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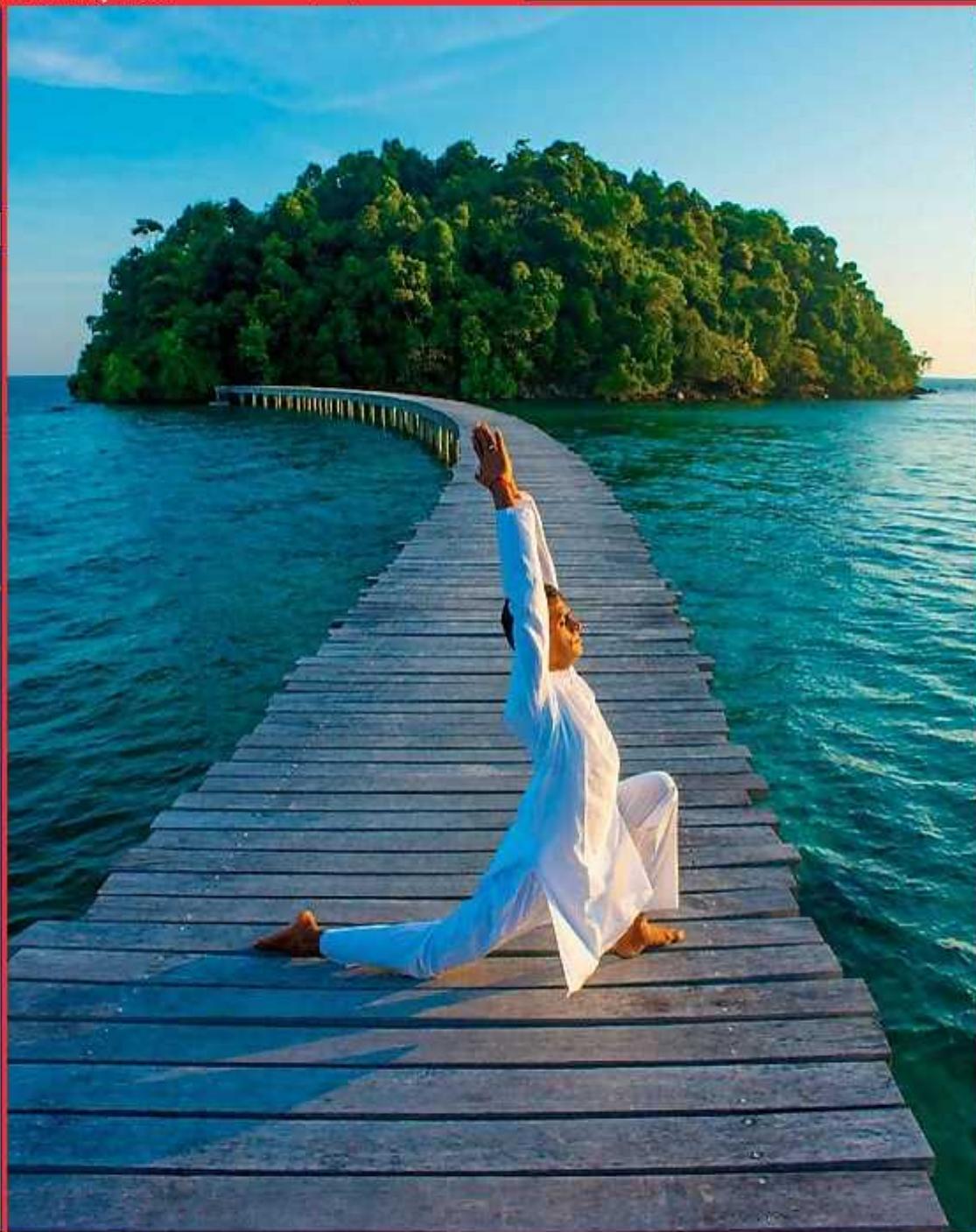
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Condomania Comes to Kampot

What would justify a 41 story building in a sleepy little town of 60,000 people? A hotel with hundreds of rooms? An office building with the capacity to accommodate all the current offices in Kampot several times? Depending on the building's footprint there could be hundreds of expensive condos. Space in buildings that tall is necessarily pricey, it costs more to build high. It's all very mysterious, you see, since there's been no official announcement or architect's drawings, only hearsay and a sturdy perimeter construction fence. And that's all before begging the question of who would want to live there.

There is another potential use which I discovered after I wrote the above, but I'll come to that later after recapping the condo situation in Phnom Penh. There are about 9,000 condos in the capital today, but by 2020, there'll be about 38,000. I have to say, after reading four different articles about condos in Phnom Penh, I'm a bit confused when it comes to numbers. One thing that's clear is that, contrary to the bragging of some owners that their units are selling briskly, most new ones are going very sluggishly. Some months ago a new building with 220 units had sold only ten by opening day, not a good start. Moreover, half of the units already built are still available.

One factor of agreement is that most buyers are foreigners coming from China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan and almost all of those are being bought for speculation. It's somewhat understandable why those nationalities (except Taiwan) in particular are eager buyers since a very high percentage of their people are high rise dwellers. That only applies to China's cities, of course. The vast majority spend their lives in little cubicles high up in the air so they're used to the idea, think it's quite normal. But this is Cambodia with a small population and lots of land. Khmers are not used that kind of living so the only likely buyers are also from those countries.

There's a disconnect between how easy it is to finance and build those things here and the number of likely owners/renters who might occupy them. One certain result of that disconnect is the softening of rents in the city. With massive oversupply there'll be price competition for people to occupy those dwellings and an accompanying reduction in land values. Land is only worth hundreds or thousands of dollars per square meter if you can use it in some way to justify the cost.

As a basic rule of thumb, if you purchase real estate for investment purposes you need to get a return of 1% a month to recoup your cost. So for instance, if you pay \$100,000 for a building you need to get \$1000 per month in rent and that still means it'll take 8 1/2 years to get your money back. With maintenance, figure 10 years and that doesn't include any profit. With property sellers asking \$200,000 and up for shophouses here in Kampot, the only way that expense can be justified is if the value of the property rises because nobody can get \$2000 per month rent here. Newly renovated shops right on the river are renting for six or seven hundred a month. If you're buying the property as a domicile, then it doesn't matter how much you are paying.

