

ARI NEWS

ARI
ASIA RESEARCH INSTITUTE
National University of Singapore



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May 2026

Director's Foreword



Selamat Hari Raya!

Since joining ARI as Director in January, I have been struck by the sustained rhythm and breadth of activity across our events, clusters and programmes - from seminars, workshops and conferences to research outputs. Our events calendar has been especially vibrant, with a packed and fast-moving programme that has so far included:

[Planetary Experiments: Notes to a Theory of Technospheric Governance](#) - a talk by Orit Halpern, Lighthouse Professor and Chair of Digital Cultures at Dresden University of Technology on 12 March 2026; a lively presentation by Ah Eng Li, [Musical Migrations: Popular Musical Flows and Routes](#)

[Across Borders in East and Southeast Asia, 1960s–1980s](#) and roundtable discussion of Miles Kenney-Lazar's new book [Socialising Land: Plantations, Dispossession and Resistance in Laos](#).

Programme Highlights

Tansen Sen has been appointed Chair of the [Nalanda Professorship in India–China Studies](#) programme. He will commence his visiting appointment in April 2026, further strengthening research and teaching in India–China historical and contemporary relations.

Arabia–Asia Studies Programme

The Muhammad Alagil Distinguished Professorship in Arabia–Asia Studies hosted the third and final iteration of the ['Connecting Imaginaries' workshop series](#) (5–6 March 2026). Eighteen colleagues presented short papers and responses, exploring questions of imagination, connectivity, and intellectual exchange across Arabia–Asia contexts.

Research node on the Global Indo-Pacific

The Global Indo-Pacific node of the DIJ–ARI partnership hosted the Global Indo-Pacific Symposium (9–12 February 2026, Singapore), convening scholars to examine infrastructure, geopolitics, and regional transformation.

The node also announced recipients of the Global Indo-Pacific Global Mobility Fellowship, supporting new transregional research collaborations: <https://ari.nus.edu.sg/global-indo-pacific-global-mobility-fellowship/>

Several new grants have been awarded to ARI researchers and their teams. Elaine Ho is leading the project *Ageing Futures and Resource Environments of Foreign-born Singapore Residents*, supported by the Social Science and Humanities Research Thematic Grant (SSHR-TG). Brenda Yeoh and her team have secured funding from the Academic Research Council, Ministry of Education (ARC, MOE) for their project *Low-carbon communities and their futuring practices in Singapore*. In addition, Michael Charles Dunn, together with his project team including ARI Research Fellow Eric Kerr, has been awarded an MOE Tier 2 grant for the project *Epistemic Cultures in the Management of Chronic Illness in Singapore*. Congratulations to all of the awardees!

Recent publications by ARI scholars span urban life, gendered economies, and religious communities in Asia. [Rice Politics in Southeast Asia: Legacies of the Green Revolution](#) by Prof Jamie S. Davidson argues that Green Revolution legacies and rice import regimes explain durable rice protectionism in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia. [Dhaka, Everyday Imagination and the Subjective City](#) by Dr Tabassum Zaman examines everyday urban experiences in Dhaka; [Emergent Genders: Living Otherwise in Tokyo's Pink Economies](#) by Dr Michelle H. S. Ho explores alternative gender formations in Tokyo's informal economies; and [Communities of Sound: Religion, Displacement, and Caste in the Bay of Bengal](#) by Carola Lorea investigates religion, displacement, and caste through sonic practices in the Bay of Bengal.

ARI's Kenneth Dean, Elaine Ho and Stefan Hübner are among researchers involved in the new [NUS Centre for Computational Social Science and Humanities](#) (CSSH) that [was officially launched on 4 March](#). CSSH aims to address a diverse range of problems in areas such as social media, digital platforms, health and social care, environment, and heritage and culture.

In support of our scholars' professional development, we were fortunate to welcome photojournalist and National Geographic Explorer Michael Eko, who led a masterclass titled [How to Tell a Story Through Photos?](#) During the session, researchers brought images from their fieldwork and received one-on-one feedback on how to more effectively convey the essence of their work through visual storytelling.

And finally, 2026 marks a milestone anniversary year as ARI turns 25! Stay tuned for announcements about the events planned later in the year.



Vineeta Sinha
Director
Asia Research Institute

ARIscope

The case of the unsold carbon credits: Lessons from an early-REDD+ project in Southern Laos

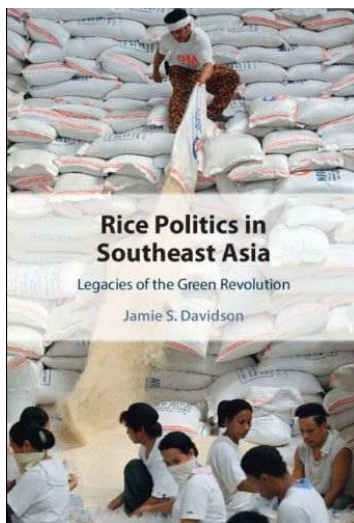


In mid-2010s, a REDD+ project was piloted with the aim of seeking continuous finance from the voluntary carbon market. Despite project verification, the carbon credits were never issued and sold. By [Yingshan Lau](#), Yunrui Ren, Khamsing Keothroumma and Sithong Thongmanivong.

