

Transcript of remarks by Secretary for Security and officials of relevant departments at joint press conference on Super Typhoon Mangkhut

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, and officials of relevant departments at a joint press conference on the Super Typhoon Mangkhut today (September 14):

Reporter: A few English questions from RTHK English News. First, for the Observatory, you mentioned that there is a very high chance for us to have a typhoon signal number 8 on Sunday, given that we know the strength of this typhoon is on par with last year's "Hato" typhoon, so does it mean that all of certain that we will have an even higher signal, like signal number 9 or even signal number 10?

The second question is for Home Affairs Department. You mentioned that one of the first time in recent years that you are sending coaches to evacuate some of the residents living in high risk area, such as Tai O and other areas. Some residents may still be reluctant to leave, is the Department going to do even more to encourage these people to evacuate to safe places?

Two more questions for Mr Lee. About the Zhuhai Macao bridge (Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge), do you think it can withstand strong winds? Also the express rail facilities, will it be able to, flooding even?

Another question is today is the deadline for the National Party reply to their possible ban. What will the Government do if there is no reply today?

Secretary for Security: Let me answer the question relating to my part first. Today's press conference is on the overall response plan to Super Typhoon Mangkhut. I think we should focus on this. Questions related to other issues, I shall answer in different forum.

In regard to the Zhuhai bridge (Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge), I think my colleague from the Highways Department has already explained that it is designed to withhold very strong wind. I am not the expert here and I will invite him to reply it. I am confident it will be able to show its strength.

In regard to how high the typhoon signal will eventually be, I will leave it to my colleague from the Observatory. But my advice is do not just look at how high the signal is, because this is a super typhoon which is going to come very fast. So the usual time that the public may have experienced on other typhoon occasions may be quite different. So there will

be very short time, from typhoon (signal) number 3 to go up to number 8, and whether it would go up to even higher (signal). Of course, we should pay more attention to, but the important advice is the precautionary measures should be taken as if it is the highest level.

The second thing is Super Typhoon Mangkhut will come with a lot of rains. We have to be careful about the high tide, so do not just look at the typhoon signal. It is what Mangkhut will bring with her.

In regard to the Zhuhai bridge (Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge), may be my colleague from the Highways Department can add a few points. And then I will invite HAD (Home Affairs Department) colleague to give you more information.

Deputy Director of Highways: The Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge has been designed in a very high standard. During the design stage, we have carried out thorough wind tunnel test to establish the design criteria. Throughout the design, we have also adopted a very large factor of safety. That means, we are confident that the Bridge will withstand very strong wind. By now, it is more important to ensure that we will deploy adequate team of staff to monitor the performance of the facilities and also in case of any incidents happen, we have the ability to respond to the incidents at the very first time.

Secretary for Security: I will invite my colleague from the Observatory to add to what he would like to tell you.

Assistant Director of Hong Kong Observatory: Your question is related to comparing super typhoons Mangkhut and Hato last year. First of all, in terms of how close of them to Hong Kong, last year super typhoon Hato was very close to Hong Kong, less than 100 kilometres, actually it was about 60 kilometres to the southwest of Hong Kong. For super typhoon Mangkhut, for the time being, we expect it to come around 100 to 200 kilometres. Although both Hato and Mangkhut are super typhoons, in terms of central wind speed, super typhoon Mangkhut is even higher. So we cannot directly compare both. I can tell that based on the current situation, we'll expect that very high winds will affect Hong Kong on Sunday, at least we are expecting tropical cyclone signal number 8. Whether or not there will be tropical cyclone signal number 10, it really depends on how close eventually super typhoon Mangkhut come to Hong Kong.

Secretary for Security: I would like to invite my colleague from HAD to give you more information.

Deputy Director of Home Affairs: Thank you. Regarding the appeals to residents to evacuate early, this is mainly targeted at the low-lying areas and the Island District Office is mobilising volunteers from the Fire Services Department and the Police to help appeal to residents this afternoon. This effort will continue tomorrow and the deployment of coaches is a special arrangement in the past few years. We haven't use this method before, and this is because of the special situation of Tai O.

As regards other low-lying areas like Lei Yue Mun, we would open a large temporary shelter for the residents including opening the Lei Yue Mun Sports Centre, with a larger capacity, and this is conveniently located, just next to the low-lying areas.

As regards other districts, the District Offices would make suitable arrangement to appeal to residents to evacuate depending on the situation on the ground as appropriate.

Reporter: Thank you. I am a reporter from CNN and I have a question for the Observatory. You said there is a very high chance that T-Eight (typhoon signal number 8) will be hoisted on Sunday. Do you expect the time for this to happen? Would it be in the morning? or in the afternoon? And when do you expect the time to be closest Hong Kong on Sunday? And also T-Eight (typhoon signal number 8) will be hoisted on Monday according to the present forecast? Thank you.

Assistant Director of Hong Kong Observatory: Thank you for the questions. For the time being, we can't say a very definite answer for your questions because we still have one or two days prior to super typhoon Mangkhut coming close to Hong Kong. From the present forecast track, super typhoon Mangkhut is expected to be closest to Hong Kong on Sunday, probably during the day on the latter part of Sunday. In terms of tropical cyclone signal number 8, of course it depends on when it will come to Hong Kong and whether or not the gale force winds associated with super typhoon Mangkhut will come very close. So we'll monitor closely the situation. But from present indications, the chance for tropical cyclone signal number 8 is very high.