

August 31, 2021
The Editor
TIME

Dear Editor,

Chandran Nair's article "*Quarantine, What Quarantine? Nicole Kidman, Expats and White Privilege*" (posted on August 26) regarding a recent decision to provide a quarantine exemption to personnel involved in the production of a TV series contains assertions that are groundless and speculative.

When asked by TIME whether we had granted exemptions to any non-white actor, a question that is insensitive, it was made very clear that no information is collected about the race or ethnic background of any applicant because such information is irrelevant when considering such a case. Despite this clear-cut approach, Mr Nair persisted to unfairly attribute the decision to a notion of so-called "white privilege" to which we take exception.

Without any supporting evidence, he speculated that "it seems unlikely that an Indian, Vietnamese, or Nigerian actor, even if they were to have a global reputation ... would have a slim chance of getting the same perk..." This in itself is a prejudicial, baseless and unacceptable attack on Hong Kong without any foundation. As an international city, Hong Kong welcomes talents from all over the world regardless of the colour of their skin. That is and will remain what Hong Kong values and believes.

It is true that Hong Kong has adopted stringent quarantine measures to safeguard our population, but exemptions are needed to maintain Hong Kong's business activities and economic development. Those granted exemptions are subject to restrictions and medical surveillance that are adjusted from time to time depending on the evolving epidemic situation in Hong Kong and elsewhere in the world.

In the case mentioned, those involved must strictly comply with measures including vaccination prior to arrival, designated accommodation, repeated tests in the first two weeks and use of point-to-point transport for pre-

determined work-related itineraries etc. to minimise the risks of social contact. Frequent checks are conducted to ensure compliance.

We fully understand that people may still disagree with our decision, but to claim this one decision is “white privilege” is not just misplaced but also absurd.

Sincerely,

Clement Leung
Permanent Secretary (Communications and Creative Industries)
Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region