

## CE meets Secretary of CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee (with photo)

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, met the Secretary of the CPC Heilongjiang Provincial Committee, Mr Xu Qin, at Government House today (March 20) to exchange views on strengthening Hong Kong's co-operation with Heilongjiang. Also attending the meeting were the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki; the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai; and the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Ms Carol Yip.

Mr Lee welcomed Mr Xu and his delegation to Hong Kong for the Heilongjiang-Hong Kong Investment Cooperation Conference. Mr Lee said he is pleased to meet Mr Xu again since they last met during his visit to Harbin in February. Noting that Hong Kong and Heilongjiang maintain close economic and trade relations, Mr Lee said Hong Kong has been the largest source of external investment in Heilongjiang, with total investments exceeding US\$ 34 billion as of last year. Hong Kong will continue to leverage its advantage as a bridge between the Mainland and the world under the "one country, two systems" principle to serve Mainland enterprises in going global while attracting more foreign investment to the country.

Mr Lee highlighted that Heilongjiang's successful hosting of the 9th Asian Winter Games Harbin 2025 sets an excellent example for the 15th National Games to be jointly held by Hong Kong, Guangdong, and Macao in November this year. Heilongjiang's integration of winter sports with cultural tourism development, along with its full promotion of the ice and snow economy, provides inspiration for Hong Kong's cultural tourism development.

Noting that the Individual Visit Scheme has been extended to include Harbin in Heilongjiang Province, while direct flights between Harbin and Hong Kong have been launched, Mr Lee said that these developments will further foster economic, trade, and cultural exchanges between Heilongjiang and Hong Kong. He welcomed more enterprises and talent from Heilongjiang to organise and participate in various activities in Hong Kong, and he also encouraged more tourists from Heilongjiang to visit Hong Kong to experience its unique charm as a metropolis where East meets West.

Mr Lee said that the Beijing Office and Liaoning Liaison Unit of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government will continue to serve as a bridge to promote deeper co-operation between Hong Kong and Heilongjiang in various areas such as sports, economic and trade investment, tourism, education, and youth exchanges, jointly making new and greater contributions to the country's high-quality development.



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## Regulatory sandbox pilot projects officially launched to foster low-altitude economy and innovative industry development

The Government announced today (March 20) the list of the first batch of low-altitude economy (LAE) Regulatory Sandbox pilot projects, which will be rolled out progressively, to enable members of the public to "see and feel" the tangible benefits of the LAE. These projects will also allow the Government and relevant sectors to simulate diversified scenarios, multiple air routes and overarching low-altitude airspace management matters, while accumulating data and experience to guide the work on multiple fronts including regulations, infrastructure, and applications.

The Chief Executive, Mr John Lee; the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Ms Mable Chan; the Director-General of Civil Aviation, Mr Victor Liu; the Chairman of the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting, Ms Elizabeth Quat; the Deputy Chairman of the LegCo Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting, Mr Duncan Chiu; LegCo Member Mr Frankie Yick; and the Council Chairman of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), Professor Harry Shum, officiated at the LAE Regulatory Sandbox – Launch Event, marking the official start of the pilot projects. They also unveiled the logo specifically designed for the LAE Regulatory Sandbox (see Annex).

"The LAE is one of our nation's strategic emerging industries, as well as the example in exploring new quality productive forces," Mr Lee said. He pointed out that the LAE not only gives rise to a series of industries, but also brings along a very wide scope of application scenarios with a tremendous potential for development. It is set to strengthen city management and business efficiency, and create a whole new experience of smart living

for the public, making it an important growth engine for the economy. Mr Lee stressed that Hong Kong is dedicated to develop into an international innovation and technology centre and an international hub for high-calibre talent. The Government will unleash the potential of the LAE by bringing together research and development outcomes and corporate efforts, taking forward the LAE in a safe and healthy manner to make Hong Kong a pioneer in the emerging new quality productive forces industry of the LAE, creating a new era of a "smart sky".

