

AIT > NEWSLETTER

Asian Institute of Technology

August 2010



H.E. William J. Burns

US describes AIT as a “world class” institute

The Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) has been described as a “**world class institute**” by H.E. William J. Burns, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, US Department of State. H.E. Burns made these remarks when he was in Bangkok to deliver a talk, “A Renewed U.S.-Thai Alliance for the 21st Century” on 16 July 2010.

The seasoned diplomat delved on the idea of a “creative partnership” between US and Thailand. While elab-

orating on the concept, H.E. Burns stated that “Western Digital’s work with the world-class Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand to develop degree programs in Information Technology is just one example of the type of cooperation we want to expand under this Creative Partnership.” AIT and Western Digital had jointly launched a Master of Science (M.Sc.) program in (Hard Disc Drive) HDD Engineering Technology, a program that drew support by the Hard Disk Drive Institute (HDDI) cluster at National Electronics and Computer Technology Center (NECTEC), Thailand. ■

The entire text of the speech can be read at this [link](#).



AIT alumnus to be new Governor of Bank of Thailand

Distinguished AIT alumnus Dr. Prasarn Trairatvorakul has been appointed as the new Governor of the Bank of Thailand. The appointment was cleared at the cabinet meeting of the Royal Thai Government, and Dr. Prasarn is slated to assume his new position on October 1 after receiving a royal command from His Majesty the King endorsing his position.

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Dr. Prasarn graduated with a Master's in Engineering in 1976 from AIT's School of Advanced Technologies in the program Industrial Engineering and Management. Dr. Prasarn has been a recipient of the AIT



Dr. Prasarn Trairatvorakul

distinguished alumni award. He has also served on the Board of AIT's School of Engineering and Technology (SET).

At present Dr. Prasarn is the president of Kasikornbank. Prior to Kasikornbank, he served at the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as both deputy secretary general as well as secretary general. He also served a two-year stint as a research fellow at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington DC. Earlier in 2010, Dr. Prasarn was elected chairman of the Thai Bankers' Association earlier this year.



AIT will be the hub of the new Asia-Africa Foundation

The Asian Institute of Technology has contributed towards the advancement of higher learning and development in Asia for more than fifty years. Africa is the next development challenge and the lessons learned by AIT in applying science and technology for sustainable solutions is also important for development in Africa. These were the remarks of AIT's Dr. Roland Amoussou-Guenou, Co-Founder and President of the new Asia-Africa Foundation (ASAFO), while speaking during the launch of a new website <http://www.asiaafricafoundation.org>.

"AIT is already receiving students from Africa, but the time has come to bring the exchange to the next level with the cooperation and support of govern-

ments, international organizations, and the public and private sectors," he said.

Dr. Amoussou-Guenou said the Foundation's mission was to serve as a bridge for new cooperation and development opportunities between Africa and Asia. The ASAFO follows an exploratory visit by an AIT delegation to various African nations in 2009. The trip provided an opportunity to understand the degree to which governments, organizations and universities are interested in engaging Asia. "AIT will be the hub of the Asia-Africa Foundation for South-South assistance and cooperation with Africa," Dr. Amoussou-Guenou confirmed. ▀

AIT mourns passing of Mr. Chukiat Photayanuvat, President of AITAA-Thai Chapter

The Asian Institute of Technology was deeply saddened by the sudden passing away of distinguished alumnus Mr. Chukiat Photayanuvat (GTE 1979), President of the AIT Alumni Association (AITAA) – Thai Chapter, and Deputy Governor of the Mass Rapid Transit Authority of Thailand (MRTA), on Sunday, 25 July 2010. Mr. Chukiat, who lost his battle with cancer, was 55.

"With the passing away of Mr. Chukiat, we have lost a close and dear friend of the Asian Institute of Technology," AIT President Said Irandoost said in an email to faculty, staff, students and alumni.

Mr. Chukiat was an extremely active and respected member of the AIT Alumni Association, and his contributions to the Institute, especially in his capacity as the President of the AITAA-Thailand Chapter, will always be valued and remembered, President Irandoost said.

