

FDC Chairman welcomes Government measures to further support Hong Kong film industry

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Film Development Council:

The Chairman of the Hong Kong Film Development Council (FDC), Dr Wilfred Wong, welcomed the Government's announcement today (February 28) that set out an array of measures to be implemented through the Film Development Fund (FDF) in support of the Hong Kong film industry's development. The measures aim to increase the number of local film productions, gather talent, and enhance professional training to add value to the industry.

Dr Wong said, "The Hong Kong film industry is going through a very difficult time. The Government's announcement provides practical and sustainable support measures that render timely relief to the industry and film practitioners of different disciplines.

"Inviting veteran directors to partner with young directors and provide guidance in co-producing films will increase the number of local high-quality film productions and help achieve the effect of passing the baton to the new generation.

"The Scriptwriting Incubation Programme is expected to help incubate quality scripts for the industry, while short advanced professional training courses will help raise standards and nurture more specialists."

Dr Wong said that over the years, the FDC has funded about 60 film productions and identified about 40 new directors through various FDF subsidy schemes. The FDC will continue to support the further development of the Hong Kong film industry through the FDF.

The new or enhanced measures under the FDF in support of the Hong Kong film industry's development mainly include:

- Launching a new subsidy scheme under which the FDC will proactively invite veteran directors to partner with young directors to co-produce 10 to 12 films with an earmarked funding of around \$100 million. Each film will be granted a subsidy of around \$9 million;
- Launching a new Scriptwriting Incubation Programme: With earmarked funding of \$10 million, the programme will be held in the form of a competition with subsidies to be disbursed in phases to participants. Professional mentoring will also be provided. It is expected that 50 to 100 quality scripts will be incubated;
- Enhancing professional training: Funding of \$20 million is earmarked to provide short advanced professional training courses. Tuition fees will be exempted;

- Implementing an enhancement for the Film Production Financing Scheme by raising the maximum government financing amount to \$9 million; and
 - Implementing an enhancement for the First Feature Film Initiative by increasing the maximum number of winning teams to six and raising the production budget for the Higher Education Institution Group to \$5 million and that of the Professional Group to \$8 million.
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Postal services to the United Kingdom subject to delay

Hongkong Post announced today (February 28) that, as advised by the postal administration of the United Kingdom, due to severe flooding and heavy snowfall, all mail delivery services (including Speedpost) to the United Kingdom for areas with postcodes starting with the prefixes listed below are subject to delay.

Reasons	Postcodes with prefixes
Severe flooding	DE, HR, SY, TF, WR, WV
Heavy snowfall	DG, DH, HU, LA, NE, YO

Town Planning Board Secretariat's reception counter to resume normal service

The following is issued on behalf of the Town Planning Board:

In line with the arrangements announced by the Government yesterday (February 27) to implement targeted measures to reduce social contact and infection control measures and gradually resume more public services in an orderly manner, starting from next Monday (March 2), the Town Planning Board Secretariat's reception counter at 15/F, North Point Government Offices will resume normal service. The opening hours of the reception counter are Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.30pm, and Friday 9am to 6pm. Members of the public can also continue to make enquires through the telephone hotline (2231 4810) or email (tpbpd@pland.gov.hk), and can visit the Town Planning Board's website (www.info.gov.hk/tpb) for statutory planning information.

Reminder to members of public on suspected fraudulent phone calls purporting to be made by CA or OFCA

The Office of the Communications Authority (OFCA) today (February 28) reminded members of the public to stay alert to suspected fraudulent calls purporting to be made by the Communications Authority (CA) or the OFCA.

A spokesman for OFCA said, "OFCA has recently received a number of reports from members of the public on various kinds of suspected fraudulent calls purporting to be made by the CA or OFCA. Most of the calls were in the form of pre-recorded messages in either Cantonese or Putonghua claiming that the recipients' telephone services would be suspended because of anomalies with their telephone services. Most of the callers instructed the called parties to press a designated numeric key (e.g. '1' or '9') for further enquiries, and asked for the called parties' personal information.

"Notwithstanding the contents of the calls, we wish to stress that the CA and OFCA have never made and will not make such phone calls. In addition, members of the public should beware of calling numbers with a '+' sign as a prefix displayed on mobile phones, which indicates that the calls originate from outside Hong Kong even though the calling numbers may be masquerading as Hong Kong phone numbers," the spokesman said.

"We also urge members of the public to stay alert and report any suspected fraudulent calls to the Police, irrespective of whether a '+' sign is displayed as a prefix to the calling numbers. If they have any questions regarding the status of their telecommunications services, they should contact their telecommunications operators for details direct. Under no circumstances should they disclose their personal information in answering the calls," the spokesman added.

More details about the alert to members of the public on suspected fraudulent calls purporting to be made by the CA or OFCA can be found at the following hyperlink:

www.ofca.gov.hk/en/consumer_focus/education_corner/alerts/AllServices/reminder_to_members_of_the_public_on_suspected_fra/index.html.

SFST distributes masks to elderly and new-arrival families (with photos)

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, today (February 28) paid visits to elderly and new-arrival families in Central and Western District and Sham Shui Po District, during which he delivered anti-epidemic packs and surgical masks as well as explaining the Government's efforts in fighting the virus.

Accompanied by the Under Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Joseph Chan, Mr Lau first joined Fong Chung Social Service Centre Limited to visit the elderly in Central and Western District. He took the opportunity to give them anti-epidemic items including surgical masks and learned more about the impact of the epidemic on their daily lives.

Mr Lau then went to Sham Shui Po to visit new-arrival families in the district. Together with representatives of the New Home Association, Mr Lau distributed anti-epidemic packs and surgical masks, appealing to them to join the Government in fighting the virus including staying home as much as possible and reducing social activities.

Mr Lau said he understood that with the scarce global supply of surgical masks in the wake of the epidemic, members of the public have been facing difficulties in sourcing masks. The Government has decided to give the masks donated by various benefactors to non-governmental organisations for them to distribute to the needy. With the setting up of the \$30 billion Anti-epidemic Fund, the Government will continue to increase the overall supply of surgical masks in the territory by global sourcing and supporting local production, he emphasised.

Mr Lau added that Hong Kong's economy has been hard hit by the epidemic. In order to help Hong Kong people weather the storm, the Financial Secretary has just announced in his Budget Speech various assistance measures such as a cash payout, extra allowances, tax concessions, etc., to alleviate people's burden. The Government will spare no effort to enhance social welfare services to benefit the elderly, low-income families, the unemployed or underemployed, and underprivileged people.

