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Malaysia slides three places on corruption index

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - An annual survey measuring the perceived level of corruption in 99 countries shows Malaysia faring worse this year than last.

Denmark (with a perfect score of 10) and Finland (9.8) came in first and second respectively as "clean" countries, while New Zealand and Sweden (both with a score of 9.4) tied for third place.

Malaysia tied with Costa Rica (both with scores of 5.1) to rank 32, down three places from its 29th ranking last year.

Cameroon (with a score of 1.5) came in last, preceded by Nigeria (1.6). Indonesia and Azerbaijan, both scoring 1.7, shared the third-last place.

These findings are contained in the 1999 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which was released today by the global anti-corruption coalition Transparency International (TI).

The index is the result of 17 different polls and surveys carried out among businessmen, country analysts and the public on the perceived level of corruption among public officials and politicians in the 99 countries.

The CPI is used extensively by foreign investors and academic and financial institutions, including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

TI vice-chairman, Tunku Abdul Aziz Tunku Ibrahim, said in a Press statement that TI had commissioned a second survey, called the Bribe Payer's Index (BPI), for the first time this year in response to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's criticism that the CPI unfairly emphasised developing countries.

"The BPI is intended to redress this imbalance by ranking the leading exporting countries in terms of the degree to which they are perceived as the homes of corporations paying bribes abroad."

On a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 indicating a corruption-free exporting country, Malaysia ranked 15 out of 19 countries with a score of 3.9.

Sweden nabbed the top spot with a score of 8.3, while China (including Hong Kong) came in last with a score of 3.1.

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