

Japan passport the most powerful, Singapore slips to second place

Published Jan 8, 2020, 6:02 pm SGT
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SINGAPORE - Japan edged out Singapore to offer the most powerful passport in the world, even as Asian countries retained their hold on the top three spots in a ranking of global access enjoyed by passports from different countries.

Japan's passport offered the highest travel mobility - allowing its holders to travel to 191 countries visa-free or with visa-on-arrival, according to the 2020 Henley Passport Index released on Tuesday (Jan 7).

[The first-place tie held by Singapore and Japan's passports last year](#) - with access to 190 countries without a prior visa - was broken by easier access to Saudi Arabia with the Japanese passport this time.

Singapore's passport, ranked second, scored 190, while South Korea and Germany are tied in third place with visa-free or visa-on-arrival entry to 189 countries.

The Henley index tabulates the world's passports according to how many destinations their holders can travel to without a prior visa. It is updated in real time throughout the year as visa arrangements kick into force.

Dr Christian Kaelin, chairman of consultancy firm Henley & Partners, said the index shows that the world has been adapting to "mobility as a permanent condition of global life".

He added: "The latest rankings show that the countries that embrace this reality are thriving, with their citizens enjoying ever-increasing passport power and the array of benefits that come with it."

Last year, both Japan and Singapore passports took top ranking with access to 190 countries without a prior visa. South Korea, Germany and Finland shared second place, with a score of 188.

Henley & Partners noted that the United States and the United Kingdom together took the eighth spot, with access to 184 countries without a prior visa.

Their passports were the most powerful in 2015, but have seen a "significant decline" in their positions on the table, behind 16 countries.

Henley & Partners also highlighted that the "global mobility gap is the starkest it has been since the index's inception in 2006", with a Japanese passport holder now able to access 165 more countries than an Afghan national.