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China's largest SEZ celebrates 20th anniversary

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China's southernmost Hainan Province, the largest special economic zone (SEZ) in the country, celebrated its 20th anniversary in its capital city of Haikou on Saturday.



The celebration ceremony in honor of the 20th anniversary of Hainan special economic zone is held in Haikou, South China's Hainan Province, April 26, 2008. [Xinhua]

"Setting up SEZs was an important measure of China's reform and opening-up. The SEZs have played a pioneering role in prompting the reform," said Chinese Vice Premier [Li Keqiang](#) at the celebration ceremony.

Li asked the island province to build itself into a shipping hub, logistic center and export processing base for southeast Asia.

Founded on the same date 20 years ago, Hainan SEZ was a pioneer in experimenting with the market economy, developing the land with foreign investment, implementing a provincial insurance system, abolishing the agricultural tax and school fees for nine-year compulsory education.

The province also unveiled on Friday a blueprint aiming at building itself into a major international tourist destination by 2028.

The province will continue to implement its visa-free policies for tourists and open up aviation rights, introduce renowned overseas travel agencies and hotel management corporations, according to the action plan for the long-term goal of a first-class international tourist island.

With an area of 34,000 square kilometers, tropical and sub-tropical Hainan was established in 1988 as a province and approved as a special economic zone enjoying preferential development policies.

The other four SEZs are Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou and Xiamen, all in southern China.

(Xinhua News Agency April 27, 2008)

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