It's practically a matter of religious faith on the part of a lot of people that property values always go up. In the long run that may be true since we live in a finite world where population is growing, so competition for space will intensify. Nonetheless there are lots of times when values go down. In the case of Phnom Penh, the problem will be local oversupply. There's also the possibility of global financial problems. I bought land near Kampot in 2008, just before the financial crash, for \$4.60 square meter. You wouldn't think a crash in the US would impact land values here, but two years later in 2010, I couldn't sell my land for \$2 per meter.

I was lucky no-one bought it then, because when I actually did sell it in 2014 I got \$5.50 per meter. Now nearby properties are selling for upwards of \$30 meter and are often being bought by locals rather than expats or Chinese. That's very high for ordinary land and prices will certainly crash if another worldwide economic crisis hits. If you paid cash and you are living there, then your only problem will come if you want to or need to sell.

Land owners gain when property values shoot up, but almost everyone else loses. Renters pay more, costs go up. Average people who work in high cost areas have to commute long distances or pay exorbitant rents to live close to work. Shopkeepers are squeezed by rising rents forcing their prices higher.

But then booms are always followed by busts. Booms are bub-



bles and bubbles always burst at some point, it's part of their nature. On the other hand construction booms provide a lot of jobs and spread a lot of money around. If a lot of big-timers lose their shirts when it all goes belly up well that's what speculation is.

It seems perverse to hope for a bust since a lot of wealth and jobs are created by those large construction expenditures and a lot of people will be hard hit when their jobs and income go. Outside money is a boon to the economy and a lot of Cambodians need to migrate from the countryside where there's little money or opportunities and into the cities where the potential for success exists, but still a bust would be welcome in some ways. For one thing, it would stop in its tracks the building of high rises where no market exists.

Who wants a lot of Gold Tower 42s around; that is, steel skeletons of buildings that may never be finished. The space oversupply also exists in the office sector and malls. It took years for Vattanak Tower – one of the first to build high – to rent a majority of its space and a lot of malls are going through hard times, and yet they are still coming. All this construction is happening as if Cambodia was a middle class country, but a majority of Phnom Penh's people are still scraping the bottom of the barrel.

Boom and bust cycles are not inevitable. Two years ago it was clear that a condo oversupply was on the horizon, at that point a moratorium on new condo construction would've been in order. Less people would've been employed but their jobs would've lasted longer. There are now about 50,000 people working in the construction sector. In event of a crash most will lose their jobs. So the choice is 50,000 now diving to 10,000 in a crash or 25,000 steady (numbers are theoretical).

Ah, but lets get back to Kampot. An internet search for info on our planned 41 story building turned up nothing, but a friend was able to get info on it (don't know how he did it). According to the developer, who I understand has not carried through on many of his projects in the past, the first 5 stories will be a shopping mall, including possibly a Lucky supermarket. The next five, a data center, the remaining floors penthouse apartments. I should mention that the lot is very large, it looks like at least a hectare so it could accommodate a lot more than one 41 story building. Dozens of shophouses could be built around it.

So a five story shopping mall for Kampot... sounds absurd to me. Everything costs more in spiffed out malls than in old style markets and small shops and I can't imagine where the trade will come from in funky Kampot. (I should also mention that I've been wrong before). Sure, people will come to hang out in its air-con splendor, but spend a lot of money? I can't see it. The second part is even stranger and more absurd: a data center in the most expensive space in the city? Data centers can be put anywhere there's a sufficient supply of electricity. You get the cheapest land or space to house it. After all, hardly anybody works there or goes there so the last thing you need is expensive space in the heart of town. Finally, I think the guy is a little mixed up about what the word penthouse means, but regardless, those apartments won't be cheap and there'll be hundreds.

There is one other possible use for that building. I heard from a friend who works high up in a casino company that the developer is figuring on putting a casino there. The thinking being that once the tourist port is built and an immigration post is located, they can claim Kampot is on the Cambo border to comply with the law on casinos. Anyway laws don't mean much when you have the money to influence the authorities; the casino up on Bokor Mt. was given an exemption from the rules which state that casinos can only be located on the country's borders with the exception of Naga in Phnom Penh. My friend also mentioned that the newly installed governor is more amenable to such uses than his predecessor, and maybe why he was replaced.

Now a casino would surely justify a tall building as gambling operators make a lot of money. But it would be a sad day for Kampot. Casinos bring money laundering, crime and general sleaze, though I don't want to taint everyone who gambles. If the first one is successful, there'll be a torrent like in Sihanoukville and degrade the Kampot experience. That truly would be the one thing to drive us away.... but to where?

Another commercial sector that's new to Kampot is girly bars, there are three now and more to come. They're very tame compared to the equivalent in the capital or Sihanoukville, but that may change: regardless an unwelcome addition to the local scene. I had been thinking that the government would not allow that to happen here, but their appearance might be another outcome of the installation of the new governor, I really don't know. On the other hand there are thinly disguised knocking shops just a stone's throw from the old market and it doesn't seem to be a big deal, you know, live and let live. There's also the many KTVs around town where a guy with a basic command of the local language can go. We'll see where that goes: I don't think it'll make a difference, though still not preferred.

Meanwhile the city went on a resurfacing rampage last month laying asphalt on kilometers of streets as well as the giant area around the Durian traffic circle. Personally, I didn't see the need for it as most of what was paved really didn't need to be: it was

a waste of resources. But as I've commented before, the authorities in Cambodia seem to see their worth in how much they can cover with asphalt.

Nice smooth streets are good. My old Tico makes a lot of jarring, rattling noises on rough streets. Since Kampot is stated to be a big tourist destination, lots of money is available to spruce things up. It took three days to resurface the sea of asphalt surrounding the durian circle, which had been done only a couple years ago. It took big equipment and lots of asphalt. In a very rough guess, I'd say it cost tens of thousands of dollars to do that work.

In contrast, think about other ways that money could be spent. The only public playground in town, which is enjoyed exten-



Site of the soon to be Kampot 40 storey tower

sively every clement afternoon by lots of kids, cost \$800. It was built by volunteer expat labor, but labor doesn't cost much here so even if we triple the cost of doing something like that by the government, you could still serve a big part of the city with several playgrounds for the cost of one layer of asphalt on the durian circle. Or how about a public swimming pool so the common people can have a place to swim on a hot April day? Or how about hanging a pedestrian walkway off one side of the old bridge so pedestrians could feel safe and comfortable crossing it? I don't think it'd cost more than 10 or 20 grand to construct it. People would use it just for fun.

