

Malaysia

Introduction

Background: Malaysia was created in 1963 through the merging of Malaya (independent in 1957) and the former British Singapore, both of which formed West Malaysia, and Sabah and Sarawak in north Borneo, which composed East Malaysia. The first three years of independence were marred by hostilities with Indonesia. Singapore seceded from the union in 1965.

Geography

Location: Southeastern Asia, peninsula and northern one-third of the island of Borneo, bordering Indonesia and the South China Sea, south of Vietnam

Geographic coordinates: 2 30 N, 112 30 E

Map references: Southeast Asia

Area:

total: 329,750 sq km

land: 328,550 sq km

water: 1,200 sq km

Area - comparative: slightly larger than New Mexico

Land boundaries:

total: 2,669 km

border countries: Brunei 381 km, Indonesia 1,782 km, Thailand 506 km

Coastline: 4,675 km (Peninsular Malaysia 2,068 km, East Malaysia 2,607 km)

Maritime claims:

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation; specified boundary in the South China Sea

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; annual southwest (April to October) and northeast (October to February) monsoons

Terrain: coastal plains rising to hills and mountains

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m

highest point: Gunung Kinabalu 4,100 m

Natural resources: tin, petroleum, timber, copper, iron ore, natural gas, bauxite

Land use:

arable land: 3%

permanent crops: 12%

permanent pastures: 0%

forests and woodland: 68%

other: 17% (1993 est.)

Irrigated land: 2,941 sq km (1998 est.)

Natural hazards: flooding, landslides

Environment - current issues: air pollution from industrial and vehicular emissions; water pollution from raw sewage; deforestation; smoke/haze from Indonesian forest fires

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Life Conservation, Nuclear Test Ban, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical

Timber 94, Wetlands

signed, but not ratified: Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol

Geography - note: strategic location along Strait of Malacca and southern South China Sea

People

Population: 21,793,293 (July 2000 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 35% (male 3,914,112; female 3,697,731)

15-64 years: 61% (male 6,655,506; female 6,642,073)

65 years and over: 4% (male 386,387; female 497,484) (2000 est.)

Population growth rate: 2.01% (2000 est.)

Birth rate: 25.3 births/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Death rate: 5.25 deaths/1,000 population (2000 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2000 est.)

note: does not reflect net flow of an unknown number of illegal immigrants from other countries in the region

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.06 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.06 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 1 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.78 male(s)/female

total population: 1.01 male(s)/female (2000 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 20.96 deaths/1,000 live births (2000 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 70.83 years

male: 68.22 years

female: 73.63 years (2000 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.29 children born/woman (2000 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Malaysian(s)

adjective: Malaysian

Ethnic groups: Malay and other indigenous 58%, Chinese 26%, Indian 7%, others 9%

Religions: Islam, Buddhism, Daoism, Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism; note - in addition, Shamanism is practiced in East Malaysia

Languages: Bahasa Melayu (official), English, Chinese dialects (Cantonese, Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka, Hainan, Foochow), Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Panjabi, Thai; note - in addition, in East Malaysia several indigenous languages are spoken, the largest of which are Iban and Kadazan

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 83.5%

male: 89.1%

female: 78.1% (1995 est.)

Government

Country name:

conventional long form: none

conventional short form: Malaysia

former: Malayan Union

Data code: MY

Government type: constitutional monarchy

note: Malaya (what is now Peninsular Malaysia) formed 31 August 1957; Federation of Malaysia (Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore) formed 9 July 1963 (Singapore left the federation on 9 August 1965); nominally headed by the paramount ruler and a bicameral Parliament consisting of a nonelected upper house and an elected lower house; Peninsular Malaysian states - hereditary rulers in all but Melaka, Penang, Sabah, and Sarawak, where governors are appointed by the Malaysian Government; powers of state governments are limited by the federal constitution; under terms of the federation, Sabah and Sarawak retain certain constitutional prerogatives (e.g., the right to maintain their own immigration controls); Sabah - holds 20 seats in House of Representatives, with foreign affairs, defense, internal security, and other powers delegated to federal government; Sarawak - holds 28 seats in House of Representatives, with foreign affairs, defense, internal security, and other powers delegated to federal government

