



Inspire Me Talk: Always Curious About Tech By ET Tan

By

Ir. Muhammad Razif Mahboob Ali

He is an eETD co-opted committee member for 2025/2026 session.

On 9 April 2026, The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM) Penang Branch, through its Electronic Engineering Technical Division (eETD), successfully organised an industrial sharing session entitled “Always Curious About Tech” at the Multi-Purpose Hall (MPH), INTI International College Penang. The event was held with the support and collaboration of the School of Engineering (SOE) with a total of 63 participants attended the program, including 57 students and 6 lecturers from the School of Engineering, INTI International College Penang.



Figure 1: Students and academic staff attending the technical sharing session, followed by an opening introduction of the speaker's background (Mr.ET Tan) by the moderator (Ir. Muhammad Razif)

The technical talk was organised with the objective of exposing engineering students to the rapidly evolving landscape of technology and innovation while inspiring them through the personal and professional experiences of an accomplished technology innovator. The program also aimed to encourage students to cultivate curiosity, embrace lifelong learning, and appreciate the importance of innovation and problem-solving in engineering practice. The invited speaker, Mr. ET Tan, is a technology innovator and tech missionary with more than 30 years of experience in software engineering, wireless communications, secure data storage, and digital technology development.

Throughout his career, he has worked with multinational companies including Hewlett-Packard and Seagate in Scotland and Silicon Valley and has actively mentored startups through programs at Stanford University and the National University of Singapore (NUS) Enterprise incubator. During the sharing session, Mr. ET Tan shared his inspiring journey from his early years as a curious teenager to becoming an internationally recognised technology professional. He discussed how his passion for learning and curiosity about technology enabled him to explore software programming, people management, and innovation, ultimately contributing to the development of technologies that are widely used today.

The session also highlighted the importance of continuously asking questions and challenging existing ideas to create innovative solutions. Mr. ET Tan emphasised that technological advancements are often the result of individuals who are curious enough to ask why things cannot be improved and are willing to take action to make a difference.



Figure 2: Mr. ET Tan sharing his inspiring journey and encouraging students to embrace curiosity, innovation, and continuous learning.

The event featured an interactive question-and-answer session where students actively participated by raising questions related to the future of engineering and technology. Several students expressed concerns regarding the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation on future employment opportunities, including whether AI would eventually replace engineers and human jobs. Questions were also raised regarding the future skills required by engineering graduates and opportunities for conducting research and publishing technical papers through professional bodies such as The Institution of Engineers, Malaysia (IEM).



Figure 3: Students actively engaging in the Q&A session by discussing the future of engineering, AI, and research opportunities with the speaker.

In response, Mr. ET Tan explained that AI and automation will as usually transform industries and reshape job functions; however, they are unlikely to replace engineers entirely. Instead, engineers who continuously upgrade their technical competencies, develop interdisciplinary skills, and embrace emerging technologies will remain highly valuable in the future workforce. He further encouraged students to actively participate in research, innovation activities, and technical publications as part of their professional development journey.

The programme concluded with the presentation of a certificate of appreciation and honouring plaque to Mr. ET Tan in recognition of his valuable contribution and support towards engineering education and student development by INTI Penang Chief Executive Ms. Hemalatha Murugiah. The session ended with networking opportunities and a group photography session involving students, academic staff, and representatives from IEM eETD.

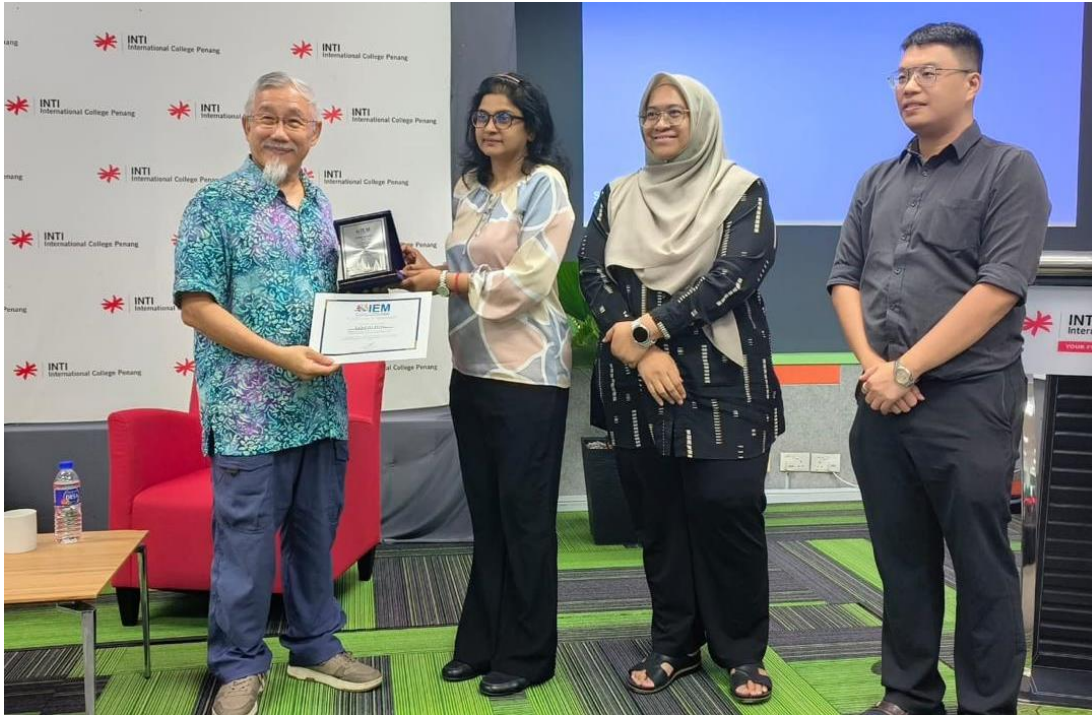


Figure 4: Certificate of appreciation given to Mr.ET Tan by INTI College Penang Chief Executive Ms. Hemalatha Murugiah with escorted by Head of Programme (EE) Mrs. Khadijah Kamarul and (ME) Dr.Lay Kok Keong.



Figure 5: Certificate and Plaque sponsored by The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM and eETD)

This program aligns closely with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) through knowledge sharing and lifelong learning, SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) by preparing future engineers with relevant skills and competencies, SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) by promoting technological innovation and engineering advancement, and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) through collaboration between educational institutions, industry professionals, and professional engineering bodies. Overall, the technical sharing session successfully achieved its objectives by inspiring students to remain curious, innovative, and adaptable in an increasingly digital and technology-driven world. The programme provided valuable insights into future technological trends and reinforced the importance of continuous learning, professional development, and active engagement in engineering and innovation activities.



Figure 6: Group photograph of the speaker, IEM eETD representatives, academic staff, and participating students following the successful completion of the programme.



Figure 7: Closing ceremony and tea break for the guest and lecturers in room LR605.