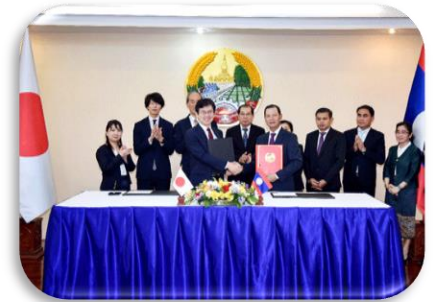




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## Jump in Cambodia's exports to Singapore, India



*Cambodia News | 23 May, 2023*

Singapore and India have gained a lot of ground in the last four months to emerge among the top export destinations of Cambodia, revealed the latest trade data of the General Department of Customs and Excise (GDCE). While Cambodia's exports to Singapore grew by around 345 percent from January to April this year compared to the same period last year, the exports to India recorded a growth of over 60 percent during the period. The two countries have the fastest growth rate (in the exports from Cambodia) among the top 20 export destinations of the Kingdom, the data showed. The growth in exports to the two countries is remarkable considering the fact that the Kingdom's total exports declined by 4.9 percent over the same period and stood at \$7.23 billion. Exports to Singapore reached \$224 million in the first four months of the year, compared to \$50 million during the same period last year. Exports to India reached \$91.5 million year-on-year, compared to \$55.7 million last year. Cambodia's exports to Singapore include pearls, precious stones, metals, rubber items, garments, electrical and electronic equipment and footwear. Exports to India include apparel, travel goods, footwear, rubber and metals. Cambodia's international trade (exports and imports together) stood at \$15.16 billion for January to April this year, a decline of 14.1 percent, compared to the same

period last year, according to the GDCE data, released earlier in the month. China is Cambodia's biggest trade partner with a trade volume of \$3.89 billion, followed by the US with \$2.52 billion. Vietnam is the third biggest trade partner of the country with \$2.43 billion. Trade with China showed a decline of 0.9 percent whereas trade with the US showed a 16.6 percent downfall. While exports to China recorded a gain of 3.7 percent at \$439.54 million, imports declined by 1.5 percent showing \$3.45 billion. The US remained Cambodia's biggest export market – though the exports to the country declined by 16.2 percent – with \$2.45 billion and a share of 33.9 percent while Vietnam with \$1.18 billion came next with a share of 16.3 percent. As China held the third position with 6.1 percent, Thailand came fourth with \$393 million and a share of 5.4 percent. Singapore, meanwhile, is also emerging as an important source of Cambodia's foreign direct investments (FDI). Recently, India also stepped up its commercial ties with Cambodia by sending in a big business delegation. The visit of the Indian delegation is expected to translate into an increased flow in FDI from India to Cambodia. Vichet Lor, Vice President of the Cambodia Chinese Commerce Association, told Khmer Times yesterday that the Asia Pacific region is emerging as the growth engine of the global economy and the growing purchasing power of Singapore and India was the reason for the rise in trade with Cambodia. "The IMF and World Bank have identified Asia Pacific as the growth engine for the global economy. Cambodia's exports

to Singapore and India are rising year by year thanks to the growing middle class in these countries,” he pointed out.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501295012/jump-in-cambodias-exports-to-singapore-india/>

## Chinese-invested car tire factory in Cambodia set to export close to 6 million tires per year



*Cambodia News | 23 May, 2023*

A Chinese-invested tire factory in Cambodia’s Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone (SSEZ) officially launched its operation on Monday. The \$300-millionr General Tire Technology (Cambodia) plant, located in Cambodia’s coastal province of Preah Sihanouk, is a subsidiary of Chinese tire maker Jiangsu General Science Technology. Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and Chinese Ambassador to Cambodia Wang Wentian cut the ribbon to officially inaugurate the factory, attending a celebration to mark the 10th anniversary of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) at the SSEZ. Hun Sen said the tire factory is another fruit of cooperation between Cambodia and China under the BRI, adding that the plant will play an important role in processing local rubber into tires. “The factory has brought about new capital, modern technologies, and tire manufacturing expertise to Cambodia,” he said. “This factory will increase the value-added to the national economy and directly increase our farmers’ income.” Gu Cui, chairman of Jiangsu General Science Technology, said the plant is capable of

manufacturing 5 million semi-steel radial tires and 900,000 all-steel radial tires per year. “Our products will be mainly exported to the United States, Europe, and Brazil among others,” he said. Xinhua

