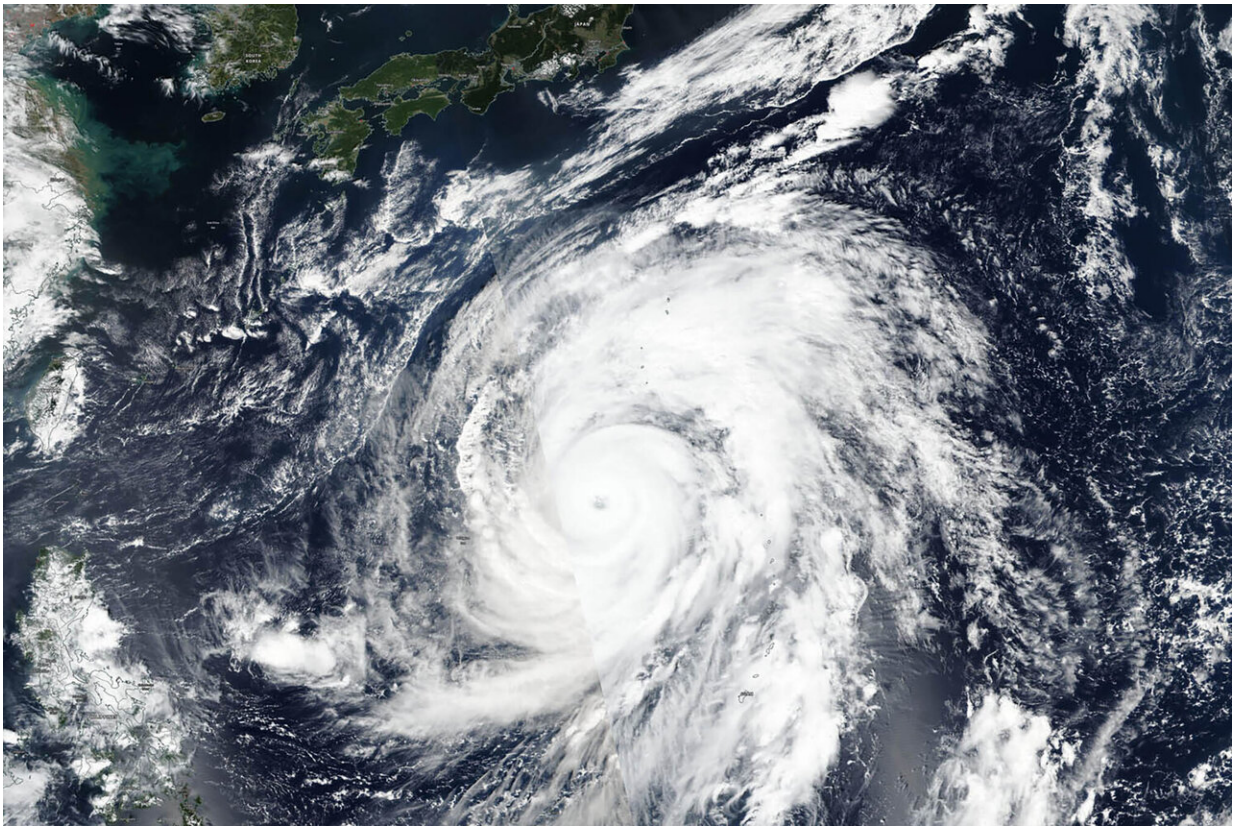


Super typhoon on track to drench Japan's main island

October 10 2019, by Mari Yamaguchi



This Oct. 9, 2019, satellite photo taken by NASA-NOAA's Suomi NPP satellite shows typhoon Hagibis approaching Japan, top. Japan's weather agency is warning a powerful typhoon may bring torrential rains to central Japan over the weekend. Typhoon Hagibis had winds gusting up to 270 kilometers per hour (168 mph) Thursday morning. It is expected to weaken over cooler waters as it nears Japan's main island.(NASA Worldview, Earth Observing System Data and Information System (EOSDIS) via AP)

Japan is bracing for a super typhoon on track to hit central and eastern regions over the three-day weekend, with sport events and domestic flights canceled and sandbags given away to minimize potential damage from torrential rains and strong winds.

Typhoon Hagibis has already caused cancellations of two Rugby World Cup matches that were to be played Saturday. Organizers canceled the England-France match planned in Yokohama, near Tokyo, and New Zealand-Italy game in Toyota, in central Japan.

Organizers also called off a marathon in Sendai and other northern coastal towns. Formula One auto racing in Suzuka in central Japan may also be affected.

Japan's Defense Ministry scrapped the first two days of the annual Oct. 12-14 navy review.

Hagibis, which means speed in Filipino, had maximum sustained winds of up to 270 kilometers (168 miles) and stronger gusts at noon Thursday near Chichi island in the Pacific, about 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) off Tokyo's southern coast. It was moving north at the speed of 20 kph (12 mph) and is expected to weaken over cooler waters as it nears Japan's main island.

It's the equivalent of a Category 5 hurricane.

The Japan Meteorological Agency says the typhoon is forecast to hit ashore in the Tokyo area late Saturday and urged people to take precautions to avoid potentially life-threatening danger. Japan's central Pacific coast may see torrential rains beginning Friday while high waves and tides may cause flooding.



This Oct. 8, 2019, photo shows the sheet-covered roofs of the houses damaged by typhoon Faxai in Tateyama, near Tokyo. Japan's weather agency is warning a powerful typhoon may bring torrential rains to central Japan over the weekend. (Kyodo News via AP)

Airlines and train services anticipate cancellations affecting holidaymakers traveling over the three-day weekend that includes Sports Day holiday on Monday. All Nippon Airways said it is grounding all domestic flights Saturday in and out of Tokyo's Haneda and Narita international airports.

