

NUS launches two buildings named after Sea as it aims to drive AI, computing research

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THE National University of Singapore (NUS) on Tuesday (Jan 21) officially launched two buildings on campus following a S\$50 million donation made in 2021 by Singapore-headquartered tech giant Sea.

Sea Building and Sea Connect – which opened in 2022 and 2023, respectively – mark the university's leap in furthering innovations in artificial intelligence (AI) and computing, said NUS.

Sea Building houses 10 research labs and three teaching labs, and spans 17,102 square metres (sq m) over six floors, while Sea Connect houses two research labs and five teaching labs, with an area of 4,468 sq m over six floors. The facilities will drive NUS' research and collaboration in areas such as AI and data science.

Minister for Education Chan Chun Sing, who was the guest of honour at the event, indicated that such partnerships between industry and academia would be good

for Singapore. "If we can have more partnerships between industry and academia, with leading ideas from industry flowing into academia, and leading, cutting-edge ideas from academia flowing into industry in a fast and seamless way, I am quite sure that, notwithstanding our size, the Singapore ecosystem will continue to shine across the world," he said.

The various labs offer students and researchers a larger space and more infrastructure to work on their projects. For example, students can utilise the Makers@SoC Lab, while the Health Informatics Research Lab allows researchers to develop solutions in an open space with dual functions as a testing and showcase area.

As part of the university's move to develop its AI-centric programmes and initiatives, a new Bachelor of Computing in Artificial Intelligence will be introduced from the 2025 academic year onwards under the NUS School of Computing.

The current Bachelor of Com-

puting in Information Systems programme will be revamped into the Bachelor of Computing in Business Artificial Intelligence Systems.

Meanwhile, the College of Design and Engineering at NUS will also introduce a four-year direct-honours Bachelor of Engineering in Robotics and Machine Intelligence programme.

Sea's CEO Forrest Li said he hopes to continue supporting the tertiary institution. "We want (Sea Building and Sea Connect) to be a birthplace for the next wave of tech pioneers and startups that will change the world."

He added that the company intends to support NUS in attracting world-class faculty and students through scholarships, fellowships and professorships. "Industry and academia make powerful, complementary partners," said Li.

While academia pushes the boundaries of fundamental research, industry provides a platform to apply this research to real-world problems at scale, the CEO said.



From left: Sea chairman and CEO Forrest Li, Education Minister Chan Chun Sing, and NUS Board of Trustees chairman Hsieh Fu Hua at the official opening of Sea Building and Sea Connect. PHOTO: ST