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501295184/chinese-invested-car-tire-factory-in-cambodia-set-to-export-close-to-6-million-tires-per-year/>

## Japan extends support for education development in Laos



*Laos News | 23 May, 2023*

The Japanese government will provide more scholarships for Lao government officials under the Japanese Grant Aid (JDS) scheme, with funding of 343 million yen. An agreement on the provision of scholarships for master’s and doctorate degrees in Japan was signed on Monday at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vientiane. The agreement was inked by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Phoxay Khaykhamphithoune and the Japanese Ambassador to Laos, Mr Kenichi Kobayashi. The JDS scholarships are provided by the Japanese government to Laos to improve the knowledge and skills of its civil servants. From 1999 to the present, Laos has received 474 JDS scholarships, averaging 20 each year. Lao government officials working in the fields of education, public health, agriculture and forestry, public works and transport and other sectors have been selected for study in Japan. The programme has helped to improve the capacity of Lao government officials, enabling them to

contribute more to Laos' social and economic development. On behalf of the government and people of Laos, Mr Phoxay Khaykhamphithoune expressed his gratitude for the support and help of the government and people of Japan in past years. Japan's official development assistance (ODA) is at the forefront of foreign aid to Laos, averaging US\$90-100 million a year. Mr Phoxay said the government considers education to be a primary factor in the strengthening of human resources for improved socio-economic development. The Japanese government has provided extensive support to the Lao government in the field of education, such as the construction and improvement of schools in remote areas, the provision of educational materials, and the provision of scholarships. The Japanese Ambassador to Laos, Mr. Kenichi Kobayashi, said the Japanese government will continue to work closely with the Lao government to enhance friendship and cooperation, as well as the strategic partnership between the two countries, with a view to closer cooperation in the future.

Source: [https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent97\\_Japan\\_y23.php](https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent97_Japan_y23.php)

## Asean must reengage with Myanmar



*Myanmar News | 23 May, 2023*

Asean ministers and leaders with executives from development agencies during the 42nd Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit in Labuan

Bajo, Indonesia on May 11. Indonesian President Joko Widodo, or Jokowi, was frank in saying that no progress had been made over the Myanmar crisis at the latest Asean summit in Labuan Bajo during a press conference after the event. Apparently, he was disappointed that the chair's efforts did not make the desirable outcome under his watch. However, his foreign minister, Retno Marsudi, was more optimistic, saying there was progress in access to humanitarian aid and establishing a dialogue with all stakeholders. Indeed, some progress has been made quickly due to the new humanitarian crisis caused by Cyclone Mocha last week in northern Myanmar. One big lesson learned from the Indonesian chair's experience in tackling Myanmar's conflict must be the wholesome yet nimble approach by Asean. That means simultaneously using the bloc's strength, courage, wisdom, and vision that allows it to play either a soft or hard role at the same time. However, for some Asean members, Myanmar has failed to implement the five-point consensus (5PC); therefore, the bloc maintains firm on preventing Myanmar's leader from participating at this political level. Other members, who share a border with Myanmar, thought Asean should continue to engage Myanmar collectively and individually. Isolation would only prolong the ongoing conflict. After the coup in February 2021, Asean leaders prohibited Myanmar military leaders from attending the Asean key meetings. At the summit, Asean leaders saw eye to eye that both informal and formal engagements with Myanmar were necessary to conduct future dialogue and build more

confidence among all concerned parties. Each member can contribute to the peace process but with a unified goal of bringing reconciliation, peace and democracy to Myanmar. The leaders also firmly support the 5PC peace plan and their decisions made in Phnom Penh last November without wavering. Since the coup, the conflict has impacted the security and stability of its neighbouring countries and beyond, with ripple effects being more serious than anticipated. The Asean chair also realised that without cooperation from Myanmar, the growing transnational crime networks, especially those involved in human trafficking, would not be suppressed. Just a few days before the summit, 20 Indonesians were rescued from the Myawaddy district opposite Maesot, Tak province. They were lured by illegal call centres based across the Thai border. Victims were reportedly coming from Malaysia, Thailand, among others. The case was serious enough for the chair to push for a separate joint leaders' Declaration on Combating Trafficking in Persons Caused by the Abuse of Technology. Interestingly, Myanmar tried very hard to make its presence felt at Labuan Bajo by communicating through two documents prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which were circulated among the members. Myanmar's seat was left vacated at the summit, but Nay Pyi Taw's voice was heard. In addition, Aung Myo Myint, Myanmar's Asean permanent representative, was at the non-political meetings. It all indicated that Myanmar did not want to isolate itself from Asean. In the first document, dated May 4, the military regime, officially known as State Administration Council

