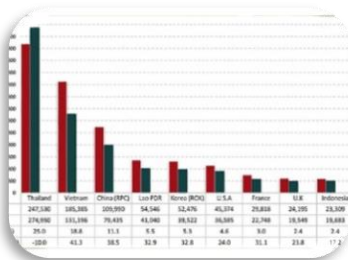


Highlight News / March 25, 2023



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Foreign tourist arrivals go up 18% in Jan-Feb



Cambodia News | 24 March 2024

Cambodia welcomed 988,574 international tourists in the first two months of 2024, up 18 percent over the same period last year, a Ministry of Tourism report revealed yesterday. Thailand which sent 247,530 travellers was the top international tourism source for Cambodia during this period this year, followed by Vietnam and China, with 185,385 and 109,990 respectively. As much as 42 percent of total foreign tourists entered the country by air, up 33 percent, compared to the same period last year. Tourism is one of the four pillars supporting Cambodia's economy, in addition to garments, footwear, and travel goods export, agriculture, and construction and real estate. The number of Cambodian outbound tourists decreased by 3.9 percent to 262,580 during the two months, read the report. In order to increase the number of tourists visiting Cambodia, the Ministry of Tourism strives to connect key priority markets by finding direct flights and improving services with standard prices. "The main factors that attract tourists to the Kingdom are the friendliness and warmth of the Cambodian people, but we have to strengthen our tourism service quality with standard prices," Tourism Minister Sok Soken said at a press conference last week in Siem Reap province. Ensuring high-quality

tourism services requires the cooperation of all stakeholders, including the strengthening of partnerships between the government, the private sector and the people as well, he said. The ministry reported the number of domestic tourist movements as 3.58 million in 2023, an 84 percent increase year-on-year. As much as 813,813 of which are domestic foreign tourists. Cambodia is well known for its world cultural heritage sites, namely the Angkor Archaeological Park in Siem Reap province, the Preah Vihear Temple and Koh Ker Temple in Preah Vihear province, and the Sambor Prei Kuk Archaeological Site in Kampong Thom province. Besides, the Kingdom has a 450-kilometre-long pristine coastline stretching across four southwestern provinces of Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong. In 2023, Cambodia's tourism earned \$3.04 billion, up 115 percent from \$1.41 billion in a year earlier, from 5.45 million international tourists. The Ministry of Tourism predicted that Cambodia would attract seven million international visitors by 2025, surpassing the pre-Covid-19 level of 6.6 million in 2019. In fact, Cambodia emerged as the frontrunner in tourism recovery among Southeast Asian nations in 2023, according to a report by travel research firm Outbox Consulting. The Kingdom's recovery rate soared to an impressive 82.5 percent of pre-pandemic levels, surpassing regional neighbours and reaffirming its status as an emerging tourism hotspot. Malaysia closely trailed behind with a robust recovery rate of 77.2 percent, followed by

Indonesia at 71.7 percent. Malaysia, meanwhile, topped the list of tourist arrivals in the region last year, welcoming 29 million visitors. Thailand secured the second position with 28 million arrivals.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501460336/foreign-tourist-arrivals-go-up-18-in-jan-feb/>

GDT's e-Administration platform to facilitate tax monitoring



Cambodia News | 22 March 2024

The General Department of Taxation launched its e-Administration, the smartphone-based app application where taxpayers can check and track their tax payment documents. GDT e-Administration will facilitate taxpayers in applying and monitoring documents after their transactions, said GDT Director-General Kong Vibol during a seminar on 'Annual Tax on Income Obligations and GDT e-Administration' held on March 20 at the Sofitel Phnom Penh Hotel. "Today, we announce another new product e-Administration, which is an additional development of the App for taxpayers to check and track when their documents are submitted," Vibol said. This program has the functions of application for enterprise to update, application for stamp tax, transfer of ownership of real estate, application for payment in stages, application for certificates or permits, and application for administrative documents and other

