

# Changi Airport is tops across industries

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CHANGI Airport, no stranger to accolades, can add another achievement to the 21 "best airport" and other awards it has bagged so far this year.

Its latest Customer Satisfaction Index of Singapore (CSISG) score of 85.5 is the highest recorded of all assessed companies across various industries, in the seven-year history of the index.

The 12.7 point surge from Changi's score a year earlier came as both tourists and locals reported leaps in their levels of satisfaction with Changi Airport's facilities and services. At least 250 tourists and Singapore residents were polled for their views on Changi between May and July this year.

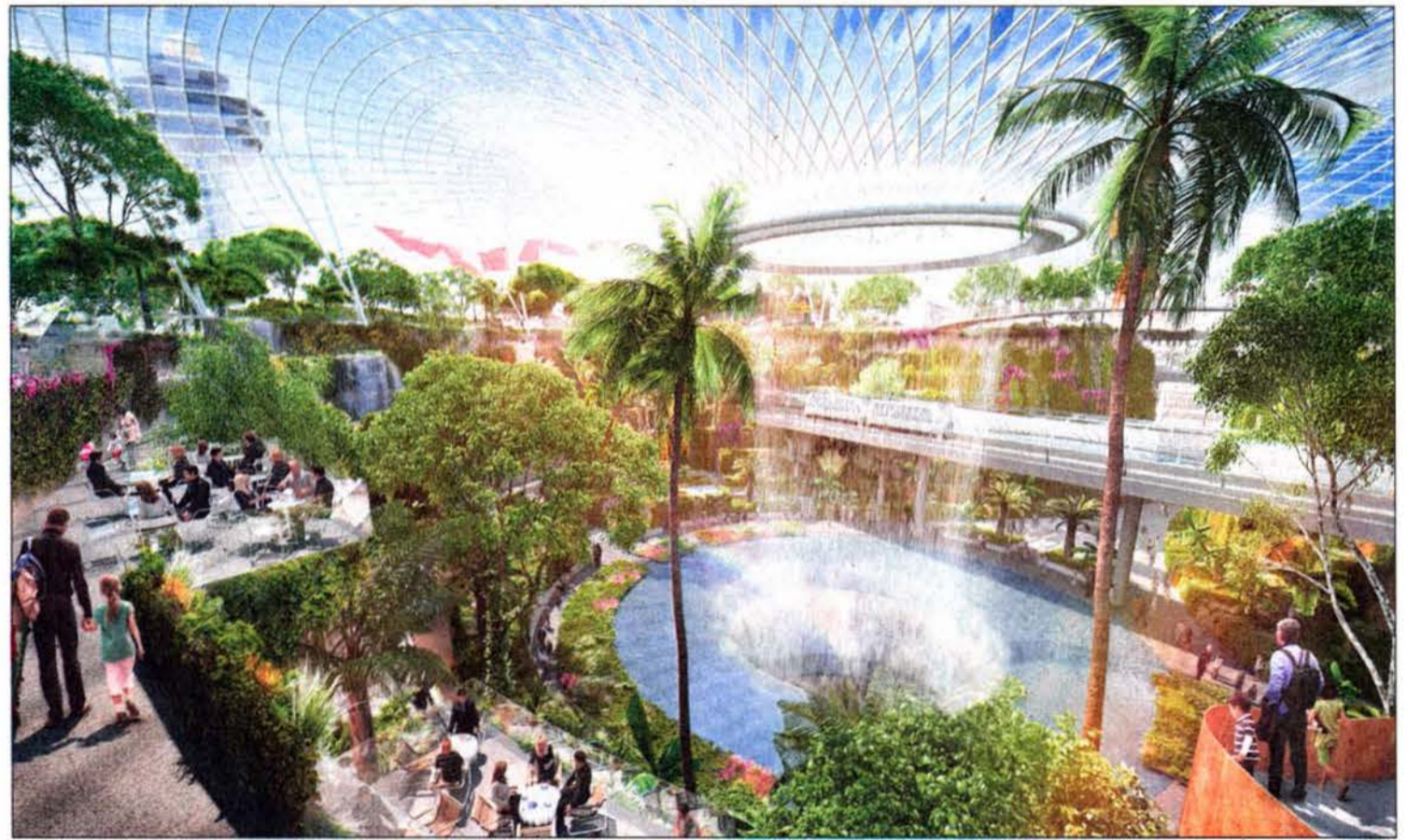
The airport's operator, Changi Airport Group (CAG) said that its upgrading of Terminal 1, which was completed last June, could have contributed to the higher score. "We have received positive comments from passengers about the new look and feel of the upgraded Terminal 1," said CAG spokesman Ivan Tan

