[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Redirect-distinguish](/wiki/Template:Redirect-distinguish) [Template:Pp-semi-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi-indef) [Template:EngvarB](/wiki/Template:EngvarB) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country)

**Malaysia** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell) or [Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en) [Template:Respell](/wiki/Template:Respell); [Template:IPA-may](/wiki/Template:IPA-may)) is a [federal](/wiki/Federation) [constitutional monarchy](/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) located in [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Southeast_Asia). It consists of [thirteen states and three federal territories](/wiki/States_and_federal_territories_of_Malaysia) and has a total landmass of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) separated by the [South China Sea](/wiki/South_China_Sea) into two similarly sized regions, [Peninsular Malaysia](/wiki/Peninsular_Malaysia) and [East Malaysia](/wiki/East_Malaysia) (Malaysian Borneo). Peninsular Malaysia shares a land and maritime border with [Thailand](/wiki/Thailand) and maritime borders with [Singapore](/wiki/Singapore), [Vietnam](/wiki/Vietnam), and [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia). East Malaysia shares land and maritime borders with [Brunei](/wiki/Brunei) and Indonesia and a maritime border with the [Philippines](/wiki/Philippines) and Vietnam. The capital city is [Kuala Lumpur](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur), while [Putrajaya](/wiki/Putrajaya) is the seat of the federal government. With a population of over 30 million, Malaysia is the [44th most populous country](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population). The southernmost point of continental [Eurasia](/wiki/Eurasia), [Tanjung Piai](/wiki/Tanjung_Piai), is in Malaysia. Located in the [tropics](/wiki/Tropics), Malaysia is one of 17 [megadiverse countries](/wiki/Megadiverse_countries) on earth, with large numbers of [endemic species](/wiki/Wildlife_of_Malaysia).

Malaysia has its origins in the Malay kingdoms present in the area which, from the 18th century, became subject to the [British Empire](/wiki/British_Empire). The first British territories were known as the [Straits Settlements](/wiki/Straits_Settlements), whose establishment was followed by the Malay kingdoms becoming British protectorates. The territories on Peninsular Malaysia were first unified as the [Malayan Union](/wiki/Malayan_Union) in 1946. Malaya was restructured as the [Federation of Malaya](/wiki/Federation_of_Malaya) in 1948, and achieved independence on 31 August 1957. Malaya united with [North Borneo](/wiki/Crown_Colony_of_North_Borneo), [Sarawak](/wiki/Crown_Colony_of_Sarawak), and [Singapore](/wiki/Singapore) on 16 September 1963. Less than two years later in 1965, Singapore was expelled from the federation.

The country is [multi-ethnic](/wiki/Ethnic_groups_in_Malaysia) and [multi-cultural](/wiki/Culture_of_Malaysia), which plays a large role in politics. About half the population is ethnically [Malay](/wiki/Malaysian_Malay), with large minorities of [Malaysian Chinese](/wiki/Malaysian_Chinese), [Malaysian Indians](/wiki/Malaysian_Indian), and [indigenous peoples](/wiki/Orang_Asal). The [constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Malaysia) declares [Islam](/wiki/Islam_in_Malaysia) the [state religion](/wiki/State_religion) while allowing [freedom of religion](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion) for non-Muslims. The government system is closely modelled on the [Westminster parliamentary system](/wiki/Westminster_system) and the legal system is based on [common law](/wiki/Common_law). The [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state) is the king, known as the [*Yang di-Pertuan Agong*](/wiki/Yang_di-Pertuan_Agong). He is an [elected monarch](/wiki/Elective_monarchy) chosen from the hereditary [rulers](/wiki/Monarchies_of_Malaysia) of the nine [Malay states](/wiki/Malay_states) every five years. The head of government is the [prime minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Malaysia).

Since its independence, Malaysia has had one of the best economic records in Asia, with its [GDP](/wiki/Gross_domestic_product) growing at an average of 6.5% per annum for almost 50 years. The economy has traditionally been fuelled by its natural resources, but is expanding in the sectors of science, tourism, commerce and [medical tourism](/wiki/Medical_tourism_in_Malaysia). Today, Malaysia has a [newly industrialised](/wiki/Newly_industrialised_country) [market economy](/wiki/Market_economy), ranked third largest in Southeast Asia and [29th largest in the world](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)). It is a founding member of the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](/wiki/Association_of_Southeast_Asian_Nations), the [East Asia Summit](/wiki/East_Asia_Summit) and the [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation), and a member of [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation](/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Economic_Cooperation), the [Commonwealth of Nations](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations), and the [Non-Aligned Movement](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement).