The Council Chairman of HKUST – the Sandbox's supporting organisation – Professor Shum, said in his welcome remarks, "HKUST is honored to be the venue host for this landmark occasion that marks a significant step in transforming aerial innovation into tangible societal impact in Hong Kong. I deeply appreciate the Government's visionary leadership in driving the city's LAE development, and I am excited that HKUST has been among the first batch of the Regulatory Sandbox pilot projects. By harnessing our interdisciplinary strengths, we will help create a robust framework that fosters a vibrant LAE ecosystem. In collaboration with the Government and other stakeholders, we are poised for a historic 'take-off' together for the rise of a trillion-dollar LAE market."

The Government received Regulatory Sandbox pilot project proposals from 72 applicants, and after review by the Working Group on Developing LAE, 38 of them are among the first batch of pilot projects to be rolled out with applicant backgrounds from enterprises, universities/research institutes, public utilities and government departments. The project list has been uploaded to the website of the Transport and Logistics Bureau ([www.tlb.gov.hk/eng/highlights/transport/low-altitude.html](http://www.tlb.gov.hk/eng/highlights/transport/low-altitude.html)). The projects cover a wide range of fields and application scenarios, including emergency and rescue, logistics and distribution, inspection and safety maintenance, surveillance and low-altitude infrastructure. The Project Facilitation Task Force under the Working Group, along with government-appointed technical partners and venue partners, will actively assist the implementation of the selected projects to expedite the research and development of the industry, as well as enhance work efficiency, citizen's quality of life and consumer experience through innovation and technology.

A number of organisations of the pilot projects with various application areas set up booths at the Launch Event to introduce the application scenarios and features of their projects. Some of the Sandbox applicants also make use of drones for demonstrations.

The Working Group will closely monitor the implementation of the first batch of pilot projects to better prepare for and decide on the timing and details for the second batch of applications. The Working Group will also organise different activities with technical and venue partners to progressively expand and enrich the scope of low-altitude flying applications, providing new impetus to Hong Kong's economy.

The Chief Executive announced in the 2024 Policy Address to establish the Working Group to boost the development of LAE from various perspectives, with promoting Regulatory Sandbox pilot projects as one of its major tasks.

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## Keynote speech by SCST at Hong Kong Tourism Overview 2025 (English only)

Following is the keynote speech by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Miss Rosanna Law, at Hong Kong Tourism Overview 2025 today (March 20):

Dr YK Pang (Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Dr Pang Yiu-kai), Dr Peter Lam (Chairman-Designate of the Hong Kong Tourism Board), distinguished guests, friends from the travel industry, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. It is with enormous pleasure and a lot of emotion that I join you all at today's Hong Kong Tourism Board's Tourism Overview. I was a regular attendee from 2011 to 2016, but this is my very first time joining this important event as the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism. Really happy to see so many old friends of the tourism industry in the audience, and for new friends in this room, a very warm "hello" to all of you.

Strong rebound of tourism performance

Tourism has been a cornerstone of Hong Kong's economy all along. It may not be a major source of foreign investment, but travel and related sectors gallantly provide employment for some 150 000 people of our workforce. In 2024, we welcomed close to 45 million visitors, marking a more than 30 per cent increase year on year. Among them, Mainland and non-Mainland visitors exceeded 34 million and 10 million respectively, with year-on-year increases at 27 per cent and 44 per cent respectively, injecting momentum into the local economy, and showcasing the collaborative efforts of the Government and the industry. As we entered 2025, we continue to see handsome growth, and achieved in January alone the highest monthly record of 4.74 million visitor arrivals since the pandemic.

And for these remarkable achievements, I would like to take the opportunity to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to Dr YK Pang for leading the Hong Kong Tourism Board with dedication and passion over the past six extraordinary years, particularly through the difficult times during the pandemic. As the Chairman, you have guided the Board with exemplary leadership in successfully overcoming various challenges and then driving the recovery of Hong Kong tourism. Thank you for your invaluable contributions to the Board and to Hong Kong's tourism development.

To sustain the momentum of the recovery, it is essential for all of us in the Government and the industry to recognise that the global tourism landscape has indeed changed substantially after the pandemic, and is continually evolving. With the advancement in digital technology and changing traveller preferences, we must embrace innovation, adapt our traditional

offerings and craft new ones to maintain our competitive edge.