Speaking of the durian, the area devoted to the pavement surrounding it is far larger than necessary, even if you look decades in the future. It wasn't that long ago that the durian was constructed and the raised area around it expanded, but they could've doubled its size and still left more than enough room for traffic.

There are several reasons why excess pavement is not the best use of land. For one, it's expensive, asphalt doesn't come cheap, and requires maintenance. It's ugly: There's nothing esthetically pleasing about tarmac, whereas anything else you might do with the space; planters, grass, trees, benches, is far preferable. A smaller paved area would make it easier and safer for pedestrians to get to the center. Excessive pavement worsens drainage problems. Replacing tarmac with planters would allow rain to be absorbed into the earth rather than need to be carried away in the sewer system. All in all, a waste of money.

Since all lesser government officials, except for the commune level, are appointed by the ruling party their major priority is to please the people on top, rather than the citizens they govern. It took 2 1/2 years after the old bridge was closed by safety concerns for it to be repaired and put back into use. The people's wishes were ignored until the PM came to town. He was asked by locals

to open the bridge and told the local officials to get right on it. Within three days it was open for traffic and in 10 days it was improved and upgraded. It's only suitable for motos, bikes and pedestrians, and is used every day by 10,000 vehicles. So, in a city of 60,000 an important part of traffic capacity.

Finally, in a case of government indifference, there's no will to slow down traffic on the riverside. Three years after a speeding

drunk totalled my car and killed a tuk-tuk driver, there've been no changes on the street. Every night, and sometimes in daytime, you'll see car drivers going 100kph on the river and motorbikes going as fast as their vehicles will go. People will die, nothing is done.

Cambostan

IN BAD TASTE

Tracing the source of an unwanted bank deposit

A repeated anonymous donor from Stoke has been thrown out of his home by his wife. John Ewes, 42, occasional smoker, had been donating to local sperm banks for 22 years and had never once informed his wife.

Mary Ewes, 42, smoker (we think she was kinda into us), explained: "I'd only gone into the kitchen to get the "Beating Baguette"* and there he was, plain as day with his hand beating as fast as a hummingbirds heart. I shouted "John" and he looked up at me like a startled puppy but he didn't bloody stop!"

John could have fathered thousands of children or, if the bank was running a really disgusting side trade, been spread on millions of sandwiches.

John commented: "I don't know why I never told her but I think the feeling of secrecy is what made me want to do it more and more. Sometimes I was sending in up to fifty pots a week. I can't stop and I won't stop. Mary just has to love me the way I am or not at all."

A spokesman for the Stoke sperm bank said: "Is that who's been doing it? We've informed the police multiple times about these incidents. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the general public that we do not accept random packets of sperm sent to us through the post."

A hardened baguette traditionally used around Stoke to beat their children

Palace Bans Prince Philip Dead Pool Entries

In an unusual move Buckingham Palace has banned the UK from adding Prince Philip to any dead pools around the country.

Following his recent appearance at the Royal Wedding of Harry and Meghan, where he looked like he needed a decent taxidermist rather than a doctor, dead pool members up and down the country who drew Prince Philip have been rubbing their hands with glee.

The unprecedented move follows speculation that the elderly Royal may actually be already dead and was merely propped up in the carriage for the royal celebrations. Adding fuel to this rumour is the fact that other Royals are not appearing in public with him as the contrast between the barely living and the dead would give the game away.

It is believed that banning dead pools from introducing Prince Philip in future may coincide with a massive bet placed by "The TSB and RBS Group" recently stating the actual date of the Princes death. Coincidentally, the Queens diary has been cleared for the same date.

Just in; National Holiday announced on 31st July

How to pretend you know about football

NOW is the time to pretend you're into football, even though the only player you know is David Beckham. Here is your essential guide to being part of the national frenzy.

The man with the whistle is the umpire. Like tennis, a really

good sport, the umpire controls everything and can award a player with a yellow or red card if they think their hair is shit.

If someone asks you who you support you should not mention your standing order to The Red Cross.

The fight lasts for 90 minutes but extra time can be added if there isn't enough waving from the audience.

If England score grab a nearby man by the head, look into his eyes and say 'Ooooo, Bill Beaumont-esque.' Then kiss him on the lips.

On football history, you should know that women were banned at the Brazil World Cup for biting, much to everyone's relief.

If someone calls you out for being a 'casual' impress them with your knowledge of other big entertainment events like The Voice or X-Factor. If they don't know what Gareth Gates sang in the Pop Idol final then they're the fucking casual mate.

Avoid using British parts, European porn makers advised

Stars of the UK porn industry are on all fours after the EU advised against the use of British private parts in porn products and merchandise once Brexit takes place. To qualify for free trade access, at least 55% of a product must originate from an EU country. British porn stars gathered at a hastily convened coming together, clearly stressed and anxious at their future employment prospects. After much panting, moaning and the occasional scream, the meeting was extended beyond the planned two hours as members failed to reach a satisfactory climax.

'I voted Leave because I thought it was the right time to withdraw. Naturally I was all in favour of a hard Brexit, but I regret it now,' said British porn star Donald 'Donkey Ride' Fleetwood. 'The industry is already going down steadily and this is going to a terrible blow to jobs in porn. Trading conditions suck already and - hang on, I think this one will work - and I think we should have listened to the expert anal-ysts.'

Defiant Leaver Ricky 'The Dick' Rixon, however, said that, unlike him, Brexit couldn't come quick enough. 'They think they can manage without good old British spunk, well them Europornocrats have another think coming,' he said. 'No-one makes council house porn featuring fat middle aged blokes and peroxide chavs with tattoos going at it on a filthy carpet better than the Brits. No 30-year-old French women look as convincing as naughty schoolgirls in 1950s uniforms as British babes do. They'll come crawling back to us on their hands and knees, mark my words. Probably wearing black latex and sweating like pigs, if I know the Germans.'

However, tearful Remainer Daisy Buck called them both 'dickheads', ignoring Rixon's retort that 'If there was a dick on my head, love, you would be sitting on my shoulders'. 'My career is ruined,' sobbed the girl said to have put the 'sex' into Essex. 'I've only ever done manual - and oral - work all my life and I don't know nothing else. My O and A levels aren't going to have any relevance in the wider employment market. And I can't even work in Europe on the side because I've got a Made In England tattoo right above my vajazzle.'

