

Country Background Notes

SINGAPORE:



FLAG OF SINGAPORE: Two equal horizontal bands of red (top) and white; near the hoist side of the red band, there is a vertical, white crescent (closed portion is toward the hoist side) partially enclosing five white five-pointed stars arranged in a circle.

BACKGROUND: Singapore was founded as a British trading colony in 1819. It joined the Malaysian Federation in 1963 but separated two years later and became independent. It subsequently became one of the world's most prosperous countries with strong international trading links (its port is the world's busiest in terms of tonnage handled) and with per capita GDP equal to that of the leading nations of Western Europe.

GEOGRAPHY Area: 692.7 sq km

Capital: Singapore

Terrain: Lowland; gently undulating central plateau contains water catchment area and nature preserve.

Climate: Tropical; hot, humid, rainy; two distinct monsoon seasons - Northeastern monsoon from December to March and Southwestern monsoon from June to September; inter-monsoon - frequent afternoon and early evening thunderstorms.

PEOPLE: Nationality: *noun*: Singaporean(s), *adjective*: Singapore

Population: 4,353,893

Religions: Buddhist (Chinese), Muslim (Malays), Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Taoist, Confucianist

Literacy: 92.5%

Health: Infant mortality rate: 2.28 deaths/1,000 live births, Life expectancy: 81.53 years.

Work force: Manufacturing 18%, construction 6%, transportation and communication 11%, financial, business, and other services 49%, other 16% (2003).

Ethnic groups: Chinese 76.7%, Malay 14%, Indian 7.9%, other 1.4%

GOVERNMENT: Type: Parliamentary republic.

Independence: 9 August 1965

Constitution: June 1959, amended 1965 (based on pre-independence State of Singapore Constitution) (from Malaysian Federation).

ECONOMY: Currency: Singapore dollar (SGD).

Per capita income: \$23,700.

Trade: Machinery and equipment (including electronics), consumer goods, chemicals, mineral fuels.

AGRICULTURE: Rubber, copra, fruit, orchids, vegetables, poultry, eggs, fish, ornamental fish.

LANGUAGE: Chinese (official), Malay (official and national), Tamil (official), English (official).