



Hubs of East Asian science

A special issue explores the booming research landscapes of Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan.

Science is booming in many parts of Asia — but it is too easy to focus only on the giant economies and overlook other research powers. This special issue shines the spotlight on five strong science centres in East Asia: Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan. This group is incredibly diverse in priorities and approaches, but all see science and technology as keys to their future. Together, they have an expanding role in the global research enterprise.

An infographic on page 500 explores the investments that members of this group have made in research and development, and how they have raised their international standing in spending and research output. The breadth of their science and technology programmes is illustrated by profiles of ten remarkable researchers who are advancing science — ranging from genome editing to green-energy development — and supporting their communities (see page 502). Two Comment articles chart paths for

research in South Korea and Malaysia. Physicist and presidential science adviser Han Woong Yeom argues on page 511 that South Korea must spend more on basic research and infrastructure while also addressing public concerns such as health care and air pollution. Asma Ismail, president of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia, issues a call on page 514 for scientists to further progress in social as well as economic areas, from green technology to the Halal economy. And an Editorial on page 485 urges science officials across the world to address local needs.

The growth of science in this region is a lure for scientists. A Careers Feature on page 625 traces the path of four researchers who left East Asia to pursue PhDs and postdoctoral research, but have now returned to develop their research.

With their substantial investments and strengths, these five research centres in East Asia are working to secure their future as major forces in the global science landscape. ■



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