

Xi inspects key infrastructure projects in HK

President Xi Jinping Saturday inspected major infrastructure projects in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), urging more efforts to keep and improve its competitiveness.

Xi inspected the construction site of the Hong Kong segment of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao bridge, noting that building of the bridge is a major step of the central government to support better development of Hong Kong, Macao and the Pearl River Delta region.

It also represents an important achievement of close collaboration among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao under the “one country, two systems” framework, he added.

He urged active follow-up work on the project to ensure its smooth and safe operation after completion.

Xi also inspected the construction of the third runway at Hong Kong International Airport, saying that the central government supports the building of the runway to help Hong Kong consolidate its status as a global aviation hub and improve its overall competitiveness.

The president said that efforts must be made to ensure safe and efficient construction of the project, and maximize its benefits after completion.

Xi arrived in Hong Kong Thursday for a three-day trip to attend celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong’s return to the motherland and the inaugural ceremony of the fifth-term government of the HKSAR. He also inspected the HKSAR.

HK cannot afford to be torn apart by internal rift: Xi

Hong Kong cannot afford to be torn apart by reckless moves or internal rift amid the intense global competition, President Xi Jinping warned Saturday.

Hong Kong is a plural society with “different views and even major differences on some specific issues,” he acknowledged.

However, “making everything political or deliberately creating differences and provoking confrontation will not resolve the problems,” Xi said. “On the

contrary, it can only severely hinder Hong Kong's economic and social development."

"Hong Kong is an affluent society, but it also faces enormous challenges posed by profound changes in the global economic environment and the increasingly intense international competition," he said.

Xi sounded the caution when attending a gathering here celebrating the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, and the inaugural ceremony of the fifth-term government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

"It is imperative to always maintain a harmonious and stable social environment," he said, noting that "harmony brings good fortune, while discord leads to misfortune."

The concept of "one country, two systems" gives expression to the vision of peace and harmony in the Chinese culture, and it embodies a very important tenet, namely, seeking broad common ground while setting aside major differences, Xi said.

"On the part of the central government, we are ready to talk to anyone who loves the country, loves Hong Kong and genuinely supports the principle of 'one country, two systems' and the Basic Law of the HKSAR, no matter what political views or position he or she may hold."

Xi draws 'red line' for handling mainland-HK relations

President Xi Jinping Saturday drew the "red line" for handling relations between the mainland and Hong Kong, warning against attempts to undermine national sovereignty or challenge the central government's power.

"Any attempt to endanger national sovereignty and security, challenge the power of the central government and the authority of the Basic Law of the HKSAR or use Hong Kong to carry out infiltration and sabotage activities against the mainland is an act that crosses the red line, and is absolutely impermissible," he said.

Xi made the remarks at a gathering celebrating the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland and the inaugural ceremony of the fifth-term government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

PLA garrison key to HK prosperity, Xi says



President Xi Jinping inspects the garrison at the PLA's Shek Kong barracks in Hong Kong on Friday, the eve of the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China. [Photo/Xinhua]

President Xi Jinping has said the People's Liberation Army garrison stationed in Hong Kong should resolutely champion state sovereignty, security and interests regarding the country's development, and ensure Hong Kong's prosperity and stability.

Xi made the remarks after inspecting the garrison at the PLA's Shek Kong barracks in Hong Kong on Friday, the eve of the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China.

The PLA has had a garrison in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region since the former British colony was handed over to China in 1997.

More than 3,100 officers and soldiers and over 100 pieces of military equipment took part in the review by Xi, who is also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission.

After the review, Xi received briefings by the garrison and said it should be navigated with the goal to reinforce the PLA, and its works should be strengthened in every aspect at a new starting point.

In the past 20 years, the garrison has strictly lived up to instructions of the CPC Central Committee and the Central Military Commission, and has fully honored the "one country, two systems" principle as well as the Hong Kong

Special Administrative Region's Basic Law and Garrison Law, Xi said.

"The (PLA) garrison is an important embodiment of national sovereignty, an important force to safeguard 'one country, two systems', and an important cornerstone of Hong Kong's prosperity and stability," he said.

