

# Hong Kong Film Development Council welcomes measures by relevant Central authorities to further facilitate entry of Hong Kong film industry into Mainland market

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

The Hong Kong Film Development Council (FDC) welcomed the five relaxation measures agreed by the relevant Central authorities, to further facilitate Hong Kong films and film practitioners entering the Mainland market.

The Chairman of the FDC, Dr Wilfred Wong, said, "Removing the restriction on the number of Hong Kong practitioners participating in a Mainland film production would encourage the Hong Kong film industry to more actively participate in Mainland film productions, thereby contributing more to the Mainland's film industry; removing the restriction on the percentage of Hong Kong artistes, the requirement for Mainland-related plots in Hong Kong-Mainland co-productions (co-productions) and the fees for establishing co-productions with the Mainland authority, would provide further facilitation for making of co-productions.

In addition, allowing Hong Kong films to participate in Mainland's film awards would raise the reputation and recognition of Hong Kong films in the Mainland market, while the incentive scheme for distribution and promotion would encourage Hong Kong film companies to promote outstanding Mainland films and co-productions, thereby helping expand markets for film industries of the two places."

Dr Wong said that the FDC is grateful for the support to the Hong Kong film industry by the relevant Central authorities and the HKSAR Government. The FDC will follow up with the HKSAR Government and the industry on implementation details.

Over the years, the FDC has funded about 60 film productions and identified 40 new directors through various film production subsidy schemes (e.g. "Film Production Financing Scheme" and "First Feature Film Initiative") under the Film Development Fund (FDF). The "Sponsorship for the Sale and Distribution of Hong Kong Films (Cantonese Version) in the Mainland" scheme and the "Sponsorship for Local Films Nominated to Participate in Film Festival Overseas" scheme under the FDF have also funded about 100 Hong Kong films to expand into the Mainland and overseas markets. The FDC will continue to support the further development of Hong Kong film industry through the FDF.

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## Illegal worker jailed

A Nepalese illegal worker holding recognisance form was jailed by Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday (April 15).

During a joint operation conducted by the Immigration Department (ImmD), the Hong Kong Police Force and the Labour Department codenamed " Powerplayer " on November 7, 2018, enforcement officers raided a hair salon in Yau Ma Tei. A male Nepalese illegal worker, aged 25, was arrested. When intercepted, he was found working as a hairdresser. Upon identity checking, he produced for inspection a recognisance form issued by the ImmD, which prohibits him from taking employment. Further investigation revealed that he was a non-refoulement claimant. Two employers suspected of employing the illegal worker was also arrested and the investigation is ongoing.

The illegal worker was charged at Shatin Magistrates' Courts yesterday with taking employment after landing in Hong Kong unlawfully and remaining in Hong Kong without the authority of the Director of Immigration or while being a person in respect of whom a removal order or deportation order was in force. He pleaded guilty to the charge and was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment.

The ImmD spokesman warned that, as stipulated in section 38AA of the Immigration Ordinance, illegal immigrants or people who are the subject of a removal order or a deportation order are prohibited from taking any employment, whether paid or unpaid, or establishing or joining in any business. Offenders are liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and up to three years' imprisonment. The Court of Appeal has issued a guideline ruling that a sentence of 15 months' imprisonment should be applied in such cases.

The spokesman reiterated that it is a serious offence to employ people who are not lawfully employable. The maximum penalty is imprisonment for three years and a fine of \$350,000. The High Court has laid down sentencing guidelines that the employer of an illegal worker should be given an immediate custodial sentence. According to the court sentencing, employers must take all practicable steps to determine whether a person is lawfully employable prior to employment. Apart from inspecting a prospective employee's identity card, the employer has the explicit duty to make enquiries regarding the person and ensure that the answers would not cast any reasonable doubt concerning the lawful employability of the person. The court will not accept failure to do so as a defence in proceedings. It is also an offence if an employer fails to inspect the job seeker's valid travel document if the job seeker does not have a Hong Kong permanent identity card. The maximum penalty for failing to inspect such a document is imprisonment for one year and a fine of \$150,000.