Phnom Penh Pub Page

Guess we will keep the tradition going by starting again with a GSM update – I have a feeling it is going to be a while before this is done. The place is still mostly empty although there are a few new shops going. Home Food seems to be getting the most business, although the second level is not as busy as I had expected, and I have so far only seen tuk and moto drivers playing pool there. There is a new place across the courtyard called Purple BBQ & Pub. While the recent grand opening was very floral and seemed to have a decent turn out, I think it may take some time to catch on – the loud and bad Chinese karaoke tunes were not a great impression when I walked by. Next door is Suzie Wong which, if named after the infamous Soi Cowboy establishment, is missing some of its Thai counterpart's principle attractions. The Tropicana has moved from St. 172 into the middle of GSM and seems to be getting a mixed crowd of regulars in the evening. The page will be checking it out soon. However, GSM has decided on that the best thing to do to attract customers would be to start a "Pre-Flight Party" and have live DJs in the courtyard every Friday and Saturday night from 8-12 pm. A lovely idea that drove out the customers that are supporting the current establishments – many of whom I assume would like to have conversations with their companions and instead of enduring overwhelmingly loud music that is designed to appeal to teenagers with addiction issues.

Speaking of overly loud music – spent a few nights at Sharky's on St. 130 this month. Have to say that the management seems to be doing an excellent job of turning the place around – the Pub Page's investigative staff did a proper survey appearing on different nights of the week and at different times and by 8 pm each evening, there were always a decent mix of at least 30-40 customers. On weekends it was considerably busier. For drinks there are a lot of specials - perhaps the most popular is the free flow of draft every day between 5-8 pm for USD 6 and you can get the same deal for any three hours during the afternoon on Saturdays and Sundays. Another popular deal is that if 4 ladies come together they get a free bottle of whiskey, wine or vodka and only have to pay for the mixes. There is also the regular happy hour special between 4-8 pm on week nights and 11 am -8 pm on weekends where draft is USD 1, basic spirits are \$2.5 and cocktails are 25% off. If that was not enough, between 5-9 pm, if you buy a lady drink for one of the friendly staff, you get a free draft. The kitchen has gone through another transformation and seems to be focusing more on American food again. Overall, lots of reasons to give the new Sharky a try – it is NOT the old Sharky, but, at least on my last trip, as in one of review of Sharky's under the old regime that got me into a bit of trouble, I would recommend that those who do not want way overloud live music to leave before 9 on Friday and Saturday. As many know, I am not a live music fan, but the place was almost unbearable once the band started as none of the people at my table could hear each other despite the fact that the vocalist was also inaudible for most of the performance. To each their own, if you like live music, on Thursday

they are experimenting with a Khmer music night featuring local bands, regular bands play on Friday and Saturday and Sunday is still the notorious open mike nights. Beyond the drink specials and music, if you like a busy, friendly bar with good service, that seems to be the norm at the new Sharky so far (and they don't even pay for me for the mostly good review).



Tried a relatively new bar on St. 136 called I get you you get me bar – no I did not think it rolled off the tongue either... despite the poor choice in name and the intimidatingly bad entrance way, it was actually a really nice set up. Fairly bright, spacious, well lit with a pool table and a mezzanine with some comfortable looking couches. Music was kept at a reasonable level and the staff was attentive without being annoying. Draft is USD 1.75 a glass or \$6.5 for a jug. Most cans of beer were \$2 and bottles, \$3.5. Most spirits were \$3.5. Overall, a nice addition to the way overcrowded St. 136 menagerie.

I should give them props for at least having a name, as another new bar I wanted to review had not bothered with one yet. Basically, I walked along St. 178 towards Norodom until I found what seemed to be a dark brown painted storefront with chairs outside. It was dark, not very welcoming, had no name and no evidence that it was in use except for a

few lights. However, there is an amazing contrast when you open the door. While there were not a lot of staff and no menus when I dropped by, the place looked amazing. It was comfortable, spacious, classy and had a great relaxed vibe. Service was good and friendly, and I will definitely be back to try it once they get their act a bit more together. While it seems an odd place to drop a new bar (particularly when you don't bother to identify it as a working establishment), it is actually worth the trip if you are looking for a nice, quiet place to have a couple of drinks. More details to follow once they get menus and staff up a bit.

Big new – SKIRTS – yup had to get my contractual mention in. They will be moving soon as the Evil Publisher has decided to bring it in house along with the Pub. Yes, that means that the general public will soon be invited into the den of iniquity that rivals the lair of a typical Bond villain in order to get good pub fare, late night Japanese ramen and a few pints with some of the hardest working and friendliest publicans you will meet. All while facing the Damoclean threat that the Evil Publisher or his motley band of hooligans might descend at any time to join you in a round or three. More details on this to follow as well, but the move is over a month away and is only a few hundred meters up the road so no stress.

Amazingly, I actually have more bars that I have notes on this week – guess I waxed on too much about Sharky's (since I take a lot of flack for this, I stress again that it is not the Sharky of 10 years ago – but, nowhere is and, from my perspective, despite the recent and Herculean efforts of its previous Aussie owner, it is now a lot closer to old Sharky's than the bar has been for many years), so I guess I have a running start on next month. Maybe I will have time to talk about my adventures on the hostess bar trail with Golem (he has not been on bar tours in many a year and instructed me that if I wanted to talk about him I had to clarify that he is not named the Gollum of LOTR fame, but more resembles the Jewish walking clay variety).

The CAMBODIA DREARY

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0000 Riel

This is a work of fiction and satire any semblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental



A beached truck washed ashore on Sokha beach last month. It is not known whether plastic ingestion was responsible for its death. Chinese workers soon descended and cut up the poor creature
Cont Page17

Election Fever, Sweats, Cramps

BY SAL UT
THE CAMBODIA DREARY

Visitors to the Kingdom will be heartened this month to see Cambodians taking to the streets in large numbers in a celebration of their newly found freedoms. There will also be the semblance of an election.

A spokesperson stressed the advances made in recent years. "The streets have been cleared of litter, union leaders, and pop singers; self-censorship of parliament has reduced hot air and other dangerous emissions; and women can walk the streets alone safe in the knowledge that certain political leaders are in self-imposed exile."

Campaigners were also touting the government's new and radical 'oblong strategy'TM.

the opposition have been working on competing geometric tactics, but have so far been ineffective with their square dance, vicious circle, and love triangle.

We were unable to contact opposition leaders as our phone lacked international calling and what qualifies as "opposition" *Cont page 17*

Wisney World to Open in Sinoukville. Maybe?

