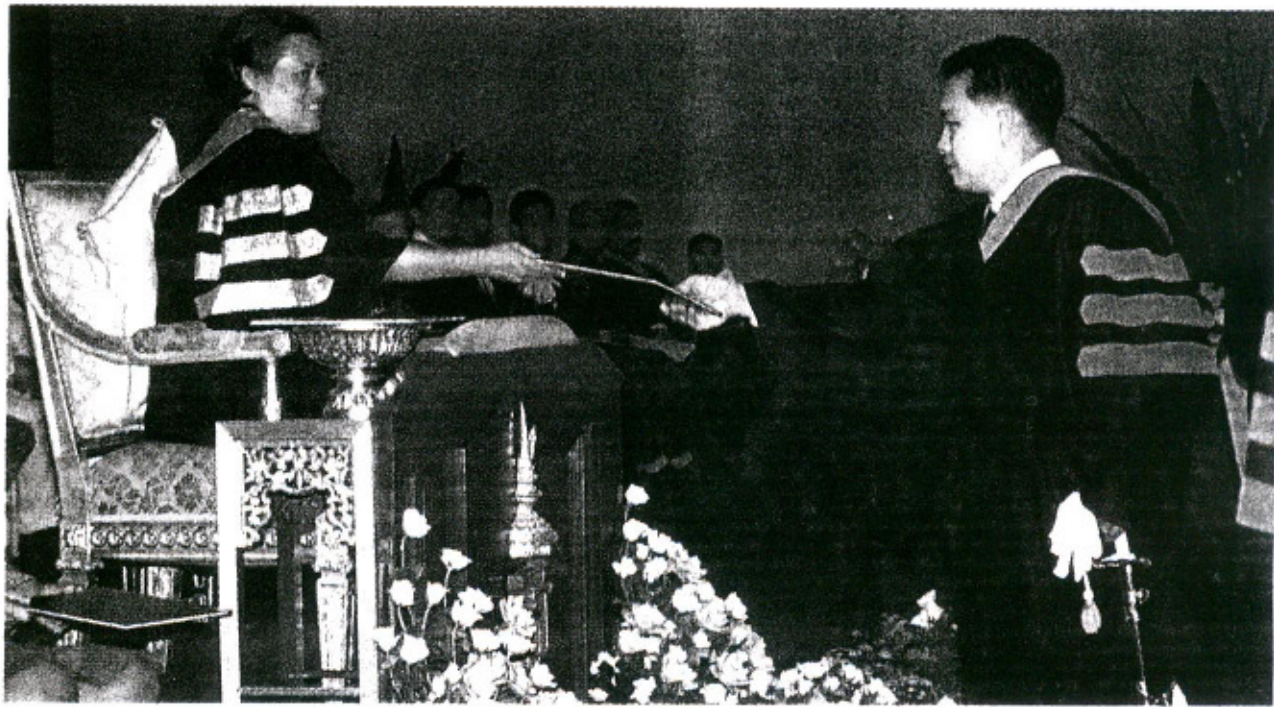


TALK OF THE TOWN

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EDUCATION

AIT celebrates its ROYAL SPONSORS



HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn confers degrees on Asian Institute of Technology graduates.

■ The Nation

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn conferred degrees on 538 graduates of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) last week.

The master's and doctoral degrees were handed out last week at the Thailand Science Park Convention Centre.

"AIT's mission has been very closely aligned to His Majesty the King's support for the promotion of holistic education as an important base for the development of scientific knowledge and skills," the Princess said.

"His Majesty has always adhered to a scientific approach to development, while at the same time drawing upon great lessons from nature. AIT's mission has always

emphasised this important aspect and continuously sought scientific yet practical solutions to development in the region."

Also addressing the graduates and an audience of 1,200 were former prime minister Anand Panyarachun, who chairs AIT's board of trustees, the institute's president, Said Irandoust, and the most outstanding student, Manavit Vinaipanit, who received his master's degree in industrial engineering and management.

"What is unique about AIT is that it symbolises not only international cooperation, but partnership," Anand noted. "Whether donors or recipients, there is a genuine belief and conviction in partnership which serves as proof of the vitality of AIT and of the importance of its role in the region."

AIT's 105th batch of graduates hailed from 26 countries. The institute now has more than 14,000 degree-holding alumni and 22,000 alumni of short-term courses from more than 70 countries.

The presence of the Princess at the commencement exercise allowed AIT to join in celebrations of His Majesty's 60th year on the throne.

AIT prepared a five-minute video documenting its relationship with the royal family. Throughout its history, the 47-

year-old institute has been fortunate to receive royal patronage.

The Princess is an honorary faculty member and alumna. In 1984 she attended a two-month course at the Asian Regional Remote Sensing Training Centre and became AIT's first royal alumna by earning her certificate of course completion.

In 1989, as part of the institute's 30th anniversary celebration, AIT conferred the honorary degree of doctor of technology on her.

A royal presence at AIT dates to the 50th anniversary of the founding of Chulalongkorn University in 1967, when His Majesty awarded an honorary doctor of engineering degree of to Dean Milton Bender Jr and Assistant Dean Aroon Sorathes of what was then still called the Seato Graduate School of Engineering.

A year later, at the renamed Asian Institute of Technology's graduation ceremony, His Majesty conferred degrees upon 52 candidates.

In 1973 Their Majesties the King and Queen ushered in yet another new era at AIT, presiding over the opening ceremonies of the Pathumthani campus.

The King returned in 1975 to speak at the graduation ceremony and was conferred AIT's first honorary doctorate.

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