

NATION CELEBRATES



Performers in festive costumes parade into Beijing Workers' Stadium, where 80,000 people from various walks of life gathered last night to celebrate Hong Kong's return to the motherland.

80,000 gather to mark a new, brighter chapter

EIGHTY thousand people from various walks of life in the Chinese capital gathered yesterday evening at the Beijing Workers' Stadium to celebrate Hong Kong's return to the motherland.

Addressing the rally at the stadium, President Jiang Zemin said that "Hong Kong has finally come back to the motherland; Macao will come back soon; and a promising prospect of a complete national reunification and all-around rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is now in sight."

The evening party was sponsored by the CPC Central Committee, the National People's Congress (NPC) Standing Committee, the State Council, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) National Committee and the Central Military Commission.

It began at 7:30pm with "Ode to the Motherland," sung by 10,000 people to the accompaniment of music played by 1,000 instrumentalists. On the grandstand, some 5,000 middle school students formed a pattern of the national emblem of the People's Republic of China, drawing enthusiastic cheers from the crowd.

At 8pm, 99 salvos of fireworks

were set off in the stadium. Then, all rose to sing the national anthem.

Over the stadium was hung a gigantic streamer which read: "Celebrate Hong Kong's Return and Make Concerted Efforts to Create a Bright Future."

On behalf of the Communist Party of China, the Central People's Government and people of all ethnic groups throughout China, Jiang extended warm congratulations on the return of Hong Kong and the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

"The return of Hong Kong marks an end to the 100-year national humiliation of leaving Hong Kong under foreign occupation and has opened a new era of common development of Hong Kong and the inland areas of the motherland," Jiang Zemin said.

He noted that Comrade Deng Xiaoping made historic contributions to the settlement of the Hong Kong question and the promotion of the complete reunification of the motherland.

"Today, the Chinese people have made remarkable achievements in their modernization en-

deavor," Jiang said. "As a result, China now enjoys a higher international status in the world. It is against this background and for this very reason that Hong Kong has come back to China."

He said that the central people's government shall, in accordance with the law, manage foreign affairs and defence of the Hong Kong SAR.

All departments of the central government, provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government shall observe the Basic Law of the Hong Kong SAR and none of them shall interfere in Hong Kong affairs, which shall be managed by the Hong Kong SAR on its own in accordance with the Basic Law, he said.

"Economic activities, trade and investment interests of other countries and regions in Hong Kong will be protected by law."

Jiang pointed out that the implementation of these policies will not only ensure long-term prosperity and stability in Hong Kong after its return to the motherland but also help promote the socialist modernization drive in the interior.

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President Jiang Zemin, flanked by Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen (left) and Chief Executive of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Tung Chee-hwa, holds an inscription yesterday at a grand celebration to mark the establishment of the HKSAR. The inscription, written by Jiang, reads, "A More Splendid Future for Hong Kong."

Joyous Hong Kong heralds return home

By Qu Yingpu and Gao Anming

HONG KONG — Flowers and fireworks, songs and dances, hearty cheers and broad smiles were how a joyous Hong Kong celebrated its first day back home after a sleepless night of carnival.

The gala reached a new peak yesterday morning when top State and local leaders joined performers to stage a grand cel-

ebration of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Speaking at the celebration held at the new wing of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, President Jiang Zemin reaffirmed the central government's full confidence in and full support of the HKSAR government.

Jiang reaffirmed that it was the central government's long-term basic principle to ensure

the policies of "one country, two systems," "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and "a high degree of autonomy" will remain unchanged for 50 years.

He said Hong Kong would, in accordance with the Basic Law, develop democracy gradually with the ultimate aim of electing the chief executive and the Legislative Council by universal suffrage.

Jiang thanked "those British personages, both within and out-

side the government, for their contributions to the smooth transition of Hong Kong."

Tung made a policy speech concerning the future development plans of Hong Kong in the local dialect, Cantonese. Hours earlier, Tung made a speech at the inauguration of his government in *putonghua*.

He explained official policies on economic, educational, housing, welfare and some social and political issues.

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Vice-Premier Qian Qichen (left) hands a certificate for the HKSAR Land Fund, worth about HK\$170 billion, to Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa during yesterday's celebration marking the establishment of the HKSAR.

Reception greets historic occasion

PREMIER Li Peng and other Chinese leaders turned out to join about 4,000 people in Beijing yesterday at a reception celebrating the return of Hong Kong to the motherland.

Li delivered an important speech at the reception sponsored by the State Council.

The Banquet Hall on the second floor of the 38-year-old Great Hall of the People, where the reception took place, was decorated with a huge colour picture showing Hong Kong's panorama, flanked by red flags, the emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, red lanterns and colourful bunting.

Other Chinese leaders including Qiao Shi, Li Ruihuan, Zhu Rongji, Liu Huaqing, Hu Jintao and Rong Yiren attended the reception.

"We are celebrating not only the advent of a new era for Hong Kong and a major victory for the great cause of China's peaceful reunification, but also a great triumph for justice and progress of mankind," the premier said.

Li emphasized that a democratic system consistent with the provisions of the Basic Law and in line with Hong Kong's reality will surely develop, and the Hong Kong

compatriots will surely enjoy extensive rights and freedoms beyond what existed during the colonial rule.

With the return of Hong Kong, the compatriots there have become the real masters of the land, he said, adding that "they are fully capable of creating an even better future by giving full play to their wisdom and talent."

Li pointed out that Hong Kong's return represents an important milestone for the complete reunification of the motherland, and he said he believes that the philosophy of "one country, two systems" initiated by the late leader Deng Xiaoping will work in Hong Kong and Macao, and should also work for Taiwan.

Present at the reception were Communist Party and government leaders, officials and ministers of relevant departments directly under the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee and the State Council, leaders of the non-Communist parties and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce, and non-party figures as well as representatives from various non-governmental organizations and the 56 ethnic groups in China.

(Xinhua)