

LCQ6: Promoting culture of ethnic minorities

Following is a question by Dr Hon Priscilla Leung Mei-fun and a reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (May 20):

Question:

I have received complaints that while the population of South Asians in Hong Kong has been increasing in recent years, cinemas rarely show films that fit the taste of the South Asians, and the Government and non-governmental organisations are not active in promoting cultural and ethnic diversity among the locals. Non-mainstream films are only shown at the annual Hong Kong International Film Festival. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) whether South Asian films, for instance, Bollywood (i.e. Indian) films, have been shown at any community centres under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department or the City Hall in the past five years; if so, of the relevant figures; if not, whether the authorities will consider showing such films;

(b) of the activities which were organised by the authorities in the past five years to promote the traditional festivals, culture and habits of ethnic minorities to Hong Kong people; and

(c) whether the authorities will make reference to "Little India", a successful example in Singapore, and develop a minority hub at the West Kowloon Cultural District or a landmark minority town in areas, such as Tsim Sha Tsui, which are highly populated by ethnic minorities?

Reply:

President,

(a) Hong Kong is a metropolis which embraces the essence of the Chinese culture and the diversities of other cultures. Our arts and cultural activities are free and open, as well as pluralistic and tolerant. The films, thematic activities and programmes that we support and present include those from the South Asian region.

In the past five years (i.e. 2004-05 to 2008-09), 2 Indonesian, 4 Cambodian, 12 Indian, 15 Thailand, 17 Filipino, 18 Singaporean, 19 Malaysian films were shown in the Leisure and Cultural Services Department venues.

(b) In the past five years (i.e. 2004-05 to 2008-09), activities promoting the traditional festivals and culture of ethnic minorities supported/presented by the Government are listed in Annex. In addition, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council provided funding support to a training and exchange workshop for East Asian drama teachers, a film co-produced by Hong Kong and Bangladeshi directors and a publication of Hong Kong-based Nepalese literature.

(c) In line with our policy to encourage wider participation in the arts and cultural activities by all people, the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), like all other cultural venues, will be staging programmes of rich and diverse content, produced by people of different cultural background, for the enjoyment of people locally, regionally and internationally. The WKCD Authority will soon launch a large-scale public engagement exercise to canvass views on the development plan and to gauge the public's expectation and aspiration of the WKCD, for which ideas and comments are most welcome.

Our city grows organically. The Government has no intention to develop a town for people of any particular ethnic minority.

Ends/Wednesday, May 20, 2009

Issued at HKT 15:00

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