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|alt=English Map of Southeast Asia, "MALAYSIA" typeset horizontally so that the letters run across the northernmost corner of Borneo and pass just south of the Philippines.|"Malaysia" used as a label for the](/wiki/File:LA2-NSRW-1-0148_malaysia.jpg) [Malay Archipelago](/wiki/Malay_Archipelago) on a 1914 map from a United States atlas The name "Malaysia" is a combination of the word "Malay" and the Latin-Greek suffix "-sia"/-σία.[[1]](#cite_note-1) The word "*melayu*" in [Malay](/wiki/Malay_language) may derive from the [Tamil](/wiki/Tamil_language) words "*malai*" and "*ur*" meaning "mountain" and "city, land", respectively.[[2]](#cite_note-2)[[3]](#cite_note-3)[[4]](#cite_note-4) "*Malayadvipa*" was the word used by ancient Indian traders when referring to the [Malay Peninsula](/wiki/Malay_Peninsula).[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[[7]](#cite_note-7)[[8]](#cite_note-8)[[9]](#cite_note-9) Whether or not it originated from these roots, the word "*melayu*" or "*mlayu*" may have been used in early [Malay](/wiki/Malay_language)/[Javanese](/wiki/Javanese_language) to mean to steadily accelerate or run. This term was applied to describe the strong current of the river Melayu in [Sumatra](/wiki/Sumatra).[[10]](#cite_note-10) The name was later adopted by the [Melayu Kingdom](/wiki/Melayu_Kingdom) that existed in the seventh century on Sumatra.[[11]](#cite_note-11)[[12]](#cite_note-12) Before the onset of European colonisation, the [Malay Peninsula](/wiki/Malay_Peninsula) was known natively as "[*Tanah Melayu*](/wiki/Tanah_Melayu)" ("Malay Land").[[13]](#cite_note-13)[[14]](#cite_note-14) Under a racial classification created by a German scholar [Johann Friedrich Blumenbach](/wiki/Johann_Friedrich_Blumenbach), the natives of [maritime Southeast Asia](/wiki/Maritime_Southeast_Asia) were grouped into a single category, the [Malay race](/wiki/Malay_race).[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16) Following the expedition of French navigator [Jules Dumont d'Urville](/wiki/Jules_Dumont_d'Urville) to [Oceania](/wiki/Oceania) in 1826, he later proposed the terms of "Malaysia", "[Micronesia](/wiki/Micronesia)" and "[Melanesia](/wiki/Melanesia)" to the [*Société de Géographie*](/wiki/Société_de_Géographie) in 1831, distinguishing these Pacific cultures and island groups from the existing term "[Polynesia](/wiki/Polynesia)". Dumont d'Urville described Malaysia as "an area commonly known as the East Indies".[[17]](#cite_note-17) In 1850, the English ethnologist [George Samuel Windsor Earl](/wiki/George_Samuel_Windsor_Earl), writing in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, proposed naming the islands of Southeast Asia as "Melayunesia" or "Indunesia", favouring the former.[[18]](#cite_note-18) In modern terminology, "Malay" remains the name of an [ethnoreligious group](/wiki/Ethnoreligious_group) of [Austronesian people](/wiki/Austronesian_people) predominantly inhabiting the [Malay Peninsula](/wiki/Malay_Peninsula) and portions of the adjacent islands of [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Southeast_Asia), including the east coast of [Sumatra](/wiki/Sumatra), the coast of [Borneo](/wiki/Borneo), and smaller islands that lie between these areas.[[19]](#cite_note-19) The state that gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1957 took the name the "[Federation of Malaya](/wiki/Federation_of_Malaya)", chosen in preference to other potential names such as "[Langkasuka](/wiki/Langkasuka)", after the historic kingdom located at the upper section of the Malay Peninsula in the first millennium CE.[[20]](#cite_note-20)[[21]](#cite_note-21) The name "Malaysia" was adopted in 1963 when the existing states of the Federation of Malaya, plus Singapore, North Borneo and Sarawak formed a new federation.[[22]](#cite_note-22) One theory posits the name was chosen so that "si" represented the inclusion of Singapore, North Borneo, and Sarawak to Malaya in 1963.[[22]](#cite_note-22) Politicians in the Philippines contemplated renaming their state "Malaysia" before the modern country took the name.