

India's top IITs slip as universities from China, Singapore surge ahead: QS Asia Rankings 2026

Nine of India's top 10 institutions, including seven IITs, see sharp rank falls in QS Asia 2026 list even as their scores improve — a sign of stronger competition from East and Southeast Asia.

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Updated: November 5, 2025 05:53 AM IST

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In the QS Asia Rankings 2026, top Indian institutes making it to the list are IIT Delhi, IISc Bangalore, IIT Madras, and IIT

QS Asia Rankings 2026 Complete List: All but one of the top 10 Indian institutions in the QS rankings of Asian universities for 2026, including seven IITs, have seen their ranks fall sharply this year, with institutions in China, Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore outperforming them.

In the 2026 edition of the [QS World University Rankings](#): Asia, five IITs among the top 10 Indian institutions– [Delhi](#), Madras, Bombay, Kanpur, and Kharagpur – recorded their lowest rank in recent years.

IIT Delhi, which is the country’s top ranked institution for the second year in a row, stood in the 59th position this year, a steep fall of 15 ranks from last year’s 44. From 2021 to 2025, the institute’s rank has ranged from 44 to 47.

Among the top 10 Indian institutions, IIT Bombay saw the sharpest fall in ranking, dropping by 23 positions this year. Standing fourth among Indian institutions, IIT Bombay was ranked 71 in the 2026 edition, down from 48 in 2025. IIT Bombay was the highest ranked among Indian institutions from at least 2021 to 2024, with its rank ranging from 37 in 2021 to 42 in 2022, and 40 in the two years after that.

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The only Indian institution in the top 10 that saw an improvement in ranking compared to last year was [Chandigarh](#) University, a private university, with a rank of 109 this year, up from 120 last year.

Global higher education analysts QS Quacquarelli Symonds released the 2026 rankings for Asian universities on Tuesday.

QS Asia Rankings 2026: Top 10 Institutions

Top 10 Asian Universities 2026

2026 Rank	Institution
1	The University of Hong Kong
2	Peking University

2026 Rank	Institution
=3	National University of Singapore
=3	Nanyang Technological University
5	Fudan University
6	The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
=7	The Chinese University of Hong Kong
=7	City University of Hong Kong
9	Tsinghua University
10	The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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Globally, institutions in Hong Kong, Mainland China, and Singapore dominate the top 10 ranks, with The University of Hong Kong taking the first position, putting China's Peking University in second place this year from last year's first. The National University of Singapore and the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore ranked joint third. In addition to these countries, institutions from South Korea and Malaysia made it to the top 20 ranks.

Check | [Top 10 Indian Colleges as per QS Asia University Rankings 2026](#)

“The 2026 edition of the QS Asia University Rankings reflects a clear eastward concentration of top performance, driven by sustained improvement in East and Southeast Asian higher education systems,” QS said in response to questions from [The Indian Express](#).

Referring to Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Malaysia, QS added: “In contrast, Indian institutions — while retaining strong reputations — face stiffer competition from these countries, which are outperforming them in research impact, faculty resources, and international engagement.”

Also Read | [At 17, Mumbai University among India's top 20 in QS World Ranking 2026](#)

The decline in ranks among nine of the top 10 Indian institutions is relative – their total scores have all improved compared to last year, but they have dropped ranks relative to other

institutions in Asia.

For the rankings, QS considers scores in academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty-student ratio, international research network, citations per paper, papers per faculty, staff with PhD, international faculty, international students, and inbound and outbound exchange students.

On academic reputation, employer reputation, staff with PhD, and papers per faculty, the IITs fare well, scoring in the 80s and 90s.

On the areas where Indian institutions have seen a decline in their performance relative to others in the region, QS pointed to the 'citations per paper' metric (a measure of research impact), faculty-student ratio, and metrics on 'internationalisation' like the 'international student ratio' metric.

On 'citations per paper', QS said that top Indian institutions "saw weaker scores in this metric — for instance, IIT Delhi (31.5), IIT Bombay (20.0), and IIT Madras (20.3) – indicating reduced research visibility or fewer highly cited outputs compared to regional peers." While these three IITs have scored higher on this metric than last year by a few points each, they have not caught up with institutions in the global top 10 ranks that have scored in the high 90s on this metric.

"Declines or stagnation in this indicator are visible across the IITs...compared with stronger regional peers who are accelerating research collaborations and publication output," QS said.

On the 'faculty-student ratio' metric (number of faculty divided by number of students; higher the score the better), QS said that "many IITs continue to face challenges here, with scores ranging from 16.5 (IIT Kharagpur) to 40.9 (IIT Delhi), reflecting large class sizes and resource constraints relative to leading Asian universities." On this metric as well, the top 10 institutions in the region have scores in the late 80s or 90s.

The IITs have also fared poorly on 'international student ratio (ISR)', which is the ratio of international students to the total student strength. While four universities in the top 10 globally have scored a full 100 on this metric, the IITs in the Indian top 10 list have scores ranging from 2.5 (IIT Kharagpur) to 12.3 (IIT Roorkee), despite recording marginal improvements in scores on this metric compared to last year.

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“The IITs’ limited international student and faculty presence is reflected in ISR scores...keeping them at a structural disadvantage compared with Asian peers in Singapore, Hong Kong, or South Korea,” QS added.

QS also said that this year’s edition of the Asia rankings has “expanded significantly”, adding over 550 new institutions, and this broader scope has increased competition and “introduced more volatility into the results.”

The rankings include 1,529 institutions. Of the 552 institutions that feature in the rankings for the first time this year, China has added the highest number of 261, trumping India which had added the highest number for the past two years. India has 137 institutions that featured in the ranking for the first time this year, taking the country’s total to 294, against China’s 395.

Top 10 Indian institutions in 2026 and their rank in previous years

Top 10 Indian Institutions in 2026 and Their Rank in Previous Years

Institute/Year	2026	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
IIT Delhi	59	44	46	46	45	47
IISc	64	62	58	52	56	56
IIT Madras	70	56	53	53	54	50
IIT Bombay	71	48	40	40	42	37
IIT Kanpur	77	67	63	66	64	72
IIT Kharagpur	77	60	59	61	60	58
Delhi University	95	81	94	85	77	71
Chandigarh University	109	120	149	185	271-280	-
IIT Roorkee	114	108	116	114	109	103
IIT Guwahati	115	104	111	124	119	117

Of the 157 Indian institutions that featured in the QS Asia rankings last year, 105 institutions (67%) have seen a drop in their 2026 rank.

While institutions in China, Hong Kong and Singapore have retained their positions near the top, QS said that South Korea “shows strong upward mobility, with multiple universities (e.g., Yonsei University, Korea University) climbing steadily and now filling positions in the top 20 — reflecting strategic investment in research collaboration and internationalisation.”

They also pointed to Malaysia as being among the “regional climbers”, with universities like Universiti Malaya and Universiti Putra Malaysia improving their ranks, driven by gains in faculty-student ratio, and international faculty and student metrics.

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