



INSTITUTE OF STRATEGIC &
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
(ISIS) MALAYSIA

Realising an **AI** **NATION**

13 October 2026 // Hilton Kuala Lumpur

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The Institute of Strategic & International Studies (ISIS) Malaysia was established on 8 April 1983 to advance Malaysia's strategic interests. As an autonomous research organisation, we focus on foreign policy and security; economics and trade; social policy and nation-building; cyber and technology; and climate and energy.

We conduct track-two diplomacy by promoting the exchange of views and opinions at the national and international levels. We also support regional integration and international cooperation through various forums, including the Asia-Pacific Roundtable, ASEAN Institutes of Strategic & International Studies network, Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific, Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, Network of East Asian Think-Tanks, Network of ASEAN-China Think-Tanks and ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Dialogue.



Theme

Malaysia has ambitious plans for AI, reflected in the policy directions of the 13th Malaysia Plan, the third phase of the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint and the AI Action Plan 2026-30. Yet nation-building extends beyond measures of economic growth and productivity. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, for instance, highlights the importance of shared identity, belonging and social cohesion, while Edward Said reminds us how colonialism continues to shape cultural agency.

Because AI systems are interactive, reactive and intelligent, their effects will extend beyond technology adoption to social, psychological, economic and governance domains.

The conference aims to examine the relational aspects of society, and what it means for a Malaysia when humanity is increasingly augmented by machine intelligence. The theme aims to envision the values, safeguards, development pathways and policy structures that must be shaped today to realise a successful nation in 2030. In doing so, ISIS Malaysia aims to move the conversation beyond application towards the conditions for their safe deployment and meaningful contribution to society and the world.

Programme

0800-0900	Registration and networking <i>Lake Garden Foyer, Grand ballroom, Level 6</i>
0900-0915	Opening remarks Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah Executive Chairman ISIS Malaysia
0915-0945	Keynote address I YB Tuan Steven Sim Chee Keong Minister of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development
0945-1000	Refreshments <i>Lake Garden Foyer, Grand ballroom, Level 6</i>
1000-1100	Fireside chat Sentience in AI and the question of responsibility <i>Ballroom A & B, Level 6</i>
1100-1130	Refreshments
1130-1245	Session 1 Digital colonisation and the captured mind
1245-1400	Lunch <i>Vasco's @ Lobby</i>
1400-1430	Keynote address II YB Tuan Liew Chin Tong Deputy Finance Minister
1430-1545	Session 2 Truth, hallucination and social cohesion
1545-1600	Refreshments
1600-1715	Session 3 Governance in a human-machine region
1715	End



Opening remarks

Datuk Prof Dr Mohd Faiz Abdullah

Executive Chairman
ISIS Malaysia

Faiz advises the government on geopolitics, defence and security, and the evolving global geoeconomic landscape. At ISIS Malaysia, he leads policy innovation and strategic track-two diplomacy. He represents Malaysia on the ASEAN Regional Forum Experts and Eminent Persons and co-chairs the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific. He is also a member of the World Economic Forum's Global Future Council on Good Governance and a distinguished adjunct professor at the International Islamic University Malaysia.



Keynote address I

YB Tuan Steven Sim Chee Keong
Minister of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development

Sim is the MP for Bukit Mertajam and was appointed to his current portfolio in December 2025. He previously served as human resources minister, deputy finance minister, and deputy youth and sports minister. Across these roles, he contributed to national policy development, economic strengthening, youth and sports talent development, and ethical and inclusive employment practices. He is also the author of four books: *The Audacity to Think: An Invitation to Rethink Politics*; *Being Malaysia*; an anthology of Malay poems, *Dalam Salju Ada Bunga* (2018); and a contemporary sociopolitical critique of the Malay classic Hikayat Hang Tuah, *Hang Tuah: Adiwira Bangsa*.

Keynote address II

YB Tuan Liew Chin Tong

Deputy Finance Minister

Liew is the MP for Iskandar Puteri. From December 2022 to December 2025, he served as deputy investment, trade and industry minister, working closely with Minister Tengku Zafrul Aziz to shape the strategic direction of Malaysia's industrial development, particularly in the semiconductor, iron and steel, and automotive sectors. He previously served as deputy defence minister. His book *Second Takeoff: Strategies for Malaysia's Economic Resurgence* outlines his vision for better jobs and higher pay for Malaysians, as well as the emergence of a Malaysian middle-class society.

Fireside chat

Sentience in AI and the question of responsibility

A Centre for Responsible Technology session

AI governance is at a crossroads. One approach assigns liability to the operators, processors and developers responsible for AI systems. Another asks whether greater accountability can be built into the systems themselves, through their design and behaviour during interactions. The prospect of sentient AI could intensify existing tensions over jobs, technological overreach and control of decision-making.

- What are the prospects for sentience in systems?
- What should be appropriate governance and security responses to balance between the promise and perils of sentient AI?
- Can AI systems be designed to bear greater responsibility for preventing and responding to harm?
- Are there means to futureproof ethical obligations and responsibility in the current and future age of AI?