## Tourism Blueprint 2.0

With this in mind, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau promulgated on December 30, 2024, the Tourism Blueprint 2.0, setting out the vision and mission for the development of Hong Kong's tourism industry for the five-year period from 2025 to 2030.

Blueprint 2.0 is obviously a roadmap, but it is also a pragmatic and forward-looking action plan comprising four development strategies and 133 measures, which cover product development, visitor source expansion, smart tourism and service enhancement, to name but a few. We will vigorously press ahead with the implementation of these measures, many of them are suggestions from the audience in this room, to achieve our vision of consolidating Hong Kong's position as a world-class premier tourism destination and the mission of implementing "tourism is everywhere".

I am sure most of you have already read the Blueprint 2.0, maybe several times, so I am not going to bore you with the details yet again. But I think it is useful for me to elaborate the three key messages, which form the bases of the Blueprint 2.0, to you in person, which will shape the direction of the tourism industry in the coming years.

### Opportunities to capitalise – Mainland's support measures

The first message is Hong Kong's uniqueness as an international tourist city with the advantage of being backed by the motherland, the Mainland of China. This is our core strength and fundamental asset, and it is getting even more important at this day and age as we are under the cloud of geopolitical tension. It is paramount that we make the most out of the wide range of supportive measures that the Central People's Government has so generously endowed Hong Kong, through the rolling out of the resumption and expansion of multiple-entry permits for Shenzhen residents and the gifting of two precious giant pandas "An An" and "Ke Ke", to name just a few. These measures have injected fresh impetus into our travel, retail, catering and hospitality industries. The entire tourism industry must strategically utilise these initiatives to maximise the benefits for Hong Kong as a whole.

### Traditional and new tourism offerings

This naturally brings me to my second message. Hong Kong boasts significant traditional tourism advantages, including world-class tourist attractions, like the Hong Kong Disneyland Resort, which will be celebrating its 20th anniversary later this year; Ocean Park, especially with "An An", "Ke Ke" and the two cute panda cubs "å®ŒŒŒŒ", "ç´°ä½ŒŒ"; our diverse cuisine, from corner delis "chaa chaan teng" to Michelin-star restaurants; efficient urban management and transportation systems. One thing that we in Hong Kong take for granted and tourists from abroad may not be aware, Hong Kong is in fact one of the safest cities in the world for business and leisure travel. It is essential that we continue to fortify these traditional assets and

optimise and strengthen our infrastructure. But it is also crystal clear that amidst fierce competition from nearby cities, there is no room for complacency at all, and we surely cannot just rely on our traditional tourism mode and attractions anymore.

In the Blueprint 2.0, we promote the four "+ tourism" directions, covering culture, sports, ecology and mega events, in which Hong Kong possesses world-class resources that have yet to be fully presented to global visitors. This is where you, my friends in the travel and tourism trade, must and can all work together and rack your brains to develop innovative and interesting tourism products that speak to the desire of new-generation travellers' aspiration for in-depth exploration of Hong Kong's rich, diversified, and unique characteristics. Island tourism, for example, is one of the areas that we are actively working on. Hong Kong's countryside and outlying islands are our hidden gems. Within an hour, we can travel after attending a formal business meeting in the bustling city centre to our countryside and explore the amazing wonders of nature, just like I did just this past Sunday when I hiked for five hours from Shek Pik Reservoir to Tai O in Lantau in the day, and then dressed up to the nines for a wedding banquet in the evening. We should develop more island tourism and eco-tourism itineraries for our global visitors who now have an increase in preference in this area. Our stunning Victoria Harbour is also one of the most beautiful and must-go photo points among the world's top visit places. We must make better use of our harbour and the surrounding water body by developing more innovative products like yacht tourism to attract tourists. Horse racing is another world-class tourist attraction that Hong Kong excels and has lots of potential, and I'm glad that CTS (China Travel Service) has recently signed an MOU with the Hong Kong Jockey Club to promote horse-racing tourism, and I believe more will come in this direction. And these days I cannot attend any public speaking engagement without mentioning the Kai Tak Sports Park, our new and proud landmark with a 50 000-sized stadium, with which we are now in a position to bring truly mega sports and entertainment events befitting Hong Kong's role as an international metropolis. It is only by infusing the city with fresh energy through new tourism offerings can we enhance the ambiance of our vibrant city and attract visitors from around the globe. On this, I look forward to the support and efforts from all of you in unleashing our creativity and developing products that will captivate the hearts of visitors.

