

## Introduction

*Jirayudh Sinthuphan*

In recent decades, it has been widely accepted that the creative industry is an important sector to global development. This is not just for its direct economic benefits but also for its broader impact on culture, society, and innovation. The creative industry enriches lives, fosters cultural understanding, and drives progress in various domains, making it a cornerstone of sustainable and inclusive development. The compelling collection of articles in this issue of *The Asian Review* offers readers a rich tapestry of insights, analysis, and reflections to the creative industry. Each essay within this anthology delves into unique aspects of culture, architecture, tourism, politics, and security, providing a comprehensive exploration of significant themes that shape our world.

In **Thailand Magic Amulets and Their Multi-Million Baht Demand: Why and Are They Really Worth So Much?**, Ainsley JONG embarks on an intriguing journey into the world of Thai magic amulets, examining their cultural significance and the substantial value placed upon them. The article uncovers the deep-seated beliefs that drive collectors to invest millions of baht in these objects, despite the pervasive issue of counterfeiting. By exploring the amulets' historical and spiritual context, the essay evaluates the potential for authenticating and legitimizing this market, positing it as a potential economic boon for Thailand in the post-COVID-19 era.

Next, **Exploring the Vernacular Architecture in the Eastern Commercial and Tourism Districts of Mueang Chiang Mai** by Aumpika AMLOY takes a closer look at the vernacular architecture

found in the bustling districts of eastern Chiang Mai. Through field surveys and architectural analysis, it identifies and documents six distinct styles, from wooden houses to concrete shophouses. The essay highlights how these architectural forms reflect local wisdom, the adaptation to modern construction techniques, and the timeless aesthetics that continue to shape the urban landscape.

**Enhancing Urban Tourism in Bangkok: Challenges and Opportunities** by Pechladda PECHPAKDEE focuses on Bangkok's urban tourism, this study investigates the challenges and opportunities inherent in the city's development. By analyzing data from tourist questionnaires, stakeholder interviews, and online travel platforms, the essay identifies mobility infrastructure as a critical issue. It offers strategic recommendations to improve primary attractions, support facilities, and mobility solutions, thereby enhancing Bangkok's appeal as a premier tourist destination.

On a political note, Gil D. TURINGAN delves into the symbolic and historical significance of the 14th of October 1973 Memorial in Thailand. **The Stories of Construction and Contention: The 14th of October 1973 Memorial and the 2020 Student Movement in Thailand** traces the evolution of this memorial from a site of remembrance for the student revolution to a platform for contemporary democratic movements, particularly the 2020 student protests. Through detailed analysis, the essay underscores the memorial's role in Thai democracy discourse and the enduring legacy of student activism.

**Lastly, Taliban 2.0 and Geopolitical Security Concerns in South Asia's Neighbourhood** by Anup Shekhar CHAKRABORTY and Masom Jan MASOMY examines the geopolitical shifts and the prevailing anti-India and anti-Pakistan sentiments within Taliban-controlled regions. The resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan presents profound security implications for South Asia, particularly for India and Pakistan. This essay explores the complex dynamics between these nuclear powers and the Taliban, highlighting the critical security concerns and the potential for regional instability.

Each essay in this collection offers a unique lens through

which readers are encouraged to engage with the material thoughtfully and critically. From the mystical allure of Thai amulets to the geopolitical tensions in South Asia, these writings provide valuable insights and foster a deeper understanding of the intricate forces at play in our world.

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