

Hong Kong Film Festival opens in Singapore (with photos)

Hong Kong Film Festival (HKFF) – Project HK, co-organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (HKETO) in Singapore and Singapore Film Society, opened in Singapore today (March 12). The film festival features 11 movies and short films selected from across a variety of genres to excite and entertain Singapore audiences.

To be held over three days from March 12 to 14, HKFF is a hybrid event with both cinema and online screenings. The majority of the titles are recent releases, with some of them being showcased as regional premieres. To provide opportunities for audiences to deepen their understanding of the films and to encourage exchanges between the creative industries of Hong Kong and Singapore, all cinema screenings are followed by a live-streamed Q&A with filmmakers in Hong Kong.

Speaking at the Opening Night of HKFF, the Director of the HKETO in Singapore, Mr Wong Chun-to, expressed appreciation for the overwhelming support Singapore audiences have given for the film festival and noted that the close connection and affinity between the two cities played an important role.

Mr Wong said, "Hong Kong has one of the most dynamic film industries in the world. The prosperous development of the film industry can be attributed to Hong Kong's diverse and international culture, a wealth of experience in movie making and large pool of creative talents, its freedom of expression as safeguarded by the Basic Law, a solid legal system that protects the intellectual property rights of filmmakers, and the city's status as a premier fundraising capital."

HKFF presented "Lion Rock", an inspirational feature based on the true story of former Asia's top rock climber Lai Chi-wai, as the opening film. Two documentaries, "Bamboo Theatre" and "Keep Rolling", were selected to pay tribute to Hong Kong's unique cultural heritage of using bamboo to build temporary theatres and to internationally acclaimed director Ann Hui respectively by offering audiences a close look at both through the lenses of Hong Kong filmmakers. Three Fresh Wave short films produced by emerging local filmmakers will also be presented in virtual screenings, showcasing future talents in Hong Kong's film industry.

To actively support and promote Hong Kong's film industry, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has been providing various initiatives, such as the Film Production Grant Scheme and the First Feature Film Initiative, for the long-term sustainable development of the industry.

"To address challenges faced by the film industry under the COVID-19 pandemic, the HKSAR Government announced last July that around \$260 million

has been earmarked under the Film Development Fund to implement comprehensive measures for supporting the film industry, so as to increase local film productions, nurture talents and help the film industry tide over the difficult times," Mr Wong added.

The HKFF Opening Night was well attended by representatives of arts and cultural organisations, people from the government sector, academics, business leaders and members of the media. HKFF has received support from Create Hong Kong, a dedicated agency of the HKSAR Government established to lead, champion and drive the development of the creative economy in Hong Kong.



[Immigration Department clarifies rumours on updating policy of non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents](#)

â€œRegarding the recent rumours in social media groups that the Immigration Department (ImmD) has updated the policy of non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents, ImmD today (March 12) issued the following clarification:

Since the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) on July 1, 1997, according to paragraph 7 of Schedule 1 to the Immigration Ordinance, a HKSAR permanent resident ("HKPR") who is not of Chinese nationality will lose his/her HKPR status if he/she has been absent from Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than 36 months since he/she ceased to have ordinarily resided in Hong Kong.

As for a HKPR of Chinese nationality, he/she will still be regarded as a Chinese citizen unless he/she has applied for and being approved the renunciation of Chinese nationality/declaration of change of nationality by ImmD. He/she will not lose his/her HKPR status even if he/she has been absent from Hong Kong for long periods.

ImmD reiterated that the relevant ordinance has been enacted on July 1, 1997 with no subsequent changes. The rumours are misleading and thus clarified as above.

Security guard employed by Housing Department contractor at Chak On Estate tests positive for COVID-19

The Housing Department today (March 12) learned that a security guard employed by one of its contractor in Chak On Estate has tested positive for COVID-19. She is now in hospital for treatment.

