

*Highlight News / January 20/2023*



- Cambodia's economy to grow despite volatility of Covid-19
- Cambodia's trade with RCEP countries hit \$31 bln last year
- More money needed for payment of debt, salaries, development schemes
- Mandalay-Mangshi direct flight to be resumed on 21 Jan
- Rubber price hits K1,300 per pound in domestic market
- Viet Nam's foreign exchange reserves to grow this year
- Ba Ria- Vung Tau aims for per capita GRDP of 8,200 USD in 2023



## Thailand visitors help record 1,059% jump in tourist arrivals in 2022



*Cambodia News | 19 January, 2023*

International tourist arrivals in Cambodia recorded a massive jump of 1,059 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year to reach 2.28 million and neighbouring Thailand with 37.5 percent and Vietnam with 20.4 percent sent the majority of the visitors. According to the latest Tourism Statistics Report of the Ministry of Tourism, more than one million visits happened in the last quarter of 2022, from October to December, alone. The statistics further revealed that unlike in the two previous years when the majority of the foreign visitors arrived by air, road trip was the most favoured mode of transport with 1.47 million reaching the Kingdom crossing the land borders. In fact, the number of tourists who arrived by air in 2022 was only 791,603, lesser than the 99,829 who used the air transport mode in 2021. Among the regions, Asean with a share of 70.4 percent stood on top as the most important tourism market for Cambodia by sending 1.6 million tourists in 2022. Visits from the region registered a whopping 1,252 percent growth compared to the previous year. Lao PDR with 4.1 percent, Indonesia with 3.3 percent, Malaysia with 2.4 percent, the Philippines with 1.3 percent and Singapore with 1.2 percent were the other significant markets in Asean after Thailand and Vietnam. Outside Asean, despite the 'Zero Covid' policy, China with 4.7 percent was the top market for Cambodia in 2022 as 106,875

Chinese visited the Kingdom. Traditionally, China was the biggest tourism market for Cambodia and in the pre-Covid years visits from China used to cross the two million mark. The US was next with a share of 4.1 percent and 93,386 travellers from the country visited the Kingdom in 2022. From the European countries, France sent a maximum of 56,509 travellers, recording a 2.5 percent share of the market. Meanwhile, outbound tourism from Cambodia also rose sharply by 3,079 percent in 2022 as 970,292 Cambodians travelled to other countries last year, compared to only 30,517 in 2021. Internal tourism too registered significant growth in 2022 with 13.9 million people visiting various destinations within the Kingdom. The coastal zone was the biggest attraction in the country with 7.1 million visiting the areas, including 4.6 million visits to Preah Sihanouk alone. This was followed by 2.4 million visits each to Siem Reap/Angkor Wat and various destinations in Phnom Penh. The tourism industry, meanwhile, is placing high hopes for 2023 as well, building on the gains of 2022 when some of the establishments could reopen businesses after the pandemic shutdowns. Expectations are that some four million people will visit Cambodia from various parts of the world this year. The numbers are worked on the basis of large arrivals expected from China. Cambodia's Tourism Minister Thong Khon said last week that the country is ready to welcome Chinese tourists, business people and investors. Tourist arrivals from China are expected to touch two million in 2023 as the country opened its borders on

January 8, virtually ending the Zero Covid policy. The Kingdom was also one of the first countries that announced a 'non-discriminatory policy' saying that Chinese visitors are welcome in the country without any Covid-19 travel restrictions like people from other parts of the world. Thourn Sinan, Cambodia Chapter Chairman of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) told Khmer Times that the country is banking high hopes regarding the return of Chinese tourists. "Despite the war crisis (Russia-Ukraine war), we expect a much better year ahead," he said.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501221970/thailand-visitors-help-record-1059-jump-in-tourist-arrivals-in-2022/>

## Cambodia's business establishments increase 50 pct in 10 years



*Cambodia News | 19 January, 2023*

Cambodia has 753,670 business establishments, employing 2.98 million people, the preliminary results of the 2022 Economic Census said here on Wednesday. The number of business establishments represented a significant rise of 50 percent from 505,134 in the first economic census in 2011, with 1.67 million people employed. The 2022 census results showed that almost 1.14 million employed people, or 38.3 percent, were male and 1.84 million, or 61.7 percent, were female. Hang Lina, director-general of the Ministry of Planning's National Institute of Statistics, said the census covered all fixed establishments in the Southeast

