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President says project shows the nation's ability to innovate, realize world-class achievements, and its hardworking spirit

By **AN BALJIE** in Zhuhai, Guangdong and **LUIS LIU** in Hong Kong

President Xi Jinping hailed the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB), the world's longest cross-sea bridge, which opened for traffic on Oct 24, as a pillar project of the country.

The State-level project demonstrates China's comprehensive national strength and innovation capability, Xi said.

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Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, announced the opening of the 55-kilometer-long structure on Oct 23 at a ceremony in Zhuhai, in South China's Guangdong province.

More than 800 people attended the opening ceremony, including government officials of different levels and important contributors from various organizations.

After the ceremony, Xi spoke with representatives of the bridge's construction and management teams on an artificial island, where the bridge and an undersea tunnel meet.

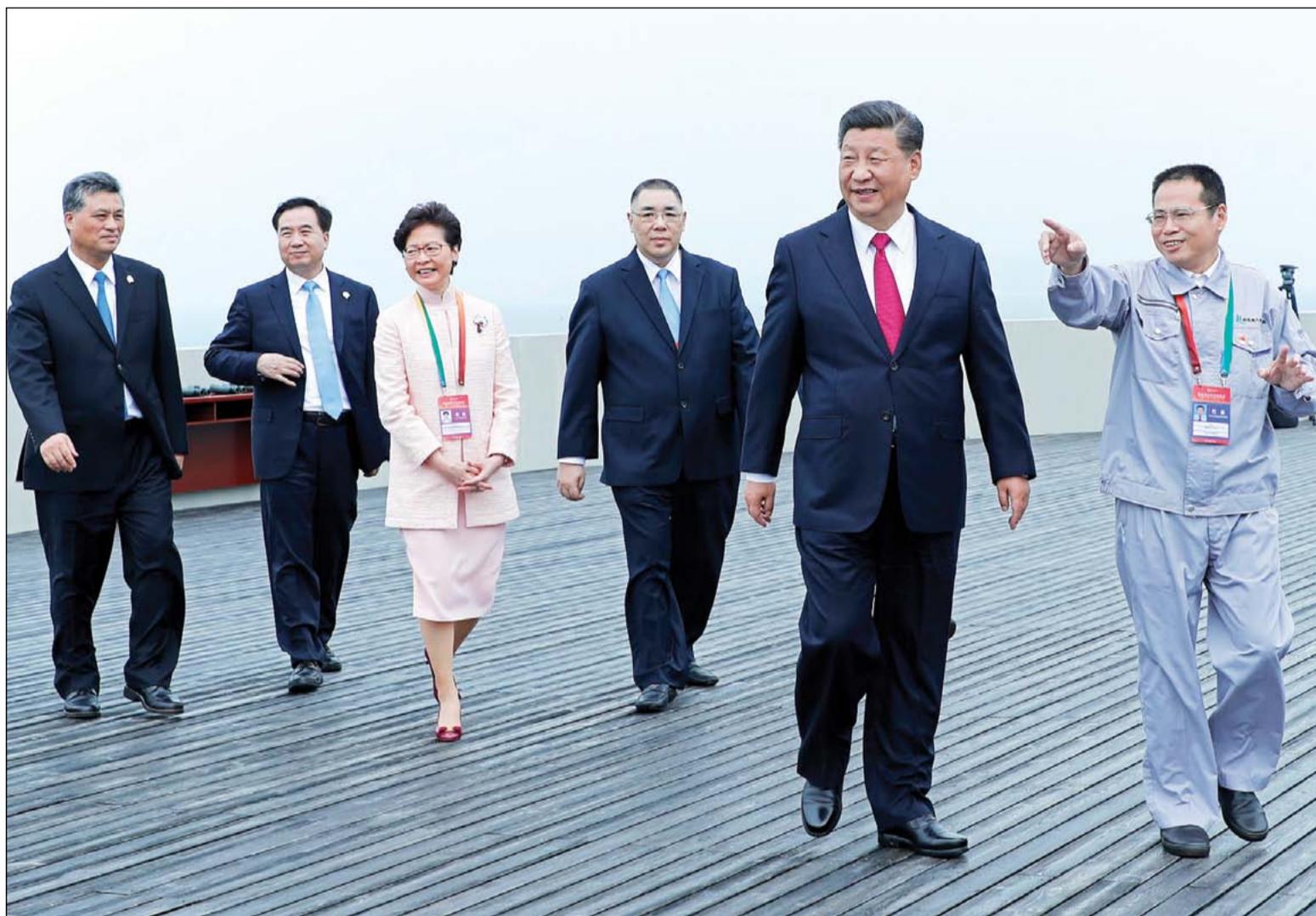
The president spoke highly of efforts by designers, builders and operators of the bridge as they have overcome difficulties and completed the project thanks to world-leading advanced technologies and management experience.

