



## New students welcomed at AIT

One-hundred and sixteen students hailing from 16 countries spread across three continents were welcomed on the occasion of the Orientation Day on 5 January 2016 organized at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). The day marked the beginning of the January semester, with the incoming students being acquainted to the premier postgraduate institute.

Students who have joined AIT in January 2016 are from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, PR China, Sri Lanka, Thailand, USA, and Vietnam. Eighty percent of the students

enrolled in the January 2016 semester have joined the Master's program, while the remaining students are enrolled in Doctoral and other special programs. Three-quarters of the new students have joined the School of Engineering and Technology (SET), while the remaining are enrolled in School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD), and School of Management (SOM). Incoming students were welcomed by Prof. Sivanappan Kumar, Vice President for Academic Affairs; Prof. Voratas Kachitvichyanukul, Dean, SET; Prof. Rajendra Shrestha, Dean, SERD; Prof. Nazrul Islam, Interim Dean, SOM ; and Mr. Jayasingam Adhuran, President, AIT Student Union.



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## Thailand's tallest Buddha statue has an AIT connection



*Prof. Pennung Warnitchai with the model of Buddha Metta Statue.*

When the tallest statue of Lord Buddha was being created in Thailand, the Crown Property Bureau thought of one organization to fall back on to check and verify the stability of the structure — the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT). Thailand's premier earthquake expert, Prof. Pennung Warnitchai provided the Structural Design Review of the statue which was inaugurated in December 2015 by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn in Kanchanaburi.

“It is the tallest standing statue configuration in Thailand, and we were asked to review the design to ensure that the structure has the ability to withstand extreme wind and ground shaking caused by earthquakes,” Prof. Pennung says. Moreover, the structure is unique since it is not in a sitting position, which would have provided it with stability. Instead, the standing pose has the entire structure standing on two legs, which raises serious design and stability challenges. “AIT was chosen, since we are not only an independent education and research institute, but we also possess the expertise, and we co-host (along with Thammasat University) the largest wind tunnel in Thailand,” he says. Prof. Pennung is a recognized leader in this field, having developed the design standards in Thailand for both earthquakes and winds.

## AIT hosts International Forum on Sustainable Future in Asia

Amidst the backdrop of the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations, and the signing of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific



*Prof. Akimasa Sumi*

(RRC.AP) at AIT organized a two-day “International Forum on Sustainable Future in Asia.” Co-hosted by AIT, National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) Japan, Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IRSSS) of the University of Tokyo, Japan, and the Alliance for Global Sustainability Asia, the conference was attended by 160 participants.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Akimasa Sumi, President, NIES stressed the importance of an international forum for converting aspirations into actions. Prof. Kazuo Yamamoto, AIT's Vice President for Resource Development delivered the welcome address on behalf of AIT.

## 29 students from 17 countries complete UN Winter program

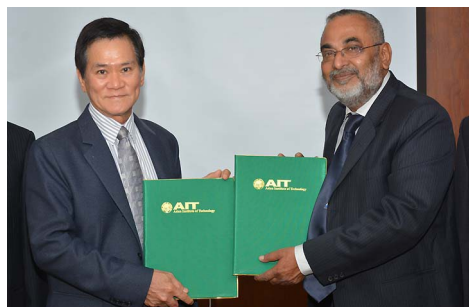
Twenty-nine students from 17 countries completed the UN Winter program on Sustainable Consumption and Production in Asia and the Pacific. Organized by AIT Extension, the program was led by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Prof. C Visvanathan of AIT's School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD).



*From right: Prof. C Visvanathan, Ms. Janet Salem of UNEP, and Dr. Jonathan Shaw.*

The two-week long programme was conducted jointly by UNEP, Switch Asia, AIT, Chulalongkorn University, United Nations University- Institute of Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU- IAS), and Prince of Songkhla University.

## Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kashipur signs agreement with AIT



*Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai (left) and Prof. Gautam Sinha.*

The Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Kashipur, India, has signed agreements with AIT for facilitating student exchange, faculty exchange, and undertaking joint research projects. Prof. Gautam Sinha, Director, IIM (Kashipur), and Prof.

Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, AIT President, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) on 19 January 2016.

