

CAMBODIAN TOURISM: MAY SHOWS THE FIRST POSITIVE SIGNS



The president of the Association of Khmer Tourist Guides of Angkor, Khieu Thy, said that the reopening of the kingdom to foreign tourists is now essential. Better still, it would be a dream for the Cambodian tourism industry.

Suffering from a shortage of international visitors for over a year, Mr. Thy stressed that the tourism sector is facing an unprecedented shortage of tourists.

"If Cambodia were to reopen its doors to foreign tourists in the fourth quarter, it would restore jobs and income for those working in the sector," he said. **A report from the Ministry of Tourism revealed that 1,306,143 international tourists visited Cambodia last year, down 80.5%** from the previous year and its 6,610,592 of 2019.

The decline in international tourist arrivals last year cost the Cambodian tourism industry more than \$3 billion in lost revenue. International tourism revenue generated only \$1.023 billion in 2020, down 79.2% from \$4.919 billion in 2019.

This year the situation is slowly changing for the better. The Minister for Tourism, Thong Khon, announced that in May Cambodia registered a total of 194,025 domestic tourist visitors. The figure showed a dramatic increase of 696.33 percent over the previous month's total. In April, all resorts in the country were ordered to close temporarily and a provincial travel ban was put into place to prevent the spread of Covid-19 over Khmer New Year and beyond.

The travel ban and closures were imposed on April 6 and 17 respectively. **On April 25 the government announced an end to the inter-provincial travel ban and the re-opening of most tourist attractions across the country, with some exceptions.**

The ministry of tourism has since advised all provincial and municipal tourism departments and tourism-related businesses, as well as other relevant parties to strengthen health-prevention measures and to help ensure the safety of all tourists and community members during the current pandemic.

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