

## Flights gradually resume as typhoon departs

- A Monitor Desk Report

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**Hong Kong: Hong Kong started gradually reopening after a typhoon forecast to be the strongest to hit the territory in about 5 years departed, leaving minimal reported damage.**

The city's airport, businesses and public transportation began slowly resuming operations, while street cleaners cleared debris and uprooted trees that Severe Typhoon Saola left in its wake. The Hong Kong Observatory lowered its storm warning from the highest No. 10 level to the No. 8 signal at 3:40 am Saturday (Sep 2), and said it would consider dropping again before 4 pm.

The typhoon was accompanied by powerful gales and caused flooding in at least 12 areas, with 55 people seeking treatment at public hospitals, according to the government. Saola earlier sustained winds of 210 km/h near the center, as strong as a Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson scale.

The Airport Authority, the city's airport operator, said about 480 flights will be operating Saturday to and from Hong Kong, compared with the 850 scheduled to depart or arrive on Friday. Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. said its first departure was set for around 11 am to Sydney, slightly earlier than the original plan, as the airport's largest airline seeks to recover quickly from the major weather disruption.

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In the past 40 years, only 5 storms have prompted the raising of the highest signal in Hong Kong, according to observatory data. The No. 10 signal means hurricane force winds reaching a sustained speed of at least 118 km/h.

China's national weather authorities reiterated their highest alert for the typhoon on Friday, warning of severe weather in the coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong, and urging local officials to be ready for flash flooding.

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