

CE meets leaders of Central Government ministries in Beijing (with photos)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (November 4) started her visit to Beijing, where she met with the leaders of the Ministry of Commerce, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) to discuss measures by the Central Government to support the Hong Kong economy. Also joining the meetings were the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan; the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan; the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit; the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui; and the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Mr Chan Kwok-ki.

In the morning, Mrs Lam met with the Minister of Commerce, Mr Zhong Shan. Expressing her gratitude to the Ministry of Commerce for its long-standing support for Hong Kong, especially during the early stage of the COVID-19 epidemic when anti-epidemic supplies across the country were in tight supply, she said that the Ministry of Commerce still took care of the needs of Hong Kong, thereby relieving significantly the pressure of supplies on Hong Kong. She said that many Hong Kong enterprises engaging in external trade are under pressure due to the unilateral measures of the United States and the epidemic, and that she hopes that the Ministry of Commerce will support Hong Kong enterprises to realise business opportunities in the Mainland market under the country's efforts to foster a dual-cycle development architecture, with the domestic cycle as the mainstay and with domestic and international development reinforcing each other. To this end, she said more than 240 Hong Kong enterprises are participating in the third China International Import Expo under the support of the Ministry of Commerce, representing an increase of 20 per cent over the past year.

Mrs Lam met with the Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Wang Zhigang, in the afternoon. She expressed gratitude to MOST for its staunch support for the innovation and technology (I&T) development in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), including the signing of an arrangement and an agreement on enhancing co-operation with the HKSAR Government in 2018, with cross-boundary remittance of scientific research funding and the Mainland-Hong Kong Joint Funding Scheme already implemented, thereby injecting impetus into Hong Kong's I&T development. As the nation's strength in science, technology and innovative capability becomes stronger, Mrs Lam said she believes that Hong Kong can further benefit from its co-operation with the Mainland and that she is confident that Hong Kong, with its unique advantages, can contribute to the nation's developments, in particular to the development of an international I&T hub in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). Pointing out that the prospects of co-operation between Hong Kong and Shenzhen in I&T are very promising, she said that the two places are pressing ahead with the development of the Hong

Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Loop, and are exploring ways of intensifying co-operation in the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone in Shenzhen. She expressed the hope that MOST will lend support to them. She added that MOST is spearheading matters on the research and development of vaccines for COVID-19 and that Hong Kong is proactively working on the procurement of vaccines through different channels. She expressed the hope to maintain close contact with MOST on the issue.

Mrs Lam also met with the Administrator of the CAAC, Mr Feng Zhenglin, in the afternoon. Mrs Lam expressed her gratitude to the CAAC for its continued support for Hong Kong's air services and the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA), and the great importance it attaches to them, including the signing of a memorandum with Hong Kong in February last year to further expand air services between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Noting that the aviation industry has been hard hit by the epidemic, she said that Hong Kong will maintain its strength and, with the support of the CAAC, continue to consolidate and strengthen its status as an international aviation hub. She expressed the hope that Hong Kong will play a key role in the development of a world-class airport cluster in the GBA, bringing new development opportunities and impetus for passenger and cargo flows in the GBA and enhancing its international competitiveness. In particular, she said that she hopes to strengthen collaboration between the HKIA and the airports in the GBA and to expand the inter-modal cargo and passenger transport services in the region.

Mrs Lam will continue her visit to Beijing tomorrow (November 5).



