

Singapore



Flag



emblem

History

Singapore was only a sparsely populated island covered with thick jungle, with fishing villages round its coast, when Sir Stamford Raffles founded a British trading post in 1819.

In 1826 Singapore joined Penang and Malacca to form the Straits Settlements, becoming their government centre in 1832.

Over the years the island, with its deep harbour, became more and more important as a staging port between Europe, India and the Far East. When the Suez Canal opened in 1869, shortening the voyage time to the East, Singapore's growth rapidly increased.

As well as its strength as a shipping and trading centre, Singapore was an important British naval base. Nevertheless, in 1942 the Japanese took the island of Singapore which they occupied until the end of the Second World War in 1945.

In 1959 Singapore gained its independence from Britain and in 1963 joined the Federation of Malaysia. However, in 1965 Singapore left the Federation becoming a completely independent country with a seat at the United Nations and a place in the Commonwealth.

In 1967 Singapore joined Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand in the economic cooperative, (ASEAN) - Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Later members included Laos, Myanmar, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam and Vietnam.

From 1965 to 1977 Singapore's income per head increased by four hundred percent and the country became firmly established as one of the "Asian Tiger" economies.

Geography

The Republic of Singapore consists of the island of Singapore and around sixty smaller islands of which just over twenty are inhabited. Singapore is located just off the southern tip of the Malaysian Peninsula to which it is linked by a causeway.

The main island is about twenty-six miles wide and stretches around fourteen miles from north to south. Singapore City is the country's capital. The Port of Singapore is a major world port.

Singapore's climate is tropical and very humid. The winter monsoon period brings the greatest amount of rain. The island has no natural resources except for its location on the trade routes between East and West and the geography which has given it one of the world's finest deep harbours.

Population

The population of Singapore was estimated at 5.5 millions in 2014

Languages

Languages are Mandarin, English, Malay and Tamil. Hokkien, Cantonese and Teochew are also spoken.

Religion

With its mixture of races, Singapore has a number of religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Confucianism, Christianity, Taoism, Judaism and Sikhism are all practised in the city state.

Currency

The Singapore Dollar is the currency in Singapore (SG, SGP). The United States Dollar is the currency in American Samoa (AS, ASM), British Virgin Islands (VG, VGB, BVI), El Salvador (SV, SLV), Guam (GU, GUM), Marshall Islands (MH, MHL), Micronesia (Federated States of Micronesia, FM, FSM), Northern Mariana Islands (MP, MNP), Palau (PW, PLW), Puerto Rico (PR, PRI), United States (United States of America, US, USA), Turks and Caicos Islands (TC, TCA), Virgin Islands (VI, VIR), Timor-Leste, Ecuador (EC, ECU), Johnston Island, Midway Islands, and Wake Island. The United States Dollar is also known as the American Dollar, and the US Dollar. The symbol for SGD can be written S\$, and SGD\$. The symbol for USD can be written \$. The Singapore Dollar is divided into 100 cents. The United States Dollar is divided into 100 cents. The exchange rate for the Singapore Dollar was last updated on December 10, 2014 from The International Monetary Fund. The exchange rate for the United States Dollar was last updated on December

10, 2014 from The International Monetary Fund. The SGD conversion factor has 6 significant digits. The USD conversion factor has 6 significant digits.

Government

Singapore is a republic with a parliamentary system of government. The city-state and former British colony adopted the Westminster model after it gained independence on 9 August 1965. There are three branches of the Government of Singapore: Executive, Legislative and the Judiciary.

Executive

Executive power rests with the Cabinet. The Cabinet is led by the Prime Minister, who is appointed by the President. On the advice of the Prime Minister, the President appoints other Ministers from among the Members of Parliament to form the Cabinet. The Cabinet is responsible for all government policies and the day-to-day administration of the affairs of state.

Legislative

The Singapore Parliament is unicameral and together with the President of Singapore, is known as the Legislature. It is modelled after the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy, where Members of Parliament (MPs) are voted in at regular General Elections. In Singapore, a General Election must be held at least once every five years. The leader of the political party that secures the majority of seats in Parliament will be asked by the President to become the Prime Minister. MPs consist of either Elected, Non-Constituency or Nominated members.

The present 12th Parliament of Singapore, which opened its first session on 10 October 2011, has 99 MPs, comprising 87 elected MPs, 3 Non-Constituency MPs and 9 Nominated MPs.

President

The Constitution provides for a President who is the Head of State. Prior to 1991, the President was appointed by Parliament and had a largely ceremonial role. In January 1991, the Constitution was amended to allow for the election of a President by the citizens of Singapore. Under the revision, the President is empowered to veto government budgets and key appointments to public office. The elected President will hold office for a fixed term of six years. There are no term limits to the presidency.

The first Presidential election was held on 28 August 1993. Mr Ong Teng Cheong was elected, and he served a six-year term from 1 September 1993 to 31 August 1999. His successor, Mr S R Nathan, served for two terms. The current elected President, Dr Tony Tan Keng Yam, was sworn in as the seventh President of Singapore on 1 September 2011.

Judiciary

The Judiciary is made up of the Supreme Court and the State Courts. The Judiciary administers the law independently of the Executive and this independence is safeguarded by the Constitution. The Supreme Court consists of the Court of Appeal and the High Court. The Chief Justice, Judges of Appeal, Judicial Commissioners and High Court Judges are appointed by the President from candidates recommended by the Prime Minister.

Singapore practices the common law legal system, where the decisions of higher courts constitute binding precedent upon courts of equal or lower status within their jurisdiction, as opposed to the civil law legal system in continental Europe. The current criminal code was preceded by the Indian Penal Code which was adopted when Singapore was a Crown Colony.

Economy

Singapore has one of the world's busiest ports and one of the world's leading airports. It is an important centre for oil refining and ship repairing. The financial and business services sectors of the economy have become the largest single contributor.

In October 2008 Singapore guaranteed billions of dollars worth of bank deposits for more than two years when governments throughout the world acted quickly to recapitalize their banking systems hit by the global financial crisis.

The electronics industry is a significant part of the manufacturing sector. Singapore's role as a trading centre between East and West has continued into the age of telecommunications. Singapore Telecom has developed a technologically advanced communications system networking the island. The country is linked internationally by submarine cables and satellite stations.

Singapore's soil is not very productive and the amount of land available for agriculture is small. Fishing is more significant, as is to be expected on an island. However, almost all Singapore's food has to be imported.

Tourism is an important earner of foreign exchange for Singapore's economy. Most visitors come for short stays, stopover or conferences. (2008)

Architecture

A large percentage of Singapore's population lives in public housing, built by the government, so apartment blocks are part of the landscape. There are also many modern hotels and commercial buildings, some designed by leading international architects. Changi Airport, opened in 1987, is one of the world's most modern airports. Many buildings from the colonial era remain; the Raffles hotel being one of the most famous.

One form of building from the earlier days of Singapore still to be found, though in declining numbers is the shophouse. In these traditional buildings the ground floor consists of a shop, while the upper story is residential.

Environment

Singapore's original environment consisted of rainforest and coastal mangrove swamps. Some forest areas remain in the north of the island. Only a very small percentage of the land is used for agriculture.

The wildlife of the island is now limited to smaller animals such as wild cats, flying squirrels, monkeys, lizards and snakes. There are around one hundred species of birds and some four hundred types of butterflies. The larger mammals such as tigers and bears have been wiped out.

Ref : <http://worldinfozone.com/country.php?country=Singapore&page=2>

<http://app.singapore.sg/about-singapore/government>