



Som Leng

the voice of

HANUMAN TOURISM VOYAGES

ISSUE 1

JULY — SEPTEMBER 2005

Thank you for arranging our tour of Angkor and Siem Reap. We had an incredible trip and the scheduling worked out flawlessly for us. I just want to let you know we really enjoyed touring with our guide - he was a terrific, insightful tour guide. I will certainly use your agency again upon my return to Cambodia and will refer my friends to you in the future.

Wendy Wong (USA), Jan 05

Welcome!

Greetings from Hanuman Tourism Voyages and 'Welcome' to our new look newsletter - 'Som Leng'.

'Som Leng' is Khmer for 'Voice' and that is exactly what this quarterly publication will be - Hanuman's voice. Keeping you all up-to-date about tourism related news in Indochina as well as keeping you fully informed of Hanuman's exciting new products and itineraries.

We are continually striving to bring you all innovative, new products and there are exciting times ahead: the addition of a swimming pool and sauna at our HanumanAlaya Boutique Guesthouse in Siem Reap; soon to begin building the eco-friendly 'Mondolkiri Lodge'; and our unique Temple and Beach Safaris gaining in popularity.

From time to time we will also let you know what we are doing internally to ensure that the level of service we offer our agents and clients is constantly improving.

We hope you will find 'Som Leng' both interesting and informative. If you require further information about anything you read please do not hesitate to email us at marketing@hanumantourism.com

We look forward to hearing from you and working together.

All the very best for the remainder of 2005...

Kind regards

Kulikar Sotho
Chief Executive

Cambodia Tops One Million!

For the first time ever, more than one million tourists visited Cambodia in 2004. The Ministry of Tourism has long been aiming to reach the million tourists mark, and the Minister of Tourism said the Government will continue to promote Cambodia as a safe country to visit, 'We will continue to build tourists confidence and try to change their perception'.

2005 is set to be even better with Jan - April 2005 figures up 43% over the same period in 2004.

You have all been part of reaching this milestone and the continual growth which is undoubtedly aiding the country's development.

On behalf of Cambodia we say a big 'Thank you!' to all of you.

Mondolkiri set to take off...

The Hanuman staff recently experienced a Fam trip to **Mondolkiri**, and what we found was wonderful - another world, a windswept landscape of rolling hills, lush pine forests and shy minority peoples, very different to the rest of Cambodia. Improved road access means it is just six hours from the capital, **Phnom Penh**. Hanuman Tourism has several innovative itineraries that connect this emerging destination with **Kompong Cham** and **Kratie** in a loop, or links on to **Laos** for those planning a two-country holiday.

Later this year Hanuman Tourism is planning to open the first genuine eco-lodge in Cambodia in **Sen Monorom**, the provincial capital of Mon-

dolkiri. Solar power, eco-friendly bathrooms and projects to assist disadvantaged minority communities in the area will set this apart from the competition. Known as the '**Mondolkiri Lodge**', accommodation will be in sumptuously decorated bamboo clad chalet tents, complete with wooden floors and western bathrooms. The central bar and dining area will be styled in keeping with the local minority Phnong architecture.

Located about 1km from Sen Monorom on the new road to **Bou Sra** (Cambodia's most spectacular waterfall) Hanuman will offer exclusive packages to the lodge, including elephant rides, trekking and cycling to minority villages and 4WD adventures.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Quality: No. 1 Priority	2
Preah Vihear Border	2
Price Increases...	2
Tourism Strategy?	2
Koh Ker is Back!	3
Festivals & Events	3
The PEPY Ride	3
HanumanAlaya	4
Sign up to Skype	4

www.hanumantourism.com

QUALITY: No. 1 Priority

Here at Hanuman we strive to provide the best quality of service at all times to both our Agents and our clients. However, we fully acknowledge that occasionally we do not live up to our own very high standards.

We appreciate all the feedback we receive concerning problems and we fully investigate all complaints. Recently we completed a review of feedback/complaints and we are putting in place a range of measures to mitigate such events in the future. A large percentage of the complaints concerned guides, drivers and vehicles - all fundamental elements to the success and enjoyment of a holiday.