BY CHOY MAI
THE CAMBODIA DREARY

At a lavish launch on Koh Pic island in P.P. Wisney World was unveiled to the public it is a joint venture between China's AMC International and Malaysian company SV International. Government officials attended the

launch of the little known project. Covering 65 hectares it will boast a casino hotel (of course) amusement park, hotel, malls and a water park. The governor of Sinoukville was contacted but denied any knowledge of the huge project casting

some doubt over the validity of the development. The two companies state they operate a hotel/casino in Sinoukville but details of its name or location were unavailable.

Disney world were contacted by phone on what seems a blatant trademark ripoff but

were unable to comment as they thought we had a bad lisp.

As noted by some local development experts, projects between Chinese and Malay companies have never been involved in development scam said a western expert laughing on the -*Cont P 17*

About Cambodia

- Tens of patrons protest for right to sell alcohol, provide 'companionship', during the election *Page 17*
- Owner of ugly hostess bar assumes moral high ground in battle with town hall without trace of irony *Page 17*
- Adultery law. "Only bad wives take husbands to court" *Page 17*
- Everyone should buy a helicopter states he who should be obeyed. Bell-end to open dealership *Page 17*

Older Expatriate Single Male Guilty On All Above Counts

BY RAY BIDLOONY
DISASSOCIATED PRESS
PHNOM PENH – A new NGO was launched this month in a customary blaze of publicity. Against Smug Sanctimonious Harassment Of Law-abiding Expats (ASSHOLE) will be

targeting the increasing number of Westerners abusing their fellow expatriate's freedoms and civil liberties with no legal basis based on a pious sense of moral superiority and dangerous racist and ageist gender stereotyping.

24/7 observation of key areas has been started. While it is acknowledged that less than 1% of those drinking at the Elephant Bar are

targets, this may ensure press coverage, greater funding, and better bonuses for the ED.

A sister organisation, APLE, has had great success. A sting operation launched after a 42 year old Belgian national was seen passing money to a shoe-shine boy on the Riverfront caught the target repeatedly straying within 10m of children, and frequenting bars that also served soft drinks

and alcopops. Operatives staking-out his apartment – just 2 km from a school – saw regular deliveries of pizza, a well known bait for under 16s. Officers pounced after he brazenly gave a poor young mother a dollar for her starving child in an obvious daylight attempt at purchased bum-rape.

"In someone clearly not female, middle class, or below thirty," frothed a spokeswoman, "such behaviour can only be seen as rampant male deviancy." *Continued page 17*

FAUX NEWS

Trump Suffering from Separation Anxiety

Washington, DC - President Trump has just been diagnosed with a severe case of separation anxiety. The White House refuses to reveal the cause. Trump's family is with him during all treatments. Melania is now residing with the President at the White House with their son Barron. Trump's daughter and son-in-law work with him. He is surrounded by his family during this difficult time.

Some speculate that Trump's severe bout was triggered by his troubled relationship with his father, who was always at work and never home to tuck President Trump into bed. As part of his therapy, Trump was recently spotted sucking his thumb.

"He's like a puppy in his crate on the first night home," acknowledged one White House staffer.

Meanwhile, outrage mounts over Trump's new policy to separate children from their parents at our nation's borders, leaving children in cages over many days until their papers can be processed. The White House has refused to back off the policy despite bipartisan fallout.

"Are you saying the anxiety is actually over the outrage from his new separation policies?" replied the White House staffer with a wink. "No comment."

Parents of teens attempt to sneak across U.S. Mexico border to get a break from their kids

In what appears to be a misguided attempt to get a break from their teenage sons, a Nevada couple purposefully attempted to cross the U.S./Mexico border illegally.

According to reports, Stan and Fran Druzinski of Winnemucca, Nevada were caught attempting to swim across the Rio Grande near El Paso. The couple allegedly approached a border patrol officer saying, "no habla ingles" and "yo no se." It was later discovered that "I don't speak english" and "I don't know" were the only two phrases Mr. Druzinski could remember from three years of spanish class in high school. The border patrol officer reported something odd about their encounter as the two sons were quoted as saying, "what the hell are you doing mom?" while the parents tried to cover their mouths. Despite his suspicions, the officer followed protocol, separating the family and sending them to different detention centers.

Throughout the next several weeks the boys were very disruptive during their stay at Casa Padre, with several workers describing them as the "worst behaved kids we've ever had here."

"They kept calling the other kids "dill weeds" and complaining about the food and lack of Play Station 4s" one employee at the facility stated.

It wasn't until their deportation hearing that the parents fessed up. Mrs. Druzinski described her detention as the "most relaxing three weeks of my life" and Mr. Druzinski stated that he hadn't "had that much fun since college."

The decision to get themselves arrested seemed to stem from a recent altercation with their children that neighbors described as "typically nasty" where both boys hung their parent's underwear out on a tree in front of the house. There is a long documented history of incidents where the children were obstinate and disrespectful to their parents.

When pressed during the hearing, Stan explained, "we just really needed a break from them. We love our boys, but they're total bas-

tards."

"we really had hoped for a little more appreciation for all of the hard work we've put into raising them at this point," Fran stated, eliciting laughter from the other people in attendance.

Although authorities strongly suggest against taking such extreme measures to get a little break from your brat kids the Druzinskis stayed very positive despite a heavy fine of \$20,000.

"Best money I ever spent," Stan Druzinski said.

"If I was given a second chance I'd do it all over again," Fran agreed.

Police force report shows "significant improvement"

The police watchdog announced on Tuesday "Woof, woof, woof." No, not really, we just thought we'd open with a joke because the world is such a terrible place full of shit and hate right now. Stark, but true.

A police watchdog has actually said: "Humberside police force has significantly improved."

In the context of Humberside police force, it probably means that 12% of their officers are now able to put their shoes on the correct feet.

Humberside police force was the only police force in England and Wales to be rated as "inadequate" and it only received such a high rating because people don't like seeing swear words on official reports.

A report published in 2016 stated: "Humberside police force has a



limited understanding of the current and future demand for it's services."

If you apply that statement to a surgeon you get a bloke who not only doesn't turn up to theatre but is likely to remove your leg if operating on eye cancer.

Humberside police appear not only corrupt they, at times, they have seemed wilfully stupid to us. We once witnessed a officer inform a member of the public that they wouldn't be recording the theft of their bike as a crime because: "There's not much point, it's only a bike."

