

*Highlight News / June 27/2023*



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## Cambodia eyes over 5.6M international tourists by 2024



*Cambodia News | 26 June, 2023*

Cambodia expects over 5.6 million international tourists and over 16.4 of national tourists in 2024 by developing tourism infrastructure, sports events and implementation of digital technology, according to the roadmap plan of the Ministry of Tourism. Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, on Thursday, chaired the seminar attended by over 800 official members, along with Hor Sarun, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Tourism, and Nep Samouth, Director-General of Tourism, held at Sokha Phnom Penh Hotel in the capital. Addressing the closing ceremony under the theme of 'Summarize the plan to promote Cambodia's tourism sector, during and after the Covid-19 crisis', Nep Samouth presented the tourism statistics reported in May 2023. He also highlighted that Cambodia's tourism is rapidly revising from the Covid-19 crisis and the government has agreed to continue to support the strategies for resilience and recovery to speed up the process. Samouth said that in response to the current situation, the government aims to promote Cambodia as a clean and green tourist destination. He revealed that the government plans to build a sports stadium that is capable to contain 10,000-20,000 people to promote sports events and tourism in Siem Reap province. He urged the private sector and business institutions to promote tourists from China and Muslim society. Thong Khon said, "The economy of Cambodia will

increase by 6.6 percent and even up to seven percent in the next few years with an increasing number of both international and national tourists, which is expected to reach 5.6 million international tourists and 16.4 national tourists in 2024." He continued that the government has set a roadmap to promote tourist destinations in Cambodia through three major factors. The first factor is the development of tourist infrastructures such as a new airport, tourist ports and expressways. Second, is the promotion of more sports events in Cambodia and the last factor is the implementation of digital technology to reserve hotels, book tickets or make payments." Speaking to Khmer Times Nep Samouth said, "The development of tourism will reap benefits as a whole to Cambodia, not just a certain province with more tourist destinations. The government will manage the budget to improve roads, schools, hospitals and tourist sites across the whole country." He told that while developing the tourist destinations in Siem Reap, Ratanakiri and Kep province, the government has set four new poles to attract tourists which include Battambang, Pursat, Pailin, and Banteay Meanchey province. The government has launched the 'Best tourism business campaign for visit Cambodia in 2023' in line with the 'IBEST' concept which stands for improving service quality, booking, environment, safety and technology.

Source : [https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501314073/cambodia-eyes-over-5-6m-international-tourists-by-](https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501314073/cambodia-eyes-over-5-6m-international-tourists-by-2024/)

2024/

## Thailand agrees to renew permits for 40,000 Cambodian workers



*Cambodia News | 26 June, 2023*

Thailand has agreed to extend the work permit of nearly 40,000 Cambodian migrant workers, bringing relief to their families. Media reports from Thailand said yesterday that the Labour Department officials of both countries came to an agreement to facilitate the renewal of the work permits of the migrant workers. The workers will be allowed to apply for the renewal online to make the process speedier and also hassle-free. Quoting Pairoj Chotikasathien, the Director-General of Thailand's Department of Employment, Bangkok Post, said the workers will also be exempted from the usual requirement of waiting a minimum of 30 days after the expiry of work permits for making an application for renewal. According to the report, these work permits as per a current MoU for four years are expiring between January last year and coming July 31. The new agreement between the two countries would help the migrant workers who are still in Thailand to remain in the country and those who returned to Cambodia could now go back. The Thailand side also requested the Cambodian counterparts to speed up certifying the documents containing the personal information of the workers for the renewal. The new agreement followed the Thai Cabinet's earlier decision to renew the permits of nearly 200,000 migrant workers. It is learnt that the Cambodian side asked for a reduction in the visa fee from the current

2,000 baht to 500 baht per application. The request would be sent to the approval of the new Cabinet of Thailand. The agreement followed reports that Thailand is facing a severe labour shortage, especially in tourism, service, construction, real estate and food processing. These labour-oriented sectors are said to be crucial for the country's post-pandemic economic revival and growth. According to Cambodia's Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), out of the 1.3 million workers who migrated from the country, 1.2 million are working in neighbouring Thailand, earning an average of \$400 monthly. It is also estimated that there are 49,000 Cambodian migrant workers in South Korea, 22,000 in Malaysia and 19,000 in Japan. These workers are reportedly paid average monthly wages of \$1,500 in South Korea, about \$1,400 in Japan and around \$300 in Malaysia. Ith Samheng, the Minister for Labour and Vocational Training, recently said that the migrant workers sent home remittances of nearly \$2.7 billion a year, a significant contribution to the Kingdom's economy. The ministry, on its part, he added, ensures that the workers get social security benefits in each of these countries. The Labour Migration Policy of Cambodia 2019-2023 and related legal standards aim to protect and promote the rights and interests of workers, including when they return home. The policy outlines the government's commitment to leveraging the benefits of labour migration for the country's long-term development. Also, the free movement of labour is one of the core elements of the ASEAN Economic Community's