[[23]](#cite_note-23)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|upright|alt=Map showing the extent of the Malacca Sultanate, covering much of the Malay Peninsula and some of Sumatra|In the 15th century the](/wiki/File:Malacca_Sultanate_en.svg) [Malacca Sultanate](/wiki/Malacca_Sultanate) played a major role in spreading Islam throughout the Malay Archipelago. Evidence of modern human habitation in Malaysia dates back 40,000 years.[[24]](#cite_note-24) In the Malay Peninsular, the first inhabitants are thought to be [Negritos](/wiki/Negritos).[[25]](#cite_note-25) Traders and settlers from India and China arrived as early as the first century AD, establishing trading ports and coastal towns in the second and third centuries. Their presence resulted in strong Indian and Chinese influences on the local cultures, and the people of the Malay Peninsula adopted the religions of [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism) and [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism). [Sanskrit](/wiki/Sanskrit) inscriptions appear as early as the fourth or fifth century.[[26]](#cite_note-26) The Kingdom of [Langkasuka](/wiki/Langkasuka) arose around the second century in the northern area of the Malay Peninsula, lasting until about the 15th century.[[20]](#cite_note-20) Between the 7th and 13th centuries, much of the southern Malay Peninsula was part of the maritime [Srivijaya](/wiki/Srivijaya) Empire. After the fall of Srivijaya, the [Majapahit](/wiki/Majapahit) Empire had influence over most of Peninsular Malaysia and the Malay Archipelago.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Islam began to spread among Malays in the 14th century.[[28]](#cite_note-28) In the early 15th century, [Sultan Iskandar Shah](/wiki/Parameswara_(sultan)), a runaway king of the former [Kingdom of Singapura](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Singapura), founded the [Malacca Sultanate](/wiki/Malacca_Sultanate), commonly considered the first independent state in the peninsula area.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Malacca was an important commercial centre during this time, attracting trade from around the region.

[thumb|left|upright|alt=Dutch fleet vs Portuguese armada|The Dutch fleet battling with the Portuguese armada as part of the](/wiki/File:AMH-6472-KB_Battle_for_Malacca_between_the_VOC_fleet_and_the_Portuguese,_1606.jpg) [Dutch–Portuguese War](/wiki/Dutch–Portuguese_War) in 1606 to gain control of [Malacca](/wiki/Malacca_City). In 1511, [Malacca](/wiki/Malacca) was conquered by [Portugal](/wiki/Portuguese_Malacca),[[28]](#cite_note-28) after which it was taken by the [Dutch](/wiki/Dutch_Malacca) in 1641. In 1786, the [British Empire](/wiki/British_Empire) established a presence in Malaya, when the Sultan of Kedah leased [Penang Island](/wiki/Penang_Island) to the British [East India Company](/wiki/East_India_Company). The British obtained the town of Singapore in 1819,[[30]](#cite_note-30) and in 1824 took control of Malacca following the [Anglo-Dutch Treaty](/wiki/Anglo-Dutch_Treaty_of_1824). By 1826, the British directly controlled Penang, Malacca, Singapore, and the island of [Labuan](/wiki/Crown_Colony_of_Labuan), which they established as the crown colony of the [Straits Settlements](/wiki/Straits_Settlements). By the 20th century, the states of [Pahang](/wiki/Pahang), [Selangor](/wiki/Selangor), [Perak](/wiki/Perak), and [Negeri Sembilan](/wiki/Negeri_Sembilan), known together as the [Federated Malay States](/wiki/Federated_Malay_States), had British [residents](/wiki/Resident_(title)) appointed to advise the Malay rulers, to whom the rulers were bound to defer to by treaty.[[31]](#cite_note-31) The remaining five states in the peninsula, known as the [Unfederated Malay States](/wiki/Unfederated_Malay_States), while not directly under British rule, also accepted British advisers around the turn of the 20th century. Development on the peninsula and Borneo were generally separate until the 19th century. Under British rule the [immigration](/wiki/Immigration) of Chinese and Indians to serve as labourers was encouraged.