IISc Bangalore among top 30 Asian universities in THE 2016 ranking –
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IISc Bangalore jumps 10 places to 27th rank in Times Higher Education Asia rankings; 16 universities from India find place in top 200

New Delhi: The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru found a place in the top 30 Asian universities—the best yet for an Indian institution—in the Asian University Ranking 2016 by the UK’s Times Higher Education (THE).

According the rankings published on Monday, IISc jumped 10 places to be ranked 27th among the top 200 universities in Asia. Overall, 16 universities from India found a place in the top 200 list and eight of the top 10 Indian universities improved their rankings.

In Asia, the National University in Singapore was ranked the best, followed by Nanyang Technological University (also in Singapore) and Peking University in China. Among the top 10 Asian universities, Singapore, China and Hong Kong have two universities each, Japan has one and South Korea three.

Universities from 22 Asian countries participated in the ranking, which counts parameters such as learning environment, research, research citations, international outlook and industry income.

While IISc maintains its standing as the best institution in India, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay (43) was No. 2 and IIT Kharagpur (51) was the third best from India. The two IITs jumped 14 and 18 places, respectively, in 2016 from their ranking in 2015.

IIT Guwahati and Jadavpur University, which were not in the top 100 list last year came in at 80 and 84.

Attributing the rise to a focus on excellence in education and research, IIT Bombay director Devang Khakhar said, “rigorous academic programmes and strong linkages with industry prepare our students very well for employment. We have been successful in recruiting excellent faculty members and our healthy faculty-student ratio is another major factor for moving up in the rankings”.
The ranking agency acknowledged the improved performance of Indian universities.

India is the leading South Asian country in the ranking, with 16 universities featuring in the top 200, ranking editor Phil Baty said in an email.

India’s “leading institution, the Indian Institute of Science, makes the top 30 for the first time, in 27th place”, he said.

“India has made great gains in this list in recent years—just three institutions appeared in the top 100 in 2013—but the nation still has a long way to go to compete with Asia’s leading university nations, such as China, Japan and South Korea, and scores particularly weakly on internationalization,” Baty said.

Indian universities traditionally lag behind on internationalization parameters. International faculties, international students and exchange programmes have been poor.

While government institutions are yet to improve the situation despite a clear demand from experts and industries, some private universities have started focusing on it.

For instance, in the QS Asian University rankings published last week, Amrita University in Kerala, promoted by spiritual guru Mata Amritanandamayi, did very well in all aspects of internationalization—much better than the elite IITs.

Of late, institutions and the government are trying to bring heterogeneity to campuses. IITs, Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) and some other leading universities have now started making formal efforts to recruit both students and faculty staff from abroad to improve the international outlook.

The human resource development ministry has started new schemes through which it is inviting hundreds of top academics to teach and carry out research for short durations—a move that authorities believe will give the institutions more exposure to global standards, improve rankings and help improve the brand of Indian schools.

Although Baty pointed to the poor performance of several South Asian institutions due to a lack of funding and clear policy direction, he welcomed the Indian government’s move to select 20 institutions, across the public and private sector, for special funding to help them compete on the global stage.

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