

PRESS STATEMENT

7 October 2019

MTR Forced to Suspend Service on All Rail Lines due to Malicious Vandalism of Railway Facilities

Radical protestors once again maliciously vandalised and set fires at various MTR stations yesterday (7 October 2019), endangering the safety of passengers, MTR staff and the railway assets. Having regard to the safety of passengers and staff, the MTR Corporation announced at around 7:30pm that while limited services on the Airport Express and some MTR bus routes were maintained, other services of Heavy Rail, Light Rail and MTR bus were suspended. The MTR Corporation strongly condemns the reoccurrence of these illegal and irresponsible behaviours, which should not be tolerated. The Corporation had reported the cases to the police.

After the suspension of service of the whole network on 5 October 2019, the Corporation has conducted a review on the complex repair works required as well as a joint risk assessment with the Police and other relevant government departments. The Corporation re-opened 45 Heavy Rail stations providing limited passenger service yesterday morning (6 October 2019). However, at around 4:00pm, multiple stations including Yau Ma Tei and Kowloon Tong stations were maliciously attacked by radical protestors. Station facilities such as entry/exit gates, CCTV cameras and fire equipment etc. were vandalised while arsons occurred at the entrances of various stations. Fire sprinklers at various stations had been damaged, causing flooding at these stations. Besides, protestors threw objects at a section near Kowloon Tong Station on the East Rail Line which severely endangered train operations. The Corporation closed the Yau Ma Tei and Kowloon Tong stations at around 4:30pm and 4:50pm respectively. Train service between Kowloon Tong and Hung Hom stations on East Rail Line was suspended. In order to ensure the safety of passengers, MTR staff and railway operations, the Corporation subsequently suspended train service on several rail lines including Tsuen Wan, Kwun Tong, Tseung Kwan O, Island and South Island lines. Later at about 7:30pm, a number of other stations were closed in the network because of heavy damage. As we were no longer in a position to provide safe and reliable service to passengers in the prevailing circumstances, the Corporation had no choice but to make the decision to only maintain limited services on the Airport Express between Hong Kong and Airport stations without stopping at intermediate stations, and some of the bus routes. Other services of Heavy Rail, Light Rail and MTR bus had to be suspended.

The Corporation stresses that MTR staff have been striving to provide safe and smooth railway service to members of the public under feasible and safe conditions. However, multiple stations were once again maliciously and severely damaged, endangering the safety of passengers and staff. The Corporation therefore had no choice but to gradually close the stations and adjust train service. The Corporation expresses its anger over protestors setting fires at multiple locations on railway premises and damaging railway facilities which seriously undermined railway safety. The Corporation strongly condemns these dangerous behaviours which can constitute serious crimes and has reported the incidents to the Police. We reserve the right to take legal action against the concerned parties for our losses.

Since outbreaks of violence continue to occur at multiple districts, maintenance staff are unable to travel to the damaged stations to inspect and assess the extent of damage or to carry out

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repair works. We will conduct a joint assessment with the Police and other relevant government departments to decide on the service arrangement for today (7 October 2019). Any update on the service arrangement will be announced as soon as possible. In case of reoccurrence of vandalism, MTR service may be affected for a longer period of time. Since many members of the public depend on railway service for going to work, to school and for conducting daily affairs such as going to see the doctor, visiting family members etc., we ask everyone be considerate and help to protect the railway facilities.

Passengers are advised to pay attention to the MTR website, MTR Mobile, public announcements at stations and on trains for the latest train service information. The Corporation will also disseminate relevant information via the media.

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