

OFFICIAL NAME: Malaysia

CAPITAL: Kuala Lumpur

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Federal Constitutional Monarchy

AREA: 329,749 Sq Km (127,317 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 21,759,500



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Malaysia consists of two geographical segments. (1.) West Malaysia, the southern third of the Malay Peninsula in South East Asia and (2.)

East Malaysia which occupies the northern quarter of the island of Borneo. West Malaysia is bound by Thailand to the north, the South China Sea to the east, Singapore to the south and the Strait of Malacca to the west. East Malaysia is bound by Indonesia to the south, the South China Sea to the west and north, and the Sulu Sea to the northeast. The enclave of Brunei is located in the northern region of East Malaysia. West or Peninsula Malaysia consists of a range of steep forest covered mountains with coastal plains to the east and west while the principal river is the Pahang. East Malaysia has a broad swampy coastal plain that rises to jungle covered hills in the interior. The principal rivers of East Malaysia are the Rajang, Baram, Lupar, Limbang, Kinabatangan and Padas. Major Cities (pop. est.); Kuala Lumpur 1,145,100, Ipoh 382,600, Johor Baharu 296,000, Melaka 296,000, Petaling Jaya 254,800 (1991). Land Use; forested 68%, pastures 0.1%, agricultural-cultivated 14.9%, other 17% (1993).

CLIMATE: Malaysia has a tropical climate with two monsoon seasons. The NW Monsoon from October to February and the SW Monsoon from April to October with squalls and thunderstorms common. Average annual precipitation for West Malaysia is 2,540 mm (100 inches) and for East Malaysia it is 4,420 mm (150 inches). Humidity is high all year round and average temperature ranges for Kuala Lumpur are from 22 to 32 degrees Celsius (72 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit) all year round while in the mountains the average temperature ranges are from 13 to 27 degrees Celsius (55 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit).

PEOPLE: The people of Malaysia can be classified into four broad categories. (1.) Native tribal groups such as the Semang, Senoi, Jakun, Ibans or Sea Dayaks, Land Dayaks, Melanaus, Kayans, Kenyahs, Kajangs, Muruts, Kelabits, Kadazans and the Bajans. (2.) The Malays who combined with the tribal groups account for 61% of the population. (3.) The Chinese who account for around 30% and (4.) Indians, that include Pakistanis and Sri Lankans, who account for 8% of the population.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 55 persons per sq km (143 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 43.0% urban, 57.0% rural (1993). Sex Distribution; 50.4% male, 49.6% female (1991). Life Expectancy at Birth; 69.0 years male, 73.0 years female (1993). Age

Breakdown; 37% under 15, 29% 15 to 29, 18% 30 to 44, 10% 45 to 59, 6% 60 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 27.0 per 1,000 (1991). Death Rate; 5.0 per 1,000 (1991). Increase Rate; 22.0 per 1,000 (1991). Infant Mortality Rate; 13.0 per 1,000 live births (1991).

RELIGIONS: The official religion is Islam with 53% of the population Muslims while 29% are Buddhists and Confucianists, 7% are Hindus, 6.4% are Christians and the remainder following local native tribal beliefs.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Bahasa Malay, although Chinese, English and Tamil are also widely spoken.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 36.6%, primary 42.1%, secondary 19.4%, higher 1.9% (1980). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 5,719,358 or 72.6% (1980).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: After World War II the British returned to Malaysia and in April 1946 the British formally established a Malay Union of the individual states. This Union also included provisions for the Chinese and Indians to be granted citizenship and equal rights, which met with strong opposition from the Malays. In Feb. 1948 negotiations resulted in the federation of the Malay states and the formalization of the Union's provisions. In 1949 the Malay Communist Party (MCP) began to incite unrest resulting in the British and communists, as well as other rebels, fighting. The conflict ended after the Federation of Malaya gained complete independence from Britain in Aug. 1957. In Sept. 1963 Malaya, Sarawak, Sabah and Singapore united and formed the independent nation of Malaysia. In Aug. 1965 Singapore left the federation after disagreements arose. In Aug. 1967 Indonesia formally recognized Malaysia and in Dec. 1969 the Philippines also recognized the nation. Both countries had sovereignty claims over parts of the federation. In May 1969 racial tension culminated in serious clashes between the Chinese and Malays, resulted in the suspension of the constitution until 1971. In 1971 Tun Razak became Malaysia's second Prime Minister. In 1972 the government embarked on a New Economic Policy (NEP) to reduce the disparity between the Chinese and Malays. In 1976 after Prime Minister Razak's death, Datuk Hussein Onn became Prime Minister until his own retirement in 1981. In the same year Dr Datuk Seri Mahathir bin Mohamad was elected Prime Minister and re-elected in 1986. In 1986 Malaysia executed two Australian drug traffickers which led to the Australian Prime Minister Robert Hawke describing the acts as "barbaric" and from then, Australian-Malay relations have deteriorated. In 1990 Dr Mahathir was re-elected Prime Minister. In 1991 the government announced a replacement to the NEP, named the National Development Program (NDP). The NDP differed only slightly to the NEP in that the timetable for the transfer of corporate holdings to the Malays or "bumiputras" was removed and called for assistance to be given for the establishment of businesses. In May 1991 Dr