Under the existing mechanism, the ImmD will, as a standard procedure, conduct initial screening on vulnerable persons, including illegal workers, illegal immigrants, sex workers and foreign domestic helpers, who are arrested during any operation, with a view to ascertaining whether they are trafficking in persons (TIP) victims. When any TIP indicator is revealed in the initial screening, the officers will conduct a full debriefing and identification by using a standardised checklist to ascertain the presence of TIP elements, such as threat and coercion in the recruitment phase and the nature of exploitation. Identified TIP victims will be provided with various forms of support and assistance, including urgent interference, medical services, counselling, shelter, temporary accommodation and other supporting services. The ImmD calls on TIP victims to report crimes to the relevant departments.

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## **HKSAR Government welcomes measures by relevant Central authorities to further facilitate entry of Hong Kong film industry into Mainland market**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government today (April 16) welcomed the five relaxation measures agreed by relevant Central authorities, to further facilitate entry of Hong Kong films and film practitioners into the Mainland market.

The five relaxation measures are:

1. To remove the restriction on the number of Hong Kong people participating in Mainland film productions;
2. To remove the restriction on percentage of artistes and requirement of Mainland-related plots in motion pictures jointly produced by the Mainland and Hong Kong (Mainland-Hong Kong co-productions);
3. To waive the fees for establishing Mainland-Hong Kong co-production projects;
4. To allow Hong Kong films and film practitioners to apply for nomination for awards in Mainland film festivals; and
5. To allow Hong Kong film companies to apply for incentives for distributing and promoting outstanding Mainland motion pictures and Mainland-Hong Kong co-productions in Hong Kong, Macao and overseas.

The Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau, said, "This is another round of further relaxation measures offered by the Mainland authorities for the Hong Kong film industry since the implementation

of the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and its Supplements. Implementation of the measures would further enhance the flexibility of producing Mainland-Hong Kong co-productions and reduce relevant production costs. It would encourage Hong Kong film industry to play a more active role in production and promotion of Mainland films and co-productions, enhance the reputation and recognition of Hong Kong films in the Mainland and provide more opportunities in the Mainland for local film industry, thereby furthering the development of film industries in the two places."

"With a wealth of talent who are flexible and of global vision, there is huge potential for the Hong Kong film industry to further develop in the Mainland market. I hope that the film industry will tap the new measures, while continue to leverage existing advantages, to expand Mainland and overseas markets and further promote the brand of "Hong Kong Films"."

Mr Yau said that the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau will follow up with the relevant Central authorities on the details for early implementation of the new measures.

He reiterated that the HKSAR Government has been committed to developing Hong Kong's creative industries, including the film industry. The Chief Executive in her 2018 Policy Address announced the proposal to make an injection of \$1 billion into the Film Development Fund, with a view to boosting development of the film industry under four broad directions, namely nurturing talent, enhancing local production, expanding markets, and building audience. Measures to be launched include enhancing the First Feature Film Initiative and the Film Production Financing Scheme. Regarding the proposals of the industry for facilitating Mainland-Hong Kong co-productions and entry of Hong Kong productions into the Mainland market, the Government has conducted multiple discussions with relevant Central authorities to seek their support.

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## [Red flags hoisted at several beaches](#)

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (April 16) that due to big waves, red flags have been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach, Turtle Cove Beach, Shek O Beach and Big Wave Bay Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island; and Clear Water Bay First Beach and Clear Water Bay Second Beach in Sai Kung District. Beach-goers are advised not to swim at these

beaches.

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## **Key statistics on service demand of A&E Departments and occupancy rates in public hospitals**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

During the winter surge, the Hospital Authority is closely monitoring the service demand of Accident and Emergency Departments and the occupancy rate in public hospitals. Key service statistics are being issued daily for public information. Details are in the appended table.