Hanuman has a limited number of its own guides, drivers and vehicles which we have full control over. However often, especially during the high season we have to use freelance guides and contract drivers/vehicles. Although all the guides we use are Ministry of Tourism approved guides we understand that as a developing tourism destination the quality of that 'approval' may not be as high as more developed tourism destinations - this can lead to the expectations of clients not being met.

Hanuman has decided to tackle the guide, driver/vehicle quality issues head on and has introduced various new procedures to ensure all the freelance guides and

contracted drivers/vehicles we use will meet our own high standards. We have introduced 'Service Level Agreements' (SLAs) for both freelance guides and the vehicle/driver rental companies. We are in the process of meeting with the guides and vehicle/driver companies explaining that they must agree and sign up to these SLAs if Hanuman are to contract them. We have also introduced a stringent auditing process to ensure that these SLAs are being honoured. Whilst we are meeting with the guides we are getting a better understanding of them, for example what their idea of an excellent guide is, and whether they have any specialist knowledge, such as birds, periods in history, rice farming etc. We can then better match a clients interests with a guides knowledge.

Based on our past experience of each guide, any complaints and compliments received about them, their guiding experience, language ability, specialist knowledge etc., we have introduced an enhanced payment system, helping us secure the better guides during the busy peak season months.

We feel the above measures will ensure that all the holiday makers we handle will have the best experience possible.

If you would like to see a copy of the SLAs email: mark@hanumantourism.com

Attraction Price Increases...

Angkor Wat

Confusion abounds... will they? won't they? A few weeks before the June 1st deadline, the company that owns the ticketing concession at Angkor Wat announced it was going to raise the price of all passes by USD 3. The tourism industry protested and come June 1st the price was not introduced, the company citing 'technical issues' as the reason. There has been no further news if or when the increase will be implemented.

Choueng Ek (the Killing Fields)

The Phnom Penh Municipality has controversially awarded the Choueng Ek management concession to a Japanese company. The Japanese company intends to develop the site enhancing the visitor experience. To pay for these developments on June 1st the entrance fee was raised from USD 0.50 to USD 2.

Sambor Prei Kuk

Until recently there was no entrance charge to visit the Sambor Prei Kuk temple complex, instead Hanuman used to make a voluntary contribution each time we took people there. However, a USD 3 entrance fee has now been introduced.

Cambodia Tourism Strategy?

The Government has asked the Australian Ambassador and the Asian Development Bank for assistance to establish a tourism strategy for the country and to protect and develop a dolphin habitat in Stung Treng province. A coherent, realistic, adequately funded development strategy for tourism in Cambodia is well over due. We await to see how involved the local tourism industry will be in its preparation.

Preah Vihear: Thai - Cambodian Border Strains

Age-old tensions once again flared up between Thailand and Cambodia in the middle of May. Cambodia's border council decided that the country should stick to its old border agreements of 1964 which were lodged with the United Nations. In the intervening years of conflict, Cambodia has lost considerable territory to neighbouring Thailand and Vietnam and this will be difficult to reclaim. The spat at **Preah Vihear temple** was most likely a little warning from Thailand not to push for the return of territory and they signalled their displeasure by

constructing huts no more than 25m from Cambodia in no man's land. They also raised the Thai flag over a nearby mountain long considered Cambodian territory. Tensions eased as the month wore on and the border is now tentatively open for now. However, there is better news on the Cambodian side as road links continue to improve. Traditionally, most adventurous visitors starting out from **Siem Reap** approached the temple via the old Khmer Rouge stronghold of Anlong Veng. Now there is a faster route via the temple complexes of **Beng**

Mealea and **Koh Ker**. This route takes between five and six hours but should be faster by the start of peak season in November as more sections are being improved. The authorities are also concreting the steep final sections to the temple itself, guaranteeing year round access. This means it is now feasible to visit Preah Vihear, Koh Ker and Beng Mealea as a two-day, one-night trip on one of **Hanuman's popular Temple Safaris**. For those with an interest in more in-depth exploration at Koh Ker, this can be a three-day, two night trip.

