



Ooi Keat Gin

*Professor, Academy of Brunei Studies,
Universiti Brunei Darussalam*

Keynote Speaker

Ooi Keat Gin is currently professor of the modern history of Brunei/Borneo at the Academy of Brunei Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei and visiting professor of the Korean Institute of ASEAN Studies (KIAS), Busan University of Foreign Studies, Busan, South Korea.

An elected Fellow of the Royal Historical Society (London), he serves as associate editor of *Suvannabhumi: Multi-disciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, and honorary advisor of *International Journal of Asia Pacific Studies (IJAPS)*, both Scopus-listed peer-reviewed scholarly journals. Having an area of specialisation in Southeast Asia, his varied expertise ranged from wars and conflicts, sociocultural and socioeconomic history, biographical studies, urban colonial history to gender studies, modern Malay literature, food culture (street foods), underwater cultural heritage.

Recent book-length works, viz. co-authored, with V. T. King, *The Handbook of Southeast Asian Studies: Pioneers and Critical Thinkers. Parts I & II* (Springer) Part I: available online; with Cao Kim Lan, *Bao Ninh's Contribution to Vietnamese and World Literature: The Sorrow of War and his Short Stories* (Routledge, 2025); co-edited, with V. T. King, *Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Brunei* (Routledge, 2023); with Kathrina Mohd Daud, *Literature of Brunei: History, Culture, and Challenges* (Routledge, forthcoming); with Norainie Ahmad, *Women's Agency and the State in Contemporary Brunei* (Routledge, forthcoming). Single-authored volume, *Brunei and the British in the Nineteenth Century: Of a Seer-poet, an Adventurer, and the near extinction of an Ancient Malay Sultanate* (Routledge, forthcoming).



Muhammad Habib Dzakwan

Researcher, Department of International Relations, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Indonesia

Speaker - Session 1

Muhammad Habib Abiyan Dzakwan is a Researcher at the Department of International Relations, Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Indonesia. His research focuses on the intersection of foreign policy, economic security, and geoeconomics, with particular attention to Indonesia's strategic position amid U.S.-China competition and ASEAN's evolving economic architecture.

He holds a Master of Arts in International Economics and General International Relations from Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). His writings have appeared across academic, policy, and media platforms in Asia and beyond, including Asia Policy, ISEAS Fulcrum, East Asia Forum, and The Diplomat.

At CSIS, he is part of the research teams on Middle Power Cooperation on Critical Minerals, Indonesia's Strategic Dependence, and the Digital Silk Road in Southeast Asia. He frequently engages with leading policy and research communities across the United States, China, and the wider region.



Speaker - Session 1

Daniel Shields

*Ambassador (Retired) and Editorial Advisor,
Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*

Ambassador (Ret.) Daniel Shields, Editorial Advisor to the Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs, delivers presentations, teaches courses and conducts simulations relating to diplomacy and the Indo-Pacific region, collaborating with institutions including the University of Pennsylvania Penn Carey Law School.

Before he retired from the U.S. State Department in 2018, he served on detail starting in 2015 as Diplomatic Advisor to the Commandant at the U.S. Army War College.

At the request of the State Department, he left the Army War College for six months in 2017 to work as the Chargé d’Affaires (acting Ambassador) at the U.S. Mission to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Jakarta. He served as the U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam from 2011-14. He led Embassy Singapore as Chargé d’Affaires for over a year, mainly in 2009. He served as Political Minister Counselor at Embassy Beijing from 2004-07.

His earlier career assignments were in Southeast Asia, Japan, and China. He speaks Japanese and Chinese. He lives with his wife Sangeeta and daughter Sonali in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.



Speaker - Session 1

Arividya Arimuthu

Senior Fellow, Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS), Malaysia

Arividya Arimuthu is a Senior Fellow at ISIS Malaysia with over 20 years of experience in the Malaysian civil service. Her career spans pivotal roles in shaping Malaysia's trade and investment policies, advancing regional economic integration, strengthening defence diplomacy, and guiding strategic economic reforms.

A seasoned international trade negotiator and policy strategist, she also served as Malaysia's Chief Negotiator for the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). At ISIS Malaysia, Arividya's work focuses on the nexus between geopolitics and geoeconomics, with particular interest in Malaysia's 2025 ASEAN Chairmanship, WTO reforms, BRICS, and the evolving global economic order.

She regularly contributes to high level regional dialogues, including PRAXIS, and is widely recognised for her commitment to inclusive and sustainable development, strategic foresight, and evidence based policymaking in an increasingly complex global environment.



Speaker - Session 2

Dr Evi Nurvidya Ariffin

Senior Assistant Professor, Center for Advanced Research (CARE), Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Evi Nurvidya Ariffin is a Senior Assistant Professor at the Centre for Advanced Research (CARE), Universiti Brunei Darussalam, and an Adjunct Researcher at the Demographic Institute, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Indonesia.

With a PhD in Social Statistics specialising in Demography from the University of Southampton, UK, she has established herself as a leading expert in the field.

Her research delves into critical issues such as population ageing, disability, poverty, health, employment, financial adequacy, population mobility, ethnicity, family, and population dynamics. She has been concentrating her research on Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam.



Speaker - Session 2

Dr Noraini binti Zulkafli @ Zulkifli

Senior Lecturer, National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), Malaysia

Dr. Noraini binti Zulkifli @ Zulkafli is Acting Head of the Department of International Relations, Security, and Law at Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM). A senior academic and curriculum innovator, she leads teaching and research in international relations, strategic studies, border security, maritime strategy. and international political economy.

