shopping but I am happy that I am getting quality stuff that won't be turning into rags after the first wash.

Saron is on full swing "tour guide" mode as he plans on taking me to Central Market, this old building looking very much like our New Market. I step into the landmark building as it is Cambodia's oldest market, only to find the same artifacts as in the Russian Market only slightly pricier. Saron insists I go to the Olympic Market,



The independence monument.

a fairly modern structure and a great place for whole sale shopping, We drive around the place but I refuse to get out of the air conditioned comfort of the car. We skip the war museum much to the disappointment of my guide. Saron tells me "Mr. Farhan there are many, many heads in the museum " I nod and smile thinking I should have seen the skeletons of Pol Pot's genocide before lunch. As we drive back to the hotel he starts a conversation about how much I will love Siem Reap and Sihanoukville, the other two major cities in Cambodia. I tell him that I will not be visiting these two cities this time.

Saron's eyes pop out , thinking I must be a moron not to visit the most famous landmark in Cambodia? The ruins of Angkhor Wat in Siem Reap is why millions of tourists keep flocking into Cambodia, and now with its inclusion in the new 7 wonders of the world, Siem Reap has double the hotels that Phnom Penh has. Sihanoukville is the seaside resort town in Cambodia and though commercial tourism is just on the rise, it is still a great new virgin territory for sun and sand lovers. Pity I do not have the time to go to either town on this trip I promise Saron that he will take me and my group the next time I come with a posse.

Having said that I tread lightly on the subject of Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouge Regime and the impact it has had on the people of Cambodia. Saron laughs and says "impact? Pol Pot Kill half my country Mr. Farhan !". He says that he was a student back then when Pol Pots Army were advancing towards the capital, Saron's father was a motor garage owner. When the troops took over the city, the people actually admired Pol Pot's ideologies, but then things began to turn as families were forced to give up their businesses and go back to the village and work the land, Pol Pot's ideals revolved around an agriculture revolution which never really worked, harsh austerity measures & impoverished hardship turning the population into slaves . Saron was forced out of school like all other children and were sent back to their provinces to farm, he was lucky he did not lose half his family, almost all Cambodians people have lost family and relatives during the Khmer regime . Pol Pot almost wiped out a third of his country's population during his tenure and no one was spared, the intelligentsia, the middle class, the upper class, the peasants, it was perhaps the worst kind of genocide ever seen in history. What is ironical , is that the current Hun Sen led Government still has three senior Pol Pot lieutenants in its Cabinet. Wonder how they cross the streets everyday?

What can you say after that but remain silent. Saron looks at me and says "Don't worry Mr. Farhan Cambodia good now, you see this car I have three now, 2 vans and one car, business is good, so you send people from Brangrdresh to me". You have to salute these people, the sheer resilience and spirit to live after so many years of atrocities, violence and misery. I learn a valuable history lesson sitting in a car, coming straight from the mouth of the people who lived through it. Phnom Penh was a short trip for me but it opened up the gateway to visit this country. As I sit in the transit lounge in Phnom Penh Airport I am impressed by the this quaint little airport, neat and clean and very pretty, just like the country. Wait Cambodia, the Bangladeshis are coming to town soon!!

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