

**Malaysia far from 'failed state' but brain drain worsening, says US think-tank
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 2 — Malaysia's continuing economic growth has kept it moderately safe from being ranked a "failed state" in the latest global survey of 177 countries by the Fund for Peace (FFP) but the US public policy think-tank also noted an increasing loss of talent due to citizens seeking better livelihoods abroad.

FFP is an independent think-tank founded in 1957 and based in Washington D.C. that is working "to prevent violent conflict and promote sustainable security" worldwide by focusing on conflict assessment and early warning on transnational threats, peacekeeping, and security and human rights issues.

Malaysia placed 110th and earned an above average mark of 68.5 points out of a maximum 120 points on the Failed States Index Score this year, an annual ranking of 177 nations based on their levels of stability and capacity, it said in the latest survey released last month.

The FFP's Failed States Index was first published in 2005.

It noted that Malaysia's economy grew 5.1 per cent last year, but it noted that although the "growth has remained strong, uneven development remains an on-going challenge".

The country scored 6.4 out of 10 points, with 10 being the worst on uneven development marker, which pointed to a weak position and earned it 105th spot out of 177 nations.

"The Uneven Development score improved slightly but remains high as the central government has not completely phased out preferential treatment for ethnic Malays," the index said.

The survey also said Malaysia's 4.4 points on the Human Flight score, which it noted was moderate but put the country at 124th place, which signalled outflow of talent was worsening in a five-year trend outlook.

"A slight worsening of the Human Flight indicator suggests that more Malaysians are seeking better livelihoods abroad," it reported.

"The Human Flight score increased substantially as social and economic reforms have not produced many changes. While the current prime minister has publicly stated his support for eliminating preferential treatment for ethnic Malays, little progress has been made," it said.

Malaysia scored 6.5 points for legitimacy of the state, which FFP marked as weak and was worsening in a five-year trend outlook.

"A number of promised legal enactments remain frozen in the political process and restrictions on the freedom of expression continue to be imposed on the Malaysian populace, worsening the Human Rights and Rule of Law indicator score by a 0.5 margin," it said.

"The Legitimacy of the State score has remained consistent at an elevated level since 2006 as a consequence of continued resentment on the part of the minority Indian and Chinese

populations toward policies that are preferential toward the ethnic Malay population," it added.

The index also noted Malaysia's high score of 6.4 points for group grievances, which looks at the tension and violence between groups and the state's ability to provide security.

"The Group Grievance score remains high as political actors attempted to stir ethnic tension and resentment in advance of the special elections," it said.

While the Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition led by Umno has managed to stay in power since independence in 1957, FPP said the results of the 2008 general elections prompted the ruling government to "react aggressively when faced with mass demonstrations in favour of election reform in July 2011".

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