LEAP East Closes Inaugural Edition with 25,000 Attendees and Three-Year Commitment to Hong Kong

HONG KONG, HONG KONG, July 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- LEAP East concluded its inaugural three-day edition in Hong Kong last week, bringing together more than 25,000 attendees, 340 speakers, 450 exhibitors, 300 startups and 600 investors representing more than US$6.5 trillion in assets under management.

Saudi Minister of Communications and Information Technology met with companies including Tencent, Tencent Cloud, SenseTime and Sony AI, among others.

Created to connect the Middle East’s largest economy with one of Asia’s leading international financial centres, LEAP East brought together capital, technology companies, founders and policymakers to accelerate investment, commercial partnerships and innovation between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Asia.

With 55 per cent international and 45 per cent local participation, the event attracted governments, investors, technology companies, startups and entrepreneurs from across Asia, the Middle East and global markets. The inaugural edition launched at more than five times the scale typically seen for a new event in Hong Kong, demonstrating growing demand for deeper technology and investment links between the two regions.

Following the strong response to its first edition, the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau (ITIB), the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and organiser Tahaluf announced a three-year strategic partnership, securing Hong Kong as LEAP East’s exclusive Asian host city for the next three years, with the event set to return in December 2027.

Prof. Sun Dong, Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry, said: “LEAP East has brought together enterprises, investors, exhibitors and high-calibre talent from Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and the Chinese Mainland. We are delighted to continue serving as LEAP East's Government Partner for the next three years, and we remain firmly committed to providing strong support to LEAP East for co-creating a larger platform in Hong Kong to foster I&T exchanges from Saudi Arabia, the Middle East and the world. With unique institutional advantages under 'One Country, Two Systems', Hong Kong serves as an ideal gateway for both Mainland enterprises going global and Saudi and Middle Eastern firms accessing Chinese and other Asian markets. Through this three-year partnership, we will further leverage Hong Kong's role as a 'two-way platform' to bring new business opportunities and foster global I&T collaborations."

LEAP East brought together industry leaders, technology professionals and participants exchange insights, explore emerging technologies and discuss the future of innovation.

Over three days, LEAP East hosted high-level government and industry engagement, investment discussions, business matchmaking and startup competitions, alongside a programme spanning artificial intelligence, digital infrastructure, smart cities, fintech and emerging technologies.

Highlights from LEAP East 2026 included:

• High-level engagement strengthened Saudi–Hong Kong technology and investment ties: H.E. Abdullah Alswaha, Minister of Communications and Information Technology of Saudi Arabia, met with the Hon. John Lee Ka-chiu, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Hon. Paul Chan, Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong SAR Government, Prof. Sun Dong, Secretary for Innovation, Technology and Industry of the Hong Kong SAR Government, and senior representatives from Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTP), alongside technology companies including SenseTime, Tencent, Tencent Cloud and Sony AI. The meetings advanced engagement between Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong across technology investment, innovation and opportunities for deeper commercial collaboration between the GCC and Asia.

• Three startups secured US$100,000 in equity-free funding through Rocket Fuel: LEAP's flagship startup competition brought emerging companies before an international judging panel and global investors. Finland's ROTOBOOST, Saudi Arabia's Uvera Inc, and Hong Kong's Meinong Robot were named this year's winners, securing a combined US$100,000 in equity-free funding to accelerate their growth and international expansion.

• Hong Kong secured as LEAP East's exclusive Asian host city for the next three years: ITIB and HKTB confirmed a three-year strategic partnership with Tahaluf that will see LEAP East continue to take place in Hong Kong, providing a long-term platform to connect capital, technology and innovation between Asia and the Middle East.

Dr Peter Lam, Chairman of The Hong Kong Tourism Board, said "LEAP East has chosen Hong Kong for its first-ever edition in Asia this year, and we are delighted to establish a strategic partnership with the organiser to secure Hong Kong as the exclusive Asian host city of LEAP East for the coming three years. This significant partnership not only demonstrates the global industry's confidence in Hong Kong, but also affirms Hong Kong's status as the World's Meeting Place and a hub for innovation and technology, as well as its role as a 'super-connector' and 'super value-adder'. By bringing together tech and innovation enterprises, investors, research institutions and innovative talent from around the world, Hong Kong is fostering cross-regional and cross-industry collaboration."

Annabelle Mander, Executive Vice President of Tahaluf, said: "LEAP East has exceeded expectations as a premier meeting point for the global technology ecosystem. The scale of engagement, quality of conversations and level of investment interest underline Hong Kong's strategic importance as a bridge between Asia and the Middle East. The partnerships and investment commitments announced this week reflect the real business outcomes generated by the event, and we are excited to return in 2027 with an even bigger platform for innovation, investment and growth."

With ewpartners serving as the exclusive strategy partner, LEAP East brings together the technology ambitions and investment capacity of the GCC with Hong Kong's financial markets, international connectivity and access to Asia's innovation ecosystems. The event is building a long-term platform for companies, investors and founders seeking new capital, commercial partnerships and growth opportunities across both regions.

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About Tahaluf

Headquartered in Riyadh, Tahaluf brings together strategically important commercial communities from Saudi Arabia, the wider Gulf and the global stage through a portfolio of world class exhibitions and digital platforms.

Tahaluf is a joint venture between Informa PLC, the Saudi Federation for Cybersecurity Programming and Drones and the Events Investment Fund. Sela, the Saudi owned event production company known for creating world class experiences, is also set to join the venture.

Tahaluf is behind leading events including LEAP, DeepFest, LEAP East, Money20 20 Middle East, Black Hat MEA, Cityscape Global, Global Health Exhibition and CPHI Middle East.

For more information, visit www.tahaluf.com and www.leapeast.com.

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