[[32]](#cite_note-32) The area that is now [Sabah](/wiki/Sabah) came under British control as [North Borneo](/wiki/North_Borneo) when both the [Sultan of Brunei](/wiki/Sultan_of_Brunei) and the [Sultan of Sulu](/wiki/Sultanate_of_Sulu) transferred their respective territorial rights of ownership, between 1877 and 1878.[[33]](#cite_note-33) In 1842, Sarawak was ceded by the Sultan of Brunei to [James Brooke](/wiki/James_Brooke), whose successors ruled as the [White Rajahs](/wiki/White_Rajahs) over an independent [kingdom](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Sarawak) until 1946, when it became a [crown colony](/wiki/Crown_Colony_of_Sarawak).[[34]](#cite_note-34) [thumb|upright|alt=Statue of Francis Light in the Fort of Cornwallis|right|Statue of](/wiki/File:FORT_CORNWALLIS_GEORGETOWN_PENANG_ISLAND_MALAYSIA_JAN_2012_(6963840293).jpg) [Francis Light](/wiki/Francis_Light) in the [Fort Cornwallis](/wiki/Fort_Cornwallis) of [Penang](/wiki/Penang), the first British colony in what was to become Malaysia. In the Second World War, the Japanese Army [invaded](/wiki/Japanese_invasion_of_Malaya) and occupied [Malaya](/wiki/Japanese_occupation_of_Malaya), [North Borneo, Sarawak](/wiki/Japanese_occupation_of_British_Borneo), and [Singapore](/wiki/Japanese_occupation_of_Singapore) for over three years. During this time, ethnic tensions were raised and nationalism grew.[[35]](#cite_note-35) Popular support for independence increased after Malaya was reconquered, by Allied forces.[[36]](#cite_note-36) Post-war British plans to unite the administration of Malaya under a single crown colony called the "[Malayan Union](/wiki/Malayan_Union)" met with strong opposition from the [Malays](/wiki/Malays_(ethnic_group)), who opposed the weakening of the Malay rulers and the granting of citizenship to the [ethnic Chinese](/wiki/Malaysian_Chinese). The Malayan Union, established in 1946, and consisting of all the British possessions in the Malay Peninsula with the exception of [Singapore](/wiki/Singapore), was quickly dissolved and replaced on 1 February 1948 by the [Federation of Malaya](/wiki/Federation_of_Malaya), which restored the autonomy of the rulers of the Malay states under British protection.[[37]](#cite_note-37) During this time, mostly Chinese rebels under the leadership of the [Malayan Communist Party](/wiki/Malayan_Communist_Party) launched guerrilla operations designed to force the British out of Malaya. The [Malayan Emergency](/wiki/Malayan_Emergency) lasted from 1948 to 1960, and involved a long anti-insurgency campaign by [Commonwealth](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations) troops in Malaya.[[38]](#cite_note-38) After this a plan was put in place to federate Malaya with the crown colonies of North Borneo (which joined as Sabah), Sarawak, and Singapore. The date of federation was planned to be 31 August 1963 so as to coincide with the anniversary of Malayan independence; however, federation was delayed until 16 September 1963 in order for a United Nations survey of support for federation in Sabah and Sarawak, called for by parties opposed to federation including [Indonesia's](/wiki/Indonesia) [Sukarno](/wiki/Sukarno) and the [Sarawak United Peoples' Party](/wiki/Sarawak_United_Peoples'_Party), to be completed.[[39]](#cite_note-39)[[40]](#cite_note-40) Federation brought heightened tensions including a [conflict with Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia–Malaysia_confrontation), Singapore's [eventual exit](/wiki/Singapore_in_Malaysia) in 1965,[[41]](#cite_note-41)[[42]](#cite_note-42) and racial strife. This strife culminated in the [13 May race riots](/wiki/13_May_Incident) in 1969.[[43]](#cite_note-43) After the riots, the controversial [New Economic Policy](/wiki/Malaysian_New_Economic_Policy) was launched by Prime Minister [Tun Abdul Razak](/wiki/Tun_Abdul_Razak), trying to increase the share of the economy held by the [*bumiputera*](/wiki/Bumiputera_(Malaysia)).[[44]](#cite_note-44) Under Prime Minister [Mahathir Mohamad](/wiki/Mahathir_Mohamad) there was a period of rapid economic growth and urbanisation beginning in the 1980s. The economy shifted from being agriculturally based to one based on manufacturing and industry. Numerous mega-projects were completed, such as the [Petronas Towers](/wiki/Petronas_Towers), the [North-South Expressway](/wiki/North-South_Expressway,_Malaysia), the [Multimedia Super Corridor](/wiki/MSC_Malaysia), and the new federal administrative capital of [Putrajaya](/wiki/Putrajaya).[[22]](#cite_note-22) However, in the late 1990s the [Asian financial crisis](/wiki/1997_Asian_Financial_Crisis) almost caused the collapse of the currency and the stock and property markets.[[45]](#cite_note-45)