[Read More](#)

New Books

Rice Politics in Southeast Asia: Legacies of the Green Revolution



Rice is the foremost foodstuff in terms of caloric intake for Southeast Asians and for bolstering national food security, yet writings on the region's politics have overlooked the crucial role rice production programs have played in shaping signal political and development outcomes.

In this comparative historical analysis, Jamie S. Davidson argues that the performance legitimacy stemming from the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, along with the formation of rice import regimes, best explain durable rice protectionism in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia, the region's large rice importers.

[Read More](#)

Researcher Profile

Yoga Prasetyo

Drawing from his own experience as a “left-behind” child in Tulungagung, East Java, Yoga Prasetyo works alongside Brenda Yeoh on the third wave of the Child Health and Migrant Parents in Southeast Asia (CHAMPSEA) project, contributing to ARI’s long-term exploration of how migration reshapes care, childhood, and family life across Southeast Asia.



'What continues to amaze me is that 18 years later, fate somehow led me to CHAMPSEA, now as a researcher studying the lives of individuals whose experiences closely echo fragments of my own.'

[Read More](#)

Featured Event

Global Indo-Pacific Symposium



Delegates at the Global Indo-Pacific Symposium, 9-12 February 2026, Singapore.

The Max Weber Foundation’s research node on 'Global Indo-Pacific: Connecting Histories and Futures' hosted the Global Indo-Pacific Symposium on 9–10 February. The event explored the Indo-Pacific’s complex history, spanning from the east coast of Africa to the

west coast of the Americas, and examined the region as both a maritime ecological system and a strategic geopolitical construct.

The symposium brought together 26 delegates and presenters from Germany, India, Japan, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, along with participants from Max Weber Foundation institutes in Delhi, London, Paris, Tokyo, and Washington; the Institute for Asian and African Studies at Humboldt University of Berlin; and ARI.

Funded by the Max Weber Foundation and hosted by ARI, with additional co-funding support, the symposium focused on two core themes: 'History, Heritage, Civilisation' (convened by Christina von Hodenberg and Tim Winter) and "Knowledge, Networks, and Institutions" (convened by James Sidaway and Franz Waldenberger), opening new avenues for research and collaboration.

Invited speakers included Mark Frost (University College London), Sdeshna Guha (Shiv Nadar University), David Malitz (DIJ Tokyo), Sumit Mandal (Muhammad Alagil Chair in Arabia Asia Studies, ARI), Jasnea Sarma (University of Zurich), and Simon Rowedder (NUS Southeast Asian Studies), alongside a seminar by Stephen Legg (University of Nottingham). ARI's postdoctoral fellows: Rani Singh, Yang Zezhou, Fatun Karib, and Yannis-Adam Allouache, also shared their ongoing work, exploring Indo-Pacific connections.

We would also like to congratulate the 13 recipients of the second Global Indo-Pacific Mobility Fellowship, which supports one- to two-month research stays at member institutes and fosters collaboration through workshops, publications, and other joint activities. For details, see: [Global Indo-Pacific Mobility Fellowship](#).

Bulletin Board

Call for Papers Submission Deadlines:

- **8 May 2026** | [Multidirectional Migration within Asia and to the World](#) (26-27 Nov 2026)
- **29 May 2026** | [Urbanization Beyond the City: The Making and Mobility of Concepts from Southeast Asia](#) (24-25 Sep 2026)

Staff Changes

ARI warmly welcomes Mallika Luezingler and Keiko Mishimura as Visiting Scholars this term.

At the same time, we bid farewell to Emily Soh and Walker DePuy as they conclude their time with us.

New Books

- [Rice Politics in Southeast Asia: Legacies of the Green Revolution](#) by Jamie S. Davidson. Published by Cambridge University Press.

- [*Dhaka, Everyday Imagination and the Subjective City*](#) by Tabassum Zaman. Published by Springer.
- [*Emergent Genders: Living Otherwise in Tokyo's Pink Economies*](#) by Michelle H. S. Ho. Published by Duke University Press.
- [*Communities of Sound: Religion, Displacement, and Caste in the Bay of Bengal*](#) by Carola Lorea. Published by Wesleyan University Press.

In the News

- [*From Malaysia to the World: The Asian Legacy of Pope Francis*](#) by Michel Chambon, *The Diplomat*
- Stefan Hübner was re-elected as [President of the Society of Floating Solutions](#)
- Yoga Prasetyo was featured in the ABC News Australia article '[These mums raise other people's children to secure a future for their own.](#)'
- Kishore Mahbubani was interviewed by Channel 4 for their feature '[The West is an emperor with no clothes](#)'.

Awards & Recognitions

- Kelzang T. Tashi — Honourable Mention, E. Gene Smith Inner Asia Book Prize (AAS) for *World of Wordly Gods* (Oxford University Press, 2023).
- [Justin Lau](#) — Best PhD Thesis Prize 2025, Australian Anthropological Society.
- Patrick Quinton-Brown — Two major awards for *Intervention before Interventionism* (Oxford University Press, 2024), including the Cecil B. Currey Book Award and Sussex International Theory Prize.
- [Zezhou Yang](#) — First Prize for Outstanding Thesis (South Asian Languages Research Association) for research on Chinese knowledge production and inter-Asian engagement.

Featured Video



'Unsettling: Chinese International Graduate Women Navigating (Im)mobility and Chrononormativity'. Speaker: Prof Fran Martin, The University of Melbourne. Jointly organised by the Department of Communications and New Media and the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore.

Connect with us!



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