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www.chinadailyhk.com HK 110

FRIDAY, April 15, 2022

Xi: Build world-class spaceport

President Xi Jinping tours Wenchang launch facility in Hainan

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President Xi Jinping has called on the Wenchang Space Launch Center in the southern island province of Hainan to build itself into a world-class spaceport.

Xi made the remark on Tuesday afternoon as he visited the launch complex, the newest and southernmost of its kind in China.

Inside Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, said that the Wenchang center must uphold a spirit of hard work and perseverance, research the latest developments in the global space field and the strategic needs of China's space industry, strengthen its sense of mission and responsibility, take the lead in innovation and comprehensively boost its space launch capabilities.

He stressed that the facility is tasked with servicing China's new-generation, heavy-lift carrier rockets and it plays a significant role in the country's deep-space exploration endeavors, making it quite unique in the nation's space sector.

The president said the center should make full plans and preparations for upcoming launch missions, which will deploy multiple spacecraft in orbit to complete China's Tiangong space station. It should strive to make all these missions successful and make new achievements to welcome the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, which is scheduled to be held later this year.

Accompanied by General Zhang Youxia, a vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, and several other high-ranking military officers,



President Xi Jinping inspects the launching tower and other facilities at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in Hainan province on Tuesday. He extended his greetings to all the staff stationed at the site. U. GANG / XINHUA

Xi inspected launch towers and other infrastructure and listened to a report about the center's condition and development plan and the preparatory work for upcoming missions.

According to a report on China Central Television, Xi was given a guided tour of the assembly and testing halls of the Tiantzhou 4 cargo spaceship and the Long March 7 carrier rocket that will take the cargo craft into space.

Through this tour, Xi has completed his inspections of all of China's space launch facilities.

In February 2013, he visited the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, which was his first inspection of a Chinese space launch base following his election as general secretary of the CPC Central Committee.

In June 2017, he inspected the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Shanxi province, and he visited the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province in February 2018.

After years of selection and discussion, the central government decided to build a launch site in Wenchang,

Hainan province, in 2007.

Construction work started in September 2009 and was completed in October 2014. The first launch at the facility took place in June 2016 with the debut of the Long March 7 rocket.

Covering about 12 square kilometers, the equivalent of 1,700 soccer fields, the center is tasked with launching heavyweight satellites, deep-space probes, and components of the Tiangong space station.

The biggest advantage of the facility is its low latitude — only 19

degrees north of the equator, which enables rockets to save considerable fuel and to carry heavier payloads, compared with launches from the other three centers in China.

So far, the Wenchang center has serviced 16 launch missions. It is the only launch facility in China capable of launching Long March 5-series rockets, the biggest and most powerful in the country's rocket fleet.

China's Chang'e 5 lunar probe, the Tianwen 1 Mars explorer and the Tiangong space station's core module were all launched from the facility.