President Irandoost expressed his heartfelt condolences on behalf of the



Mr. Chukiat Photayanuvat

entire AIT community to the immediate family members, relatives and friends of Mr. Chukiat. He said the thoughts and prayers of all of AIT were with them at this very difficult time of bereavement. ■

SCINDA receiving station established at AIT



The Institute of Scientific Research (ISR), Boston College, USA has established a receiving station at AIT under the framework of Network Decision Aid (SCINDA) research network. The receiving station comprises of a high precision GPS Base station and Very High Frequency(VHF) receivers. SCINDA involves over 40 institutions and is a network of ground sensors developed to generate real time communication outage maps and warnings for satellite communication and GPS users. It ensures exchange of ionospheric data recorded by each institution as a part of collaborative research activities.

AIT has signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Institute of Scientific Research (ISR), Boston College, USA to forge cooperative research under the framework of Scintillation Network Decision Aid (SCINDA) research network. ISR and AIT will conduct regional research on geodynamics, real-time corrections of GPS signals from solar extremes and solar flares in upper atmosphere among others. ■

AIT alumna appointed Permanent Secretary in Ministry of Social Development and Human Security

Ms. Panita Kambhu Na Ayutthaya, a distinguished alumna of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT,) has been appointed Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Royal Thai Government. She is the second woman to be appointed at this position since its establishment in 2002.

Ms. Panita graduated from AIT in 1986 with a M.Sc. in Human Settlements and Development from the School of Environment, Resources and Development (SERD). She studied Archaeology in her Bachelor's degree from Silpakorn University, graduating in 1977. She also attended the National Defence College of Thailand in 2004. ■

Timor Leste needs strong involvement of AIT: Minister

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries of Timor Leste, H.E. Mariano Assanami Sabino has called for strong involvement of AIT in meeting the country's Strategic Program 2020 for agricultural growth and sustainable food security. The Minister stated this following consultative meetings held after the two day national workshop on "Review of rice cultivation systems in Timor Leste" held at Dili.

A meeting of donor agencies with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) of Timor Leste is planned in coming weeks and the Minister stressed the need for the presence of AIT at this meeting to assist in formulating a five-year plan of activities for rice intensification.

The two-day national workshop was hosted by the MAF (Timor Leste) in co-sponsorship with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ), European Union (EU), and AIT. The co-sponsorship for AIT was brought through by Dr. Abha Mishra, Senior Research Specialist-cum-Affiliated Faculty, ASE/SERD with support from GTZ. Dr. Mishra was one of the four key speakers invited to analyze, discuss and provide recommendations for Sustainable Rice

Intensification (SRI). The other key speakers invited for this workshop were from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI); Bogor Agricultural University (IPB), Indonesia and the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, India. ■



From Left: Prof. Dr. P. Iswandi, IPB, Bogor, Indonesia; HE Eng. Mariano Assanami Sabino, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Timor Leste; and Dr. Abha Mishra from AIT.

AIT Chairman discusses New AIT Charter, and much more on ASEAN TV

AIT's Chairman of the Board of Trustees, H.E. Dr. Tej Bunnag, was the special guest of the television program *ASEAN Talks* telecast regionally on 1 July 2010.

In a 30-minute interview, Dr. Tej touched on a wide variety of subjects related to the Asian Institute of Technology, in particular AIT's landmark New Charter, which he explained would be signed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the Royal Thai Government to become a founding member of the "New AIT".

The Chairman outlined to viewers key elements of AIT's half-century history, and told of its lasting impact on the region. In an entertaining exchange, Dr. Tej explained details of what makes AIT a special and enduring international institute of higher leaning for Thailand and the region.

ASEAN Talks is broadcast nightly on the ASEAN TV network via satellite across the ASEAN region, and can be viewed in Thailand on MCOT Channel 2.



H.E. Dr. Tej Bunnag

PEOPLE



Dr. Supasith Chonglertham

Dr. Supasith Chonglertham has joined the School of Management (SOM) as a Senior Instructor starting 1 July 2010. Dr. Chonglertham obtained his Ph.D. in Finance, 2009, from the

University of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii, USA and an MBA in Finance, 2005, from Tulane University, USA. During his appointment, Dr. Chonglertham will teach Finance and Managerial Accounting.