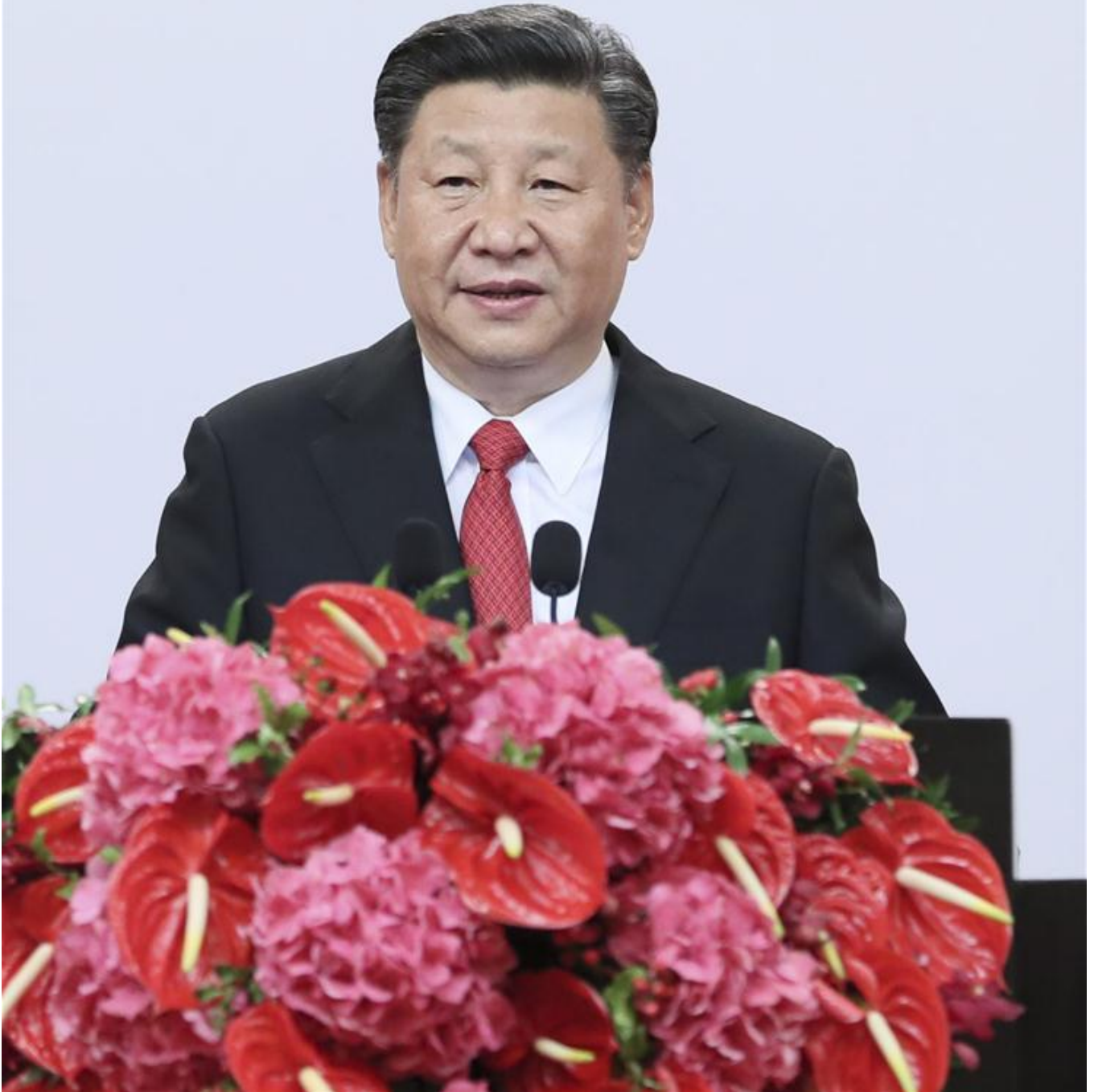
It should beef up its political awareness and its consciousness of political power and the big picture, and strengthen its sense of duty about ensuring "one country, two systems", Xi added.

The garrison should also remain alert and effectively maintain combat readiness, he said.

Earlier in June, Xi had conferred an honorary title on a special operation force under a brigade of the Hong Kong garrison.

