

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 April 2026 — London

The Asian Awards Top 100 2026: The Definitive Ranking of the World's Most Influential Asians

China's Xi Jinping holds number one. Gautam Adani overtakes Mukesh Ambani. Middle Eastern leaders enter the list for the first time.

The Asian Awards today publishes its 2026 edition of the **Top 100** — the definitive ranking of the most influential Asians in the world. First published in 2013 and updated regularly since, the list spans politics, business, cinema, music, sport, and philanthropy across Asia and the global Asian diaspora.

The 2026 edition reflects a decade of structural change in Asia: a new political settlement across East and South Asia, Asian technology firms at the centre of the global economy, and Asian voices dominating culture, sport, and music in ways that would have been unimaginable when we started. For the first time, the list incorporates leaders from the Middle East — reflecting the reality that West Asia sits squarely within the Asian continent and commands capital and influence that rewrite the power hierarchy.

The Top Ten

| # | Name | Country | Category |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|----------|
| 1 | Xi Jinping | China | Politics |
| 2 | Narendra Modi | India | Politics |
| 3 | Mohammed bin Salman | Saudi Arabia | Politics |
| 4 | Mohamed bin Zayed | UAE | Politics |
| 5 | Sanae Takaichi | Japan | Politics |
| 6 | Gautam Adani | India | Business |
| 7 | Jensen Huang | Taiwan | Business |
| 8 | Mukesh Ambani | India | Business |
| 9 | Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani | Qatar | Politics |

10 Amit Shah

India

Politics

Key Findings

Politics dominates. Thirty-four of the Top 100 are political figures — heads of state, prime ministers, and their closest operators. Politics is weighted most heavily in our algorithm because it answers the simplest question about influence: who can out-manoeuvre whom.

The Middle East arrives. For the first time, the list includes fourteen entries from West Asia, spanning Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Israel, and Iran. Three Gulf rulers sit within the Top 10.

Gautam Adani reclaims Asia's richest. In April 2026, Gautam Adani overtook Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest person with a net worth of \$92.6bn, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. He enters the list at number six.

Technology power is Asian. Jensen Huang (NVIDIA), C.C. Wei (TSMC), Sundar Pichai (Alphabet), Satya Nadella (Microsoft), Lip-Bu Tan (Intel), Neal Mohan (YouTube), Shantanu Narayen (Adobe), and Arvind Krishna (IBM) between them run the infrastructure layer of the global economy.

Twenty-six countries represented. India leads with 33 entries, followed by China (13), South Korea (10), Japan (5), and the UAE (4). The list spans the full breadth of the Asian continent and the global Asian diaspora.

Cultural reach, measured. Virat Kohli is the most-followed Asian on Instagram (274 million). BLACKPINK's Lisa is the most-followed Asian woman (106 million). Shohei Ohtani, Japan's four-time MLB MVP, is the most decorated Asian athlete of the era.

Methodology: The Power Stack

Every entry is scored against five weighted factors, calibrated by a judging panel drawn from business, media, culture, and politics.

| Factor | Weight | What It Measures |
|--------------------|--------|---|
| Political Power | x3 | Law-making, war-making, market-moving authority |
| Economic Leverage | x2 | Wealth, market cap controlled, capital deployed (Bloomberg benchmark) |
| Cultural Reach | x1.5 | Verified audience only — followers, streams, box office |
| Strategic Leverage | x1.5 | Ability to shape outcomes beyond direct remit |
| Panel Judgement | x1 | Legacy, gravitas, intangibles (capped) |

Politics carries the heaviest weight because a single decision from a head of state can shift markets, redraw borders, or commit a nation to war. A billionaire can move capital, but not law. A film star commands attention, but not policy. The ranking reflects that hierarchy.

What's New in 2026

- **Middle Eastern leaders added** — MBZ (UAE) at #4, MBS (Saudi Arabia) at #3, Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (Qatar) at #9, Mohammed bin Rashid (Dubai) at #14, alongside Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, and Israel.
- **Sovereign wealth fund chiefs recognised** — Yasir Al-Rumayyan (Saudi PIF) at #15, Khaldoon Al Mubarak (Mubadala) at #28, Mansour bin Zayed at #27, Ho Ching (Temasek) at #72.
- **Sanae Takaichi** enters at #5 as Japan's first female Prime Minister.
- **Amit Shah** debuts at #10 — India's Home Minister and Narendra Modi's closest political operator.
- **Shohei Ohtani** ranked appropriately at #64 — four-time MLB MVP, back-to-back World Series champion.
- **BLACKPINK's Lisa, Jennie, Rosé, and Jisoo** all in the top 70, reflecting measurable global reach.
- **Ratan Tata** has been removed following his passing in October 2024.

Statement from the Founder

"Asian influence has fundamentally rewritten the global hierarchy. When we started The Asian Awards in 2010, the idea of an Asian CEO running Microsoft, Google, YouTube, Adobe, and the world's most valuable chipmaker would have sounded fanciful. Today it is just a Tuesday. The 2026 Top 100 is an honest attempt to measure that power — and to recognise that influence is earned in parliaments, boardrooms, stadiums, and streaming charts alike."

— Paul Sagoo OBE, Founder, The Asian Awards

About The Asian Awards

The Asian Awards is the world's pre-eminent awards ceremony honouring people of Asian heritage across all fields of endeavour. Founded in 2010 by Paul Sagoo OBE via Lemon Group, the awards celebrate extraordinary contributions across Business, Cinema, Philanthropy, Sport, Arts & Culture, Public Service, and more. Past recipients include Sachin Tendulkar, A.R. Rahman, Priyanka Chopra, Malala Yousafzai, Sir Li Ka-shing, and Dame Zaha Hadid.

The 10th Asian Awards will take place on **26 September 2026 at the Fairmont Hotel, Mumbai**, marking the first time the ceremony has been held in India.

— ENDS —

Notes to Editors

The full Asian Awards Top 100 2026 list, including justifications for each entry and interactive breakdowns by category and country, is available at theasianawards.com/top_100.html

High-resolution imagery and further quotes are available on request.

Press Contact

Paul Sagoo OBE, Founder

paul@theasianawards.com

theasianawards.com