These included comments about better lighting and a refreshing ambience. CAG's own monthly airport surveys have also shown an improvement in Terminal 1's scores, he said.

Apart from regular surveys, the airport also gathers feedback from its eFeedback kiosks and Instant Feedback System. The latter consists of 660 interactive screens deployed at information desks, retail outlets and essential facilities such as washrooms across all terminals, and collects more than a million pieces of feedback for the airport every month. Ninety per cent of these are positive.

Caroline Lim, director of the Institute of Service Excellence at the Singapore Management University (ISES), which is behind the CSISG, said that all key drivers of satisfaction tracked by the CSISG – expectations, value and quality – contributed to the outstanding performance.

One specific reason could be the airport's "unwavering commitment to service excellence and a focus on long term results", she said. "This



**Not resting on its laurels:** Changi Airport's Project Jewel (above) – a mixed-use complex linking Terminals 1, 2 and 3 which is slated to have a large indoor garden and waterfall within its glass and steel facade – have stirred up considerable excitement. FILE PHOTO

commitment and focus is required of the service provider as well as the service provider's partners and suppliers."

Indeed, airport staff – in roles from housekeeping to trolley retrieval, immigration and customs control to retail and security – are required to undergo service quality training before being deployed on-the-ground. The intention is to ensure a consistent level of service is delivered, even though the staff come from different organisations, Mr Tan said.

That commitment to service excellence is also behind the airport's introduction of roving service officers – "Changi Experience Agents" – to anticipate passengers' needs.

There are now more than 200 of them, speaking a total of more than 20 languages and dialects, tasked with roaming the airport to assist passengers with special needs, provide directions, help passengers with check-ins or onward connections, and locate lost baggage.

Changi Airport is not standing still. Recent announcements about Terminal 4 and Project Jewel – a mixed-use complex linking Terminals 1, 2 and 3 which is slated to have a large indoor garden and waterfall within its glass and steel facade – have stirred up considerable excitement.

Ms Lim said: "In the medium and longer term, it would stand Changi in good stead. There is no doubt that Changi is cognisant of the very competitive challenges regional and international airports are putting up."

But such excitement is invariably accompanied by greater expectations. "We are aware that there will be high expectations from our customers. However, we will continue to strive and ensure that the airport experience continues to be excellent even as passenger traffic grows in Changi," Mr Tan said.

Changi Airport handled 35.45 million passengers over the eight months of 2013, 5.4 per cent higher than for

the same period last year. The airport is also home to more than 100 airlines, which operate some 6,700 weekly scheduled flights to 250 cities worldwide.

Focusing on the customer can boost the bottomline too, both ISES and CAG believe.

Mr Tan notes that 30 per cent of passengers using Changi Airport are in transit, headed to another destination. "They could have chosen to fly via another airport. However, Changi's strong air hub status and varied range of facilities and services are key reasons why passengers have continued to choose Changi," he said.

More passengers passing through naturally translates into a stronger financial performance for CAG, he said. Similarly, for Singapore residents arriving in or leaving Singapore, a positive experience at the airport would make it more likely that they would spend more time and money at the airport's restaurants and retail outlets.