A rather scruffy looking man I spoke to at Hull bus station, who informed me, while vigorously rubbing his gums, was Humberside Police Chief Constable said:

"Well we're surprised really because our overall shrug your shoulders attitude to crime hasn't really changed but hey a wins a win right? It's not that difficult to improve when you're at the bottom anyway."

"A lot of the extra points we scored this year were for things we missed out on last.

"Simple things like spelling "Humberside" correctly and letting people out of cells when were supposed to.

"It's just small steps but I think the fact we're no longer allowing officers to pick and choose which crimes they investigate is a really good thing.

"We are also now well aware how unacceptable it is to pursue inappropriate sexual relationships with vulnerable women who have been affected by crime."

Robbie Williams humiliates the UK. Again.

Karaoke turn come pop star, Robbie Williams, has again humiliated the British people by 'giving the finger' to millions when for some bizarre reason he was chosen to open the 2018 World Footballing Cup in Russia.

Not content with years of inflicting dreadful music on us, the ageing numpty thought it would be all 'rock and roll' to give the bird to the estimated 340 billion billion viewers who had tuned in, not to watch Williams.

A typical 40yr old female Robbie fan was reported to have said "ahh, he's dead good, he's dead fit, i'm going to have Angels played at my funeral."

Mr Billingsgate-Smythe-Peterson, 76, was a little more discerning.

"Bloody fool. You wouldn't have had Sinatra or Elvis lowering the tone in such a disgraceful manner. What an outrage. If he were my grandson, i'd snap that middle digit off his hand and push it up his bottom. It was good enough for me."

Everything is proceeding exactly as I have foreseen, explains wise Brexit sage

Two years after the country voted to leave the EU, wise Brexiters have insisted everything is going exactly to plan.

As the nation reached the second anniversary of voting for Brexit, some Brexiters have reflected on the many successes it has brought the country so far.

Simon Williams, a staunch Brexiter and regular retweeter of the Leave.EU account, told us, "I will be cracking open the champagne today, as everything is going exactly as I predicted.

"Brexit is definitely happening, and everything around us is wonderful. Just look around you, can't you feel it?"

"People have selective memories, but I vividly remember telling everyone just over two years ago that the pound would fall, economic growth would slow down, inflation would rise, major employers would be threatening to leave the country and we'd have a hamstrung minority government that nobody actually wanted trying to negotiate our Brexit deal with an EU steadfastly refusing to give us everything we want.

"Yes I did, shut up."

Friends of Williams have explained that this type of behaviour is par for the course.

As one explained, "Once he makes up his mind, he never admits he was wrong, regardless of the evidence to the contrary. "We've given up trying to convince him otherwise. He seems happy in his ignorance and as long he gets his round in, the rest of us can probably live with it."



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TECHNOLOGY PAGE

How to add an SSD to your laptop

Adding an SSD to your laptop is the most effective upgrade you can perform.

There is one upgrade that will universally improve a laptop's performance: adding an SSD. This is a particularly attractive upgrade for budget laptops, which typically come with a hard drive. That's the case with the extremely popular Acer Aspire E 15.

This laptop has been the top seller on Amazon for months and months. It's easy to see why: for \$350 (and below \$300 during the holidays), you get a 7th-gen Core i3 processor, 4GB of DDR4 RAM, a 1TB hard drive, and a 15-inch 1080p screen. It's a killer deal for those on a budget—but not exactly fast.

Here's how we can do something about that. The good news is that just about any budget laptop today should offer a path to an SSD. On the Aspire E 15, there are two paths: via an M.2 slot for a tiny card-style drive or by replacing the hard drive with a SATA SSD. We'll cover both paths, starting with

how to add an M.2 SSD to your laptop. (Or jump ahead to our section on replacing your hard drive with an SSD.)

[Further reading: Our picks for best PC laptops]

One caveat: While we're sure your laptop would benefit from an SSD upgrade, it may not actually be possible with your particular model. We recommend searching YouTube for videos on how to open up and upgrade your laptop before you buy anything.

How to choose an M.2 SSD: SATA vs. PCIe

Before you get all excited and run out to buy an M.2 drive, you should know that not all M.2 SSDs are the same. In fact, they vary so much so that it's possible the drive you buy might not work at all without making changes to the BIOS.

Even though they use the same connector, M.2 drives can support either the older SATA interface or newer PCIe interface. PCIe can be far faster and is preferred, while SATA is more compatible with older machines.

For our Aspire E 15, we intentionally picked the WD Blue 1TB SATA SSD for its compatibility. The M.2 slot in the Aspire E 15 does support PCIe drives as well as SATA drives but it will not boot to a PCIe device without changing from UEFI to legacy BIOS support.

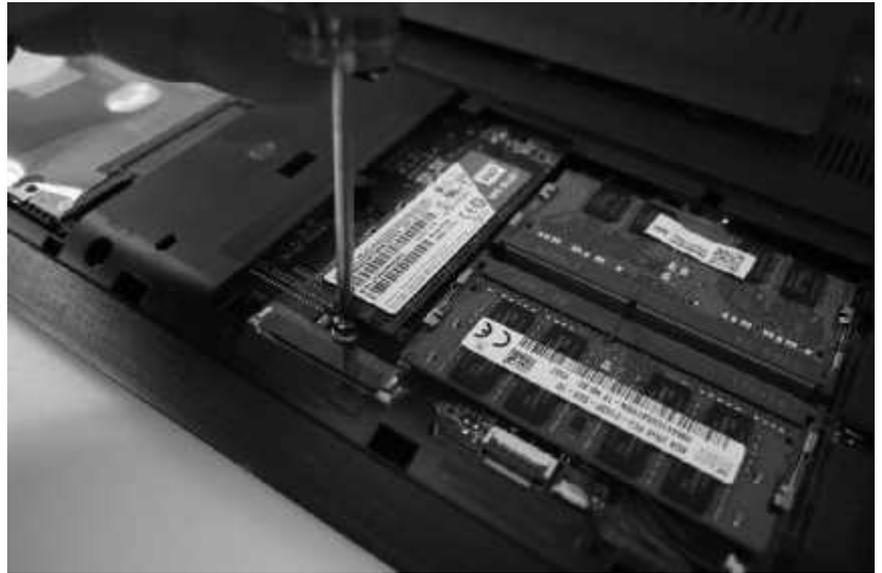
The difference is that UEFI is modern and features Secure Boot, which theoretically guards against malicious attacks by requiring signed drivers and a signed OS.