Asian nation. "The number of establishments with one or two persons engaged was 621,078, or 82.4 percent of the total establishments," she said. She added that 53,724 establishments, or 7.1 percent, have five or more persons engaged; 20,820, or 2.8 percent, have 10 or more persons engaged; 1,870, or 0.2 percent, have 100 or more persons engaged; and only 624, or 0.08 percent, have 500 or more persons engaged. "Hence, large-scale establishments remain to account for a low portion of all establishments in Cambodia," Lina said. Speaking at the event, Planning Minister Chhay Than said the census results would serve useful purposes for Cambodia's socio-economic development. "The economic census provides information on the current situation of economic activities in Cambodia and serves for useful purposes for various users such as policymakers, government officials at national and local levels, NGOs, private sectors, researchers, and development partners," he said. "Also, it is an important input to the estimation of the country's gross domestic product," he added. Xinhua

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501222359/cambodias-business-establishments-increase-50-pct-in-10-years/>

## More money needed for payment of debt, salaries, development schemes



*Laos News | 19 January, 2023*

The payment of government officials' salaries, investment in development projects and repayment

of debts constitute the largest portion of government expenditure allocated for 2023, according to the Ministry of Finance. The government will increase its expenditure budget from 34.5 trillion kip in 2022 to 43.49 trillion kip this year. Meanwhile, national revenue is targeted at 38.44 trillion kip, an increase of 21.7 percent year-on-year. This year's planned spending represents 18.58 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). Of the total, 13.3 trillion kip has been allocated for the payment of government officials' salaries, while 2 trillion kip will be spent on various types of allowance. Earlier this month, the Prime Minister's Office announced that the government would award a monthly living allowance of 150,000 kip to civil servants and retired senior employees. The increased living allowance was announced amid the spiralling price of consumer goods. In addition, the government has allocated 7.63 trillion kip for the payment of interest on loans and another 14.46 trillion kip for investment in development projects. Of the total, 10.15 trillion kip will be disbursed as the government's contribution to cooperation projects funded by development partners. The remaining 4.31 trillion kip will be ploughed into state-funded development projects. Rising costs have forced the government to boost national income and spend money in an effective and efficient manner or on programmes that guarantee high economic returns. The government has also pledged to pursue its austerity policy by limiting spending on administrative affairs and non-essential projects. This year, the government plans to

recruit only 800 new civil servants, a huge drop from the 1,300 civil servants recruited last year, the 1,600 taken on in 2021, and the 2,000 people given government positions in 2020. The downsizing of state organisations is also aimed at reducing the number of state employees in order to cut spending on salaries and allowances. The government will continue to improve mechanisms relating to expenditure management as well as digitalising payment systems. One of the most important goals is to ensure that domestic revenue is sufficient for domestic spending or produces a surplus, so that the government has more money in reserve to repay debts. The weak kip makes it challenging for the government to project the amount of money needed to repay the interest on loans owed to foreign countries. However, the government has vowed that it will not allow Laos to default on debt repayment. Laos has experienced financial difficulties for several years, ramping up pressure on its debt servicing capacity. The government is also committed to modernising revenue collection and encouraging the private sector to participate in development projects through public-private partnerships.

Source : [https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent2023\\_More14.php](https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent2023_More14.php)

## Mandalay-Mangshi direct flight to be resumed on 21 Jan



Myanmar News | 19 January, 2023

A Mandalay-Mangshi direct flight will be resumed on 21 January and will operate three days a week. Ruili Airlines has temporarily suspended flights due to the Covid-19 pandemic and will launch weekly flights on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays starting from 21 January. The flight will leave from Mangshi at 5 pm and arrive in Mandalay at 6:10 pm. It will leave from Mandalay at 7:10 pm and arrive in Mangshi at 8:10 pm. — TWA/MKKS

Source : <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/mandalay-mangshi-direct-flight-to-be-resumed-on-21-jan/>

## Rubber price hits K1,300 per pound in domestic market



*Myanmar News | 19 January, 2023*

The price of rubber touched around K1,300 per pound, according to the rubber market in Mon State. The price of rubber hit K1,600 per pound in the third week of September. The prices gradually declined. The prevailing prices stood at K1,280 per pound of sundried local 3 and K1,300 per pound of Ribbed Smoked Sheet Local 3. Global demand for rubber, rubber production of the Southeast Asian nations and the market supply weigh on the rubber price condition of Myanmar. The rubber price in Mon State, a major rubber production state in Myanmar, is positively related to those factors as well, the traders elaborated. Rubber is commonly produced in Mon and Kayin states and Taninthayi, Bago, and Yangon regions in Myanmar. As per 2018-2019 rubber season data, there are over 1.628 million acres of rubber plantations in Myanmar, with Mon

State accounting for 497,153 acres, followed by Taninthayi Region with 348,344 acres and Kayin State with 270,760 acres. Myanmar's rubber production is annually estimated at 300,000 tonnes. Seventy per cent of rubber produced in Myanmar goes to China. It is also shipped to Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Viet Nam, the Republic of Korea, India, Japan, and other countries. Myanmar bagged more than US\$449 million in revenue in rubber exports in the previous financial year 2020-2021. —NN/EMM

