

# S'pore least corrupt country in Asia; ranks third globally

Republic is the only Asian country to make it to top 10 in global survey

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Singapore has again made it to the top ranks of the least corrupt countries in the world based on a global survey released annually.

The Republic, along with Finland, Switzerland and Sweden, scored 85 points each, tying for third place in the 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index released by the global anti-graft movement, Transparency International, yesterday.

Denmark and New Zealand earned 88 points each to tie for top spot among the 180 countries and territories surveyed.

Singapore took top spot in Asia,

the only Asian country to make it to the top 10.

Transparency International chair Delia Ferrerira Rubio said the Covid-19 pandemic in the past year was as much a health and economic crisis as that of corruption, which the world was failing to manage.

“Those with higher levels of corruption have been less able to meet the challenge,” she noted. “But even those at the top of the (index) must urgently address their role in perpetuating corruption at home and abroad.”

Corruption often intensifies the effects of a crisis and when combined with a public health emergency like Covid-19, poses a threat to lives and livelihoods, said Transparency International (TI).

The Berlin-based non-governmental organisation cited its own research from 2019, which found that corruption deprives the

## Top 10 least corrupt countries

Rank	Country/territory	Score
1	Denmark	88
1	New Zealand	88
<b>3</b>	<b>Singapore</b>	<b>85</b>
3	Finland	85
3	Sweden	85
3	Switzerland	85
7	Norway	84
8	Netherlands	82
9	Germany	80
9	Luxembourg	80

Source: 2020 CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX, BY TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL  
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS

global health sector of over US\$500 billion (\$666 billion) annually.

Countries that perform well on the index invest more in healthcare, are better able to provide universal health coverage and are less likely to violate democratic norms and institutions or the rule of law, added TI.

For instance, Uruguay, which scored the highest (71) in Latin America, had a robust epidemiological surveillance system aiding its response to the coronavirus, it said.

At the other end of the scale, Bangladesh – with a score of 26 – was rife with bribery in health clinics, misappropriated aid and corrupt procurement of medical supplies.

Since 2012, Singapore has not scored below 84 points or ranked lower than seventh in the index, which is derived from 13 expert assessments and surveys of business

executives.

The situation in Singapore remains well under control with corruption-related reports on a downward trend, and public sector cases remaining low over the years, said the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB) in a statement yesterday.

It noted that its biennial public perception survey of over 1,000 respondents in Singapore, most recently conducted last year, found that 94 per cent rated local corruption control efforts to be effective – up from 92 per cent in 2018.

“Our success comes from the public’s vigilance and resolve in keeping corruption at bay as a nation. We must not let our guard down in our fight against corruption despite the disruptions from the Covid-19 pandemic,” said CPIB director Denis Tang.

The next least corrupt place in Asia in the TI survey was Hong Kong, which came in at 11th place with 77 points.

More than two-thirds of all the countries attained less than 50 points, with the average score being 43.

Nearly half of those on the index have remained stagnant on it for almost a decade – indicating stalled government efforts to tackle the root causes of corruption, said Transparency International.

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