According to the agreement, both IIM (Kashipur) and AIT will accept three exchange students, and will grant full credit transfer to the exchange students. The IIM Director was accompanied by Prof. Kampan Mukherjee, Dean (Planning and Development).

## AIT faculty member co-authors FAO publication



*Dr. Peeyush Soni (left) and Dr. Hiroyuki Konuma (right) with the book. Dean, SERD, Prof. Rajendra Shrestha is in the middle.*

Dr. Peeyush Soni, an Associate Professor in the School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD) has co-authored a publication titled “A regional strategy for sustainable agricultural mechanization.”

Published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the book focuses on sustainable mechanization across agri-food chains in Asia and the Pacific region. The publication is jointly authored by Geoffrey Mrema of Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania; Dr. Peeyush Soni of AIT; and Rosa S Rolle of FAO.

## Agreement with College of Agriculture, Baramati, India



*Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai presented with autobiography of former Indian minister Sharad Pawar, President of Agricultural Development Trust, Baramati.*

The College of Agriculture (CoA), Baramati, India has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with AIT to offer a “Unified International Bachelor Master Degree Program.” The College is affiliated to the Mahatma Phule Agriculture University (MPKV), Ahmednagar, India. The MoA was signed by AIT and representatives of CoA on 27 January 2016.

Under the agreement, the Bachelor’s degree will be awarded by MPKV in India, while the Master’s degree will be awarded by AIT. Between 10-25 students from CoA will join AIT after completing eight semesters of study in India. AIT will offer Master’s programs in AgriBusiness Management (ABM), and Agricultural Systems and Engineering (ASE). The visiting delegation included Mr. Rajendra Dinkarrao Pawar, Chairman of Agricultural Development Trust, Baramati; Mr. Rohit Rajendra Pawar, CEO, Baramati Agro Industries Ltd.; Mr. Nilesh Ashokrao Nalawade, Director of Education and Principal, CoA; and Ms Jaya Tiwari of CoA.

## Climate Change battle has to be fought in cities: Dr Bindu Lohani

The climate change battle has to be fought in cities since it is the cities that generate the maximum Gross Development Product (GDP), emit the maximum Greenhouse

Gases (GHGs), and are increasingly becoming more vulnerable. These were the remarks of Dr. Bindu Lohani, Senior Advisor to the AIT President, and former Vice President of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) while delivering the Distinguished Adjunct Faculty (DAF) Seminar on “Technological Challenges and Opportunities in Addressing Climate Resilience Smart Cities” at AIT on 26 January 2016.

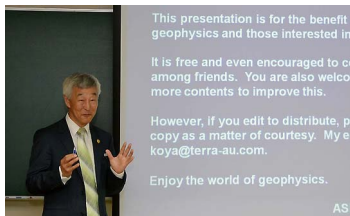


Dr. Bindu Lohani

“Cities have to be made more liveable, smart, clean and green,” Dr. Lohani stressed, as he outlined the technological challenges being faced in urban areas. He stated that 80 per cent of the global GDP is generated in cities, and 600 cities collectively contribute 60 per cent of the global GDP. Quoting from an ADB study, he added that 23 megacities (cities with a population of over 10 million people) are currently contributing 14 per cent of GDP, though this is expected to reduce to about 10 per cent by 2025.

## Exploring the mysteries of the invisible layers of the earth

While star-gazing and new techniques enable scientists to explore objects billions of kilome-



Mr. Koya Suto

ters away, the fact remains that we cannot see what is happening a few centimetres below the ground. Unless one is a geophysicist, the mysteries of what happens “under the ground” always remain an enigma.

Exploring this phenomenon was Mr. Koya Suto, Director of Terra Australis Geophysica and past president of the Australian Society of Exploration Geophysicists at the Asian Institute of Technology on 18 January 2016. In Bangkok to attend the 7th International Conference in Applied Geophysics, Mr. Koya Suto delivered a talk at AIT and interacted with students of Geotechnical and Earth Resources Engineering.

