

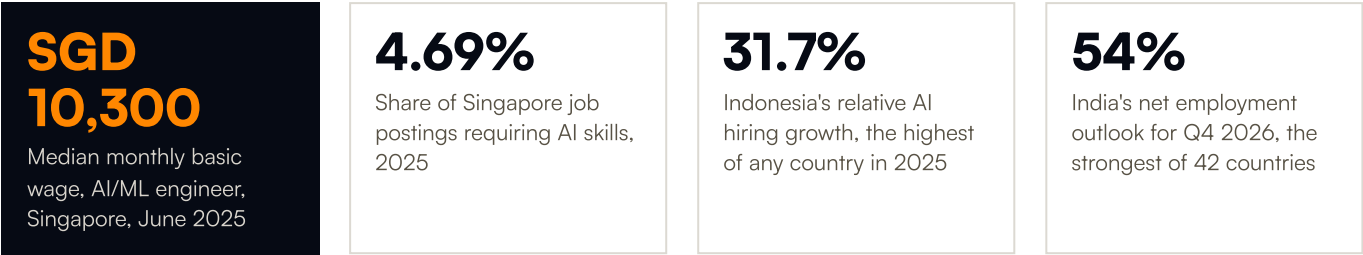
Asia's AI hiring outlook 2027

AI roles now top the fastest-growing job lists in Singapore and India. This report sets out where AI demand is concentrated and where it is growing, what AI roles pay, how fast salaries move into 2027, the skills employers want and the work-pass rules that shape who can be hired.



The Headline Numbers

Sources: Ministry of Manpower; Stanford AI Index 2026; ManpowerGroup; Aon.



In LinkedIn's Jobs on the Rise 2026, Singapore's three fastest-growing roles were AI engineers, heads of AI and machine learning researchers. India's top four were prompt engineer, AI engineer, software engineer and manager of AI. LinkedIn published 2026 lists for no other Asian market.

Where AI Demand Is Concentrated and Growing

Source: Stanford AI Index Report 2026 (13 Apr 2026), Chapter 4, LinkedIn and Lightcast data.

Measure	Market	Value
Job postings requiring AI skills, 2025	Singapore	4.69%
Job postings requiring AI skills, 2025	Hong Kong	3.48%
AI talent concentration, 2025	Singapore	1.82%
AI talent concentration, 2025	South Korea	1.05%
AI talent concentration, 2025	India	1.01%
Growth in AI talent concentration, 2019 to 2025	India	+120%
Growth in AI talent concentration, 2019 to 2025	Indonesia	+108%
Relative AI hiring growth, 2025	Indonesia	31.7%

Each row is a different measure; values are only comparable within the same measure.

Singapore and Hong Kong carry the densest AI demand. India and Indonesia are growing fastest: only the United Arab Emirates grew its AI talent concentration faster than India between 2019 and 2025. India's 2,117 global capability centers employ 2.36 million people (Zinnov-Nasscom, 2026).

What AI Roles Pay

SGD a month, basic wage, full-time resident employees. Source: Ministry of Manpower, Occupational Wages 2025, Table 4 (June 2025).

Occupation	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile
AI/ML engineer	SGD 8,000	SGD 10,300	SGD 13,970
Data scientist	SGD 7,528	SGD 9,522	SGD 12,563
Cloud specialist	SGD 7,085	SGD 9,332	SGD 16,242
Data engineer	SGD 6,351	SGD 8,551	SGD 10,674
Software developer	SGD 5,697	SGD 7,605	SGD 10,830
DevOps engineer	SGD 5,941	SGD 6,450	SGD 8,336
Data analyst	SGD 4,548	SGD 5,694	SGD 7,118

Singapore. The AI/ML engineer median is about 35% above the software developer median (our arithmetic, within this table).

Korea job group	Mean monthly labor cost
IT planner (incl. AI service planner)	KRW 11.85 million
IT architect (incl. AI architect)	KRW 11.10 million
Systems operator (incl. AI service manager)	KRW 10.65 million
Data analyst	KRW 8.50 million
Application developer (incl. AI developer)	KRW 7.75 million
Systems software developer	KRW 5.84 million

KRW a month, mean fully loaded labor cost. Includes bonuses, severance accrual and employer social insurance. Source: Korea AI-Software Industry Association, 2026 SW technician average wages (19 Dec 2025), statistic No. 375001.

In Japan, Robert Walters puts a machine learning engineer in one East Japan tech table at ¥8m to ¥15m a year in 2026, up from ¥8m to ¥14m, and expects tech vendor job changers to gain 10-20%, up to 30% for critical roles.

The AI Premium, Three Ways

- **Advertised wages (PwC Singapore, 2026).** AI roles advertise premiums of at least 32% in every sector, up to 107% in government. PwC's global figure for AI-skilled workers is 62%.
- **Paid wages (MOM Singapore, 2025).** AI/ML engineers' median basic wage is about 35% above software developers'.
- **Employer surveys.** In Taiwan, 75% of firms would pay extra for AI development talent, 9.5% or more on average (104 Job Bank). In India, AI, ML and data science premiums rose about 10% from 2025 (Aon).

Why the numbers differ

Advertised premiums compare job ads, paid-wage ratios compare what employees earn, and employer surveys report what budgets allow. They are shown separately and never averaged.

Salary Growth Into 2027

All industries. Sources: Aon Salary Increase and Turnover Study, Southeast Asia (23 Sep 2026); Aon India Annual Salary Increase and Turnover Survey 2026-27 (14 Oct 2026).

Market or segment	2027 projected increase
Vietnam	6.7%
Indonesia	5.5%
Philippines	5.3%
Malaysia	4.8%
Thailand	4.6%
Singapore	4.1%
Southeast Asia overall	5.2%
India overall	9.1%
India, technology platforms and products	9.5%
India, global capability centers	9.4%
India, technology consulting and services	6.6%

Southeast Asia and India figures come from two separate Aon studies.

Skills, Supply and Policy

- **Skills on the Rise 2026 (LinkedIn).** India: Prompt engineering, Workflow automation, LLMOps, AutoML, API. Singapore: LLM, Generative AI, Computer vision, Robotics, Data engineering, Data management.
- **Hardest skills to find (ManpowerGroup 2026).** AI model and application development (20% of employers) and AI literacy (19%) lead the global ranking.
- **Developer supply.** GitHub counted 21.9 million developers in India in 2025 and projects 57.5 million by 2030.
- **Targets.** Singapore aims for 15,000 AI practitioners, from a pool of more than 6,000 in May 2025. Malaysia's 2026 to 2030 plan expects 300,000 to 500,000 new AI-related jobs.
- **Work passes.** Singapore lists AI engineer and AI researcher or scientist as shortage occupations from 1 January 2026 and raises its Employment Pass floor to SGD 6,000 for new applications from 1 January 2027. Taiwan had approved 18,128 Employment Gold Cards by August 2026.

Method and Limits

- **One source per figure.** No figure is added, subtracted or averaged across sources. Where we compute a ratio, it is within one table and labeled as ours.
- **Different measures of demand.** Job postings, LinkedIn member data and employer surveys measure different things and are never ranked against each other.
- **Pay definitions differ.** MOM reports basic wages; the Korean statistic is fully loaded labor cost; Robert Walters reports base salary ranges for roles it advertised; Aon reports all-industry salary budgets.
- **Coverage.** We found no primary role-level AI salary data for Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines or Thailand, so those markets appear only through salary-growth projections.

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Hiring AI engineers from Asia? Second Talent helps US startups hire vetted AI-native engineers from Asia, from MLOps engineers to LLM specialists, matched in 24 hours. secondtalent.com

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