



(Above) A close look at official merchandise including finishers' medals featuring a four-leaf clover design.

Wong (centre) checking out PIBM 2024 apparel alongside (from left) Ikano Centres/Klipa commercial director Arnoud Bakker, Aspen Group managing director A. Anilarasu, Brooks Malaysia director Tiew Cheng Tai and BIG Caring Group chief marketing officer Wong Siew Lai. — Photos: CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

New milestone for Penang run

20,000 expected at iconic marathon set to kick off from vibrant Batu Kawan

FOR the first time in its history, the Penang Bridge International Marathon (PIBM) will kick off from Batu Kawan on Penang mainland.

The significant change to the starting point will offer participants a fresh perspective on the iconic race that is being held at Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Bridge, also known as the second Penang Bridge, this year.

For most of the previous years, the run was held on Penang Bridge with the starting and finishing points near Queensbay Mall in Bayan Lepas.

On its history, Penang tourism committee chairman Wong Hon Wai (*pic*) said PIBM, which started in 1986, was held to celebrate the completion of Penang Bridge in 1985.

He said when the second Penang Bridge was completed in 2014, the marathon was held there but the starting point was in Batu Maung on Penang island.

"This year, Aspen-Klipa PIBM 2024 will start and end at Aspen Vision City in Batu Kawan on Dec 15," said Wong.

"This will make it the longest bridge run in South-East Asia.

"More than 20,000 participants from all over the world are expected to run across the second Penang Bridge while enjoying breathtaking views.

"It will be a sight to behold and an experience like no other for the runners," he said, adding that more than 60% of contestants were expected to be Malaysians.

Wong said about 17,000 runners had signed up to date for all three categories - full marathon (42km), half marathon (21km) and 10km run (open/junior).

He said a switch in venue would offer participants a different experience.

"All these years, participants have been running and collecting their medals on the first Penang Bridge.

"We found that the second Penang Bridge is equally, or even more interesting and challenging," said Wong during a press conference at

Komtar in George Town.

He said that over the past 16 years, Batu Kawan had transformed from a swampy and undeveloped area into one of Penang's most promising regions for growth.

Once a place with little to offer, Batu Kawan has seen significant develop-

ments, including the rise of factories, housing projects and shopping malls.

"This transformation has turned it into a key area for future growth in Penang," said Wong.

"The state government and Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow have consistently emphasised the potential of Batu Kawan and its surroundings on Penang mainland, calling it 'the future of Penang'.

"Despite this, many people on Penang island remain unfamiliar with this rapidly developing part of the state."

Wong said to spark interest and draw attention to Batu Kawan as a vibrant and growing hub, plans are underway to host major international events in the area.

He hoped that Aspen-Klipa PIBM 2024 would generate new interest and investments in this often-overlooked part of Penang, solidifying its role as a key driver of the state's future growth.

Asked if the organisers would consider having PIBM permanently at the second Penang Bridge, Wong said a decision would only be made once the marathon was completed.

In conjunction with Aspen-Klipa PIBM 2024, a special fashion show will be held at Klippa Shopping Centre in Batu Kawan to showcase official PIBM apparel, medals and merchandise.

The title sponsors of PIBM 2024 are Aspen and Ikano Centres' Klippa.

Other sponsors include Teleperformance, BIG Caring Group, Brooks, Seiko, Emico, Counterpain, Himalaya Sports, Island Hospital and N8 Sports Nutrition, with Star Media Group Bhd as official media partner.

Registration deadline is Sept 30.

For details and registration, visit www.penangmarathon.gov.my

