
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services

Canadian filmmakers to produce Komagata Maru historical miniseries

VANCOUVER – Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services Amrik Virk announced a \$2 million contribution to Knowledge Network for the making of *Lions of the Sea*, a feature film and miniseries, based on the history of the Komagata Maru incident.

First Take Entertainment Ltd. is producing the feature film and four-part miniseries. Set in 1914, the film will chronicle the tragic story of 376 Indian passengers that sailed into Vancouver's Burrard Inlet aboard the Komagata Maru in the hope of opportunity and a better life, but who were turned away. Tragically, upon their forced repatriation to India, 19 individuals were killed.

This production provides an opportunity to highlight the early struggle of South Asian Canadians for justice and equality and a key part of the province's history. South Asian pioneers have established strong cultural ties between India and British Columbia, playing a significant role in shaping immigration policies and furthering B.C.'s international trade and investment.

In 2008, the B.C. Legislative Assembly made a formal apology to the South Asian community and to the families of the victims of this incident.

With this contribution, Knowledge Network will be able to broadcast the film and miniseries on its television service, and stream them on its website and apps. The production will begin this year, as the province celebrates its history and diversity as part of Canada's 150th anniversary in 2017, and prepares to celebrate the 150th anniversary of B.C.'s entry into Confederation in 2021.

First Take Entertainment is a Canadian-based international film production house specializing in feature films. The company will engage with Community Foundations of Canada to hold complimentary screenings of the film at community centres, schools and libraries in B.C. and Canada, as well as to provide curriculum and copies of the DVD and miniseries. The estimated production budget for *Lions of the Sea* is between \$16 and \$19 million, with contributions coming from the Knowledge Network and other Canadian entities.

A viewer-supported public broadcaster, British Columbia's Knowledge Network offers commercial-free documentaries, arts and culture, drama and children's programs from British Columbia, Canada and around the world.

Quotes:

Amrik Virk, Minister of Technology, Innovation and Citizens' Services –

"The Komagata Maru incident is a dark chapter in our history that reflects racial discrimination and policies of the time. Through education and awareness, we honour our multicultural fabric

and values and vow to never make the same mistake again.”

Rudy Buttignol, president and CEO, Knowledge Network Corporation –

“This is a timely initiative as we reflect on our nation’s past during the Canada 150 celebrations. The Komagata Maru story is an important and critical part of B.C.’s history, and continues to be relevant in today’s globalized world.”

Vinay Virmani, creative producer, First Take Entertainment –

“In association with Salman Khan, we are extremely excited to partner with the Knowledge Network and the Province of British Columbia to produce the First Indo Canadian co production Lions of the Sea – The Voyage of the Komagata Maru. The most important history lesson our youth can absorb from the Komagata Maru incident is that the freedoms and openness we celebrate in Canada today would not have been possible without the enormous sacrifices made by the brave souls connected with this tragic chapter in our history – who risked life and limb to create the first inroads that have eventually led to our nation becoming the inclusive, welcoming and multicultural Canada of today.”

Quick Facts:

- On May 23, 2008, the B.C. Legislative Assembly unanimously passed a motion apologizing for the Komagata Maru incident.
- Through B.C.’s new curriculum, students are learning about specific incidents such as the Komagata Maru and the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, as well as historical wrongs against Chinese Canadians.
- Built in 2012, there is a Komagata Maru memorial in Vancouver’s Coal Harbour.
- B.C. is the most ethnically diverse province in Canada and welcomes nearly 40,000 new immigrants every year.

Learn More:

Explore Knowledge Network at: www.knowledge.ca

Remembering the Komagata Maru on its 100th anniversary:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/remembering-the-komagata-maru>

Embrace BC - Province of B.C. multiculturalism site: www.embracebc.ca

Welcome BC - Information and services for new British Columbians: www.welcomebc.ca

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Connect with the Province of B.C. at: www.gov.bc.ca/connect

\$2M Grant for Komagata Maru Feature Film

KEY MESSAGES

Confidential

April 4, 2017

- The BC government is providing a \$2 million contribution towards the making of a feature film and mini-series based on the Komagata Maru incident in 1914.
- The film, “Lions of the Sea,” will chronicle the tragic story of 376 Indian passengers that sailed into Vancouver’s Burrard Inlet aboard the Komagata Maru in hopes of opportunity and a better life.
- This is an important story that should be told to honour the South Asian people who are a key part of the history that is British Columbia.
- This production highlights the early struggle that South Asian Canadians had for justice and equality.
- Knowledge Network will broadcast the film and mini-series -on its television service and stream them on its website and apps.
- The production will begin this year, as the province celebrates its history and diversity as part of Canada’s 150th anniversary in 2017. It will also help celebrate the 150th anniversary of B.C.’s entry into Confederation in 2021.
- The film and mini-series will be produced by First Take Entertainment, a Canadian based international film production company, beginning this year.
- The estimated production budget for “Lions of the Sea” is between \$16 and \$19 million with \$2 million from the B.C. government and contributions coming from other Canadian entities.