(AEC) single market and production base. Meanwhile, the Thailand Migration Report 2019 estimated that the country hosts about 4.9 million non-Thai residents, with some 3.9 million being documented and undocumented workers from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.

Source : <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501314077/thailand-agrees-to-renew-permits-for-40000-cambodian-workers/>

## Provinces prepare to tempt tourists during Visit Laos Year 2024



*Laos News | 26 June, 2023*

Provincial authorities across the country are preparing programmes of activities to be rolled out during Visit Laos Year 2024, so that tour companies can create package tours based on the range of offerings. The planned events were summarised at a meeting held in Vientiane last week to report on the progress of preparations for Visit Laos Year 2024, chaired by Prime Minister Sonexay Siphandone. Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism Mrs Suanesavanh Vignaket said all provinces have sent lists of planned events and activities to the ministry, which has forwarded them to tour companies. Meanwhile, the ministry is preparing a logo and slogan for Visit Laos Year 2024, in cooperation with tour companies and airlines. In addition, the ministry is holding regular meetings with government officials and tour operators across the country to share ideas on ways to make Visit Laos Year 2024 a success, Mrs Suanesavanh said. The ministry is also partnering

with tour companies and airlines to draw up a list of suitable activities for tourists, with the final selections to be made in July and August. In September and October, the national steering committee will meet to consider the proposed events and draw up a budget, which will be submitted to the government for approval. A Visit Laos Year 2024 calendar will be produced, as well as videos and souvenirs, and the campaign will be advertised in media outlets and on websites, Mrs Suanesavanh said. In November and December, the ministry will hold a press conference and the opening ceremony of Visit Laos Year 2024, as well as advertise the planned activities, she added. Meeting participants shared their ideas about tourism services, the entry and exit procedures for foreign visitors, and the production of souvenirs, and also discussed safety measures for visitors. The government has organised previous promotional campaigns to attract tourists, including two Visit Laos Years, Visit Laos-China Year and Lao Thiao Laos, which drew many visitors. During Visit Laos Year 2018 visitor arrivals topped 4.1 million, up 8.2 percent compared to 2017. During Visit Laos-China Year 2019, Laos welcomed 4.58 million international visitors, representing an increase of 9 percent over 2018.

Source : [https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent121\\_Provinces\\_y23.php](https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent121_Provinces_y23.php)

## Myanmar burns \$446 million worth of seized drugs as illicit trade booms in Southeast Asia



*Myanmar News | 26 June, 2023*

BANGKOK (AP) — The authorities in Myanmar destroyed more than \$446 million worth of illegal drugs seized from around the country to mark an annual international anti-drug trafficking day on Monday, police said. The drug burn came as U.N. experts warned of increases in the production of opium, heroin and methamphetamine in Myanmar, with exports threatening to expand markets in South and Southeast Asia. Myanmar has a long history of drug production linked to political and economic insecurity caused by decades of armed conflict. The country is a major producer and exporter of methamphetamine and the world's second-largest opium and heroin producer after Afghanistan, despite repeated attempts to promote alternative legal crops among poor farmers. In the country's largest city, Yangon, a pile of seized drugs and precursor chemicals worth \$207 million was incinerated. The destroyed drugs included opium, heroin, methamphetamine, marijuana, kratom, ketamine and crystal meth, also known as ice. The burn coincided with the UN's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Authorities also destroyed drugs in the central city of Mandalay and in Taunggyi, the capital of eastern Shan state, both closer to the main drug production and distribution areas. Last year, authorities burned a