The security guard normally works on the middle shift and is responsible for manning the ground floor guard counter of Fu Chak House. She last performed duties on March 10, and was notified by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) today that she had tested positive for COVID-19.

The security guard has no recent travel history. She has been wearing a face mask and observing relevant disease prevention measures at work. When performing duties, she has been undergoing temperature checks and her body temperature was normal.

The security guard is not a resident of Chak On Estate.

The common areas of Fu Chak House and the estate management office of Chak On Estate have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the guidelines of the CHP.

The Housing Department will continue to keep up close liaison with the CHP and co-operate with its quarantine work.

CEDB briefs Trade and Industry Advisory Board on contents relating to Hong Kong in National 14th Five-Year

Plan (with photos)

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, briefed members of the Trade and Industry Advisory Board today (March 12) on the contents relating to Hong Kong in the "Outline of the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035" (the 14th Five-Year Plan) and the passage of the Decision on improving the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) at the National People's Congress (NPC). Members showed unanimous support for these two initiatives, which are timely, positive and important to the development of Hong Kong.

On economic development, the 14th Five-Year Plan continues to support Hong Kong to enhance its status as an international financial, transportation and trade centre; strengthen its status as a global offshore Renminbi business hub, an international asset management centre and a risk management centre; establish itself as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region; and promote service industries for high-end and high value-added development. The 14th Five-Year Plan also raises for the first time the support for Hong Kong to enhance its status as an international aviation hub, to develop into an international innovation and technology hub and a regional intellectual property trading centre, and to develop into a hub for arts and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world.

Mr Yau said that the 14th Five-Year Plan supports the future development of Hong Kong in various key areas, demonstrating the Central Government's unwavering support for Hong Kong. The members agreed that the rich content in the 14th Five-Year Plan is important to the development of Hong Kong. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) will actively press ahead with measures to bolster Hong Kong's competitiveness in relevant sectors, especially in continuing to make the best use of the advantages under the "one country, two systems" principle to tap into the business opportunities brought about by the twin engines of the country's economic development – the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) development. Hong Kong will continue to leverage its advantages to meet our country's needs. Concrete work includes strengthening the promotion of Hong Kong's competitive edge and professional services in GBA cities and overseas markets, riding on the country's "dual circulation" strategy and supporting Hong Kong's businesses to expand in the Mainland domestic sales market.

Hong Kong is conferred by the Basic Law a status as a separate customs territory, and may, using the name "Hong Kong, China", participate in international organisations such as the World Trade Organization and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation as a separate member, and develop mutually beneficial economic and trade relations with economies around the world. The members welcomed the support of the 14th Five-Year Plan for Hong Kong in continuing to foster co-operation and exchanges with countries and regions

around the world and fully utilise its unique status and advantages. The CEDB will continue to establish close economic and trade relations with other economies and forge free trade agreements and investment agreements, such as actively engaging member economies of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership to start discussion on Hong Kong's early accession, expanding the network of the overseas Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (HKETOs) by establishing the 14th HKETO in Dubai.

Mr Yau also briefed the members on the Decision on improving the electoral system of the HKSAR by the NPC. He said that the Decision could ensure the full and resolute implementation of the principles of "one country, two systems" and "patriots administering Hong Kong", and effectively enhance the governance capability of the HKSAR. The members in particular agreed that the Decision is urgently needed and significant as it could especially help deal with the reckless moves or internal rifts that have torn Hong Kong apart in recent years. As such, Hong Kong can focus on economic development and create a stable business environment to help Hong Kong bounce back from economic difficulties and benefit its long-term economic development.

Members attending the Trade and Industry Advisory Board meeting today were representatives from major chambers of commerce, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and the professional services sector. They were briefed on the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme by representatives from the Civil Service Bureau and the Food and Health Bureau during the meeting. In addition, representatives from the Trade and Industry Department (TID), HKMC Insurance Limited and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) introduced respectively the enhancement measures of the TID's funding schemes, the latest arrangement of the Special 100% Guarantee Product under the SME Financing Guarantee Scheme and the latest services provided by the HKTDC to support SMEs to develop diversified markets.