documents. The documents submitted in this program will not be lost as long as they are already included in this program and all documents are received via this program and have no chance of losing documents, Vibol said. All applications to this program do not need taxpayers to come to the General Department of Taxation or the Tax Administration. This is part of GDT's digital transformation initiative to collect income with efficiency. Now, e-Document Submission System and e-Tax Services have been made possible. The GDT is committed to effectively implementing government policies as well as reforms such as modernization of the tax administration, improvement in taxpayer services and expansion of data storing facilities among other things, he said. The Kingdom has two institutions responsible for collecting taxes. One is the General Department of Taxation (GDT), which focuses on interior taxes such as income tax, salary tax, value-added tax and property tax, and the other is the General Department of Customs and Excise (GDCE), which collects taxes on goods entering and leaving the country. GDT collected \$3.6 billion in tax income in 2023, up 4.49 percent over that in a year before.

Source: <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/501460312/gdts-e-administration-platform-to-facilitate-tax-monitoring/>

Laos, China Collaborate to Advance Traditional Medicine.



Laos News | 22 March 2024

Traditional medicines in Laos are poised for broader recognition as a state-run pharmaceutical enterprise partnered with three Chinese agencies to enhance the therapeutic potential of traditional medicine in the country. On 19 March, in a move aimed at promoting research in traditional medicine in Laos, State Enterprise Pharmaceutical Factory No. 3 teamed up with China's Kmoeba (Zhuhai Hengqin) Biomedical Co., Ltd., Guangdong Engineering Centre for Traditional Chinese Medicine, and National Chi Nan University. Moreover, pharmaceutical manufacturers in Laos have developed herbal capsules to treat COVID-19 patients, utilizing research and development from local medicinal plants such as *Andrographis paniculata* and *Houttuynia cordata*. Despite the challenges traditional medicines face, the Lao government remains committed to promoting their use and enhancing their capabilities through collaboration with various sectors.

Source: <https://laotiantimes.com/2024/03/22/laos-china-collaborate-to-advance-traditional-medicine/>

Huaphan, Son La provinces stage festival to promote local culture, tourism.



Laos News | 22 March 2024

The Huaphan and Son La Cultural Tourism Festival, showcasing these remote northern provinces of Laos and Vietnam as a leading regional tourist destination, is taking place in Huaphan province from March 20-23. Son La province in Vietnam borders on Huaphan to the east and the two provinces are working to develop and benefit from their shared links. Visitors can enjoy cultural shows that extol the glories of the area's traditional customs and lifestyle, including traditional dances, a photographic exhibition, and food items that represent the quintessence of Huaphan cuisine. Speaking at the opening ceremony of the Huaphan and Son La Cultural Tourism Festival, the Governor of Huaphan province. Festival-goers can learn about the rich culture of the various ethnic groups in Huaphan province through a street fair that showcases popular local dishes and handicrafts made by ethnic groups. The event is a rare treat for anyone visiting Huaphan province and offers a vast array of fascinating sights and experiences.

Source: https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freenews/freecontent_59_Huaphan_y24.php

ARCCI welcomes Indonesian investors to agriculture, livestock sectors



Myanmar News | 24 March 2024

Ayeyawady Region Chambers of Commerce and Industry (ARCCI) invited Indonesian businesspersons to invest in agriculture and livestock businesses, including the production and export of rice, fish and shrimp. ARCCI officials met Mr Arvinanto Soeriaatmadja, Commercial Attache of Indonesia, at the Pathein Industrial Project meeting hall in Pathein, Ayeyawady Region, on 22 March. At the meeting, the Commercial Attaché expressed willingness to import rice from Myanmar to meet the growing demand from Indonesia and build bridges between Myanmar businesspersons and Indonesian companies with a common interest in joining hands in rice and other businesses. Additionally, Indonesian businesspersons have been cordially invited to join the expo that will be held in June at the Embassy of Indonesia to Myanmar. Additionally, the officials of the ARCCI rediscussed matters on the technology and capital requirements in rice and livestock businesses, inviting Indonesian companies to invest in contract farming and direct export of rice and pulses from Ayeyawady Region to Indonesia and other export opportunities. The head of the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization

(Ayeyawady Region) addressed the need to make direct contact with Indonesian exporters and buyers via email regarding the digital e-commerce platform.