Moderator



Harris Zainul

Director of Research
ISIS Malaysia

Harris directs the institute's research to advance Malaysia's strategic interests. He works on the interplay between technology, human rights and democracy, with a focus on the governance of large technology companies and online safety. He is also the co-founder of the Centre for Responsible Technology.



Speaker

Prof Fu Hongyu

Director of AI Governance Centre
Alibaba Research Institute

Fu is an adjunct professor at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities at the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China and a research fellow at Tsinghua University's Centre for Industrial Development and Environmental Governance. He is a member of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development's Working Group on Data Governance. His research focuses on policies and laws concerning AI development and governance, data as a factor of production, and related fields. He contributed as a drafting expert to China's Model Law on Artificial Intelligence and participates as an expert in track-two dialogues on AI.

Session 1

Digital colonisation and the captured mind

Today, a small number of actors develop and control many foundational technologies. This concentration could lock digitally under-resourced and innovation-poor countries into dependent ecosystems shaped by external developers and machine-based platforms. It could also widen the gap between resource-rich and developing countries as knowledge and innovation circulate primarily among established partners and alliances. The central question is one of sovereignty: can countries retain sufficient governance capacity and control to ensure that technological development serves their societies and the wider global community?

- What aspects of emerging technological dominance should most concern developing countries and middle powers?
- How does digital colonisation impact on innovation ambitions?
- How could the impact of digital colonisation be mitigated, especially if labour and natural resources are traditional trade-offs in economic sectors?
- What are governance efforts and platforms needed today to strengthen resilience for the technological impact?

Moderator



Farlina Said

Director
ISIS Malaysia

Farlina heads the Cyber and Technology Policy programme. Her research focuses on cyber stability, Malaysia's national interests in emerging technologies as well as peaceful and meaningful use of cyber and digital tools. She has facilitated workshops on cyber norms and chaired the CSCAP study group on international law in cyberspace. She is a former Asia-Pacific Foundation of Canada research fellow and has contributed to key policies in the region, such as the ASEAN Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy 2026-30.

Speakers



Dr Ikseon Kang

Principal Researcher

Korea Artificial Intelligence Safety Institute (K-AISI)

Kang works in the AI policy and international collaboration section at K-AISI, which operates within the Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute. His research focuses on AI safety policy, including implementation of Korea's AI Framework Act and Enforcement Decree, risk-management practices among frontier AI developers, and the institute's AI Safety Forecast Report. Before joining K-AISI, he planned and developed smartphones, wearables, IoT devices and AI-enabled products at LG Electronics and Samsung Electronics.



Khalil Nooh

Chief Executive Officer

Mesolithica

Khalil is a tech entrepreneur, AI builder and educator with more than two decades of regional experience. As co-founder of Mesolithica, he helped bring MaLLaM, a large language model built for Malaysian languages and culture, into enterprise applications through collaborations with Nvidia and Amazon Web Services. He also leads The Future Is Solo, an initiative that helps professionals and aspiring founders turn their expertise into AI-powered independent ventures. His Solo Systems Architect framework helps people design systems and direct AI agents.



Danny Yap

Director of Business & Network Consulting

Huawei APAC

Yap has more than two decades' experience in the telecommunications industry, specialising in aligning network technology with business growth. Having worked across every major network generation from 3G to 5G, he brings a broad perspective on network evolution and strategy. His expertise encompasses network performance, customer experience management and service quality assurance. He has led large-scale digital transformation projects, including the modernisation of service operations centres to make them more service- and user-centric.



Dr Stefan Bächtold

Lecturer

Monash University

Malaysia

Bächtold leads the governing technologies research programme at the Southeast Asia research centre for Digital Technology and Society. His research examines the political dimensions of digital technologies in Southeast Asia – specifically, how digital discourses, practices and infrastructures interact with the state and society and become involved in governing, geopolitics and armed conflict. He has explored Facebook's role in Myanmar, mobile infrastructure and internet blackouts following Myanmar's coup, and imaginaries of AI futures in Malaysia and beyond.

Session 2

Truth, hallucination and social cohesion

AI systems are increasingly presented as neutral and authoritative “voices of reason” in decision-making, mediation and information synthesis. As their influence grows, they may displace human judgement, shape interpretations of history and acquire disproportionate authority in areas such as conflict resolution, healthcare, governance and public discourse.

- How might AI affect socio-economic trends, such as ageing, demographic change, belonging and the decentralisation of power? How could unequal access to and deployment of AI affect social cohesion?
- How do design tendencies, such as algorithmic deference, sycophancy and the “superhuman myth”, reshape trust, autonomy and accountability when people reduce their critical scrutiny of machine-generated reasoning?
- What is the potential impact of AI’s epistemic authority on Malaysian society?
- Could there be safeguards in place to preserve human agency, critical thinking and ethical judgement in an era where AI increasingly speaks with the voice of reason?