Everyone is tourism ambassador

My third message, which I have been repeating at every opportunity since appointment as the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, is that everyone in the community has a role to play in the development of tourism in Hong Kong, in particular in welcoming our visitors from around the world. This is surely most important for all of us present today, who is always the first point of contact with our tourists. Positive and warm hospitality is the key to prosperous tourism development. Hospitality is not just about providing accommodation and dining services but also about offering attentive and caring services, making visitors feel like home and willing to consume, if I am honest. Therefore, we advocate the concept of "Everyone is a tourism

ambassador", and I would encourage everyone in the tourism trade, as well as members of the public, to welcome every visitor with a warm and friendly smile. Every sunny smile by a member of the public will add to the happy vibe that we could bring to our community, and will more likely bring about quality service provided by hospitality professions. We launched the Hospitality Campaign in 2024 with various government departments, the tourism and related sectors, the education sector and district representatives, encouraging the trade and the entire community to go an extra mile in promoting the spirit of hospitality. We will continue to encourage quality services to welcome every visitor. One of our development strategies in the Blueprint 2.0 is to expand and diversify our visitor source markets. These include the Muslims, silver-haired, family, study-tour, and youth visitors. In order to attract these different segments of visitors, in addition to providing attractive tourism offerings, we must understand their needs and show our respect to make them feel welcomed and valued. This is hospitality and I am confident that our tourism industry will excel in it, giving the warmest welcome to our visitors.

## Conclusion

My dear friends, we have come a long way recovering from the pandemic, and it is now time for us to work together to bring Hong Kong tourism to new heights. Hong Kong is a city full of energy and endless adventures. The Government, along with the tourism industry, the business sector and the community, and indeed everyone in Hong Kong, need to act together to shape Hong Kong's attractive tourism brand vividly. I always call myself a tourism veteran, and you have my assurance that I am all ears when you have a new idea to tell me, and I shall be in action when I know that there are things that my bureau could do to facilitate your business. Equally, I hope I have your assurance that you are walking with me to rejuvenate our travel and tourism industries, and that I can count on your diligence and creativity on this journey. I also look forward to working closely once again with the new Chairman of Hong Kong Tourism Board, Dr Peter Lam, to bring Hong Kong tourism to the new and next level of excellence.

Thank you very much.

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**DH calls on public to maintain oral health in support of World Oral Health Day and launches Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents to**

# [promote lifelong tooth protection](#)

On the occasion of World Oral Health Day, the Department of Health (DH) today (March 20) urged the public not to neglect the prevention of dental diseases in their daily lives, as managing one's own oral health is the most cost effective way to retain teeth and achieve oral and general health. In addition, the Primary Dental Co-care Pilot Scheme for Adolescents (PDCC) commenced its services today.

The World Dental Federation has designated March 20 of each year as World Oral Health Day, with this year's theme being "A Happy Mouth is a Happy Mind. Spread Happiness Everywhere." The DH's Oral Health Promotion Division (OHPD) has launched a new promotional video on its [YouTube channel](#) to encourage the public to maintain good oral health and to remind them of the importance of "Love Your Teeth, Check-ups Annually". By maintaining good preventive oral care, people can retain their teeth to a considerable extent in old age

"There is an intimate relationship between oral health and general health. Tooth decay and periodontal disease share many common risk factors as cardiovascular disease and diabetes. For example, smokers are more likely to develop cardiovascular and periodontal disease. To maintain good personal oral and general health, members of the public are encouraged to start with daily habits, such as toothbrushing and interdental cleaning thoroughly every day, having regular oral check-ups, maintaining a healthy eating habit, and refraining from smoking or drinking alcohol to minimise the risk of related diseases," said the Consultant in-charge, Dental Services of the DH, Dr Kitty Hse.