Source : <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/rubber-price-hits-k1300-per-pound-in-domestic-market/>

## Viet Nam's foreign exchange reserves to grow this year



*Vietnam News | 19 January, 2023*

HA NOI — VNDirect Securities Corporation expects Vietnamese foreign exchange reserves to recover to 3.3 months of imports and reach US\$102 billion by the end of this year from the current level of \$89 billion last year, said in its updated macro report. Analysts of VNDirect have made forecasts and said that with the US Federal Reserve (Fed) slowing down the rate of interest rate hikes this year and improving Vietnamese foreign exchange reserves, it would stop the decline price of Vietnamese dong. At the same time, the rate at the end of this year is likely to decrease by 1-2 per cent. Besides, experts also expect a trade surplus of \$13.4 billion this year, from a trade surplus of \$12.4 billion last year. In addition, the current account will

turn into a surplus at 1.4 per cent of GDP this year from a projected deficit of 0.8 per cent of GDP last year. According to data published in March 2022, Viet Nam's foreign exchange reserves are at a record high of nearly \$110 billion. However, after that, the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV) faced many difficulties in balancing the three main goals of controlling inflation, stabilising exchange rates and interest rates to support growth. SBV had to sell a large amount of foreign exchange reserves to stabilise the exchange rate, which is estimated at approximately 20 per cent of foreign exchange reserves, in the first 10 months of last year. This has caused Viet Nam's foreign exchange reserves to fall below the level recommended by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) when it was less than three months of imports. VNDirect expects a trade surplus of \$12 billion next year, from an expected trade surplus of \$10.4 billion last year. At the same time, VNDirect also expects the current account to turn into a surplus in to 0.4 per cent of GDP this year from a projected deficit of 1.3 per cent of GDP last year. Therefore, the securities company said that Viet Nam's foreign exchange reserves will recover to the level of three months of imports and reach \$102 billion by the end of this year from the current level of \$89 billion. However, VNDirect said that there were several key risks to the forecast including higher-than-expected inflation and a stronger-than-expected US dollar which could put additional pressure on the Vietnamese dong and the stronger-than-expected recession of Viet Nam's major trading

partners. In fact, Vietnamese dong once depreciated by 7-8 per cent last year compared to the end of 2021, but by the last trading day of last year, Vietnamese dong only depreciated by 3.53 per cent, equivalent to half of the two previous months. — VNS

Source : <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1451472/viet-nam-s-foreign-exchange-reserves-to-grow-this-year.html>

## Ba Ria- Vung Tau aims for per capita GRDP of 8,200 USD in 2023



*Vietnam News | 19 January, 2023*

Ba Ria - Vung Tau (VNA) – The sea tourism capital of Vietnam's southern region, Ba Ria- Vung Tau province has set a target of a per capita Gross Domestic Product (GRDP) of about 8,231 USD (excluding crude oil and gas) this year, and increase of 620 USD compared to that 2022. Vice Chairman of the provincial People's Committee Dang Minh Thong said, in 2023, total development investment capital in the province is expected to reach nearly 59 trillion VND (about 2.6 billion USD), up 6.54%. The total local budget revenue is projected at nearly 89 trillion VND (nearly 3.8 billion USD), of which domestic budget revenue is roundly 43 trillion VND. Accordingly, the province has rolled out action plans for 2023 with a focus on deploying work such as connecting inter-regional infrastructure and key projects, and medium-term public investment projects during 2021-2026. They will also plan out the Bien Hoa – Vung Tau expressway project (the

first phase), the Phuoc An bridge, Ring Road No.4; Highway No.994, and coastal road. The province has also developed projects to lift Ba Ria- Vung Tau into a national economic centre including works on a free trade zone associated with Cai Mep- Thi Vai area, and a project to modernise Cai Mep- Thi Vai sea port, among others. In 2022, the province achieved significant socio-economic developments (excluding oil and gas) with an expected increase of 10.97% compared to 2021, the highest rise of the province in the past decade. Budget revenue was estimated at about 110,000 billion VND, reaching 153.4% of the estimate. Domestic revenue reached 45 trillion VND, reaching 130% of the estimate, the highest rate in recent years. In the same year, the province attracted 58 foreign direct investments, increased capital for 40 projects with a total of newly granted and adjusted domestic and foreign investment capital of about 2.07 billion USD, or 112.77% of the plan./.

Source : <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/ba-ria-vung-tau-aims-for-per-capita-grdp-of-8200-usd-in-2023/247275.vnp>

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