Moderator



Nabila Hussain

Director of Government Affairs and Public Policy
Microsoft

Nabila is responsible for leading Microsoft’s efforts in Malaysia across a spectrum of policy areas, including artificial intelligence, data governance, digital infrastructure and cybersecurity. She previously led Southeast Asian public policy at Cloudflare and established the technology policy division at the Social & Economic Research Initiative. She also led public affairs at Micron Technology (Malaysia). She serves as chair of Architects of Diversity Malaysia, a youth-led non-profit advancing racial and religious cohesion.

Speakers



Vinorra Shaker

Head of the School of Psychology
Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation (APU)

Vinorra's research interests include cyberpsychology, digital mental health and ethical AI. Under her leadership, APU launched Southeast Asia's first Master of Applied Psychology in Cyberpsychology, bringing together psychological science, AI, virtual reality, cybersecurity and digital innovation to examine how emerging technologies shape human behaviour, identity, mental health and society. She has contributed to Malaysia's national policy agenda on cybercrime and responsible technology.



Jason Wee

Executive Director
Architects of Diversity (AOD)

Wee is the co-founder of AOD, a youth-led non-profit organisation working towards a peaceful, equitable and inclusive Malaysia. Under his leadership, AOD empowers leaders and communities to pursue systemic change and serves as the secretariat for Malaysia's All-Party Parliamentary Group on Racial and Religious Harmony. He also hosts English-language programmes on Bernama TV, including *The Nation and The World*.



Prof Andrew Campbell

Chair of Cyberpsychology Research Group
University of Sydney
Australia

Dr Campbell is a pioneer in digital mental health and chairs Australia's first Cyberpsychology Research Group within the Faculty of Medicine and Health. Drawing on more than two decades of clinical, teaching and research experience, he examines techno-ethics, psychologically safe design, and the effects of AI, social media, gaming and immersive technology on mental health and human behaviour. He leads initiatives including MyCircle, a moderated group counselling platform developed with yourtown and Kids Helpline.

Session 3

Governance in a human-machine region

AI has become a catalyst for national development, prompting countries to craft strategies that harness its industrial and developmental potential. Governing the technology requires international collaboration, whether in hardware development or platform production. Yet systems developed outside domestic ecosystems can be difficult to govern, particularly as countries seek both to spur innovation and to remain competitive amid technological transformation.

- What are a nation's priorities for international engagements in their respective AI strategies?
- Does the absence of binding, coordinated AI safety governance weaken the region's ability to exercise sovereignty over technologies that increasingly shape economic, social and security outcomes?
- Why do technology companies publicly resist binding rules while privately seeking regulatory certainty and cross-border alignment? How can ASEAN and its dialogue partners turn this dynamic into collective leverage rather than fragmented compliance?
- How should Malaysia contribute or lead in AI safety governance and what should be prioritised?

Moderator



Samantha Khoo

Researcher, Cyber and Technology Policy
ISIS Malaysia

Khoo's work focuses on cybersecurity, AI governance, social media regulation and digital safety in Southeast Asia. She researches the security, governance and rights implications of emerging technologies, with particular attention to online safety, platform accountability and regional digital governance. She has contributed research and policy input to national and regional discussions on AI governance, cybersecurity and technology regulation, and has published analyses of emerging digital policy challenges. She is also a policy group lead at the Centre for AI and Digital Policy, contributing to international policy work on AI governance, human rights and democratic accountability.

Speakers



Rohit Kumar

Managing Director
RiskAI Technologies GmbH

Rohit is the founder of RiskAI Technologies. He is an AI governance, risk and assurance expert with more than 15 years' experience building, deploying and governing AI systems across Europe, North America, Africa and Asia. His work spans national-scale public-sector AI transformation and governance programmes for major financial institutions collectively serving more than 50 million customers. He advises governments, boards and senior executives on AI accountability, safety and responsible deployment.



Darmain Segaran

Manager
AI Malaysia Berhad

Darmain is the manager of the AI Policy Lab at AI Malaysia [formerly the National AI Office], where he leads national initiatives on AI governance, regulation and policy. As the project lead for initiatives such as the AI Governance Bill and MY-AI Standards, his work focuses on policy interventions that shape AI governance frameworks, safety and standards-aligned regulatory approaches. He is also actively involved in regional engagements, including efforts to support the ASEAN Working Group on AI Governance and establish the ASEAN AI Safety Network.



Dr Tan Jun-E

Senior Research Associate
Khazanah Research Institute

Tan's current research interests include digital rights and AI governance in the contexts of Southeast Asia and Malaysia. She has also worked in the areas of environmental and climate policy, social and solidarity economy, as well as sustainable development in general.



Calvin Woo

Director
Malaysia Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution [MYCentre4IR]
MyDIGITAL Corporation

Woo leads MYCentre4IR, a multi-stakeholder platform established through a partnership between the Malaysian government and World Economic Forum. He oversees the centre's strategic workstreams on digital transformation and energy transition, driving national and regional policy development, multi-sectoral initiatives and thought leadership in emerging technologies. Before joining MyDIGITAL, he held leadership roles spanning digital innovation, partnerships and trade.

Notes

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