

Xi arrives in HK for 20th return anniversary

President Xi Jinping set foot on Hong Kong Thursday.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, is here to attend celebrations marking the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland, and the inauguration of the fifth-term government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

He will also inspect the special administrative region.

This is Xi's first trip to Hong Kong as Chinese president.

Xi and his wife Peng Liyuan were greeted by a group of high-ranking officials at the airport, including HKSAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying and Chief Executive-elect Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor.

'One country, two systems' enriched by Xi

On his first trip outside Beijing after becoming general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee in late 2012, Xi Jinping laid flowers before a statue of late leader Deng Xiaoping on a hillside in Shenzhen, which neighbors Hong Kong.

Coming down the hill, a journalist from Hong Kong asked Xi, "General Secretary, do you have anything to say to your Hong Kong compatriots?"

Xi's answer was short but powerful, "Hong Kong will prosper."

Five years on, Xi's confidence has been translated into solid reality.

Two decades after Hong Kong was handed back to China under the "one country, two systems" formula, the region is doing better than ever.

Despite various prophets of doom, the Special Administrative Region (SAR) has remained a center of international finance, shipping and trade, and has been recognized as one of the world's freest and most competitive economies.

Strong support from central gov't

Aside from a business-friendly environment that encourages openness and productivity, the modern metropolis of over seven million people owes much of its economic success to closer links with the mainland.

Since 1997, the central government has made every effort to ensure Hong Kong's stability and prosperity as a special administrative region.

Basic necessities, including about 95 percent of live swine, 100 percent of live cattle, 90 percent of vegetables and 70 percent of flour on the Hong Kong market are supplied by the mainland.

The Guangdong-based Daya Bay Nuclear Power Plant provides a quarter of Hong Kong's annual electricity consumption, and some 70 to 80 percent of Hong Kong's fresh water comes from the mainland.

The central government also rendered timely and strong support to Hong Kong during the Asian financial crisis in 1997, the international financial crisis in 2008 and the SARS outbreak.

Hong Kong has been the largest source of overseas investment for the mainland, which has approved nearly 400,000 projects from Hong Kong investors worth over 900 billion U.S. dollars. Hong Kong is also the largest recipient of the mainland's overseas investment and its largest overseas financing platform.

"Hong Kong understands that its future and the mainland's are symbiotic and intertwined," 88-year-old Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing told Xinhua in a recent interview.

"'One country, two systems' epitomizes the creativity and the flexibility of Chinese leaders," Li said, adding that Xi's unwavering commitment to the principle is "strong and comforting."

Firm commitment

Indeed, on many occasions Xi has reaffirmed the principle of "one country, two systems."

"Twenty years of practice shows 'one country, two systems' is not only the best solution to the Hong Kong question left over from history, but also the best institutional arrangement for its long-term prosperity and stability since its return," Xi said on Monday this week when visiting an exhibition in Beijing profiling Hong Kong's achievements over the past two decades.

"We will continue to comprehensively and precisely implement the 'one country, two systems' principle, handle affairs strictly in line with the Constitution and the Basic Law of the HKSAR, and further promote the overall development of Hong Kong," Xi said.

The top Chinese leader's commitment to "one country, two systems" has been firm and consistent.

In his first meeting with Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying in

December 2012 after taking the helm of the CPC, Xi promised “unchanged support” for the chief executives and governments of Hong Kong and Macao SARs in carrying out their legal duties.

The central government’s adherence to the “one country, two systems” principle and the basic laws of the two SARs will not change, he said.

When meeting with incoming Hong Kong SAR Chief Executive Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor in April this year, Xi stressed that the practice of the “one country, two systems” principle in Hong Kong is an unprecedented cause and needs to be advanced through fresh explorations.

The central government is determined to stick to the principles of “one country, two systems,” “Hong Kong people governing Hong Kong” and a high degree of autonomy, he said.

That determination would not change or waver, said Xi, adding that full support would be given to Lam and the HKSAR government to carry out their duties in accordance with the law.

The Chinese president has backed up his words with action.

In 2015, the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong reached a Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) on service trade, to allow professionals from the SAR to enjoy greater access to the mainland’s growing service market.

The Shanghai-Hong Kong and Shenzhen-Hong Kong stock connects allow international investors to trade stocks listed in Shanghai and Shenzhen via the Hong Kong exchange while mainland investors can trade Hong Kong stocks via Shanghai and Shenzhen exchanges. Along with the Bond Connect, approved in May this year, these arrangements have strengthened Hong Kong’s role as an international financial center.

Plans for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area will bring the SARs closer to the Pearl River Delta’s manufacturing and innovation heartland. The Belt and Road Initiative will also boost Hong Kong’s financial clout.

Land of optimism

Both the Belt and Road Initiative and the Greater Bay Area development plan are perceived as new impetus for Hong Kong’s development.

According to the central government’s annual work report in 2017, China is planning to develop a city cluster in the Greater Bay Area, playing to the distinctive strengths of Hong Kong and Macao, and elevating their positions and roles in the mainland’s development and opening up.

The Greater Bay Area will include the two SARs and nine cities in Guangdong Province, namely Dongguan, Foshan, Guangzhou, Huizhou, Jiangmen, Shenzhen, Zhaoqing, Zhongshan and Zhuhai.

Stressing the importance of the Belt and Road Initiative to Hong Kong, Leung said Hong Kong’s enterprises could “take the same boat” with the mainland

partners in sailing into the countries and regions involved in the initiative.

Hong Kong “can be very proud of itself” for its achievements during the past 20 years, said Eric Berti, consul general of France in the Hong Kong and Macao SARs.

