

Hong Kong swelters in hottest October day for almost 130 years – a day before Mid-Autumn Festival

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It may be a day before mid autumn, but Hong Kong continued to sizzle in high temperatures as the Observatory raised a “very hot” weather warning on Tuesday – the first time such an alert has been issued in October since the system was launched in 2000.

HK Morning Briefing

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Hongkongers were warned to take precautions against heatstroke as the Observatory recorded temperatures of 33.5 degrees Celsius at its Tsim Sha Tsui headquarters. Some places, including Chek Lap Kok and Lau Fau Shan, reached 34 degrees.

It was the second highest October temperature ever recorded, only topped by a day in 1890 when the mercury reached 34.3 degrees.

The Observatory’s scientific officer, Chong Sze-ning, said the heat had been down to strong sunshine during the day.



It's a day before the Mid-Autumn Festival but the weather still feels like summer. Photo: Felix Wong

“The sunny weather has pushed up the temperature,” said Chong. “While the average temperature during autumn is expected to be lower, it is possible to have one or two days warmer or cooler than usual.”

She said the weather would be cooler on Wednesday with the arrival of a northeast monsoon, which would bring cloudy weather with occasional rain.

Leung Wing-mo, spokesman of the Hong Kong Meteorological Society, said it was “rare” to see a very hot warning issued in October, but the phenomenon was to be expected.

“[This] fits into scientists’ prediction of more very hot days a year,” said Leung. The Observatory has projected that the number of very hot days could increase to as many as 52 a year by the 2050s – compared with 38 days last year – if greenhouse gas emissions continue at existing levels.

Leung said the effects of a warmer climate could include an extended mosquito season and a longer active period of mosquito-borne diseases.

The Centre for Health Protection advised the public to take necessary measures to prevent heatstroke under the very hot weather alert which was issued at 12.20pm on Tuesday and was lowered at 7pm.