## Government and politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|alt=Perdana Putra.|](/wiki/File:Perdana_Putra_building_2005.jpg)[Perdana Putra](/wiki/Perdana_Putra) houses the office complex of the [Prime Minister of Malaysia](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Malaysia). Malaysia is a [federal](/wiki/Federation) [constitutional](/wiki/Constitutional_monarchy) [elective monarchy](/wiki/Elective_monarchy), and the only federation in [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Southeast_Asia). The system of government is closely modelled on that of the [Westminster](/wiki/Westminster_system) parliamentary system, a legacy of [British colonial rule](/wiki/British_Empire).[[46]](#cite_note-46) The head of state is the [Yang di-Pertuan Agong](/wiki/Yang di-Pertuan Agong), commonly referred to as the King. The King is elected to a five-year term by and from among the nine hereditary [rulers](/wiki/Monarchies_of_Malaysia) of the [Malay states](/wiki/Malay_states); the other four states, which have titular [Governors](/wiki/Yang_di-Pertua_Negeri), do not participate in the selection. By informal agreement the position is systematically rotated among the nine,[[46]](#cite_note-46) and has been held by [Abdul Halim of Kedah](/wiki/Abdul_Halim_of_Kedah) since December 2011.[[47]](#cite_note-47) The King's role has been largely ceremonial since changes to the [constitution](/wiki/Constitution_of_Malaysia) in 1994, picking ministers and members of the upper house.[[48]](#cite_note-48) Legislative power is divided between federal and state legislatures. The bicameral federal [parliament](/wiki/Parliament_of_Malaysia) consists of the [lower house](/wiki/Lower_house), the [House of Representatives](/wiki/House_of_Representatives_of_Malaysia) and the [upper house](/wiki/Upper_house), the [Senate](/wiki/Senate_of_Malaysia).[[49]](#cite_note-49) The 222-member House of Representatives is elected for a maximum term of five years from single-member constituencies. All 70 senators sit for three-year terms; 26 are elected by the 13 state assemblies, and the remaining 44 are appointed by the King upon the Prime Minister's recommendation.[[28]](#cite_note-28) The parliament follows a multi-party system and the government is elected through a [first-past-the-post](/wiki/First-past-the-post) system. Since independence Malaysia has been governed by a 13-party coalition known as the [Barisan Nasional](/wiki/Barisan_Nasional).[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[50]](#cite_note-50) Each state has a unicameral [State Legislative Assembly](/wiki/State_Legislative_Assembly) whose members are elected from single-member constituencies. State governments are led by [Chief Ministers](/wiki/Chief_Ministers_in_Malaysia),[[28]](#cite_note-28) who are state assembly members from the majority party in the assembly. In each of the states with a hereditary ruler, the Chief Minister is normally required to be a [Malay](/wiki/Malays_(ethnic_group)), appointed by the ruler upon the recommendation of the Prime Minister.[[51]](#cite_note-51) Parliamentary [elections](/wiki/Elections_in_Malaysia) are held at least once every five years, the most recent of which took place in May 2013.[[28]](#cite_note-28) Registered voters of age 21 and above may vote for the members of the House of Representatives and, in most of the states, for the state legislative chamber. Voting is not mandatory.[[52]](#cite_note-52) Except for state elections in Sarawak, by [convention](/wiki/Constitutional_convention_(political_custom)) state elections are held concurrently with the federal election.[[48]](#cite_note-48) [thumb|upright|alt=an official photo of prime minister Najib Tun Razak.