Source: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/arcci-welcomes-indonesian-investors-to-agriculture-livestock-sectors/>

Myanmar workers prepare for Malaysia move after visa deadline announcement



Myanmar News | 23 March 2024

After the Malaysian government announced that foreign workers who had been granted calling visas would be recruited in Malaysia by 31 May, many Myanmar workers were eager to go there. Therefore, young people need to be cautious about fraud, said an official from Myanmar Overseas Employment Agencies Federation (MOEAF). Businesses in Malaysia have to finalize the submission of calling visas before 31 March for foreign workers who have already received KSM Approvals, which still have terms. Malaysian businesses would recruit foreign workers who received calling visas from the immigration department by 31 May into Malaysia, said the announcement. Therefore, agencies in Myanmar have worked to send workers as quickly as possible by negotiating with businesses. "Malaysia has announced that the calling visa submission must be done by 31 March, and those who would receive

calling visa have to leave by 31 May. Malaysia will close the submission after the deadline. That's why many people have come to submit. Those who have been already granted approval have called interviews promptly. However, some don't want to recruit because they don't have vacancies, and there are some who work on recruiting as quickly as possible because they can't hire workers anymore. But there are more companies which do recruiting. At present, there are a lot of people going to Malaysia. Agencies are also working on recruiting as speedily as possible by negotiating with Malaysian bosses. The recruitment will be stopped completely after the deadline, so our young people need to be aware of fraud," said the official. When Malaysia's recruitment plan is halted, there is the possibility of an increase in preparation for going to work in South Korea and Thailand, he added. In March, the Malaysian government stopped issuing KSM Approval for the recruitment of foreign workers by factories, workshops, and companies. Concerning it, agencies that send Myanmar workers to Malaysia specifically may stop their operations, according to an overseas employment agency owner.

Source: <https://www.gnlm.com.mm/many-myanmar-workers-prepare-to-go-to-malaysia-after-announcement-on-deadline-for-submission-of-calling-visa/>

Vietnamese data center market to hit \$1.26 billion by 2030



Vietnam News | 23 March 2024

A double-digit growth rate (around 11%) is forecast for the Vietnamese data center market until 2030. The data center market in Vietnam is forecast to reach US\$1.26 billion by 2030, with a compound annual growth rate of 10.8%, according to the latest report from Viettel IDC. The global datacenter market is expected to reach nearly \$321 billion by 2024, growing at an average annual rate of approximately 7.3%, according to the report. The Asia-Pacific region is driving 19% of data center growth, with significant expansion in both primary and secondary markets, according to Hoang Van Ngoc, director of Viettel IDC, who spoke at the Data Center & Cloud Infrastructure Summit (DCCI Summit) 2024 in Hanoi on March 18. Developed countries such as South Korea, Japan, Australia and Singapore constitute the primary market, while Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand make up the secondary market. In recent years, however, there has been a noticeable shift from the primary market to the secondary market, he added. Ngoc predicts that there will be a boom in the number of data centers in Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand in the coming years. Vietnam,

a promising market, lags behind other countries in terms of size. Currently, Vietnam's datacenter market is only a small fraction of the size of Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Looking at the past three years (from 2020 to 2022), the data center market in Indonesia and Malaysia has grown about six times, while Vietnam has grown only 1.5 times. Despite the potential opportunities and market momentum, Vietnam remains relatively slow to grow compared to its regional peers. Viettel IDC highlights several factors driving market development in Vietnam, including a sizeable pool of cost-effective labor, a substantial IT workforce, lower construction costs compared to other countries, a supportive regulatory framework, and government backing for digital transformation initiatives. Four major domestic providers in Vietnam, such as Viettel, VNPT, FPT and CMC, hold approximately 97% of the market. In April, Viettel will inaugurate a new data center in Hanoi's Hoa Lac Hi-tech Park with a capacity of 250 MW, sponsored by HSBC for achieving green and sustainable certifications, Ngoc said. Currently, the Vietnamese group operates 13 data centers across the country, with a total capacity of 106 MW. "According to the plan by 2030, we intend to build megacenters in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, with an estimated total capacity of up to 450 MW. This is a big number, four to five times the current capacity," he added. Meanwhile, Vietnam's cloud computing