Capital: Kuala Lumpur

Administrative divisions: 13 states (negeri-negeri, singular - negeri) and 2 federal territories* (wilayah-wilayah persekutuan, singular - wilayah persekutuan); Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Labuan*, Melaka, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Pulau Pinang, Sabah, Sarawak, Selangor, Terengganu, Wilayah Persekutuan*

note: the city of Kuala Lumpur is located within the federal territory of Wilayah Persekutuan; the terms therefore are not interchangeable

Independence: 31 August 1957 (from UK)

National holiday: National Day, 31 August (1957)

Constitution: 31 August 1957, amended 16 September 1963

Legal system: based on English common law; judicial review of legislative acts in the Supreme Court at request of supreme head of the federation; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: Paramount Ruler Sultan TUNKU SALAHUDDIN Abdul Aziz Shah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Hisammuddin Alam Shah (since 26 April 1999); Deputy Paramount Ruler Sultan MIZAN Zainal Abidin ibni A-Marhum Sultan Mahmud Al-Muktafi Billah Shah

head of government: Prime Minister Dr. MAHATHIR bin Mohamad (since 16 July 1981); Deputy Prime Minister ABDULLAH bin Ahmad Badawi (since 8 January 1999)

cabinet: Cabinet appointed by the prime minister from among the members of Parliament with consent of the paramount ruler

elections: paramount ruler and deputy paramount ruler elected by and from the hereditary rulers of nine of the states for five-year terms; election last held 27 February 1999 (next to be held NA 2004); prime minister designated from among the members of the House of Representatives; following legislative elections, the leader of the party that wins a plurality of seats in the House of Representatives becomes prime minister

election results: Sultan TUNKU SALAHUDDIN Abdul Aziz Shah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Hisammuddin Alam Shah elected paramount ruler; Sultan MIZAN Zainal Abidin ibni A-Marhum Sultan Mahmud Al-Muktafi Billah Shah elected deputy paramount ruler

Legislative branch: bicameral Parliament or Parlimen consists of nonelected Senate or Dewan Negara (69 seats; 43 appointed by the paramount ruler, 26 appointed by the state legislatures) and the House of Representatives or Dewan Rakyat (193 seats; members elected by popular vote weighted toward the rural Malay population to serve five-year terms)

elections: House of Representatives - last held 29 November 1999 (next to be held 3 November 2004)

election results: House of Representatives - percent of vote by party - NF 56%, other 44%; seats by party - NF 148, PAS 27, DAP 10, NJP 5, PBS 3

Judicial branch: Supreme Court, judges appointed by the paramount ruler on the advice of the prime minister

Economy

Economy - overview: Malaysia made a quick economic recovery in 1999 from its worst recession since independence in 1957. GDP grew 5%, responding to a dynamic export sector, which grew over 10% and fiscal stimulus from higher government spending. The large export surplus has enabled the country to build up its already substantial financial reserves, to \$31 billion at yearend 1999. This stable macroeconomic environment, in which both inflation and unemployment stand at 3% or less, has made possible the relaxation of most of the capital controls imposed by the government in 1998 to counter the impact of the Asian financial crisis. Government and private forecasters expect Malaysia to continue this trend in 2000, predicting GDP to grow another 5% to 6%. While Malaysia's immediate economic horizon looks bright, its long-term prospects are clouded by the lack of reforms in the corporate sector, particularly those dealing with competitiveness and high corporate debt.

GDP: purchasing power parity - \$229.1 billion (1999 est.)

GDP - real growth rate: 5% (1999 est.)

GDP - per capita: purchasing power parity - \$10,700 (1999 est.)

GDP - composition by sector:

agriculture: 12%

industry: 46%

services: 42% (1998)

Population below poverty line: 6.8% (1997 est.)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 1.4%

highest 10%: 20.4% (1997 est.)

Inflation rate (consumer prices): 2.8% (1999)

Labor force: 9.3 million (1999 est.)

Labor force - by occupation: manufacturing 27%, agriculture, forestry, and fisheries 16%, local trade and tourism 17%, services 15%, government 10%, construction 9% (1999 est.)

Unemployment rate: 3% (1999 est.)

