

A warm 2018 marked by strike of severe typhoon Mangkhut

Globally, according to the World Meteorological Organization's preliminary assessment, 2018 is likely to be the fourth warmest year on record. The sea-ice extent over the Arctic was well below average throughout 2018 and reached record-low levels for the first two months of the year. Various extreme weather events continued to wreak havoc in different parts of the world in 2018, including cold spells in parts of Europe and Morocco; heatwaves in large parts of Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Japan and the Korean Peninsula; and severe droughts in Uruguay, central and northern Argentina, eastern Australia and large parts of Europe. High temperatures and drought also contributed to destructive wildfires in California in the United States, western Canada, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Greece, Latvia, the United Kingdom and Ireland. Extreme rainfall triggered severe flooding and landslides in parts of Europe, East Africa, southwest India and western Japan. High winds, storm surges and torrential rain induced by tropical cyclones brought severe damage and heavy casualties to Tonga, Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Yemen, Oman, Florida and North Carolina of the United States, east coast of Madagascar, east coast of India, Kobe and Osaka of Japan, the northern part of the Philippines and Guangdong province in China.

A weak and short-lived La Niña event was established in early 2018. Sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific became warmer and returned to normal in April. The warming trend continued into the second half of the year, with sea surface temperatures in the region exceeding the El Niño threshold in October and remaining above normal till December.

Locally, the weather in Hong Kong was warmer than usual in 2018, with an annual mean temperature of 23.9 degrees, 0.6 degrees above the 1981-2010 normal (Note 1) (or 0.9 degrees above the 1961-1990 normal), making it the joint third warmest year since records began in 1884. In particular, the monthly mean temperature of 28.3 degrees for May ranked the highest on record for the month since records began in 1884. The highest temperature recorded at the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) in the year was 35.4 degrees on May 30, the 11th highest since records began in 1884. There were 26 Hot Nights (Note 2) and 36 Very Hot Days (Note 3) in Hong Kong in 2018, ranking the eighth highest and the third highest on record respectively.

There were 21 Cold Days (Note 4) in the year – 3.9 days more than the 1981-2010 normal. The lowest temperature recorded at the HKO in the year was 6.8 degrees on February 1.

The year 2018 was drier than normal in Hong Kong, with rainfall from February to May well below the normal figure. The annual total rainfall was 2 162.9 millimetres, a deficit of about 10 per cent compared to the 1981-2010

normal of 2 398.5 millimetres (or about 3 per cent below the 1961-1990 normal). Four Red Rainstorm Warning Signals were issued by the HKO in the year. The number of days with thunderstorms reported in Hong Kong in 2018 was 38 days, close to the 1981-2010 normal of 38.6 days.

A total of 33 tropical cyclones occurred over the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in 2018, more than the long-term (1961-2010) average of around 30. There were 13 tropical cyclones reaching typhoon intensity (Note 5) or above during the year, less than the long-term average of about 15, and seven of them reached super typhoon intensity (maximum 10-minute wind speed of 185 km/h or above near the centre). Six tropical cyclones necessitated the issuance of tropical cyclone warning signals, close to the long-term annual average. The Hurricane Signal No. 10 was issued during the passage of Mangkhut in September, while the No. 3 Strong Wind Signal was issued five times for the passages of Ewiniar in June, Son-tinh in July, Bebinca in August, Barijat in September and Yutu in November.

Severe Typhoon Mangkhut ferociously struck Hong Kong on September 16 and necessitated the issuance of the Hurricane Signal No. 10 for 10 hours. This is the second longest duration of the Hurricane Signal No. 10 in Hong Kong since 1946, slightly less than the record of 11 hours set by Typhoon York in 1999. The storm-to-hurricane force winds, record-breaking storm surge and squally heavy rain brought by Mangkhut ravaged the city for about half a day, causing the most serious and extensive damage to Hong Kong since Super Typhoon Ellen in 1983.

A detailed description of the weather for individual months is available on the Monthly Weather Summary webpage:

www.weather.gov.hk/wxinfo/pastwx/mws.htm. A detailed version of the Year's Weather for 2018 with some significant weather events in Hong Kong is available at: www.weather.gov.hk/wxinfo/pastwx/ywx.htm.

Note 1: Climatological normals for the reference period of 1961-1990, 1971-2000 and 1981-2010 are available at :

www.weather.gov.hk/cis/normal_e.htm. Climatological normals of 1981-2010 are referenced in the text unless otherwise stated.

Note 2: "Hot Night" refers to the condition with the daily minimum temperature equal to or higher than 28.0 degrees.

Note 3: "Very Hot Day" refers to the condition with the daily maximum temperature equal to or higher than 33.0 degrees.

Note 4: "Cold Day" refers to the condition with the daily minimum temperature equal to or lower than 12.0 degrees.

Note 5: Information on the classification of Tropical Cyclones is available at: www.weather.gov.hk/informtc/class.htm.

No. 3 alarm fire at Lamma Southwest marine area (3)

The No. 3 alarm fire which broke out at a vessel at Lamma Southwest Anchorage today (January 8) was largely put out at around 4.30pm.

Firemen used four fire boat monitors to fight the blaze.

