

PRESS STATEMENT

15 November 2019

### **Limited Service Resumes on Northern Section of MTR's East Rail Line Heavily Damaged University Station Remains Closed**

The train service on the northern section of MTR's East Rail Line from Fo Tan Station has been suspended for four days after stations and railway facilities were maliciously vandalised by rioters. Following the concerted efforts of maintenance staff to repair the damage, limited train service between Tai Po Market Station and Lo Wu/Lok Ma Chau stations was resumed this afternoon (15 November 2019). However, University Station remains closed due to severe damage. The train stabled at University Station which was previously set on fire and seriously damaged could still not be moved. After a careful risk assessment, it is expected to take a longer time to plan and to carry out necessary repair works. University Station is therefore expected to remain closed for a period of time.

The incidents over the past several days have adversely affected residents in the northern New Territories. We appeal to the parties concerned to stop their vandalism at railway facilities and not to throw burning objects at the railway facilities and operating trains. Otherwise, we will have to suspend the service at the affected stations or railway lines to ensure the safety of our passengers, MTR staff and railway operations, which may cause further inconvenience to passengers.

A number of stations on the northern section from Fo Tan Station on East Rail Line were forced to close down because of severe damage and disruption by rioters. At around 3:00pm, limited train service between Tai Po Market Station and Lo Wu/ Lok Ma Chau stations could be resumed after the repair works by the MTR staff. Besides, in consideration of the road situation of Tolo Highway, MTR arranged free shuttle bus service today between Tai Po Market Station on the East Rail Line and Kam Sheung Road Station on the West Rail Line, giving passengers another option to travel on the West Rail Line via Tai Po Market Station for journeys between the northern New Territories and urban areas.

Due to the repeated vandalism and arson by the rioters at University Station and Sheung Shui Station, a large number of railway facilities had been seriously damaged and the stations' service could not be resumed today. There was also an arson attack and damage that targeted a train stabled at the platform of University Station. The damaged train could not be moved for repair works. In consideration of the safety of staff, it has not been possible carry out a detailed assessment and plan for repair works at the present stage. Therefore, University Station has to remain closed for a period of time and the train service between Fo Tan Station and Tai Po Market Station has to remain suspended.

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Meanwhile, MTR facilities were again repeatedly vandalised today. The East Rail Line provided service between Hung Hom Station and Fo Tan Station from the start of service hours today. However, as a result of petrol bombs being hurled for at least five times at the tracks near Hung Hom Station and Kowloon Tong Station, the train service between Hung Hom Station and Fo Tan Station was temporarily suspended or partially disrupted. Burning objects, which were later confirmed as burned newspapers and a petroleum gas tank, were also thrown onto the track at Prince Edward Station this afternoon.

The operation of train doors was repeatedly disrupted at stations along several railway lines during the peak period this morning, which affected train operations. The West Rail Line provided train service between Hung Hom Station and Siu Hong Station from the start of the train service. However, there were passenger disputes at Tin Shui Wai Station this morning and the operation of train doors was also repeatedly disrupted at certain stations along the line. The train service between Yuen Long Station and Siu Hong Station had to be suspended from around 7:00am and resumed normal at around 10:00am.

MTR Corporation strongly condemns the rioters for hurling burning objects at stations, track areas and trains, and intruding onto the track without permission. These behaviours endanger the safety of passengers and MTR staff. We have reported the cases to the Police and reserve the right to take legal action against the parties concerned. We appeal to the parties concerned for stop the malicious vandalism of railway facilities and disruption of train operation. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and may suspend or adjust train and station services when necessary to ensure the safety of passengers and MTR staff. If there is an increasing risk to safety or station facilities are being damaged, we may shorten the service hours based on risk assessment. The Corporation will disseminate relevant information on train services via the MTR website, MTR Mobile, station and in-train announcements as well as the media. Passengers are advised to pay attention to the latest information.

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Photo caption:

1. Petrol bombs and foreign objects were thrown onto the track area from height near Hung Hom Station on the East Rail Line early this morning.



2. Petrol bombs were thrown onto the track area near Kowloon Tong Station on the East Rail Line.



- At around 4:45pm, fire was seen on the track at Platform 1 in Prince Edward Station. Station staff later found a piece of burnt newspaper and a gasoline can.

