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**Cambodianess**

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Cyclists and Runners Compete in the Sangker River Run in Battambang Province

As many as 140 runners and cyclists from Cambodia and several Asian and Western countries gathered in Battambang city on Jan. 20 to participate in the first 30-kilometre Sangker River Run. Organized by the NGO Phare Ponleu Selpak to mark its 30th anniversary, the event started at a mountain on the outskirts of the city where stands an 11th-century Angkorian temple and had participants go through some of the province's most scenic areas, such as the Sangker River suspension bridge that runners crossed at sunrise.

The event included parallel routes for solo runners, cyclists, and teams of three relay runners covering 10 km each. Students, as well as residents and tourists, lined the streets to greet the runners and cyclists as they approached the finish line. Among the winners of the solo 30km race were Hiroshi Ake of Japan, who came in first place, Tang Seksang in second place, and Hong Vantheth, both of Cambodia, in third place. The bicycle race winners were Oliver Rene Bodicker of Germany, Si Meas and Samphous Pharoun, both of Cambodia, who came in first, second and third places, respectively.

This first Sangker River Run was meant as a fundraising effort on the part of Phare, said Osman Khawaja, executive director of the NGO. However, he added, hopes are that this might become an annual event in Battambang. Photos: Phare Ponleu Selpak

Photos: Phare Ponleu Selpak

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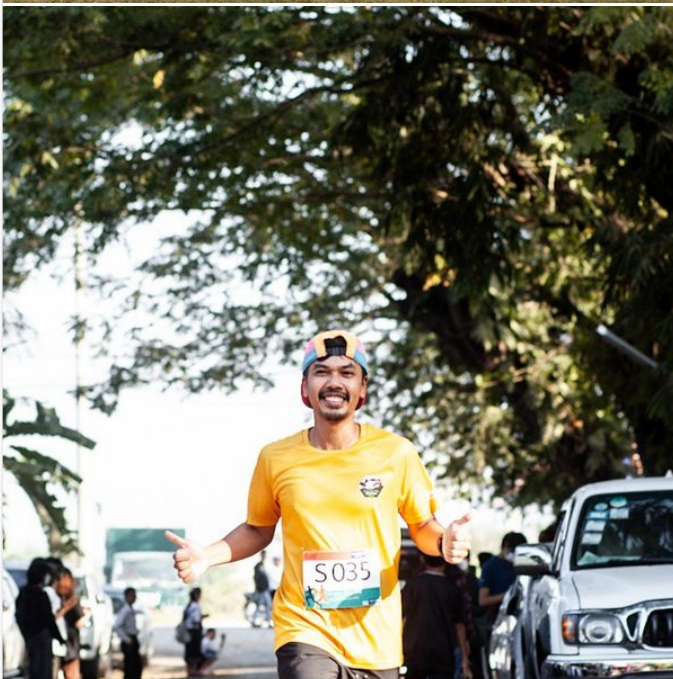
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