CHP investigates 60 additional confirmed cases of COVID-19

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced that as of 0.00am, March 12, the CHP was investigating 60 additional confirmed cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), taking the number of cases to 11 211 in Hong Kong so far (comprising 11 210 confirmed cases and one probable case).

Among the newly reported cases announced, six are imported cases.

A total of 224 cases have been recorded in the past 14 days (February 26 to March 11), including 168 local cases of which 57 are from unknown sources.

The CHP's epidemiological investigations and relevant contact tracing on the confirmed cases are ongoing. For case details and contact tracing information, please see the Annex or the list of buildings with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and the latest local situation of COVID-19 available on the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk).

Meanwhile, the CHP reminded those who had visited specified venues under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) to receive COVID-19 nucleic acid testing according to the compulsory testing notice. The public are also urged to seek medical attention early if symptoms develop.

The CHP reminds members of the public that under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Compulsory Testing for Certain Persons) Regulation (Cap. 599J) (the Regulation) requires all household members of close contacts of confirmed cases to undergo a COVID-19 nucleic acid test within a specified period according to compulsory testing notices(<https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202102/03/P2021020300018.htm>) published in the Gazette under the Regulation.

Moreover, the Government has expanded the scope of the priority groups of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme to cover staff of scheduled premises under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Requirements and Directions) (Business and Premises) Regulation (Cap. 599F) including staff of fitness centres. They can make reservations through the online booking system for receiving vaccines at community vaccination centres or get vaccinated at clinics of private doctors as early as possible.

The CHP called on members of the public to avoid going out, having social contact and dining out. They should put on a surgical mask and maintain stringent hand hygiene when they need to go out. The CHP strongly urged the elderly to stay home as far as possible and avoid going out. They should consider asking their family and friends to help with everyday tasks

such as shopping for basic necessities.

The spokesman said, "Given that the situation of COVID-19 infection remains severe and that there is a continuous increase in the number of cases reported around the world, members of the public are strongly urged to avoid all non-essential travel outside Hong Kong.

"The CHP also strongly urges the public to maintain at all times strict personal and environmental hygiene, which is key to personal protection against infection and prevention of the spread of the disease in the community. On a personal level, members of the public should wear a surgical mask when having respiratory symptoms, taking public transport or staying in crowded places. They should also perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes.

"As for household environmental hygiene, members of the public are advised to maintain drainage pipes properly, regularly pour water into drain outlets (U-traps) and cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use. After using the toilet, they should put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs."

Moreover, the Government has launched the website "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for announcing the latest updates on various news on COVID-19 infection and health advice to help the public understand the latest updates. Members of the public may also gain access to information via the COVID-19 WhatsApp Helpline launched by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer. Simply by saving 9617 1823 in their phone contacts or clicking the link wa.me/85296171823?text=hi, they will be able to obtain information on COVID-19 as well as the "StayHomeSafe" mobile app and wristband via WhatsApp.

To prevent pneumonia and respiratory tract infections, members of the public should always maintain good personal and environmental hygiene. They are advised to:

- Wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Perform hand hygiene frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, after touching public installations such as handrails or doorknobs, or when hands are contaminated by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing;
- Maintain drainage pipes properly and regularly (about once a week) pour about half a litre of water into each drain outlet (U-trap) to ensure environmental hygiene;
- Cover all floor drain outlets when they are not in use;
- After using the toilet, put the toilet lid down before flushing to avoid spreading germs;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water, and rub for at least 20 seconds. Then rinse with water and dry with a disposable paper towel. If hand washing facilities are not available, or when hands are not visibly soiled,

performing hand hygiene with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub is an effective alternative;

- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing.

Dispose of soiled tissues into a lidded rubbish bin, then wash hands thoroughly; and

- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending class at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly.