Racing through cities with technology

'Urban explorers' can create their own routes and strategies using special app

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THE one of a kind urban exploration District Race presented by AIA Vitality made its official debut in Kuala Lumpur with a bang.

Through gamification, the District Race application will bring cities to life in an immersive exploration experience by leveraging on technologies like Bluetooth, global positioning system and augmented reality.

Explorers can use the District Race app to navigate their way through the city, collecting as many points as possible by clearing virtual checkpoints and challenges.

With no set route or distance, explorers can create their own strategy and choose how they explore their cities and enjoy the experience, which is set to transcend regular running events.

District Race District Technologies chief executive officer Ben Pember said there would be something for every type of runner or explorer.

"From urbanites looking to rediscover the city to elite runners who want to conquer a brand-new challenge or even families looking for a fun, healthy and educational experience together, District Race is designed to be an unforgettable experience for all," he said.

First launched in Singapore in 2018, District Race aims to encourage people to lead active, healthy lifestyles by providing an engaging experience through the application.

"District Race is designed for anyone and everyone, and we believe that District Race is a great starting point to motivate people to go out and rediscover what their cities have

Heng (left) and Pember showing the District Race app, which combines cutting-edge augmented reality and location-based technology to create an immersive exploration race.

to offer," added Pember.

AIA Malaysia chief marketing officer Heng Zee Wang echoed his sentiments on offering a new and exciting platform for the masses to commit to a healthy lifestyle.

"Maintaining a regular workout regime and an active lifestyle can be quite challenging for the current generation.

"Our work and family commitments plus long commutes often are barriers to maintaining a healthy lifestyle," said Heng.

"This is why AIA is excited to bring District Race to Malaysia for the first time ever – as a platform that enables Malaysians to explore their cities in a whole new way with their families and friends.

"We are always looking for new and innovative ways to empower Malaysians to lead healthier, longer and better lives, and District promises a groundbreaking experience for everyone," he said.

The race is set to coincide with the KL Car Free Morning on Nov 3 at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur, with ticket prices ranging from RM60 to RM130, including early-bird and regular ticket prices.

To drum up support for the finale in Kuala Lumpur, District is going live in stages across Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Melaka and Johor Baru, with virtual checkpoints or "grids" set up to allow the public to freely explore and experience the District Race before the finale.

The grids are live from now until Oct 20, to give explorers the chance to win exciting prizes as they explore and rediscover their cities.

A series of community events known as Explore Events will also be held at these four cities, and will feature themed virtual districts with each offering different challenges that highlight landmarks, as well as the culture and heritage of the location.

District Race will also be launching the Ultimate Explorer Challenge in Malaysia, which is a competition of amassing points.

The highest scoring person who completes District grids in Malaysia from June 17 to Nov 2 will be rewarded with a round-the-world trip for them to try out District Grids in more than 15 cities around the world.

The winner of this challenge will be announced on the main race day in Kuala Lumpur this November.

Interestingly, those who complete at least five grids between June 17 and July 31 will also receive a free ticket to District Race Kuala Lumpur.