Mahathir claimed paid agents were undermining the country's stability by leaking information to Western governments and the media. Also in 1991 the New United Malays National Organization (UMNO) joined forces with a local Sabah state party in the hope of removing power from the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) which controlled the state government. In Feb. 1992 the principal coalition partner of the National Front, UMNO complained of royal interference in politics and business and in April 1992 the Sultan of Kelantan state further exacerbated the controversy by refusing to pay taxes on a new sports car. Also in April 1992 Prime Minister Mahathir challenged the Parti Islam sa-Malaysia (PAS), which had declared its intention to implement Islamic criminal punishment (hudud), to impose hudud immediately in Kelantan state. In July 1992 the majority of the country's nine hereditary rulers approved a proclamation affirming their constitutional limits. In 1992 tensions between UMNO and the PBS over the state governments rights led to an economic slowdown in Sabah as well as the review of the terms of its entry into the federation. In Jan. 1993 tensions between the federal government and the ruling PBS of Sabah state resulted in log exports being banned that cut its budget revenues by nearly 50% while the government also continued to pursue corruption charges against the PBS leader, Joseph Pairin Kitingan. In 1993 Prime Minister Mahathir challenged the royal legal right to immunity in personal matters following incidents in late 1992 that included the killing of a golf caddy amongst other allegations. The rulers refused to consent to removal of their immunity against prosecution that led Prime Minister Mahathir to propose that other privileges not guaranteed by law be revoked. In Feb. and March 1993 the royals approved amendments that any ruler could be tried by a special court that could make a ruling without appeal, although a convicted ruler could be pardoned by the Conference of Rulers after their consideration of the Attorney Generals written opinion. In Nov. 1993 Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim was elected as UMNO deputy president. Also in 1993 Malaysia supported Islamic concerns in the Middle East and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and offered to send 1,500 peacekeeping troops to Bosnia.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Ringgit (R) divided into 100 Sen.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$60,141,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$13,863,000,000 (1993). Imports; M \$117,423,000,000 (1993). Exports; M \$121,214,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$1,876,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; M \$12,628,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 7,646,500 or 40.1% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 3.6% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Japan, Singapore, the USA and the EU.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Bauxite, Cocoa, Copper, Crude Oil, Fish, Iron Ore, Natural Gas, Palm Oil, Pepper, Pineapples, Rice, Rubber, Timber, Tin.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Chemicals, Crude Oil Production, Electronics, Fishing, Food Processing, Forestry, Mining, Rubber, Textiles, Tyre Manufacture.

MAIN EXPORTS: Bauxite, Cocoa, Copper, Crude Oil, Electronic Components, Iron Ore, Liquefied Natural Gas, Palm Oil, Petroleum, Pepper, Pineapples, Rubber, Timber, Tin.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 2,098 km (1,304 mi) (1989), passenger-km 1,668,000,000 (1,036,000,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 1,404,000,000 (962,000,000 short ton-mi) (1989). Roads; length 40,174 km (24,963 mi) (1988). Vehicles; cars 1,689,370 (1989), trucks and buses 374,565 (1989). Merchant Marine; vessels 498 (1990), deadweight tonnage 2,459,516 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 10,105,000,000 (6,279,000,000 passenger-mi) (1989), cargo ton-km 403,735,000 (276,518,000 short ton-mi) (1989).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 39 with a total circulation of 2,200,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 7,460,000 (1994). Television; receivers 2,000,000 (1994). Telephones; units 2,410,700 (1993).

MILITARY: 114,500 (1995) total active duty personnel with 78.6% army, 10.5% navy and 10.9% air force while military expenditure accounts for 3.9% (1994) of the Gross National Product (GNP).