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Business May 1, 2019

Siem Reap's wildlife sanctuary, aquarium to break ground in May

Chhut Bunthoeun / Khmer Times /



The park and aquarium will sit on 100 hectares of land adjacent to the Tonle Sap Lake. Ministry of Tourism



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Construction of the ambitious Wildlife Park and Aquarium in Siem Reap is due to begin next month, investors announced during an event Monday.



The project – funded by a consortium of investors from Cambodia, Japan, and the United States – has been hailed as the first step in building Siem Reap into a world-class destination for tourists seeking to experience exotic wildlife.

Speaking during a pre-groundbreaking event held at the residence of the US Ambassador in Phnom Penh, investors, which include US-based Concept Management Inc (ICM), revealed that \$70 million will be funneled into the project.

ICM specialises in designing and operating aquariums and marine parks worldwide, according to a press release issued during the event.

The Wildlife Park and Aquarium will occupy 100 hectares in Sout Nikom district, situated along the shore of the Tonle Sap Lake and home to one of the largest communities in the area – the Kompong Khleang commune.

Roger R. Reynolds, Angkor Wildlife and Aquarium director and ICM founder, said high-quality natural habitats for Asian terrestrial wildlife, whether rescued or captive-bred, will be created.

“The complex is much more than just an aquarium or zoological park,” he emphasised.

He said the first phase alone will have the potential to add half a day onto the average length of stay of visitors in Siem Reap.

“Once all three phases finish, we expect many visitors to extend their stay by at least a full day to enjoy the wide range of attractions on offer,” he said, adding that the first phase of the project will cost \$18 million and is expected to be operational in May 2021.

He added that the park will become the second most important tourist draw in the province after the world-famed Angkor Wat.

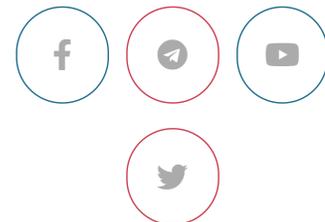
Michael Newbill, Chargé d’Affaires at the US Embassy, said the project will boost tourism revenue.

“It will be indeed an excellent way for families to spend time together in Siem Reap and add a family-oriented experience to the list of ‘must-see’ destinati



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Tith Chantha, Acting Tourism Minister, said the park has the potential to be a big success for the local tourism industry.

He said the government is seeking capital to invest in other creative and innovative tourism products like international convention and exhibition centres, theme parks, vacation centres, as well as beach and island resorts.

Tags: **construction, Siem Reap, Wildlife Park and Aquarium**

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Opinion



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Features



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Experts at London’s Kew Gardens on Monday revealed they have discovered the first new giant waterlily species since the mid-19th century – after it was initially mistaken for another.



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Good Times²



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