

CE visits I&T institutions and facilities in Japan (with photos/videos)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, continued her visit to Japan today (October 30). She toured a number of innovation and technology (I&T) institutions and facilities, including Kashiwa-no-ha Smart City in Chiba Prefecture and the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST) in Ibaraki Prefecture as well as the University of Tsukuba, and met with the Mayor of Tsukuba City.

In the morning, accompanied by the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau; the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang; the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation, Dr Sunny Chai; and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Hong Kong Cyberport Management Company Limited, Dr George Lam, Mrs Lam visited Kashiwa-no-ha Smart City to learn about its developments in innovation, health services and smart city initiatives. Kashiwa-no-ha Smart City, a public-private partnership project commenced in 2001 and involving a developer, employs advanced technology to create a liveable neighbourhood which is environmentally friendly, favourable to development of new industries and suitable for people of all ages. The city is the first in Japan to produce and distribute electricity with a smart grid to increase the use of solar energy and reduce power consumption.

Mrs Lam and the other officials then visited the AIST in Ibaraki Prefecture and were briefed by its President, Dr Ryoji Chubachi, on the operation and research achievements of the AIST. Founded in 2001, the AIST is one of the largest public research organisations in Japan and about 2 000 researchers work at research bases across the country. They conduct studies in I&T and scientific research in various fields and help with transformation of technological achievements so as to strengthen the competitiveness of Japanese industries and create new industries. Mrs Lam pointed out that there are exchanges between the universities in Hong Kong and the AIST and welcomed the AIST to collaborate with more universities and scientific research institutions in Hong Kong to promote mutual development in I&T.

In the afternoon, Mrs Lam and the other officials had lunch with the Mayor of Tsukuba City, Dr Tatsuo Igarashi, to learn about the city's successful experience in promoting I&T and measures by the city government in attracting scientific research institutions and talents. Known as the "Science City of Japan", Tsukuba City has over 300 science and technology entities. She said that Hong Kong is striving to advance I&T development and expressed the hope of strengthening collaboration with Tsukuba at the government level to provide more opportunities for joint development for enterprises in the two cities.

Mrs Lam and the other officials then visited the University of Tsukuba. Founded in 1973, the University of Tsukuba holds academic strengths in fields such as science, technology, engineering, mathematics, medicine and physical education, and has had three Nobel laureates and about 70 athletes who have participated in the Olympic Games. Mrs Lam said she was pleased to know that the university has international exchange arrangements with the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology has also collaborated with it on publications. During the visit, while she was receiving a briefing by the school on its research on artificial intelligence and cybernics, she said that the Hong Kong Science Park will establish in Hong Kong two world-class research clusters on healthcare technologies and on artificial intelligence and robotics technologies to attract top local, Mainland and overseas universities, research and development institutions and scientific technology enterprises to establish a presence. She encouraged the University of Tsukuba to join the clusters and take part in scientific research projects in Hong Kong, and also welcomed its students to come to Hong Kong for exchanges.

Mrs Lam called on the Chinese Ambassador to Japan, Mr Cheng Yonghua, and attended a dinner hosted by him in the evening. She thanked the embassy for its continuous support for the work of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office (Tokyo), and the assistance it offers to a large number of Hong Kong people visiting Japan when in need.

At night, Mrs Lam met with around 200 Hong Kong people living, working and studying in Japan to learn about their everyday lives and updated them on Hong Kong's latest developments, including the recent commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, which have enormously enhanced the connectivity between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

Mrs Lam will continue her visit to Japan tomorrow (October 31).



