The Star

M’sia up in ‘Best Student Cities’ ranking

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Student pick: Kuala Lumpur is among the top 100 best cities to study in. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

Kuala Lumpur has risen one place to 23rd, while the other two Malaysian cities, Subang Jaya (109th) and Shah Alam (123rd), rank outside the top 100 in the latest QS Best Student Cities ranking.

Despite declines in the affordability indicator, all three Malaysian cities remain among the top 50 for affordability.

Kuala Lumpur also ranks 17th for Employer Activity and 20th for Rankings.

Eight of the top 10 cities for affordability are Asian, with Indonesia excelling in the metric. Three of the country’s four cities rank among the top 10 for affordability.The 2025 edition of the ranking features 36 Asian cities, with 27 rising, four remaining stable, and only five dropping. China (mainland) has the highest number of ranked cities with eight, followed by Taiwan with five, and India and Indonesia with four each.

QS senior vice president Ben Sowter said it was encouraging to see 36 Asian cities shine for their increasingly diverse student populations, supported by expanding employment networks and enriched by a wealth of history and culture.

“We are thrilled to celebrate Asia’s outstanding performance in this year’s Best Student Cities ranking, with the majority of its cities climbing the table,” he said in a press release.

QS Quacquarelli Symonds global higher education analysts published the 12th edition of the Best Student Cities ranking on June 18, comparing 150 premier study destinations across indicators related to student feedback, universities, affordability, liveability, employment and diversity.

London remains the world’s “Best Student City” for the sixth consecutive edition, followed by Tokyo in second and Seoul in third. Munich climbs to fourth while Melbourne drops to fifth.

Tokyo also leads globally in Employer Activity, while Seoul is the City with the Highest Concentration of Ranked Universities, with 23.

Driven by enhanced student diversity, growing affordability and burgeoning international appeal, all but one of China’s (mainland) eight ranked cities have climbed the table in this year’s ranking, with Beijing taking the top spot, placing 31st.

With intra-regional student mobility on the rise, the most popular Chinese cities are bound to see a steady increase in international students.

Japan continues to struggle to attract overseas talent, with a notable shortage of international faculty and students – a result of prolonged protection measures following the Covid-19 pandemic.

By expanding English-taught programmes and reducing financial and bureaucratic barriers, South Korea hopes to position itself as one of the top 10 study-abroad destinations globally, aiming to attract 300,000 international students by 2027.