

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Singapore

CAPITAL: Singapore

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 620 Sq Km (239 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 3,109,000



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Singapore is located on the Malay Peninsula in South East Asia. The territory consists of the island of Singapore and around 50 adjacent islands.

The country is separated physically from Malaysia by the Johore Strait and from Indonesia by the Strait of Malacca as well as the Strait of Singapore. The islands are generally flat and low with a few small cliffs and shallow valleys to the southwest. The main island is drained by a number of short streams such as the Singapore, Jurong, Kalang, Kranji, Seletar and Serangoon. Land Use; forested 5%, pastures and agricultural-cultivated 1%, urban and other 94% (1993).

CLIMATE: Singapore has a tropical climate characterized by hot and humid conditions. Rainfall is distributed evenly throughout the year with an average annual precipitation of 2,410 mm (95 inches). During the NE Monsoon, floods are common while the SW Monsoon usually brings violent wind squalls called Sumatras. Average temperature ranges are between 24 degrees Celsius (75 degrees Fahrenheit) to 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit) all year.

PEOPLE: The Singaporeans are of three major ethnic groups. (1.) The Chinese who account for around 78% of the population, (2.) the Malays who account for 14% and (3.) the Indians who account for 7% of the population.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 4,371 persons per sq km (11,329 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 100.0% urban, 0.0% rural (1991). Sex Distribution; 50.6% male, 49.4% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 72.3 years male, 77.5 years female (1990). Age Breakdown; 23% under 15, 27% 15 to 29, 28% 30 to 44, 13% 45 to 59, 9% 60 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 18.5 per 1,000 (1990). Death Rate; 4.8 per 1,000 (1990). Increase Rate; 13.7 per 1,000 (1990). Infant Mortality Rate; 6.7 per 1,000 live births (1990).

RELIGIONS: Singapore is a completely secular state with no records kept of religious denominations. However, 28% of the population are Buddhist, 16% are Muslim, 5% are Hindu, 19% are Christian and 14% are Taoist or Confucianist.

LANGUAGES: The official languages are English, Chinese, Tamil and Malay.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling or incomplete primary education 43.7%, primary 38.3%, secondary 14.6%, higher 3.4% (1980). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 1,982,523 or 87.6% (1989).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1959 Singapore was granted internal self-government by Britain and the elections were won by Lee Kuan Yew of the People's Action Party (PAP). In 1963 Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia as a constituted state, however, in July and Sept. 1965 serious ethnic riots broke out and in Aug. 1965 Malaysia forced Singapore to withdraw from the federation fearing that the ethnic problems would spread. On Aug. 9, 1965 Singapore became an independent state within the Commonwealth and in Dec. 1965 became a republic. Since the mid 1960's Singapore has developed into a modern and highly industrialized nation, based on its ports and trade. In 1988 a number of people were arrested and charged with conspiring to overthrow the government in a Marxist plot. In Nov. 1990 Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew resigned and was succeeded by Goh Chok Tong. In March 1991 a commercial aircraft hijacked by supporters of Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto was stormed by commandos as it sat on the tarmac of Changi Airport with all 4 hijackers being shot dead without harm to any passengers. In May 1991 the government announced plans to privatise telecommunications, electricity and public transport as well as finance overseas joint ventures. In Aug. 1991 Prime Minister Goh and the PAP were re-elected which resulted in the introduction of further socio-economic reforms aimed at less fortunate Singaporeans. Also in 1991 the government introduced new legislation aimed at changing the constitutional function of the President which would have veto powers over the budget, security affairs and senior public service appointments. In Jan. 1992 the government banned the manufacture and sale of chewing gum, alleging it was a public nuisance. In May 1992 Prime Minister Goh announced a \$10 billion dollar program to improve housing. In July 1992 the government announced plans to increase the number of kindergartens in PAP constituencies and to reduce the number in opposition constituencies by 10%. Opposition parties claimed the government was attempting to persuade voters in by-elections that were to be held shortly. In Aug. 1992 the offices of the Business Times was raided following the publication of alleged leaked economic data. In Nov. 1992 two leading government officials, Ong Teng Cheong and Lee Hsien Loong were diagnosed with lymphatic cancer. In March 1993 the government passed legislation raising the age of retirement from 55 to 60 following labor shortages. In April 1993 Lee the son of former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and likely successor to Goh was reported by doctors as free of cancer following chemotherapy, although he was restricted in ministerial activities by his doctors. In Aug. 1993 Ong was elected as the country's first directly elected President who remained active following being diagnosed with a low grade cancer. Also in 1993 the leader of the opposition Singapore Democratic Party, Chiam See Tong resigned following political infighting. Chiam was succeeded by Chee Soon Juan who later went on a 10 day hunger strike following his dismissal as a lecturer at the National University of Singapore.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Dollar (SD) divided into 100 Cents.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$55,372,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$11,600,000 (1993). Imports; SD \$156,395,800,000 (1994). Exports; SD \$147,327,200,000 (1994). Tourism Receipts; USD \$5,793,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; SD -\$216,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 1,635,700 or 56.9% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 2.7% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are Malaysia, the USA, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Australia, Germany and Indonesia.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Coconuts, Fruit and Vegetables, Fish, Livestock, Rubber.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Chemicals, Electronic Equipment, International Trade, Oil Drilling Equipment, Oil Refining, Processed Foods, Printing, Ship Building and Repairs, Textiles.

MAIN EXPORTS: Electrical and Electronic Equipment, International Trade, Machinery, Petroleum Products, Rubber.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 26 km (16 mi) (1990), passenger-km N/A., cargo ton-km N/A. Roads; length 2,810 km (1,746 mi) (1989). Vehicles; cars 286,756 (1990), trucks and buses 127,000 (1990). Merchant Marine; vessels 774 (1990), deadweight tonnage 12,964,510 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 31,544,000,000 (19,601,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 1,696,000,000 (1,162,000,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 8 with a total circulation of 1,004,800 (1993). Radio; receivers 822,000 (1994). Television; receivers 650,000 (1994). Telephones; units 1,245,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 54,000 (1994) total active duty personnel with 83.3% army, 5.6% navy and 11.1% air force while military expenditure accounts for 4.8% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).