Koh Ker is Back on the Map!

The new toll road to the **Koh Ker** temples is now complete, making these incredible 10th century structures more accessible than ever before. In the dry season it can take as little as 2 hours to reach Koh Ker from **Siem Reap** and all of the temples have now been cleared of landmines. **Prasat Thom** is the showcase, a 45m-high pyramid with spectacular views across the countryside. Nearby **Prasat Krahom** is covered in jungle and highly atmospheric. Other important temples in the area include **Prasat Ling** with the best preserved in situ lingas in Cambodia and **Prasat Bram**, with several smothering trees cloaking the brick towers. All-in-all, a trip to Koh Ker is like a trip to the Angkor of old before it was discovered by mass tourism. We heartily recommend it for

all adventurous tourists with a desire for discovery. For details of our day trip package here, a combination with **Beng Mealea**, or a **Temple Safari** together with **Preah Vihear** temple, please contact our sales team.



FESTIVALS & SPECIAL EVENTS

A new string in Hanuman's 'Cha Pey' (a traditional long-necked Khmer musical instrument) is the introduction of packaged itineraries focused around local festivals and special events. We currently have two in November, but are working on an extra special offering to coincide with Khmer New Year (April 2006) - this will allow guests to become fully immersed in the very meaningful cultural festivities. For more information and detailed itineraries please look at the 'Special Events' page on our website www.hanumantourism.com

Angkor Wat International Half Marathon

18 - 23 November 2005

Keen marathon runner, or just enjoy fun-running for a good cause? If yes to either of these then the Angkor Wat International Half Marathon, now celebrating its 10th anniversary, around the fascinating, impressive, Angkor temples is a must!



We at Hanuman Tourism have put together an exciting 6 day package which will allow you to fully appreciate the wonderful temples, take a cruise on South East Asia's largest freshwater lake, and visit the charming capital city of Phnom Penh – as well as running the Marathon of course!

We fully understand that before and after such a run a certain amount of pampering is required. So guests will stay in the quiet, comfortable, air-conditioned HanumanAlaya with its own sauna and pool. Yet, for even further pampering guests will be able to make use of various leisure and health facilities at the sumptuous 5 star Sofitel Royal Angkor Hotel. On run day guests will also benefit from our very own Hanuman Tourism Voyages Recovery Tent, where they will be able to relax and enjoy the post-race ceremonies.

Don't forget that the Angkor Wat Marathon is both a serious and a fun event, so the whole family can take part, with a series of events from the 21km half marathon to a 4km fun run.

Water Festival (Bun Om Tuk)

14 - 21 November 2005

Experience the largest festival in the Cambodian calendar - the annual Water Festival or 'Bun Om Tuk' in Khmer! The 3-day Water Festival in Phnom Penh is of great significance as it celebrates the end of the rainy season, the start of the fishing season, and also the unique natural phenomenon - the flow of the Tonle Sap river changing direction!

The Water Festival is truly a national event, many villagers throughout the country have spent almost a full year preparing their villages boat – elaborately and brightly decorated dug out canoes with large eyes on the prows to ward off evil spirits. Thousand of Khmers descend on Phnom Penh over the three days to watch the races and cheer on their villages boat, which can be up to 20 meters long and contain up to 60 oarsmen, frantically paddling and chanting as the do battle in highly competitive races.



After an action packed 4 days in Phnom Penh guests will fly to Siem Reap where they will spend 4 days in much calmer, surroundings exploring the incredible Angkor Wat temples.