|](/wiki/File:Najib_Razak_2008-08-21.jpg)[Najib Razak](/wiki/Najib_Razak), Prime Minister since 2009. [Executive](/wiki/Executive_branch) power is vested in the [Cabinet](/wiki/Cabinet_of_Malaysia), led by the [Prime Minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Malaysia). The prime minister must be a member of the house of representatives, who in the opinion of the King, commands a majority in parliament. The cabinet is chosen from members of both houses of Parliament.[[28]](#cite_note-28) The Prime Minister is both the head of cabinet and the head of government.[[48]](#cite_note-48) The incumbent, [Najib Razak](/wiki/Najib_Razak), appointed in 2009, is the sixth prime minister.[[53]](#cite_note-53) [Malaysia's legal system](/wiki/Law_of_Malaysia) is based on [English Common Law](/wiki/English_law).[[28]](#cite_note-28) Although [the judiciary](/wiki/Judiciary_of_Malaysia) is theoretically independent, its independence has been called into question and the appointment of judges lacks accountability and transparency.[[54]](#cite_note-54) The highest court in the judicial system is the [Federal Court](/wiki/Federal_Court_of_Malaysia), followed by the [Court of Appeal](/wiki/Court_of_Appeal_of_Malaysia) and two [high courts](/wiki/High_Courts_of_Malaysia), one for Peninsular Malaysia and one for East Malaysia. Malaysia also has a special court to hear cases brought by or against royalty.[[55]](#cite_note-55) The [death penalty](/wiki/Capital_punishment_in_Malaysia) is in use for crimes such as murder, [terrorism](/wiki/Terrorism) and [drug trafficking](/wiki/Drug_trafficking).[[56]](#cite_note-56) Separate from and running parallel to the civil courts[[57]](#cite_note-57) are the [Syariah Courts](/wiki/Syariah_Court), which apply [Shariah law](/wiki/Shariah_law) to Muslims[[58]](#cite_note-58) in the areas of [family law](/wiki/Family_law) and religious observances.

Race is a significant force in politics, and many political parties are ethnically based.[[28]](#cite_note-28) [Affirmative actions](/wiki/Affirmative_action#Malaysia) such as the [New Economic Policy](/wiki/Malaysian_New_Economic_Policy)[[44]](#cite_note-44) and the [National Development Policy](/wiki/National_Development_Policy) which superseded it, were implemented to advance the standing of the *bumiputera*, consisting of Malays and the indigenous tribes who are considered the original inhabitants of Malaysia, over non-*bumiputera* such as Malaysian Chinese and Malaysian Indians.[[59]](#cite_note-59) These policies provide preferential treatment to *bumiputera* in employment, education, scholarships, business, and access to cheaper housing and assisted savings. However, it has generated greater interethnic resentment.[[60]](#cite_note-60) There is ongoing [debate](/wiki/Religion_in_Malaysia#Secularism) over whether the laws and society of Malaysia should reflect secular or Islamic principles.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Islamic criminal laws passed by the [Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party](/wiki/Pan-Malaysian_Islamic_Party) with the support of [UMNO](/wiki/United_Malays_National_Organisation) state assemblymen in the state legislative assembly of Kelantan have been blocked by the federal government on the basis that criminal laws are the responsibility of the federal government.[[62]](#cite_note-62)[[63]](#cite_note-63)[[64]](#cite_note-64)

## Foreign relations and military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|alt=With Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak|Najib Razak with](/wiki/File:Vladimir_Putin_-_080912.jpg) [Vladimir Putin](/wiki/Vladimir_Putin). A founding member of the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](/wiki/Association_of_Southeast_Asian_Nations) (ASEAN)[[65]](#cite_note-65) and the [Organisation of Islamic Cooperation](/wiki/Organisation_of_Islamic_Cooperation) (OIC),[[66]](#cite_note-66) the country participates in many international organisations such as the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations),[[67]](#cite_note-67) the [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation](/wiki/Asia-Pacific_Economic_Cooperation),[[68]](#cite_note-68) the [Developing 8 Countries](/wiki/Developing_8_Countries),[[69]](#cite_note-69) and the [Non-Aligned Movement](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement) (NAM).