market size is only 58% of the Philippines' and 50% of Indonesia's, but it has the highest growth rate in the Southeast Asia region and ranks third in Asia. The projected growth rate of Vietnam's cloud market in the next 5-10 years is expected to be around 19-20%. The estimated size of cloud computing services is expected to reach about \$1.2 billion by 2030. Viettel IDC report said that after a period of rapid development, the market is currently in a deceleration phase (2022-2023). This is a temporary trend, as enterprises and organizations prioritize cost optimization after migrating services to the cloud. The report noted that the market will recover by the end of 2024 and return to growth in 2025-2026. The Viettel IDC report also shows that the market share of both data center and cloud computing services is mostly dominated by foreign enterprises. However, there are still opportunities for domestic companies, especially since the government and relevant ministries and sectors have issued clear regulatory policies on the use and protection of personal information. According to a recent report by the Ministry of Information and Communications, the cloud market in Vietnam is expected to grow to \$1.24 trillion by 2027, with a compound annual growth rate of 17.9%.

Source: <https://hanoitimes.vn/vietnams-data-center-market-to-reach-us126-billion-by-2030-326399.html>

Việt Nam's potential to become an AI dragon: Meta



Vietnam News | 24 March 2024

HÀ NỘI — Việt Nam is poised to emerge as a 'dragon' in the AI industry, thanks to its strong determination, entrepreneurial spirit and open government policies, according to a representative from the Meta Group. Speaking at a press conference for the Vietnam Innovation Challenge 2024 last week, Rafael Frankel, Director of Public Policy for Southeast Asia at Meta Group, pointed out the remarkable transformation of Việt Nam's economy over the past 23 years. He attributed this growth to the unwavering drive of the Vietnamese people and the Government's increasingly open policies, particularly in technology realm, including collaborations with countries like the United States and the American business community. While acknowledging Việt Nam's progress, Frankel stressed the importance of maintaining an open policy to attract global investors and technology companies. "The (Vietnamese) Government should remain open and continue to be a place where investors and technology companies from around the world want to come and do business," Rafael said, reaffirming Meta's commitment to supporting Vietnamese businesses in fostering innovation and advancing AI and semiconductor technologies. AI,

alongside the semiconductor industry, is considered a cornerstone of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Its impact transcends technology, potentially revolutionising research, work dynamics, and content creation, and is expected to contribute trillions of US dollars to the global economy, as indicated by the McKinsey 2023 Report. Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Trần Huy Đông highlighted Việt Nam's proactive efforts to catch up with global AI development. He cited the government's initiatives, including the introduction of a national AI strategy until 2030, which has propelled Việt Nam to the 55th position in the AI readiness index in 2022. Several Vietnamese companies, including FPT, Viettel AI, VNPT AI and VIN AI, are deeply engaged in AI research and application. Phùng Việt Thắng, Country Director of Intel Vietnam, emphasised the necessity of a clear government strategy to bolster AI development across industries. Meta to launch AI products in Việt Nam in 2024 In 2024, Meta plans to introduce AI products and services in Asia Pacific, including Việt Nam. "We already have on the roadmap to launch AI products across WhatsApp, Messenger and Instagram in 2024 in Asia Pacific and Việt Nam is currently on that roadmap," Rafael said, believing these tools can support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Việt Nam to foster innovation and growth. Last September, Meta unveiled its first generative AI

products, including a chatbot capable of generating text responses and photorealistic images. Meta AI is set to enhance user experiences on platforms like WhatsApp, Messenger, and Instagram, leveraging artificial intelligence for improved functionality and engagement. — VNS

Source: <https://vietnamnews.vn/economy/1652586/viet-nam-s-potential-to-become-an-ai-dragon-meta.html>