"The DH has carefully chosen this meaningful day to launch the PDCC today. Through the co-payment arrangement, the PDCC subsidises adolescents to seek dental check-ups at private dental clinics, thereby fostering their partnership with dentists to maintain a good habit of regular dental check-ups and prevent dental diseases," she added.

Eligible adolescents can receive subsidised services once every calendar year. While the Government provides a subsidy of \$200 each time, participants have to pay a co-payment fee as determined by the dentists they select. The co-payment for the subsidised services recommended by the Government is \$200 each time. Currently, there are around 270 registered dentists participating in the PDCC to provide services in over 370 service locations, where 67 per cent of the co-payment amount has been set at \$200 or less and the minimum co-payment amount has been set at \$50 (as at March 19). The scope of subsidised services of the PDCC includes:

- i. Dental check-up;
- ii. Oral health risk assessment;
- iii. Dental scaling;
- iv. Personalised self-care advice on oral care;

- v. Fluoride application as risk-based follow-up; and
- vi. Check-up report.

To enhance the transparency of dental service fees other than the co-payment fee, the DH required dentists to disclose the fees for X-ray examinations, tooth fillings and tooth extractions as charged under the PDCC. All clinics participating in the PDCC will display the designated logo (see annex) outside their clinics or in visible areas for easy identification.

Adolescents aged between 13 and 17 (or will turn 13 in the calendar year when applying to join the PDCC) who hold a valid Hong Kong identity card and have registered for the [Electronic Health Record Sharing System](#) (eHealth) are eligible to join the PDCC. For details, please visit the DH's [thematic website](#) and promotional video clips. Participants may check [the list of registered dentists participating in the PDCC](#) and contact the relevant clinic to make an appointment. The list also sets out information about the dentists, such as addresses, telephone numbers, professional qualifications and co-payment fees.

Adolescents participating in the PDCC and their parents can check their relevant records, including the date of the consultation and the co-payment amount, through the eHealth mobile application (eHealth App). Later this year, they will also be able to access their electronic oral health records and oral care advice from the dentists through the eHealth App to better understand and monitor their own dental health.

Dr Hse emphasised that receiving preventive dental services is more effective in safeguarding oral health and more cost-effective than paying for curative dental services later. For more information about oral health and the PDCC, please visit the [OHPD's website](#), the [Facebook fan page](#) of "æ„>ç¸¸™ Love Teeth HK", the [YouTube channel](#) and the [PDCC website](#). The DH has issued letters through the Education Bureau to all secondary school students and parents in Hong Kong to introduce the PDCC, and has promoted the PDCC to targeted students at the Student Health Service Centres and School Dental Clinics.

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## [DH cancels licence of day procedure centre in Causeway Bay](#)

The Department of Health (DH) today (March 20) announced that it has cancelled the licence of a day procedure centre (DPC), Dr MD Clinic and Ambulatory Centre, in Causeway Bay.

In view of the potential risks to patients arising from the multiple serious breaches of the Code of Practice for Day Procedure Centres, the DH

suspended the licence of the DPC concerned [earlier this month](#) and simultaneously initiated the procedure for cancellation of its licence. The DH has considered the licensee's representation. In accordance with the Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance (Cap. 633), the statutory period of notification lapsed today, and the Office for Regulation of Private Healthcare Facilities of the DH had published the [information](#) on its website. With immediate effect, the DPC is not allowed to provide specialised services including surgical and anaesthetic procedures.

Upon receipt of a complaint about the suspected mishandling of medical equipment by the DPC concerned, the DH immediately investigated and conducted unannounced inspections. During the inspections, the DPC was found to have contravened the Code of Practice for Day Procedure Centres under the Private Healthcare Facilities Ordinance, namely improper handling and management of an anaesthetic drug, failure to properly sterilise medical equipment, and inadequate staff training and supervision. In addition, the DPC was suspected to have filled in false information in the checking and monitoring of records, including those concerning medical equipment.

The DH will continue to closely monitor licensed private healthcare facilities to protect patient safety.