Noting that the bridge is an extraordinary project that has set a number of world records, Xi said it shows China's hardworking spirit, ability to innovate, and ambition to realize world-class achievements.

It is a bridge representing confidence and rejuvenation, Xi said, adding that its opening has fostered strong confidence in the path, theory, system and culture of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

The completion of the bridge has proved that socialism is achieved through hard work, as is the new era, Xi said.

Xi required that the bridge should not only be of high quality, but also

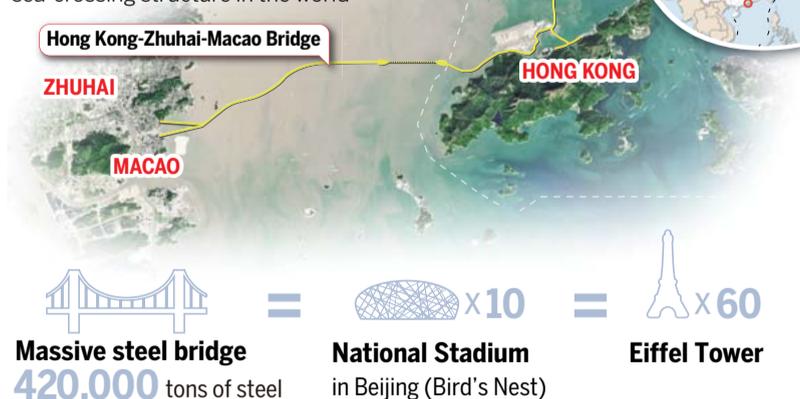


President Xi Jinping, accompanied by leading officials of Hong Kong, Macao, and South China's Guangdong province, tours the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge in Zhuhai, Guangdong, after attending its opening ceremony on Oct 23. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Bridge a 'pillar' of Bay Area

Gateway to the future

With a total length of 55 km, the bridge-island-tunnel complex is the longest sea-crossing structure in the world



Travel time from HK on the HZMB



Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, Chief Executive of Macao SAR Fernando Chui Sai-on, Guangdong Party Secretary Li Xi and Guangdong Governor Ma Xingrui.

The construction of the HZMB started in 2009. The sea span, including a 6.7-km island and tunnel project, across the Pearl River Estuary was built with some of the world's most complicated and advanced technologies.

The bridge will reduce travel time from Hong Kong to Zhuhai and Macao from four hours to about 45 minutes.

The bridge, which is mainly located in Chinese mainland waters, will be managed by the HZMB Authority, which was jointly founded by the governments of Guangdong province and the Hong Kong SAR and Macao SAR in 2010. It will be responsible for the operation, maintenance and management of the bridge.

be maintained well, thus fulfilling its function and role in building the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Vice-Premier Han Zheng said in his address at the opening ceremony that building the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area is a

national strategy planned and promoted by Xi.

The opening of the bridge will be helpful for exchanges of people, economy and trade among three areas — Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macao — which has great significance for Hong Kong and Macao to

integrate with the country's development, he said.

Also attending the ceremony were Vice-Premier Liu He, Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission He Lifeng, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR)

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