

# Virtual congress for tunnel experts

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THE World Tunnel Congress 2020 will be held fully online, paving the way for tunnelling academicians and industry players to be a part of the world's greatest virtual meeting of tunnellers.

The ITA-AITES World Tunnel Congress 2020 (WTC2020) was initially due to be held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre this month.

However, it has been moved to a digital platform as a result of global border control, restrictions on mass gathering and the requirement for physical distancing.

Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM) and the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA-AITES) decided to take the congress virtual by streaming the programmes on various dates from Sept 11 to 17 via a secure digital platform.

WTC2020 will kick off with opening speeches today by industry giants such as long-time IEM backers, WTC2020 organising chairman Dr Ooi Teik Aun, IEM president Ong Ching Loon and ITA president Prof Jenny Yan.

Themed "Innovation and Sustainable Underground Serving Global Connectivity," the congress will feature up to 300 technical presentations and talks focusing on these areas.

The main highlight will be a cross-discipline initiative at WTC, a landmark lecture by Prof Charles WW Ng who is chair professor of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and also

of Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and also

president of the International Society for Soil Mechanics and Geotechnical Engineering.

An illustrious speaker that has given keynote speeches worldwide, his talk on tunnel-to-tunnel and tunnel-to-pile foundation interactions is bound to liven the virtual congress.

There will also be interactive sessions as participants will get to pose questions and engage with speakers and presenters.

Despite WTC2020 being fully virtual, there will be up to 80 exhibitors present showcasing the latest in tunnelling trends via a digital gallery, complete with attendants ready to attend to visitors via chatrooms throughout the event.

WTC2020 will also feature two general assemblies at the end of the congress -- the ITA young members general assembly and 46th ITA general assembly.

It is a golden opportunity for the engineering fraternities in Malaysia as it brings the ingenuity and capacity in tunnelling to a global stage.

Malaysia's tunnelling icons include the 9.7km, two-storey Smart Tunnel the longest dual-function highway and storm water drainage tunnel in South-East Asia and the impressive Kajang and Putrajaya MRT lines.

These projects have given birth to many tunnelling innovations such as the Variable Density Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) and the autonomous TBM.

WTC2020 Digital is still open for registration.

For updates, go to [www.wtc2020.my](http://www.wtc2020.my) and for congress details, email Dr Ooi at [drtaooi@gmail.com](mailto:drtaooi@gmail.com)

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