

Burma

Geography

Location: Southeastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Bangladesh and Thailand

Map references: Southeast Asia

Area:

total area: 678,500 sq km

land area: 657,740 sq km

comparative area: slightly smaller than Texas

Land boundaries: total 5,876 km, Bangladesh 193 km, China 2,185 km, India 1,463 km, Laos 235 km, Thailand 1,800 km

Coastline: 1,930 km

Maritime claims:

contiguous zone: 24 nm

continental shelf: 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical monsoon; cloudy, rainy, hot, humid summers (southwest monsoon, June to September); less cloudy, scant rainfall, mild temperatures, lower humidity during winter (northeast monsoon, December to April)

Terrain: central lowlands ringed by steep, rugged highlands

Natural resources: petroleum, timber, tin, antimony, zinc, copper, tungsten, lead, coal, some marble, limestone, precious stones, natural gas

Land use:

arable land: 15%

permanent crops: 1%

meadows and pastures: 1%

forest and woodland: 49%

other: 34%

Irrigated land: 10,180 sq km (1989)

Environment:

current issues: deforestation; industrial pollution of air, soil, and water; inadequate sanitation and water treatment contribute to disease

natural hazards: destructive earthquakes and cyclones; flooding and landslides common during rainy season (June to September); periodic droughts

Note: strategic location near major Indian Ocean shipping lanes

People

Population: 45,103,809 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 36% (female 7,963,544; male 8,285,459)

15-64 years: 60% (female 13,478,211; male 13,404,987)

65 years and over: 4% (female 1,080,922; male 890,686) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.84% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 28.02 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 9.63 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 61.6 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:
total population: 60.47 years
male: 58.38 years
female: 62.69 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 3.58 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:
noun: Burmese (singular and plural)
adjective: Burmese

Ethnic divisions: Burman 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhine 4%,
Chinese 3%, Mon 2%, Indian 2%, other 5%

Religions: Buddhist 89%, Christian 4% (Baptist 3%, Roman
Catholic 1%), Muslim 4%, animist beliefs 1%, other 2%

Languages: Burmese; minority ethnic groups have their own
languages

Literacy: age 15 and over can read and write (1990 est.)
total population: 81%
male: 89%
female: 72%

Labour force: 16.007 million (1992)
by occupation: agriculture 65.2%, industry 14.3%, trade 10.1%,
government 6.3%, other 4.1% (FY88/89 est.)

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Union of Burma

conventional short form: Burma

local long form: Pyidaungzu Myanma Naingngandaw (translated by
the US Government as Union of Myanmar and by the Burmese as
Union of Myanmar)

local short form: Myanma Naingngandaw

former: Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma

Type: military regime

Capital: Rangoon (regime refers to the capital as Yangon)

Administrative divisions: 7 divisions* (yin-mya, singular - yin) and 7 states (pyine-mya, singular - pyine); Chin State, Ayeyarwady*, Bago*, Kachin State, Kayin State, Kayah State, Magway*, Mandalay*, Mon State, Rakhine State, Sagaing*, Shan State, Tanintharyi*, Yangon*

Independence: 4 January 1948 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 4 January (1948)

Legal system: has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage: 18 years of age; universal

Flag: red with a blue rectangle in the upper hoist-side corner bearing, all in white, 14 five-pointed stars encircling a cogwheel containing a stalk of rice; the 14 stars represent the 14 administrative divisions

Economy

Overview: Burma has a mixed economy with about 75% private activity, mainly in agriculture, light industry, and transport, and with about 25% state-controlled activity, mainly in energy, heavy

industry, and foreign trade. Government policy in the last six years, 1989-94, has aimed at revitalizing the economy after four decades of tight central planning. Thus, private activity has markedly increased; foreign investment has been encouraged, so far with moderate success; and efforts continue to increase the efficiency of state enterprises. Published estimates of Burma's foreign trade are greatly understated because of the volume of black market trade. A major ongoing problem is the failure to achieve monetary and fiscal stability. Although Burma remains a poor Asian country, its rich resources furnish the potential for substantial long-term increases in income, exports, and living standards.

Industries: agricultural processing; textiles and footwear; wood and wood products; petroleum refining; mining of copper, tin, tungsten, iron; construction materials; pharmaceuticals; fertilizer

Agriculture: accounts for 65% of GDP and 65% of employment (including fishing, animal husbandry, and forestry); self-sufficient in food; principal crops - paddy rice, corn, oilseed, sugarcane, pulses; world's largest stand of hardwood trees; rice and timber account for 55% of export revenues

Illicit drugs: world's largest illicit producer of opium (2,030 metric tons in 1994 - dropped 21% due to regional drought in 1994) and minor producer of cannabis for the international drug trade; opium

production continues to be almost double since the collapse of Rangoon's antinarcotic programs; growing role in amphetamine production for regional consumption

Transportation

Railroads:

total: 3,991 km (3,878 km common carrier lines, 113 km industrial lines)

Highways:

total: 27,000 km

Inland waterways: 12,800 km; 3,200 km navigable by large commercial vessels

Pipelines: crude oil 1,343 km; natural gas 330 km

Ports: Bassein, Bhamo, Chauk, Mandalay, Moulmein, Myitkyina, Rangoon, Sittwe, Tavoy

Airports:

total: 80

Defence Forces

Branches: Army, Navy, Air Force