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# Singapore 'set to be No. 2 wealth centre in the world'

It will overtake NY in 10 years; London remains No. 1, says report

By Cheryl Ong

SINGAPORE will not only continue to be a favourite investment destination for rich folk but will become one of the world's top two wealth centres, according to a new report.

It found that Singapore will move up from its third ranking now to surpass New York and take the number two position within 10 years. London is expected to hold the number one spot.

"Singapore's growing importance as a global city bodes well for its development as Asia's wealth management hub," said Mr Renato de Guzman, chief executive of Bank of Singapore, which compiled the report with property consultancy Knight Frank.

"Our clients have often cited Singapore's political and economic stability and well-regulated financial sector as key factors that make it an attractive investment decision."

Knight Frank director and research head Png Poh Soon added: "The 10-year forecast affirms our place in the global scene in the future as a city of choice for [high net worth individuals]."

The firm also forecasts that the number of such wealthy people here will increase by 40 per cent within 10 years.

It noted that European wealth centres have weakened since last year's survey. "Paris drops to ninth place in the popular vote and Berlin falls out of the top 10 altogether," the report said.

"Once again, Singapore has had a very strong year, eclipsing Paris and even Hong Kong, which it has previously lagged."

A separate Knight Frank survey of 400 private bankers around the world placed Singapore in sixth place out of 40 cities considered important to wealthy investors.

The survey was based on a indicators such as economic activity, political power, quality of life and knowledge and influence.

Mr Poh also noted that property will continue to feature strongly in the investment portfolios of the rich. "As prices of prime homes stabilise, we believe Singapore homes will be a good long-term investment as high net worth individuals continue to favour Singapore as a global city of choice."

He added that the increased taxes for pricey real estate unveiled in the Budget will not deter investment from the rich. "I think this is something more of a slight dent in their wealth, it's probably not going to be a big issue."

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