Her scholarship focuses on the Indo-Pacific, with particular expertise in the Straits of Malacca as a critical maritime chokepoint. She has designed and implemented curriculum frameworks that integrate multidimensional analysis across politics, economy, defence, and society, advancing Malaysia's role in global strategic discourse.

Dr. Noraini is widely recognised for transforming complex policy issues into clear, impactful teaching and research outputs. She has contributed to advancing Malaysia's perspectives on border security and maritime governance in international forums, while monitoring the next generation of defence and security scholars.

Her current work emphasises comparative theory in international relations and the evolving dynamics of Indo-Pacific governance, reflecting her long term vision of positioning Malaysia as a thought leader in global security and political economy.



Speaker - Session 2

Gabriel Yong

Lecturer, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), Universiti Brunei Darussalam

Mr. Gabriel Yong is a lecturer in the area of environmental systems and sustainable development at Universiti Brunei Darussalam.

With a background in geological geophysics (BSc, Reading) and environmental analysis and dynamics (MSc, Hull), his work over three decades has focused primarily on the complex interrelationships within human-environment systems in Brunei, Borneo, and the ASEAN region. He has served as a resource person for Brunei in regional projects on coastal environments and resources, integrated coastal management, maritime transport, environmental rights, migration and mobility, and disadvantaged women and gender mainstreaming.

He recently co-edited a book titled *Brunei and the Future Transformation of Southeast Asia*, which addresses the uncertainties caused by the ongoing transition in the global economic and political order, along with the associated tensions, conflicts, and potential existential threats, from a Bruneian perspective.

Currently, he is developing several initiatives with local and international partners to address social-cultural insecurity among high climate-risk communities in Brunei, including the development of innovative solutions through a blue urban lab.



Speaker - Session 3

Prof. Dr Dewi Fortuna Anwar

*Research Professor,
Research Center for Politics, National Research
and Innovation Agency (BRIN), Indonesia*

Dewi Fortuna Anwar is a Research Professor at the Research Center for Politics, National Research and Innovation Agency (PRP-BRIN), an Academician of the Social Science Commission of the Indonesian Academy of Sciences (KIS-AIPI), Chairman of the Board of Directors of The Habibie Center (THC) and Co-Founder of the Foreign Policy Community of Indonesia (FPCI). In 2001-2010 she was Deputy for Social Sciences and Humanities, Indonesian Institute of Sciences (IPSK-LIPI).

In 2010-2017 Dewi was Deputy Secretary for Political Affairs to the Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia. Dewi is the 8th Pok Rafeah Chairholder at IKMAS UKM in 2025; a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), NTU, Singapore in 2017-2018; a Distinguished Visiting Professor at SAIS, Johns Hopkins University in 2007. She has written widely on Indonesia's foreign policy, and ASEAN regional political and security issues.

Dewi sits and has sat in a number of national and international advisory boards i.a. Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) since 2019, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in 2010-2020, and the UN Secretary General Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters in 2008-2012. She obtained her PhD from Monash University, Melbourne, while her M.A. and B.A. (Hons) were from SOAS, University of London.



Speaker - Session 3

Pengiran Aki Ismasufian Pengiran Haji Ibrahim

Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank Brunei, Chair of the APEC Business Advisory Council Brunei (ABAC), and Chairman of Britain Brunei Business Forum

Pengiran Aki joined Standard Chartered Bank in April 2012 as Head of Corporate Strategic Initiatives. In December 2016, he was appointed Country Head, Global Banking with responsibility for the corporate banking business of Standard Chartered. In his role, he was responsible for establishing the segment and growing revenue exponentially as well as facilitating the government's strategic priorities in attracting FDIs and diversifying the economy. In 2019, he was appointed in his current position as Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Brunei. Prior to joining Standard Chartered, he was the Assistant Chief Executive Officer at the Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB), where his portfolios include heading Foreign Direct Investment division, Stakeholder Relations division, as well as Chairman's Office.

Pengiran Aki started his career with HSBC as part of the retail banking team. He has vast experience in facilitating major national strategic projects undertaken by the BEDB, worked as a business analyst, managing key stakeholder, and public relations, as well as marketing communications.

He is actively involved in numbers of business associations, and currently the Chairman of the Britain Brunei Business Forum. He is also a member of the Brunei Association of Banks. In January 2024, he was appointed as a member of ABAC representing Brunei in participating forums and council meetings relating to fostering economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development across the Asia-Pacific region.

He is a graduate from the University of Wales Institute Cardiff, United Kingdom and is married with one child. As a keen sportsman, he has represented the country in numerous competitive tennis tournaments including the renown Davis Cup, ATP Challengers, as well as Southeast ASEAN Games.



Speaker - Session 3

Dr Abdul Rahman Yaacob

*Assistant Professor and Researcher
Rabdan Security and Defence Institute (RSDI)
Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates*

Dr Abdul Rahman Yaacob is a former Research Fellow in the Southeast Asia Program at the Lowy Institute. He is currently an Academic Advisor to the ASEAN-Australia Defence Postgraduate Scholarship Program at the Australian National University and a Non-Resident Fellow at the Korea Institute for Maritime Strategy (KIMS).

His research focuses on Southeast Asia's defence and security dynamics, as well as the region's engagement with major powers. Dr Rahman earned his PhD at the National Security College, Australian National University, where his dissertation explored Singapore's defence policy and broader ASEAN strategic issues during the Cold War.

In May 2024, he became the first researcher to visit Cambodia's Ream Naval Base, resulting in the publication of Partnership of Convenience: Ream Naval Base and the Cambodia-China Convergence. He is also the lead author for Lowy Institute's recent publication "Southeast Asia Evolving Defence Partnership", which was published in August 2025.

Dr Rahman previously spent 18 years with the Government of Singapore, working in various security-related roles.