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Record-breaking Batt’bang circus raises awareness

ARTS & CULTURE

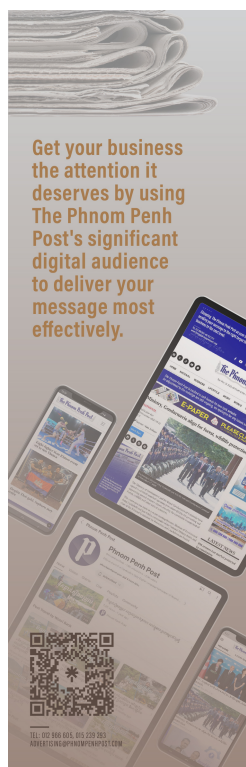
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ICT

Reporter : **Hong Raksme**

More Topic



A fiery performance by Battambang's Phare Ponleu Selpak in recent past. PHARE PONLEU SELPAK

Approaching its 30th anniversary, PPS is gearing up for the Sangke River Run, a pioneering long-distance running and cycling event along the Sangke River in Battambang, scheduled for January 20, 2024. This 30-km challenge not only tests endurance but also provides a unique opportunity for athletes.

Khuon Chanreasmey, PPS's director of projects and one of the event organisers, notes the growing interest in running and cycling in Cambodia, and this run reflects that trend. While entry is free, participants are encouraged to fundraise for the group's arts and youth education programmes.

More than a race, the event will also serve as a celebration of the group's 30 years of improving lives through the arts and a fundraiser for ongoing programmes. Starting at the foot of Phnom Banan, near an 11th-century Hindu and Buddhist temple, the race winds along the Sangke River, passing through rice fields, bridges, and downtown Battambang—a recently designated UNESCO Creative City. The finish line will be on the PPS campus.

Arts and cultural heart

Chanreasmey notes that beyond fundraising for the school, the event aims to promote Battambang as a travel destination, strengthening its position as an arts and cultural hub. Participants will also receive a complimentary ticket to the Phare Battambang Circus, held under the same big top where the world record was set.

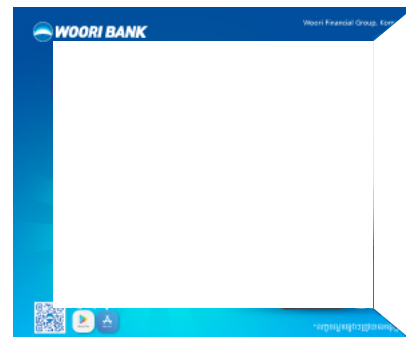
"This event offers a scenic 30-kilometer route along Battambang's iconic river. Athletes are invited to be the inaugural finishers of this challenge. Participation is free, but we encourage fundraising for Phare's arts and youth education programmes. The Sangke River Run aims to raise \$300,000 for ongoing arts education and youth programmes in Battambang," he says.

The coming event has registered participants hailing from Cambodia, Vietnam, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Australia, Germany, Belgium, France and the US. Organisers anticipate additional registrations in the coming two months.

"Our goal in organising this event is not only to raise funds for the school but also to establish Battambang as a destination for travellers," says Chanreasmey. "In the future, we envision the Sangker River Run becoming an annual event for the city and province of Battambang, enhancing its role as the arts and cultural heart of Cambodia."

The event will feature separate routes for individual runners, cyclists and relay teams of three covering 10 km each.

"As we mark 30 years of Phare Ponleu Selpak, I eagerly anticipate the potential for transforming lives through the arts in the next 30 years. I



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potential for transforming lives through the arts in the next 50 years. I believe we're just at the starting line of what's possible," Khawaja says.

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