Mr. Nayana D.P. Dehigama

Mr. Nayana D.P. Dehigama, a doctoral student of AIT's School of Management (SOM), has won the third Asia-Pacific Young Entrepreneur Award. The awards were announced at the 24th Conference of the Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI), which concluded on 7 July 2010 at Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Professional Development Needs Assessment workshop at AIT

A four-day Professional Development Needs Assessment (PDNA) workshop for the Asian Project Management Support Programme (AFMAS) was organized at AIT, with the AIT President Prof. Said Irandoost stressing that such initiatives would help project management skills in the region. AIFMAS is an initiative of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and AIT Extension was tasked to hold the four-day PDNA workshop.

"This is a platform which fosters interaction and networking combined with a professional development approach," the AIT President said. He thanked AIT alumna Ms. Ayurzana Puntsagdavaa of IFAD for enabling AIT and IFAD to work together. "I am sure the PDNA workshop will help in enhancing capacity in the Asian region," the AIT President remarked.

NITI to contribute to AIT Endowment Fund

Alumnus of the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) and Executive Chairman of Nepal's National Information Technology Institute (NITI), Mr. Pramod S. S. Pradhan, has announced that half of his earnings from undergraduate student recruitment would be donated to the AIT Endowment Fund. He stated this during the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between NITI and AIT on 16 July 2010.

Mr. Pradhan, who is also the former president of the Nepal Chapter of the AIT Alumni Association, announced that while 50 per cent of NITI's earnings from the undergraduate recruitment would be spent on publicity and AIT promotions, the remaining 50 per cent would be contributed to the AIT Endowment Fund.

NITI signed two MOA with AIT to act as a Student Recruitment Agent (SRA) for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. NITI would help AIT recruit both students and training participants from Nepal.

"30 alumni serve at Nong Lam University"

Thirty alumni from AIT are already serving at the Nong Lam University (NLU) in Vietnam and NLU looks forward towards more association with AIT. This was stated by Dr. Tring Truong Giang, Rector, NLU during a visit to AIT. NLU and AIT also signed a MOU to expand mutual collaboration in academics, research, training and consultancy services.

What's Happening at AIT?

- **August 11, 2010**
Orientation Day for fresh AIT students
- **August 23, 2010**
Training Course on CSR Essentials at the CSR Asia Center at AIT



Prospective students welcomed on Visit AIT Day

AIT played host on 12 July 2010 when prospective students and their parents visited AIT for an entire day to familiarize themselves about AIT. Apart from introductory talks about studies and life at AIT, the visitors went around the campus visiting various schools and facilities. They also savored an international lunch. An international cultural show followed, where students from various countries showcased their respective cultures for the visitors.

Prof. Worsak Kanok-Nukulchai, AIT's Vice President for Resource and Development, described AIT as an ideal place for students to acquire an international outlook



while maintaining an Asian orientation. "AIT students graduate with an international perspective; high level of IT competence, innovation, and are able to achieve integration of holistic aspects while remaining pegged to industrial relevance," he added. This opinion was also echoed by AIT alumnus, Mr. Somjate Saifon, Director and Chemicals Manager, Esso (Thailand) PCL, who specially participated in the event to enlighten prospective students regarding the advantages of acquiring education at AIT. President of the AIT Student Union, Mr. Worawaj Onnom, also welcomed the students.

News Y o u C a n U s e

In a Climate Quest, the Roof as White Knight

“ Since he took over as energy secretary last year, Steven Chu, a Nobel laureate in physics, has urged Americans to help cool the planet by painting their roofs a lighter color that reflects sunlight.

"When you're thinking of putting on a new roof, make it white," Dr. Chu told Jon Stewart's "Daily Show" audience in 2009. "It costs no more to make it white than to make it black."

Now he is following his own advice: on Monday, Dr. Chu directed all Energy Department offices to install white roofs during new construction, when replacing old roofs and wherever an installation is cost-effective over the lifetime of the roof. The secretary urged other federal agencies to follow suit.

"Cool roofs are one of the quickest and lowest-cost ways we can reduce our global carbon emissions and begin the hard work of slowing climate change," he said in a statement. **”**

Read the entire news item at [this link](http://green.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/07/21/in-a-climate-quest-the-roof-as-white-knight/)

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Did You Know?
Thailand's Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn graduated from AIT with a certificate in Remote Sensing Technology in 1984.