France has about 800 companies in Hong Kong. There is a growing French community, which has doubled to over 20,000 people since 2008.

“It shows the attraction of Hong Kong,” Berti said. “For foreign companies, especially French companies, it is very important to be able to settle here for the wide Chinese market.”

U.S. consul general to the Hong Kong and Macao SARs Kurt Tong, meanwhile, noted that the “one country, two systems” framework “allows Hong Kong to be special and different while still being part of China,” adding that the people of Hong Kong are “prosperous” due to Hong Kong’s “specialness.”

“The unique form of governance in the HKSAR has been largely successful,” Tong said.

“The EU is a firm supporter of the implementation of the ‘one country, two systems’ principle,” Carmen Cano de Lasala, head of EU Office to Hong Kong and Macao, told Xinhua.

“We think it has been key to the development of Hong Kong, and we are confident that it would continue to remain a key element in the future development of Hong Kong,” Cano de Lasala said, adding that the “one country, two systems” principle “has been beneficial not only for Hong Kong, but also for the Chinese mainland, the region, and the rest of the world.”

[Police to arrest babysitter who started fire](#)



The apartment after the fire.[Dong Xuming/For China Daily]

Hangzhou police have asked the local procuratorate for permission to arrest a nanny accused of starting an apartment fire that killed the three children she was employed to care for, as well as their mother.

Mo Huanjing, 34, was charged on Wednesday with arson and theft in connection with the blaze that swept through the family's apartment in a high-end residential building on June 22.

The oldest child was 11 and the youngest was 6.

The case has generated heated discussion among the public because the family had good relations with the babysitter and any motivation is still unknown.

The husband, Lin Shengbin, was on a business trip when the fire happened. He said the babysitter had borrowed money from his wife, Zhu Xiaozhen, a couple of days before.

Born in Dongguan, Guangdong province, Mo had been working for the family for about a year.

A few days before the fire, she borrowed 100,000 yuan (\$14,700) from Zhu, claiming that she wanted to buy a house.

However, Mo, who police said is addicted to online gambling, didn't use the money to buy any property.

A former friend of Mo's, who went by the alias Meng Qi, said to Chinese media that Mo used to work for her, but was fired when she was reported by some employers to have stolen things.

"She took the things to pawnshops and used the money for gambling," Meng

said.

After being questioned, police said, Mo admitted to having stolen watches and children's bracelets from Lin's family.

The fire started at around 5 am in the 18th-floor apartment and spread over about 50 square meters.

The young mother reportedly tried twice to call for help, but her calls were unanswered.

Zhu and her three kids were rescued from the building, but died shortly after in hospital.

Zhu's brother tried to enter the premises, but was pushed back by firefighters at the scene.

The babysitter claimed at first that she was sent downstairs by her employer to call the police, but after further investigation she admitted that she started the fire on purpose, police said.

The case has caused concern among the public about hiring babysitters as well as loopholes in background information and qualification reviews of babysitters at domestic companies.

[Guideline issued to ease shortages of medicine](#)

China has launched a multidepartmental effort to deal with occasional shortages of some prescription drugs for patients, the State Council Information Office said on Wednesday.

A guideline to improve the supply to prevent shortages was issued on Wednesday by nine government agencies, including the National Health and Family Planning Commission, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security.

China has about 3,000 drugs approved for common clinical use, with 130 of them occasionally in short supply, according to Zeng Yixin, deputy head of the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

"That's mainly due to the market gap between supply and demand," Zeng said.

"Thanks to joint efforts by all stakeholders, 50 of the 130 drugs are seeing normal supply levels again," he said, adding that the latest guideline requires interdepartmental cooperation.

“It aims to ensure that the drugs are available and safe for people,” he said. “It helps coordinate the drug supply system with reforms in medical care and health insurance.”

Earlier reports said lower-priced drugs with relatively low clinical demand usually run out of stock, seriously undermining medical options and risking patients’ lives.

Under the new guideline, an online drug consumption monitoring network will be set up to determine which drugs might run out and issue timely warnings about emerging needs so that the authorities can intervene.

The guideline calls for the creation of a cross-province coordinating system to alleviate regional shortages of certain drugs.

“Usually, the list of the drugs in short supply is dynamic,” said Mao Ningying, associate professor at China Pharmaceutical University, adding that “the government should figure out why and provide targeted intervention”.

Zeng said a nationwide drug monitoring network will help forecast consumption trends and potential supply gaps, which will buy time for intervention.

For certain drugs, consumption is difficult to forecast, he said, adding, “We are setting up a regular stocking mechanism”.

He cited pralidoxime chloride as an example. The drug has been used to treat patients with pesticide poisoning who have attempted suicide.

“It’s hard to predict suicides, but we have to stock the drug to save lives,” he said.

For drugs in short supply nationally, Zeng said, emergency imports will be arranged. If that doesn’t work, “the authorities will assign selected drug companies to produce more”, he added.

[China launches new destroyer](#)



The Navy's new destroyer, a 10,000-tonne domestically designed and produced vessel, was launched Wednesday at Jiangnan Shipyard (Group), Shanghai.
[Photo/Sina.com]

The Navy's new destroyer, a 10,000-tonne domestically designed and produced vessel, was launched Wednesday at Jiangnan Shipyard (Group), Shanghai.

The destroyer is the first of China's new generation of destroyers. It is equipped with new air defense, anti-missile, anti-ship and anti-submarine weapons.

The vessel marks a milestone in improving the nation's Navy armament system and building a strong and modern Navy.

According to the plan, tests will be carried on the vessel, including equipment operation, berthing and sailing.

Zhang Youxia, head of the Equipment Development Department of the Central Military Commission, attended the launch ceremony.