THE PEPY RIDE: PROTECT THE EARTH, PROTECT YOURSELF

Hanuman Tourism is very proud to be sponsoring the PEPY Ride. In January 06 a group of women will cycle across Cambodia, with the main aim of raising USD 35,000 to build a much needed solar panelled school in a remote Cambodian village, equipped with a computer, satellite, and large vegetable garden so that free school lunches can be provided. The funding will also cover the salary for a school teacher and a chef, thus providing much needed employment. The women will stop off at various schools and orphanages on-route where they will teach local children about health and environmental issues. This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us who earn money from Cambodia to give something back, supporting the country's future development. Please visit www.pepyride.org where you will find information of how you can make a donation.



www.hanumanalaya.com

Travel with a Personal Touch!

HanumanAlaya Boutique Guesthouse

3 Star Guesthouse with 5 Star Facilities - Siem Reap

Hanuman's very own HanumanAlaya Boutique Guesthouse is situated close to the Angkor temple complex and is the perfect blend of traditional Khmer design and sophisticated international amenities.

The Guesthouse is lovingly finished in wood and elegantly decorated in local antiques and handicrafts - this is a home more than a hotel and our guests find it the perfect place to unwind after an adventurous day exploring the temples.

Surrounded by lush gardens and tropical plants, it is an idyllic retreat from the bustle of Siem Reap beyond, a stay to be savoured rather than rushed. By the beginning of September the construction of a sauna and free form pool will be completed so guests can enjoy a relaxing cool dip! A new larger restaurant will also be completed, with a greater variety of the classic Khmer food available than the HanumanAlaya is becoming renowned for.

As for the rooms, the HanumanAlaya only hosts 12, giving it a more intimate feel. There is one family room and we recently introduced a romantic Honeymoon room. All rooms are thoughtfully finished in wood with a silk trim, and include air-conditioning, ceiling fan, IDD phone, and cable TV. The in-room minibar includes a selection of soft drinks, beers and snacks and a further range of drinks is available from the bar through room service. The large wooden wardrobes include dressing gowns for the use of guests, as well as

a safety deposit box for their peace of mind when out and about around Angkor. The well equipped bathrooms include generous sized bathtubs complete with hot and cold water and shower. Hairdryers are included with every room, as are basic amenities like soap and shampoo. Put all the ingredients together and you have the making of a comfortable and cultured stay!

What about the 5 star facilities? In a unique partnership with the 5 star Sofitel Royal Angkor Hotel, all guests staying at the HanumanAlaya enjoy complimentary access to its superb lagoon swimming pool, complete with swim-up bar, and an international standard gymnasium (including jacuzzi and sauna). Not only this, but we have also managed to arrange a 30% discount at the Angkor Spa and 10% discount on dining in any of the Hotel's fine restaurants. The Sofitel Royal Angkor is less than a five minute walk from the HanumanAlaya or guests can take a lift in the HanumanAlaya's complimentary tuk tuk.



A big "HELLO!!" from the Hanuman Team

Here's a recent picture of the Sales, Reservations, and Operations staff enjoying **Bou Sra** waterfall on their recent Fam trip to Mondolkiri. It was the tail end of the dry season so the falls were nowhere near as dramatic as they can be. But still, all agreed it was a truly beautiful spot!

FEEDBACK??

The team at Hanuman Tourism hope you have enjoyed reading this first edition of 'Som Leng'. It is all about us wanting to keep you better informed. If you have any comments, or would like to see certain topics featured in future editions, please let us know...

mark@hanumantourism.com

Hanuman Tourism signs up for

They say its good to talk, but in our worldwide business it is often expensive to talk. That's why Hanuman Tourism has decided to sign up for Skype, ensuring cheap or free phone calls around the world. Many of you may be signed up already but for those who are not, here is the scoop. Skype is similar to Yahoo Messenger and other chat programmes. It can be downloaded free at www.skype.com. However, it also works as a computer based phone, you set up a credit and can then make calls to real phone numbers worldwide at absurdly cheap rates. Better still, partners who also have Skype installed on their workstations can talk to the team at Hanuman for free! Agree a time by email, sign in to your Skype account and talk - for free. It is that easy and here at Hanuman we plan to take advantage of it by having more telephone conversations with more of our partners and clients to ensure we are providing a quality service with that all important Hanuman *personal touch*!



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