total of more than \$642 million worth of seized drugs. Experts have warned that violent political unrest in Myanmar following the military takeover two years ago — which is now akin to a civil war between the military government and its pro-democracy opponents — has caused an increase in drug production. The production of opium in Myanmar has flourished since the military's seizure of power, with the cultivation of poppies up by a third in the past year as eradication efforts have dropped off and the faltering economy has pushed more people toward the drug trade, according to a report by the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime earlier this year. Estimates of opium production were 400 metric tons (440 tons) in 2020, rising slightly in 2021, and then spiking in 2022 to an estimated 790 metric tons (870 tons), according to the report. The U.N. agency has also warned of a huge increase in recent years in the production of methamphetamine, driving down prices and reaching markets through new smuggling routes. The military government says some ethnic armed organizations that control large swaths of remote territory produce illicit drugs to fund their insurgencies and do not cooperate in the country's peace process as they do not wish to relinquish the benefits they gain from the drug trade. Historically, some rebel ethnic groups have also used drug profits to fund their struggle for greater autonomy from the central government. Most of the opium and heroin exported by Myanmar, along with methamphetamine, goes to other countries in Southeast Asia and China.

Source : <https://www.thaipbsworld.com/us-places-sanctions-on-myanmars-defence-ministry-banks/>

## Highest pension in Vietnam pays US\$5,200 per month



*Vietnam News | 26 June, 2023*

The person with the highest pension in Vietnam receives more than VNĐ124 million (US\$5,200) per month, according to the Vietnam Social Security (VSS). As of April this year, a total of 471 people receive a monthly pension of more than VNĐ20 million (\$850), said VSS. All of them worked in private companies or foreign enterprises in Việt Nam and had paid social insurance at a high level. The man with the highest pension in the country, referred to as T. throughout this article, lives in HCM City. Before retiring, T. was chairman of the members' council and general director of a company operating in Việt Nam. T. retired in April 2015 with a pension of more than VNĐ87.3 million (\$3,700) per month. After five adjustments of the State pension, by June this year, T.'s pension is more than VNĐ124 million per month. T. paid social insurance premiums for 23 years during the period before 2007 when a person's salary was taken as the basis for social insurance payment, T.'s social insurance premium was very high. There were times when T.'s average social insurance fee was more than VNĐ200 million (\$8,500) per month. When the Law on Social Insurance 2006 came into effect, the maximum monthly fee for compulsory social insurance was equal to 20 months of the general minimum salary.

Accordingly, from January 2007 to March 2015, T. always paid social insurance premiums at the highest rate as prescribed, with an average salary of VNĐ15.4-23 million (\$650-980) per month.

Source : <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/highest-pension-in-vietnam-pays-us-5-200-per-month-2158528.html>

## Vietnamese economy strives to overcome difficulties in 2024



*Vietnam News | 26 June, 2023*

According to previous estimates, the Vietnamese economy is expected to grow by 6.5% in 2023 and accelerate in 2024. However, the economy faced a great deal of challenges in the first half of 2023, with lower-than-expected growth, heaping more pressure on efforts to realise the full-year target. Economists have warned that Vietnam is not facing a short-term shock but internal and external difficulties that may continue to affect the economy in the years to come. Reports by many ministries and agencies also show that the Vietnamese economy is facing more and more challenges, raising pressure on macroeconomic management. The volume of tasks that needs dealing with is becoming heavier when the authorities have to address both the weaknesses that have existed and remained unresolved for years and the issues that arise unexpectedly. Furthermore, the risks in 2024 will not only come from global economic crisis or rising bankruptcies or increasing bad debt, but also from the ineffective implementation of economic reform measures. In addition, bottlenecks such as power

shortage is affecting enterprises' business and production activities as well as the people's lives, while reforms to improve the business climate and enhance national competitiveness have also stalled and could hinder economic recovery, which is already facing tough challenges. It is worth noting that during this time, enterprises will look at macroeconomic signals to make their business decisions for the next year. In this context, the socio-economic development plan for 2024 must be formulated on the basis of complete and accurate assessment of the socio-economic development performance in the first half of 2023 and projections for the remainder of the year. 2024 will be the breakthrough year to complete the 2021-2025 five-year plan in the context that the economy has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. The goals, orientations, and measures must be bolder and more effective, feasible, and suitable with the implementation capacity of ministries and localities. It is also necessary to mobilise and use resources effectively to overcome the difficulties and create substantive changes.

Source : <https://vir.com.vn/adb-highlights-default-risks-in-vietnams-property-markets-102853.html>

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