## AIT organizes Wetlands Alliance International Conference in Cambodia

As the host institute of the Wetlands Alliance Secretariat, AIT organized an international conference on ‘Wetlands Management: Science, Practice and Sustainable Development’ in Siem Reap, Cambodia from 19-21 January 2016. Attracting over 70 participants and 42 paper presentations, the three-day conference aimed to build and strengthen bridges between scientists, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers engaged in natural wetlands management in the Mekong region and beyond. The conference was co-hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Cambodia and AIT. Wetlands Alliance, CORIN Asia, WorldFish Center and WWF were organizing partners.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Yin Kim Sean, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Environment, Royal Government of Cambodia, highlighted the significance of water and wetlands for local rural communities and emphasized the importance of their management as a basis for the functioning of society.



Prof. Sivanappan Kumar, AIT's Vice President for Academic Affairs at the Conference.

## Dr. John K. M. Kuwornu joins as Associate Professor

Dr. John K. M. Kuwornu has joined AIT as Associate Professor in the Agri-Business Management (ABM) Field of Study in the School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD). Dr. Kuwornu, who is from Ghana, obtained his Master's and Doctoral degrees in Agricultural Economics and Management from Wageningen University, The Netherlands. His areas of teaching and research include Agribusiness Management, Agricultural Marketing and Trade, Agricultural Development, Ag-

ricultural Policy, Marketing Channels, Consumer Behaviour, Supply Chain Management, Commodity Futures Markets, Econometrics, Quantitative Methods, Climate Change, Agrobiodiversity and Stock Markets.



*Dr. John K. M. Kuwornu*

## Dr. Nophea Sasaki joins Natural Resources Management



*Dr. Nophea Sasaki*

Dr. Nophea Sasaki has joined the Natural Resources Management field of study at AIT's SERD as Associate Professor. Prior to joining AIT, Dr. Sasaki was an Associate Professor at the University of Hyogo, where he worked in the fields of environmental policy informatics and environmental business with particular focus on forestry, forest carbon monitoring and modeling,

low-carbon development project, and financial incentives. Dr. Sasaki graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Forestry from Royal University of Agriculture, Cambodia, and completed his Master's in Forest Management from Shinshu University, Japan. He received his Ph.D. in forest management from Gifu University, Japan. He was a postdoc fellow in forestry-carbon cycling modeling at the Max Planck Institute of Meteorology/Biogeochemistry; a Bullard Fellow in advanced forest research at Harvard University; and a visiting scientist at Adelaide University.

## Dr. Philippe Doney promoted to Associate Professor



*Dr. Philippe Doney*

Dr. Philippe Doney has been promoted to the position of Associate Professor in SERD. Dr. Doney joined AIT as Assistant Professor in March 2007. Dr. Doney obtained his Ph.D. in International Relations (*summa cum laude*) from the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po), Paris, France in 2003; and his Master's in South East Asian Studies, with a Major in Political Science and a Minor in Vietnamese in 1994.

He graduated from the University of Toronto, Canada in 1992 for his B.A. in International Development Studies, with a Major in Political Economy (Honors). Dr. Doney's research encompasses the areas of new technologies, industrialization and gender, HIV/AIDS, gender politics, civil society and human rights, and gender, migration and trafficking in Asia.

## Prof. Kazuo Yamamoto ranked 'Global Thought Leader' in Water Industry



*Prof. Kazuo Yamamoto*

AIT's Vice President for Resource Development (VPRD) has been ranked sixth top 'Global Thought Leader' in the Water Industry by the Water and Wastewater International Magazine.

The latest issue of their magazine says: "Yamamoto was the inventor of the submerged membrane bioreactor concept in 1986 and led research and development into membranes for advanced water treatment and reclamation. He received the Sidney Loeb Award from the European Desalination Society for invention of the submerged membrane bioreactor concept. He graduated from the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Tokyo in 1977."

## AIT Orientation: 5 January 2016



# News You Can Use

### Alumni in the news



Alumnus Narong Gieddech (Master's, Infrastructure Planning and Management, 1997) is new Governor of the Expressway Authority of Thailand (EXAT).

Read more in ThaiRath: <http://www.thairath.co.th/content/562384>

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Alumnus Twarath Sutabutr (Master's, Geotechnical and Transportation Engineering, 1992) interviewed in Thansettakij.

Read more in Thansettakij : <http://www.thansettakij.com/2016/01/24/27617>



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