Another reason you may choose a SATA M.2 over a PCIe drive is price. SATA M.2 drives tend to be far more affordable than PCIe drives. The 500GB version of the WD Blue drive we used was going for \$110 when we wrote this. A 512GB WD Black M.2 PCIe SSD was going for \$173.

Finally, while PCIe drives can offer 1.5x to 3x the performance of a SATA drive, a lot of people would be hard pressed to tell the difference in most applications.

How to install an M.2 SSD

1. Before you begin your installation, you should back up everything to an external drive. (See our article on making an image



backup in Windows, and our roundup of best external drives.)

2. Next, access your laptop's innards. On the Aspire E 15, there is an obvious access door on the underside that's held in place with just a few screws. If you are uncertain how to access your laptop's parts (or even if you can), refer to the manufacturer website or manual or Youtube.

3. Now, get a small magnetic Philips-head screwdriver and carefully remove the screw in the stand-off. This stand-off is needed to hold the drive in place. Exercise caution because if you drop that screw and it rolls into your laptop's innards, you're in big, big trouble.

Our laptop came with the mount and screw in place, and most should, but we have heard of a laptop missing the mount and screw. If your unit doesn't have one, you can get one on Amazon for less than \$10. The mounts are usually universal. That's a crazy amount of money for one screw, but unless you're willing to A-Team it with Duct tape and a more generic machine screw, this might be the easiest way.

4. The SSD slots into a roughly 1-inch wide opening. Note the notches on the SSD and the corresponding nub/s in the slot. Certain M.2 drives have a single notch on either the right side or left side of the module, which indicates a B- or M-key drive, respectively. A B key means it can operate at up to x2 PCIe or in SATA; an M key means it can operate at up to x4 PCIe or SATA. The WD Blue SATA SSD we used actually has both M- and B-key notches. These days, two notches usually indicate the drive is SATA, but you should still verify before making a purchase. The Acer notebook we are upgrading has a single plastic nub on the right, meaning it can accept faster x4 PCIe drives (which we verified) as well as SATA drives.

5. As with RAM, insert the M.2 card into the slot (usually at a very slight angle) and then tilt it flat. Now with a magnetic screwdriver (so you don't lose the screw) install the screw back into the mount while holding the drive flat.

6. With the drive installed, you're now ready to restore the



backup of Windows that you created in the first step onto the new drive—again, refer to our guide. We recommend unplugging the hard drive and removing it so you don't inadvertently wipe out your original drive.

7. With the image restored, boot into Windows and prepare to be amazed at the responsiveness of your laptop.

8. What to do with your hard drive? Keep it as a backup of your system. Or put it to use as a secondary storage drive—we offer some suggestions for storing Windows 10 libraries on a separate drive.

How to replace your laptop's hard drive with a 2.5-inch SSD

If you're now convinced that an SSD is the answer but you want something a little cheaper or you don't want to deal with an M.2 drive, the best option is to outright replace the hard drive with a standard 2.5-inch SSD.

Which SSD should you buy?

If you go shopping for an SSD your head is likely going to explode from the options available. Since we already know we're going with a SATA drive, the job is a little easier. If you're wondering about the advantage between an M.2 SATA SSD and a hard-drive-sized 2.5-inch SATA SSD, there isn't much for regular folks.

Most budget SSDs today use TLC technology, which can offer anywhere from very decent performance to plain dog performance. So we recommend that you start with a SSD buyer's guide. It'll let you know what our best pick is currently.

Even if you don't go by a list and you end up with an SSD that's only mediocre in performance, it'll still feel miles better than a hard drive. That's because the actions on a hard drive that make it feel slow—called random reads—will still be infinitely better on a mediocre SSD.

In other words, you're probably okay buying on price and capacity. You determine that based on your needs. If it's your sole computer, we recommend planning for additional space—for many people a 500GB drive will the job. If you're the kind of person who doesn't hoard photos and videos, a 250GB drive will likely last a long time. Okay, let's do this. On the Aspire E 15 it's a snap.

1. Assuming you've made an image of your OS, all you have to do is open the access door, and slide the hard drive away from the connector about half an inch. Once it is clear of the connector, gently lift the drive from the bay. (Again, the means of access will vary by laptop model. If it's not clear from looking at the bottom of your laptop how you can access its parts, refer to the manufacturer website or manual.)

2. With the hard drive out of the computer, remove the four screws on the sides of the drive and take the drive out of the plastic tray.

3. Now put your SSD into the tray, replace the screws, and slide it into the drive bay.

4. Restore your OS to the SSD and rock on. We didn't test this configuration, but expect similar performance results as the M.2 SATA SSD drive.

Replace your DVD drive with an SSD

There's one last upgrade trick we want to leave with you with: How to replace your optical drive with an SSD or hard drive. Besides needing an SSD, you'll also need a caddy. We bought this caddy on Amazon for just \$9, which is typical. It fits both 7mm- and 9.5mm-thick drives, but it's a tight fit in most computers with 9.5mm so we recommend you stick with a 7mm drive.

1. To install the drive into the caddy, simply put it in the tray and slide it onto the SATA connector. Then use the provided four screws and screwdriver to mount the drive.

2. To remove the optical drive from the laptop, turn the laptop over, and on the side where the optical drive is, look for a single

screw near the center of the optical drive and about six inches from the edge. There may be a mark to indicate this is the captive screw for the ODD. Remove the screw.

3. Use your fingernail to pull the drive out by wedging it between the laptop body and optical drive.

4. With the drive out, you'll need to transfer two things. The first thing is the metal bracket on the back end of the optical drive. This is what the screw that you removed earlier attaches to. Just remove two small Philips screws and then relocate the bracket to your new caddy.

5. The most difficult part in all of this may be removing the bezel from the optical drive to place on your SSD. It's not mandatory, but foregoing the bezel will look ugly and will make it a little more work when you want to pull the SSD from the laptop.

Almost every laptop optical drive follows an industry spec—with a different plastic bezel attached to it. To remove the bezel, take a paper clip or screwdriver and carefully—carefully (they're delicate)—bend the plastic retention arm on the inside and pop off one side of the bezel. There's a second mount on the other side that doesn't require any tools—all you have to do is gently angle the bezel so it comes off.

