

# Infrastructure boom, Artificial Intelligence fears drive civil engineering's strong comeback at top IITs

Hemali.Chhapia | TNN

**Mumbai:** For years, the hierarchy seemed settled. The best-ranked students wanted computer science. Yet, the first round of IIT seats preference for 2026 suggests that while computer science continued to dominate the imagination of India's engineering aspirants, another branch quietly clawed its way back into favour: Civil engineering.

Computer science cut-offs at IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi and IIT Madras, remain remarkably stable, but the biggest elevation came in the space of civil engineering. The shift was most dramatic at IIT Bombay and IIT Delhi. At IIT Bombay, civil engineering opened at an All India Rank of 385 this year, compared to 2,666 last year. IIT Delhi saw a similar surge, with opening ranks improving from 3,030 to 179. Significant gains were also visible at IIT Roorkee and IIT Bhubaneswar, where civil

engineering attracted substantially higher-ranked candidates than in 2025.

The trend was not universal. IIT Jammu, IIT Tirupati, IIT Palakkad and IIT Ropar witnessed the opposite movement, with civil engineering becoming accessible at considerably lower ranks than a year ago.

IIT Bombay civil engineering professor Deepankar Choudhury said the trend was hardly surprising. "Campus placements were very good this year across several disciplines, including civil, structural and environmental engineering. There are fewer graduates and opportunities are many," he said.

Industry observers believe broader economic shifts may also be influencing student choices. "AI fears are accelerating the move toward core branches like civil for students seeking stability. Nationally, there is a huge push for infrastructure. But top performers still domina-

## DEMAND ROCKETS



<b>IIT DELHI</b> Opening at AIR 179, a jump of 2,851 ranks	<b>IIT BOMBAY</b> Opening at 385, up 2,281 ranks
---	---

It means a student who could have opted for electrical/mechanical engineering has picked civil this year

<b>IIT PATNA</b> Up 2,978 ranks	<b>IIT ROORKEE</b> Up 2,454 ranks
------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

**IIT BHUBANESWAR**  
Up 3,204 ranks

te computer science. Civil graduates who learn AI tools will be even stronger. It's a smart recalibration for many students," said Bhushan Jamsandekar, IIT Madras alumnus and head of Narayana CO Campus, Nerul.

The broader hierarchy of the IIT system, however, remains largely unchanged.

The Joint Seat Allocation Authority (JoSAA) on Satur-

day released the first round of allotments for 67,323 seats across 134 institutions, including the IITs and NITs. Computer science at IIT Bombay retained its position as the country's most coveted engineering programme, opening at Rank 1 and closing at 65, compared to 68 last year.

IIT Delhi's computer science programme opened at Rank 35 and closed at 123, while IIT Madras opened at 67 and closed at 149. Even in the female-only supernumerary pool, the order remained intact, with IIT Bombay closing at Rank 395, ahead of IIT Madras at 539 and IIT Delhi at 681.

The dominance of the older IITs remained unmistakable. IIT Kharagpur's computer science programme closed at Rank 509, IIT Roorkee at 582, IIT Hyderabad at 647 and IIT Guwahati at 810. A sizeable gap separated them from the next cluster of institutions, with IIT BHU Varanasi closing at

1,436 and IIT Indore at 1,639.

Several of the most significant movements this year occurred in female supernumerary seats at newer IITs. IIT Dharwad witnessed one of the sharpest shifts, with female computer science seats becoming accessible at ranks more than 3,200 places lower than a year earlier. Similar easing was observed at IIT Palakkad, IIT Jammu, IIT Tirupati and IIT Bhubaneswar.

Conversely, computer science became more competitive in certain categories at IIT Goa and IIT Ropar, according to Amit Ahuja, career counsellor at Allen.

The surprises extended well beyond computer science. Physics at IIT Kharagpur became significantly more competitive in some categories, while programmes such as biosciences and bio-engineering at IIT Roorkee and chemical science and technology at IIT Patna became accessible at substantially lower ranks.