

## Myanmar resumes tourist visas after two years

A Monitor Report

Date: 16 May, 2022



Yangon : Myanmar has resumed issuing visas for tourists to help its tourism industry devastated by the coronavirus pandemic and violent political unrest.

From May 15, tourist "e-Visas" are provided online in a bid intended to harmonise tourism with neighbouring countries, according to reports.

Visitors need a certificate of vaccination, negative results from a Covid-19 RT-PCR test taken shortly before their flight and a travel insurance policy. They must also take an ATK rapid test after arrival.

Myanmar on April 1 had already resumed issuing business visas, and on April 17 lifted a ban on international commercial flights. It had stopped issuing visas and suspended flight arrivals in March 2020.

Tourism is an important source of revenue for most Southeast Asian nations but they banned almost all foreign visitors after the coronavirus pandemic began in early 2020. In the past six months most have reopened and gradually dropped most or all testing requirements.

The pandemic and political instability have buffeted Myanmar's economy, which was put under more pressure by economic sanctions imposed by Western nations targeting commercial holdings controlled by the army, which seized power in February 2021 from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Myanmar hosted 4.36 million visitor arrivals in 2019, before the pandemic, but the number fell to 903,000 in 2020, the latest year for which official statistics are

available.

Peaceful opposition to the military takeover has turned into armed resistance, and the country is now in a state of civil war, according to some UN experts. The army is conducting large-scale offensives in the countryside while anti-government forces carry out scattered urban guerrilla attacks in the cities.

The US State Department advisory for Myanmar is at its maximum alert Level 4. It advises against travel there "due to areas of civil unrest and armed conflict." It also says "reconsider travel to Burma due to Covid-19-related restrictions."