(SAC), underlined its efforts since the coup in February 2021 toward peace, stability and democracy, which it described as a synergy of Asean Five-point consensus (5PC) and Myanmar's Five-Point Road Map. It had seven headlines explaining Myanmar's fulfilling the bloc's 5PC. The report first detailed the cooperation with the three special envoys of the Asean chair, the SAC peace initiative, actions taken by the resistance forces, Nay Pyi Taw's efforts to restore stability and peace, efforts to reinstate a multi-part democracy, amnesty for convicts, humanitarian assistance through an AHA Center and repatriation of internally displaced people from Rakhine. The Asean leaders took note of the document. Essentially, the SAC gave a one-sided progress report, which provided clues to the SAC's thinking and strategies. While the SAC perceived it had made progress in three key areas contained in the 5PC, including cessation of violence, inclusive political dialogue and humanitarian assistance, Asean members apparently did not share those views. Before the summit, Asean leaders issued a strong statement expressing their deep concerns over the situation in Myanmar. Asean urged Myanmar to end all forms of violence and the use of force to create a conducive environment for the safe and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance and inclusive national dialogues. Moreover, the statement supported Jokowi's condemnation of the attack on a convoy of the Asean Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Management Center and the Asean Monitoring Team in Myanmar. Just hours before Asean leaders were about to meet

over the retreat, the SAC circulated a single-page letter from SAC leader, presumably Senior Gen Min Aung Hlaing, addressing his Asean colleagues. The letter dated May 9 said in part that "the government extends an invitation to members of People Defense's Force (PDF) and other armed resistance activities to the legal fold and join hands in the national-building". Returnees, the letter stated, will be given necessary amnesty or a lessening of their punishment would be considered case by case, in line with the existing law. But there will be no such exceptions for those who have committed serious crimes such as murder and rape. The letter was the first charm offensive by the SAC ahead of the leaders' retreat. Previously, Asean strongly condemned the air attacks last month in Pazi Gyi village in Sagaing region, which killed 170 people. Furthermore, the SAC also pledged to "provide necessary assistance to all returnees for reintegration, and rewards will be offered to those who turn in arms and ammunition". The letter also gives reward details -- the return of a rifle or a drone was worth 50,000 kyat (5,850 baht); one handmade gun, mine and a bomb were worth 30,000 kyat. So far, none of the resistance forces have heeded the SAC overtures. The military regime had earlier extended a ceasefire, which resistance forces refused to follow, and fighting has continued unabated. The letter did not mention the National Unity Government (NUG), which is waging a diplomatic war against the Tatmadaw regime. The international community, especially Western dialogue partners, have pressured the Asean leaders to take

punitive actions against Nay Pyi Taw. The next few months will be crucial to determine if new measures are needed to reprimand Myanmar in light of the latest developments on the ground. Since last week, questions have been asked whether Thailand's policy toward Myanmar would shift given the nation's surprising electoral result. The opposition parties, led by the Move Forward Party, are currently trying to form the next government. Speculation has been widespread that it would not be as friendly to Myanmar's junta as the outgoing Prayut administration. For now, the country's policy toward Myanmar's quagmire remains intact. Thailand's position is clear on the necessity of reengagement with Myanmar. As a next-door neighbour sharing 2,401 kilometres of border, Thailand wants peace more than anybody else. Bangkok believes that condemnation and isolation of Myanmar would not serve the bloc's collective interest, not to mention its own. Even with the more progressive government-in-waiting, the substance and trajectory of present policy and practice will be maintained over what is occurring in Myanmar. But, stronger views could be voiced on norms and values related to the conflict, refugees, and migrant workers, among other issues. Kavi Chongkittavorn is a veteran journalist on regional affairs.