A man was found dead at the scene and four men were injured. Two men are missing and the search operation is in progress.

InvestHK unveils StartmeupHK Festival 2019 agenda and partners (with photos)

Invest Hong Kong (InvestHK) today (January 8) announced details of its five-day [StartmeupHK Festival 2019](#) that will run from January 21 to 25, each day focusing on specific start-up themes with the common thread being an emphasis on new trends, fresh thinking and cutting-edge innovation.

The key themes of the week will be healthtech, lifestyle and retail technology, smart city, artificial intelligence and education, finance services, and co-innovation between start-ups and corporates.

Taking place at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre in Wan Chai, the event will see more than 200 industry experts from around the world share their knowledge and insight at a mix of panel sessions, interactive discussions, speaking events and competitions. The festival attendance is set to exceed 8 000 delegates.

Associate Director-General of Investment Promotion at InvestHK Mr Charles Ng said, "Hong Kong's start-up ecosystem grew 18 per cent year on year to 2 625 start-ups in 2018, while the number of jobs created rose a remarkable 51 per cent to 9 548. More than a third of the start-up founders are from outside Hong Kong."

Mr Ng added that the main business sectors for these start-ups include fintech, e-commerce, supply chain management and logistics technology, professional or consultancy services, and information technology and services.

Day 1 will feature the [Healthtech 020 Summit](#), an event hosted by NexChange that looks at transforming healthcare through technology. It will

bring together healthcare experts, entrepreneurs and investors, including representatives from government, industry bodies, start-ups and corporates, to examine how international and local innovation is transforming the way healthcare is delivered, while also opening doors to new solutions to health issues.

Day 2 will see the [TECH\[LIFE\]STYLE Conference](#), hosted by Startup Launchpad and the Mills Fabrica. The conference theme is "Living Smarter, Living Better". With more than 1 000 attendees, over 100 start-ups and 40-plus speakers at the conference, the audience will be treated to stories told by world-class speakers about how innovative lifestyle technologies are revolutionising the ways people live, work and play.

On Day 3 is [Retail's Cutting Edge](#), hosted by Inside Retail Hong Kong. A popular event last year, this will be a day-long immersion on the future of retail. Topics covered will include new retail, global issues ranging from logistics to social challenges, blockchain as a solution for product authenticity and supply chain streamlining, new technologies reshaping the customer experience, and the seamless merger of buying channels. It will include a panel session to look ahead 10 years with five retailers from the recently announced list of the Top 50 Innovative Retail Leaders in Hong Kong.

Days 3 and 4 will see a new event for the StartmeupHK Festival: [Jumpstarter](#), hosted by Alibaba Entrepreneurs Fund. Over the two days, this first-of-its-kind event will showcase top-notch start-ups, provide high-impact networking opportunities and bring together start-ups, corporates and investors to make connections. Various founders, CEOs, world-renowned experts, innovators and investors will take the main stage for presentations and discussions while start-ups and corporates will participate in demos and showcases.

On Day 4, the [Connected Cities Conference](#), hosted by KPMG, will have industry leaders, government representatives and entrepreneurs from around the world discuss technological trends in the urban landscape, and examine what it means to enhance a city's liveability, workability and sustainability. A great variety of topics will be discussed, such as impact investing and entrepreneurship for women.

Day 5 has an exciting double bill with the [Startup Impact Summit](#), hosted by WHub, and the [AI & Education Forum](#), hosted by EdTech Asia. The summit will focus on the impact created by regional and international start-ups, driven by successful cases of co-innovation projects between start-ups and corporates. The event will include world-class start-ups, influencers and stakeholders, with speeches, hands-on workshops, business matching opportunities, and curated networking.

The AI & Education Forum will bring together key stakeholders from across the region who are influencing the future of learning and work innovation through emerging technologies, such as AI and big data analytics. Prominent speakers representing the most progressive companies in education and technology will share insights on ethics and human resources issues

around the subject, while exploring synergies.

The Head of StartmeupHK at InvestHK, Ms Jayne Chan, said, "During the festival, you will experience the transformative power of technology that enables people to turn their ideas into reality. This is a true eye-opener where you can see how technologies are making waves in every aspect of our lives, and how Hong Kong as a leading innovative hub globally plays a part in this incredible journey towards a better, smarter world."

To follow the latest start-up developments in Hong Kong, please go to the website www.startmeup.hk/festival-2019.

About InvestHK

InvestHK is the department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government responsible for attracting foreign direct investment and supporting overseas and Mainland businesses to set up or expand in Hong Kong. It provides free advice and customised services for overseas and Mainland companies. For more information, please visit www.investhk.gov.hk.



Suspected case tests negative for MERS-CoV

The Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health today (January 8) reported that the suspected case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) pending results yesterday (January 7), upon preliminary testing, tested negative for MERS Coronavirus.

Manager of unlicensed guesthouse fined

A woman was fined \$20,000 at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts today

(January 8) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in July last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a suspected unlicensed guesthouse on Hennessy Road in Wan Chai. During the inspection, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in the guesthouse on a daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, the guesthouse did not possess a licence under the Ordinance on the day of inspection. The woman responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".