

QS Asia University Rankings 2026 - Indian Institutions Slip Amid Rising East and Southeast Asian Competition

November 5, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



QS Asia University Rankings 2026 Latest News

- The **QS World University Rankings: Asia 2026**, released by global higher education analyst QS Quacquarelli Symonds, **revealed a decline in the rankings of most top Indian institutions.**
- Despite improvement in absolute scores, **9 out of 10 leading Indian universities**—including seven IITs—**fell in rank due to stronger performance by universities from China, Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Malaysia.**

Key Highlights of QS Asia Rankings 2026

- **Top performers in Asia:**
 - **The University of Hong Kong** topped the rankings, overtaking Peking University (China), which slipped to second place.

- National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) shared the third position.
- **East and Southeast Asian universities**—especially from China, South Korea, and Malaysia—showed consistent upward mobility, driven by investment in research collaboration and internationalisation.

- **Performance of Indian institutions:**

- Among the top Indian universities, **IIT Delhi** retained its position as India's best institution but fell 15 places to 59th (from 44th in 2025).
- **IIT Bombay** witnessed the sharpest decline, dropping 23 places to 71st.
- Other IITs—**Madras, Kanpur, and Kharagpur**—also recorded their lowest ranks in recent years.
- The **only** Indian institution showing **improvement** was **Chandigarh University**, rising from 120 to 109.

Reasons Behind India's Relative Decline

- **Intensifying regional competition:**

- Universities in **China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Malaysia** have significantly improved in research productivity, faculty resources, and global engagement.
- QS noted a “**clear eastward concentration**” of top performance in higher education.

- **Expanded ranking scope and competition:**

- **The 2026 rankings included 1,529 institutions**, adding 552 new entrants.
- **China added 261 new institutions**—more than any other country—while **India added 137, bringing its total to 294.**
- The expansion **increased competition and volatility** in the results.

Decline in Key Performance Metrics of Indian Institutes

- **Citations per paper (research impact):**

- IIT Delhi (31.5), IIT Bombay (20.0), and IIT Madras (20.3) scored significantly below Asian peers scoring in the high 90s.
- Indicates **lower research visibility and fewer highly cited publications.**

- **Faculty-student ratio:**

- **IITs face resource constraints and large class sizes.**
- Scores range from 16.5 (IIT Kharagpur) to 40.9 (IIT Delhi), compared to 80–90 among top Asian universities.

- **Internationalisation metrics:**

- Poor performance in **International Student Ratio (ISR) and International Faculty indicators.**
- IITs scored between 2.5 (IIT Kharagpur) and 12.3 (IIT Roorkee).
- **Lack of foreign student or faculty participation** limits global exposure and cross-border collaboration.

Positive Aspects

- Indian institutions maintained strong scores (80–90 range) in:
 - **Academic reputation**
 - **Employer reputation**
 - **Staff with PhD**
 - **Papers per faculty**
- India continues to expand its footprint with 294 universities represented in the 2026 rankings, the **second highest** in Asia after China.

Comparative Regional Trends

- **China and Hong Kong:** Sustained dominance with large-scale investment in R&D.
- **South Korea:** Universities like Yonsei and Korea University show upward mobility due to strategic investment in international partnerships.
- **Malaysia:** Institutions such as Universiti Malaya and Universiti Putra Malaysia improved rankings, aided by faculty-student ratio and international faculty/student metrics.

Way Forward for Indian Institutions

- **Enhance research impact:** Focus on high-quality publications and internationally co-authored research to improve citations per paper.
- **Improve faculty-student ratio:** Recruit more faculty and expand infrastructure to reduce student load per teacher.
- **Promote internationalisation:** Facilitate foreign student exchange, visiting faculty, and global academic collaborations.
- **Strengthen research ecosystem:** Incentivise interdisciplinary and industry-linked research, ensuring global visibility.
- **Policy support:** Government and institutions must align policies with National Education Policy (**NEP**) 2020 goals of global competitiveness and innovation.

Conclusion

- The QS Asia Rankings 2026 **underscore a concerning trend for Indian higher education**—while absolute performance has improved, relative standing has fallen due to stronger regional competitors.
- To climb the global ladder, **India must bridge gaps in research impact, faculty resources, and internationalisation**, aligning with the NEP 2020 vision of making Indian universities globally competitive and innovation-driven.

Source: IE

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/qs-asia-university-rankings/>

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