Source: <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/2576274/asean-must-reengage-with-myanmar>

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## Vietnam emerges as a rising market for Apple



*Vietnam News | 23 May, 2023*

VOV.VN - The emergence of several Asian markets such as Vietnam, India and Indonesia offer a 'golden opportunity' for Apple, according to the US cable news network CNN. The US technology giant launched an online store in Vietnam on May 18, giving local consumers the chance to buy any Apple product directly for the first time. The recent opening came following the high-profile launch of its first physical shops in India, recognizing the growing importance of emerging markets for the iPhone maker, said CNN. Markets such as Vietnam, India, and Indonesia are rapidly becoming more important for Apple, as its growth in developed markets, including China, slows down, prompting the company to focus on places where it's traditionally been less active, according to the media outlet. Tim Cook, CEO of Apple, pointed to the company's prospects in emerging economies, calling them bright spots in the company's financial results. On an earnings call made this month, Cook said he was "particularly pleased" with the performance in these markets during the first three months of the year. Daniel Ives, managing director of Wedbush Securities, predicts that "over the coming years, Indonesia, Malaysia, and India will comprise a bigger piece of the pie for Apple, given its efforts in

these countries." Meanwhile, Chiew Le Xuan, a research analyst who covers smartphones in Southeast Asia for Canalys, said May 18's launch of an online store in Vietnam showed how Apple was "further cementing" its presence in emerging markets. He said the tech giant had been "actively increasing" its presence in the region over recent months, ramping up its distribution and network of authorised resellers, especially in Malaysia, adding that Apple has ample room to run in these markets. Apple joins a growing list of global businesses that have become bullish on Southeast Asia, where increasing investment is being poured into manufacturing. The region's consumer base also holds promise, with the number of middle-income and affluent households in economies such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and the Philippines projected to grow by around 5% annually through to 2030, according to the Boston Consulting Group. These figures have led the consultancy to dub this group of consumers "the next mega-market." The allure of Southeast Asia's rising middle class "has changed the dynamic in these countries, which previously Apple stayed away from," according to Ives. However, challenges remain as premium brands like Apple have struggled for years to compete in emerging markets because of the price of their products, choosing instead to rely on local resellers. iPhones, which cost between US\$470 and

US\$1,100, are expensive for consumers in less developed Southeast Asian economies, where the bulk of smartphone shipments are priced under US\$200, according to Chiew. He outlined that Apple's absence from places such as Cambodia or Vietnam was typically more apparent around the launch of a new iPhone, particularly as buyers from those countries often flew to Singapore or Malaysia in order to purchase devices and take them back for resale. This could change over the coming years, particularly as Apple continues to increase its firepower in the region, he noted.

Source : <https://english.vov.vn/en/economy/vietnam-emerges-as-a-rising-market-for-apple-post1021861.vov>

## Vietnam among six largest Thai tourism markets



*Vietnam News | 23 May, 2023*

Thailand has welcomed 9.47 million foreign tourists, including 84,221 Vietnamese visitors, so far this year, earning about 391 billion baht, equivalent to over US\$11.3 billion, in revenue. According to Traisulee Taisaranakul, deputy spokeswoman of the Thai Government, foreign tourists visiting the neighboring country are mainly from Asian nations, such as Malaysia, China, India, and Vietnam. Taisaranakul noted that the increase in the number of Chinese tourists is expected to further boost the development of Thailand's tourism industry this year. As of May, Malaysia led the way in the number of international tourists arriving in Thailand by nationality with

367,530 visitors. It was followed by China with 328,375 visitors and India with 131,230 visitors. Vietnam ranked in sixth place. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Thailand expects to welcome over 5.3 million Chinese tourists, 150,000 Saudi Arabian travelers, and six million European holidaymakers this year. Tanes Petsuwan, deputy director general of the Tourism Authority of Thailand, said at the recent "Amazing Thailand Festival 2023" held in Ho Chi Minh City that Vietnam was one of Thailand's six biggest tourism markets. Last year, Thailand received 470,000 tourists from Vietnam, nearly half of the pre-pandemic figure. Cheap air tickets, simple immigration procedures, good hospitality, and modern transport infrastructure make Thailand the ideal destination for Vietnamese tourists, Petsuwan added. Currently, Vietnamese tourists can fly directly from Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Da Lat, Phu Quoc, Da Nang, and Nha Trang to Thai destinations such as Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Phuket.

Source : <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/vietnam-among-six-largest-thai-tourism-markets-2146203.html>