as a Super Typhoon. Winds over parts of the high ground reached storm force. The rainbands of Saola are affecting the territory. The weather will deteriorate with heavy squally showers and violent winds. Under the influence of storm surge, the water level in low-lying coastal areas will rise rapidly tonight. There may be serious flooding. The maximum sea level may be similar to that when Mangkhut hit Hong Kong in 2018.

The HKO forecasts that the water level in the eastern coastal waters of the territory will increase from around 9pm tonight. Among which, the water level at Tolo Harbour will reach a high water level of about 5 metres or higher above chart datum around midnight, which is about 3 metres or above higher than the normal tide level. The maximum water level may reach a historical record. The worst hit areas include Shing Mun River, Tai Po, Sha Tau Kok, Sai Kung, etc. The water levels over other coastal areas of Hong Kong including Victoria Harbour will also start to rise significantly from around 6am tomorrow (September 2). The water level in low-lying coastal areas such as Lei Yue Mun will be around 1.5 metres higher than the normal tide level. The water level at Tai O will also be nearly 2 metres above the normal tide level.

During the passage of Super Typhoon, coastal low-lying or windy areas are susceptible to flood risk. The Drainage Services Department (DSD) has implemented measures including inspecting the condition of drainage channels, installation of demountable flood barriers, deployment of pumping facilities and provision of sandbags etc. at relevant locations to ensure the capacity of the drainage system. In addition, the "smart flood prevention system" installed at the riparian area of Shing Mun River allows members of the public to obtain real-time water level images, weather and tidal information announced by the HKO and flood warning messages through display panel/smart pole or online means, to enhance the alertness of members of the public at low-lying locations to stay safe.

The District Offices have contacted resident representatives in recent days to pay home visits to residents in the above said serious flood prone areas for early alerts on precautionary measures and provide support to people in need, including arranging residents to move to a safe place or temporary shelters. Together with other government departments (including the DSD, the Fire Services Department and the Civil Aid Service), the District Offices have also assisted residents to take precautionary measures against the tropical cyclone including clearing drains, providing sandbags and water-stop boards, and moving furniture to a safe place etc.

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) has worked with its district network in 18 districts to seek their assistance in reminding members of the public

to pay attention to the latest information on the tropical cyclone from the HKO and take precautionary measures. The HAD's emergency hotline (2572 8427) is operating to handle public enquiries on the tropical cyclone. A total of 37 temporary shelters have been operated by the District Offices for people in need.

The Hong Kong Police Force has enhanced patrol in high risk spots and advised members of the public to stay away from the shorelines.

The spokesman for the Government urged again the members of the public to stay indoor and stay away from low-lying areas to safeguard personal safety when the tropical cyclone is in force. Do not chase wind or engage in sea or other dangerous activities. They should also stay tuned to the latest warning messages issued by the HKO, the relevant departments and organisations.