

By **REBECCA RAJAENDRAM**
educate@thestar.com.my

LOCAL universities featured in the latest edition of the QS Asia University Rankings have promised to improve and climb to the top of the table.

The five Malaysia's research universities have moved up and are now listed within the top 50 in Asia. (See table).

Leading the way is Universiti Malaya (UM) which now ranks 24, rising three spots from 27 last year.

UM deputy vice-chancellor (academic and international) Prof Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud said Malaysia's oldest varsity would use the ranking to continue to improve itself on the world stage.

He said that UM had either improved or maintained its score in all the indicators used for the rankings.

"The most notable improvements are in Paper Publications Per Faculty and Citations Per Paper, where UM improved by 16 places and 126 places respectively," he added.

Prof Awang Bulgiba said the students and staff can be credited for the improvement in these rankings, as well as UM's strategic plan.

"The plan necessitated investments by UM in its brand image, internationalisation, academic programmes and research.

"Special attention was paid to quality over quantity in its strategic planning over the last seven years and we are now seeing the fruits of this planning.

"In order to improve its rankings, UM is now embarking on a mid-term review of its plans by adjusting and responding to the financial challenges that have arisen over the last two years.

The financial constraints are posing new challenges to UM but the varsity is rising to the occasion and

Varsities aim to boost rankings further

Top 10 Malaysian universities in QS University Rankings: Asia 2018

Institution	2018 Rank	2017 Rank
Universiti Malaya (UM)	24	27
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	36	49
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	43	55
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	46	51
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	49	63
Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)	101	127
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	131	137
Taylor's University	150	179
Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM)	158	181
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)	163	151

Source: QS Quacquarelli Symonds

will try its best to continue improving," he said.

The regional university ranking released on Monday by QS Quacquarelli Symonds, the global higher education analysts, saw Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) ranked 36, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) ranked 43, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) ranked 46 and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) ranked 49.

The varsities improved their rankings compared to last year.

A total 27 Malaysian universities,

both public and private, are in the top 400, out of 11,900 universities in Asia.

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datin Paduka Dr Aini Ideris said the university was committed to strengthening their academic and research processes in order to become a world-class university.

"UPM has remained the second best university in the country for two years running and has been continuously improving its position since it first entered the rankings in 2014 at number 76.

She also said that UPM had the most PhD-qualified lecturers in Malaysia and the second highest scores in Malaysia for the Inbound and Outbound Exchange Students indicators.

"This achievement is expected to further enhance UPM's reputation and ultimately allow us to contribute significantly to the development of society and well-being of the nation," she added.

Two private universities are also featured among the top 200 in the region, namely Taylor's University (150) and Multimedia University (179).

Both climbed up from 179 and 193 respectively.

Taylor's University vice-chancellor and president Professor Michael Driscoll said the jump in its rankings shows that the university is on the right path towards providing better quality education to its students.

"Taylor's University has maintained its distinctive strength in teaching quality and excellent student experience, a high level of graduate employment, a world class campus, an internationally diverse staff and student body and a strong international outlook, in addition to our outstanding global reputation among the academic partners and employers," he added.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh congratulated all

the Malaysian universities that made it into this year's edition of the rankings.

QS research director Ben Sowter said this year sees Malaysian institutions record their best-ever performance and becoming more competitive with their regional counterparts.

"The table is led for the first time by Singapore's Nanyang Technological University. It takes the number-one position from the National University of Singapore (which now ranks second)," said Sowter.

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology is at third position, one place up, from last year.

He also said that there was one new entrant into the top 10 this year - China's Fudan University. It moved up four spots and is now ranked seventh.

This year, QS ranked 425 universities from 17 Asian nations, the most it has ranked to date.

There are 10 indicators used to determine the rankings - Academic Reputation, Employer Reputation, Faculty/Student Ratio, Papers per Faculty, Citations per paper, International Faculty Ratio, Staff with PhD, International Student Ratio, Inbound Exchange Students and Outbound Exchange Students.

To see the full methodology and rankings table, visit www.TopUniversities.com.