Depending on the typhoon's movement, All Nippon Airways and Japan Airlines said they may cancel flights as early as Friday.

The approaching typhoon is spreading fear especially in Chiba, near Tokyo, which was hit by Typhoon Faxai last month and many residents are still recovering from damage to their homes. The typhoon tore many electrical poles and snapped cables, triggering extensive outages that lasted for weeks, contributing to heat illnesses and other health problems among elderly people.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga, at a regular news conference, said the government will do the utmost for the people's safety, and urged residents near the typhoon route to take precautions early.



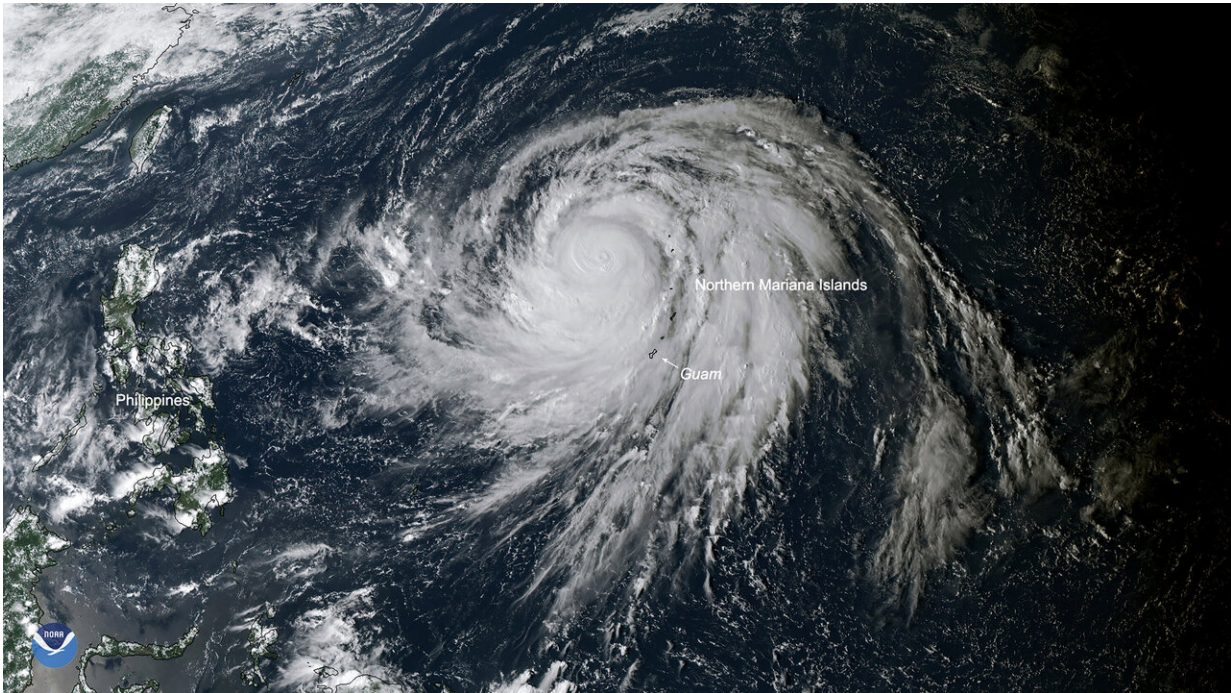
This Oct. 9, 2019, photo shows the sheet-covered roofs of the houses damaged by typhoon Faxai in Kyonan, near Tokyo. Japan's weather agency is warning a powerful typhoon may bring torrential rains to central Japan over the weekend. (Kyodo News via AP)



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A satellite photo of typhoon Hagibis is seen during a press briefing on update relating to the anticipated impact of Typhoon Hagibis on the final round Rugby World Cup 2019 pool matches this weekend Thursday, Oct. 10, 2019, in Tokyo. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)



This Oct. 8, 2019, satellite image provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) shows Typhoon Hagibis over Guam and Northern Mariana Islands. Japan's weather agency is warning a powerful typhoon may bring torrential rains to central Japan over the weekend. (NOAA via AP)



In this Sept. 28, 2019, file photo, a sea of people arrive at Shizuoka Stadium Ecopa for the Rugby World Cup Pool A game between Japan and Ireland in Shizuoka, Japan. Rugby World Cup organizers have had to cancel two games scheduled for Saturday because of concerns over the anticipated impact of Typhoon Hagibis. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong, File)

In some places, preparations have started.

Local offices in Chiba city started distributing free sandbags to shield against flooding. The city also cautioned against power outages from potential typhoon damage and urged residents to make sure they have enough food, water and their phones are charged.

In Chofu in Tokyo's western suburbs, workers at the city hall renovation

site reinforced scaffolding and placed protective nets to prevent equipment and construction materials from being blown off.

At a winery in Yamanashi, north of Tokyo, workers picked grapes Thursday to save them from the typhoon, Japan's NHK television said.

East Japan Railway Co. said it may suspend services on most local lines and bullet trains around Tokyo before the typhoon arrives.

Japan is regularly hit by Pacific storms, including Faxai in September. Typhoon Jebi flooded a terminal and a runway at Kansai International Airport last year.

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Citation: Super typhoon on track to drench Japan's main island (2019, October 10) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-10-super-typhoon-track-drench-japan.html>

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