Budget:

revenues: \$23.2 billion

expenditures: \$27.6 billion, including capital expenditures of \$NA (1999)

Industries: Peninsular Malaysia - rubber and oil palm processing and manufacturing, light manufacturing industry, electronics, tin mining and smelting, logging and processing timber; Sabah - logging, petroleum

production; Sarawak - agriculture processing, petroleum production and refining, logging

Industrial production growth rate: 8.5% (1999 est.)

Electricity - production: 57.435 billion kWh (1998)

Electricity - production by source:

fossil fuel: 94.78%

hydro: 5.22%

nuclear: 0%

other: 0% (1998)

Electricity - consumption: 53.423 billion kWh (1998)

Electricity - exports: 75 million kWh (1998)

Electricity - imports: 83 million kWh (1998)

Agriculture - products: Peninsular Malaysia - rubber, palm oil, rice; Sabah - subsistence crops, rubber, timber, coconuts, rice; Sarawak - rubber, pepper; timber

Exports: \$83.5 billion (1999 est.)

Exports - commodities: electronic equipment, petroleum and liquefied natural gas, chemicals, palm oil, wood and wood products, rubber, textiles

Exports - partners: US 23%, Singapore 16%, Japan 11%, Hong Kong 5%, Netherlands 5%, Taiwan 5%, Thailand 3% (1999 est.)

Imports: \$61.5 billion (1999 est.)

Imports - commodities: machinery and equipment, chemicals, food, fuel and lubricants

Imports - partners: Japan 21%, US 18%, Singapore 14%, Taiwan 5%, South Korea 5%, Thailand 4%, China 3% (1999 est.)

Debt - external: \$43.6 billion (1999 est.)

Currency: 1 ringgit (M\$) = 100 sen

Exchange rates: ringgits (M\$) per US\$1 - 3.8000 (January 2000), 3.8000 (1999), 3.9244 (1998), 2.8133 (1997), 2.5159 (1996), 2.5044 (1995)

Fiscal year: calendar year

Communications

Telephones - main lines in use: 4.4 million (1998)

Telephones - mobile cellular: 2.17 million (1998)

Telephone system: international service good

domestic: good intercity service provided on Peninsular Malaysia mainly by microwave radio relay; adequate intercity microwave radio relay network between Sabah and Sarawak via Brunei; domestic satellite system with 2 earth stations

international: submarine cables to India, Hong Kong, and Singapore; satellite earth stations - 2 Intelsat (1 Indian Ocean and 1 Pacific Ocean)

Radio broadcast stations: AM 56, FM 31 (plus 13 repeater stations), shortwave 5 (1999)

Radios: 9.1 million (1997)

Television broadcast stations: 27 (plus 15 high-power repeaters) (1999)

Televisions: 3.6 million (1997)

Internet Service Providers (ISPs): 8 (1999)

Transportation

Railways:

total: 1,801 km

narrow gauge: 1,801 km 1.000-m gauge (148 km electrified) (2000)

Highways:

total: 94,500 km

paved: 70,970 km (including 580 km of expressways)

unpaved: 23,530 km (1996 est.)

Waterways: 7,296 km (Peninsular Malaysia 3,209 km, Sabah 1,569 km, Sarawak 2,518 km)

Pipelines: crude oil 1,307 km; natural gas 379 km

Ports and harbors: Bintulu, Kota Kinabalu, Kuantan, Kuching, Kudat, Labuan, Lahad Datu, Lumut, Miri, Pasir Gudang, Penang, Port Dickson, Port Kelang, Sandakan, Sibul, Tanjung Berhala, Tanjung Kidurong, Tawau

Merchant marine:

total: 361 ships (1,000 GRT or over) totaling 5,000,706 GRT/7,393,915 DWT

ships by type: bulk 61, cargo 119, chemical tanker 34, container 55, liquified gas 19, livestock carrier 1, passenger 2, petroleum tanker 57, refrigerated cargo 1, roll-on/roll-off 6, specialized tanker 1, vehicle carrier 5 (1999 est.)

Airports: 115 (1999 est.)

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 32

over 3,047 m: 5

2,438 to 3,047 m: 4

1,524 to 2,437 m: 11

914 to 1,523 m: 6

under 914 m: 6 (1999 est.)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 83

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1

914 to 1,523 m: 8

under 914 m: 74 (1999 est.)

Heliports: 1 (1999 est.)

Notes to Visitors and Users:

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