6. Now just transplant the bezel to your drive caddy by gently pressing it into place. On our drive caddy, this was nearly a permanent decision. Yes, we could remove the bezel, but it took a partial disassembly of the caddy to do so.

That's it. You can now take the caddy and slide it back into the bay on the laptop. This should give you all the auxiliary you want. This trick, by the way, is nearly universal from what we've



seen on laptops with optical drive bays.

Conclusion

Upgrades aren't done in a vacuum. You prioritize them based on their returns. The greatest return with a budget laptop is to move from the stock hard drive to an SSD. The performance benefit in bootup and overall responsiveness puts it at the very top of any upgrade list.

There's one more wildcard we should mention here and that's Intel's Optane Memory Technology—an SSD caching drive that enables your regular hard drive to perform as fast as an SSD. We've tested it and found that it does indeed offer tangible performance on the cheap. In fact, for \$36 on Amazon, you could get truly "SSD-like performance" from your 1TB hard drive.

The problem: The Aspire E 15 in our test case doesn't have the BIOS/UEFI support for Optane Memory. That's really a shame because the laptop is the perfect candidate for Intel's Optane Memory.

Bits from the Beach

It has been a big month in Sinoukville with the relentless march of the Sino overlords continuing towards total control. Recent events and closures could be the final nail in the coffin of Western Barang life in what was once a sleepy seaside resort.

It is probable that Sihanoukville now has the second largest concentration of casinos in the world after Las Vegas. Our count is now 42 Casinos are open to the public. Recent articles say 50 Casinos, but some are not open to the public, like Hulk Casino on route 4 just out of town. Macau has 38 Casinos and that was the second largest Casino destination in the world. There are 40 Casinos on the Las Vegas strip.

The world is finally starting to wake up to what is happening in Sinoukville. The Fairfax media in Australia ran a front page article on the rise of Chinese control on the town recently. It highlighted much of what has been reported here and what everyone knows, especially the dissatisfaction of the Khmers and the severe lack of accommodation for them as well as everyone else.

The big news is that the Square will be closing on 7 July. The tenants were served a months notice of the closure and will get back their deposit and possibly a small amount of compensation. Considering that many were struggling, this may not be such a bad ending, however it severely contracts the number of available bars for entertainment. It was bad news for the owners of The Glory Hole which had been sold with a deposit paid, but between then and lease transfer the announcement was made, so the sale was off. It is a sign of the times that only 1 of the 9 owners still lives in Sinoukville full time.

It is rumoured that a 29 story building (no doubt containing a casino) will go up on the site.

In other news from the beach area, The Ochheateal Guesthouse has closed. Paul finally had an offer he could not refuse and the new tenants moved in, prior to the paperwork being done, with jackhammers to destroy the fixed furniture to enable bunk beds to go in. The quiz, which recently moved there with the closure of Pub Street, which moved there with the closure of The Aqua, has finally left town, like so many of the guests of these establishments.

There is a rumour that there will be another bar complex opening down on Polway street past the Gold Hotel, but do not hold your breath for that one. However there is a new complex opening on street 814, down the road from Build Bright University, called the Youth Centre. This is to be a mixed use entertainment centre with quite a few bars. Martini's bar from the beach and Stumble Inn from Pub Street are set to open there soon.

It appears that the pace of construction has increased markedly in the past 2 months with many new construction sites in the 3 roads running parallel to the beach. The former water park next to the White Sands is now a building site, as is the site next to The Coolabah. At the end of that block most of the structures have been pulled down and this will possibly be a huge development. We need to wait for the fence to go up and the pictures to

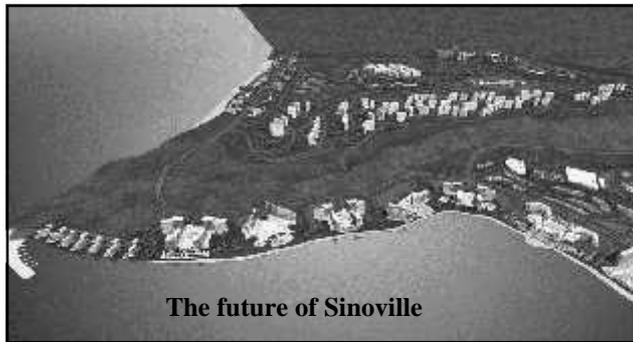
be placed on it to know for sure, just like the local Competent Authorities seem to do. The buildings opposite, where Bar from home and the other restaurants were housed, has also been levelled.

The former LoveleyBotique hotel, which was the initial Yadouli casino has been pulled down and a new multi level building is going up. Next door the Golden Sands is expanding and across the road the former Aqua is also having some building works being done.

So too have many buildings in the middle of town. Construction sites abound on and around Eckherachstreet. One wonders how long it will be before the main road resembles the now dirt and rocky road that is Mittapheapstreet. The owner of Orange supermarket is set to open a new supermarket down the road to be named Lemon Supermarket but with the same orange facade. Although the owner says he will keep operating Orange supermarket, it will in all probability not be long before that site, with valuable double road frontage too, becomes another building site.

There are not many more places for Westerners to drink in town with the recent closure of GDay Mate and the recently announced closure of Charlie Harpers, the latter of which is to become another casino apparently. Also in town the Small Hotel will be closed within a year. The recent lease extension was cancelled after the owner got a much better offer from the Chinese. This place, which opened in 2002, will be sorely missed by not only the Scandinavians, but many long time expats.

Meanwhile infrastructure is getting pretty bad. Not only the pot holed roads which will be made worse by the rains and the seeping septic tanks. Water and Power are still problems. Many places are having trouble getting town supply water, despite the dam being full. They are forced to pump water from wells. This is ok, but the problem is the near all day long power outages that people are enduring means that pups



The future of Sinoville

will not work and pump water without a generator.

Not all leases to the Chinese end well. A certain lost primate rented out some rooms to them and when there was a disagreement it nearly ended in a punchup. The tenants moved out and when he went to the Sangkat to complain about the state of the rooms, he was apparently told that the Chinese can do what they like to leased premises without recourse.

Meanwhile in Kampot, now home to numerous refugees from Sinoukville, the number of late night bars is increasing and bars seem to be doing a good trade, despite a significant low season drop in the number of tourists. Kevin, popular publican, formerly of the Bundy Bar in Pub Street in Sinoukville has reopened the Bundy Bar in Kampot, despite the near nightly downpours. The amount of persistent rain has made some of the dirt/mud roads to people houses impossible to get to by 2 wheel drive.