Leung Chun-ying, vice-chairman of the 12th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and chief executive of the HKSAR, said in a recent interview with China Central Television that the garrison "has won widespread rapport and support by the Hong Kong public".

Xi pledges firm commitment to 'one country, two systems'



Chinese President Xi Jinping speaks at a welcome dinner hosted by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in Hong Kong, south China, June 30, 2017. (Xinhua/Lan Hongguang)

President Xi Jinping reiterated the central government's firm commitment to "one country, two systems" on multiple occasions Friday, a day before the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China.

"The road ahead may not be smooth, but our commitment to 'one country, two systems' remains unchanged, and our resolve remains firm and strong," said Xi when addressing a welcome dinner hosted by the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

The president compared the practice of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong over the past two decades to the growth of a seedling, which has become strong and robust despite wind and rain and yielded many fruits.

Hailing "one country, two systems" a great pioneering initiative by China, Xi said its practice, featuring socialism in the main body of the country and capitalism in certain regions, is unprecedented in human political history. "It is a breakthrough those before us made through exploration and with extraordinary courage. We the succeeding generation should practice and develop 'one country, two systems' with firm resolve," Xi said.

"We should have full confidence in ourselves, in Hong Kong and in our country," the president said, calling for persistent and unrelenting efforts to achieve even greater success in the practice of "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong.

Riding in an open-top camouflage jeep, Xi, also general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and chairman of the Central Military Commission, inspected the Chinese People's Liberation Army Garrison in the HKSAR at Shek Kong barracks Friday.

Xi told the troops to firm up the responsibility for and commitment to safeguarding "one country, two systems."

"The garrison is an important embodiment of national sovereignty, an important force to safeguard 'one country, two systems,' and an important cornerstone of Hong Kong's prosperity and stability," Xi said.

He urged the garrison to make efforts to enhance "combat readiness" so as to fulfill its role as a powerful stabilizing force.

The president's tight schedule Friday also included whirlwind meetings with local dignitaries, the HKSAR's first chief executive Tung Chee-hwa, the Macao Special Administrative Region's chief executive Chui Sai On, and central government officials based in Hong Kong and executives of Hong Kong branches of mainland enterprises and institutions.

During the meeting with a group of dignitaries from all walks of life of Hong Kong, Xi said the central government stands firm on the "one country, two systems" principle.

For Hong Kong, the focus is not whether the principle will change or not, but how to implement it comprehensively and accurately, Xi stressed.

Since Hong Kong's return to the motherland two decades ago, the successful practice of the "one country, two systems" in Hong Kong has won global recognition, Xi said.

New situations and new problems emerging in practice should be treated in a correct and reasonable manner, Xi said, adding ways must be found to solve the problems.

When difficulties are overcome and problems solved, progress is made in the practice of "one country, two systems," he said.

INSTITUTIONAL ADVANTAGE

Addressing the dinner held in honor of him Friday, the president called on Hong Kong to leverage its institutional advantage of "one country, two systems" to create new growth drivers and new space for development.

The practice of "one country, two systems" has given Hong Kong an "institutional advantage," enabling it both to share in the mainland's vast market and development opportunities and often serve as a testing ground for the country's new opening-up initiatives, Xi said.

By building on and leveraging its strengths, Hong Kong will surely be able to seize opportunities presented by economic globalization and regional cooperation to promote innovative local business start-ups, and develop new growth drivers, he said.

"The motherland has given and will always give a strong backing to Hong Kong," the president said.

Hong Kong has leveraged the combined advantages of "one country" and "two systems," continuously expanded its functions, and has played the role of "super-connector" between the mainland and the world in the past 20 years, said outgoing HKSAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying in his welcoming remarks at the banquet.

The continuous development of the country will give new and huge impetus to Hong Kong's social and economic development, and provide the young generation with a more diverse, larger and more colorful stage of life, he noted.

Enjoying a light moment on the eve of the return anniversary, the president attended a grand gala marking the event at the waterfront Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Center Friday night.

The show culminated when Xi stepped onto the stage and sang in chorus the song "Ode to the Motherland" with the performers and the audience.

Xi arrived here Thursday to attend celebrations for Hong Kong's 20th return anniversary and the inauguration of the HKSAR's fifth-term government. Inspection of the HKSAR is also on the schedule for his three-day stay.