[[70]](#cite_note-70) It has chaired ASEAN, the OIC, and the NAM in the past.[[28]](#cite_note-28) A former British colony, it is also a member of the [Commonwealth of Nations](/wiki/Commonwealth_of_Nations).[[71]](#cite_note-71) Kuala Lumpur was the site of the first [East Asia Summit](/wiki/East_Asia_Summit) in 2005.[[72]](#cite_note-72) Malaysia's foreign policy is officially based on the principle of neutrality and maintaining peaceful relations with all countries, regardless of their political system.[[73]](#cite_note-73) The government attaches a high priority to the security and stability of [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Southeast_Asia),[[72]](#cite_note-72) and seeks to further develop relations with other countries in the region. Historically the government has tried to portray Malaysia as a progressive Islamic nation[[73]](#cite_note-73) while strengthening relations with other Islamic states.[[72]](#cite_note-72) A strong tenet of Malaysia's policy is national sovereignty and the right of a country to control its domestic affairs.[[48]](#cite_note-48) The policy towards territorial disputes by the government is one of pragmatism, with the government solving disputes in a number of ways, such as bringing the case to the [International Court of Justice](/wiki/International_Court_of_Justice).[[74]](#cite_note-74) The [Spratly Islands](/wiki/Spratly_Islands) are disputed by many states in the area, and [a large portion of the South China Sea](/wiki/Territorial_disputes_in_the_South_China_Sea) is claimed by [China](/wiki/China). Unlike its neighbours of [Vietnam](/wiki/Vietnam) and the [Philippines](/wiki/Philippines), Malaysia historically avoided conflicts with China.[[75]](#cite_note-75) However, after the enroachment of Chinese ships in Malaysian territorial waters,[[76]](#cite_note-76) Malaysia has become active in condemning China.[[77]](#cite_note-77)[[78]](#cite_note-78) Brunei and Malaysia in 2009 announced an end to claims of each other's land, and committed to resolve issues related to their maritime borders.[[79]](#cite_note-79) The Philippines has a [dormant claim](/wiki/North_Borneo_dispute) to the eastern part of Sabah.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Singapore's land reclamation has caused tensions,[[81]](#cite_note-81) and minor maritime and land border disputes exist with Indonesia.[[80]](#cite_note-80)[[82]](#cite_note-82) [thumb|right|alt=Malaysian Armed Forces assets|Examples of the](/wiki/File:Compilation_of_Malaysian_Armed_Forces.png) [Malaysian Armed Forces](/wiki/Malaysian_Armed_Forces) weaponry assets. Clockwise from top right: [Scorpène class submarine](/wiki/Scorpène-class_submarine), [PT-91M MBT tank](/wiki/PT-91M), [Malaysian Army](/wiki/Malaysian_Army) paratrooper with [M4](/wiki/M4_carbine), and [Su-30MKM fighter aircraft](/wiki/Sukhoi_Su-30MKM). Malaysia has never recognised [Israel](/wiki/Israel) and has no diplomatic ties with it,[[83]](#cite_note-83) and has called for the [International Criminal Court](/wiki/International_Criminal_Court) to take action against Israel over their [Gaza flotilla raid](/wiki/Gaza_flotilla_raid).[[84]](#cite_note-84) Malaysia has stated it will only establish an official relations with Israel once a [peace agreement](/wiki/Israeli–Palestinian_peace_process) with the [State of Palestine](/wiki/State_of_Palestine) been reached and called for both parties to find a quick resolution.[[83]](#cite_note-83)[[85]](#cite_note-85)[[86]](#cite_note-86) Malaysian peacekeeping forces have contributed to many UN peacekeeping missions, such as in [Congo](/wiki/United_Nations_Operation_in_the_Congo), [Iran–Iraq](/wiki/United_Nations_Iran–Iraq_Military_Observer_Group), [Namibia](/wiki/United_Nations_Transition_Assistance_Group), [Bosnia and Herzegovina](/wiki/United_Nations_Protection_Force), [Somalia](/wiki/United_Nations_Operation_in_Somalia_II), [East Timor](/wiki/United_Nations_Integrated_Mission_in_East_Timor) and [Lebanon](/wiki/United_Nations_Interim_Force_in_Lebanon).[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[87]](#cite_note-87) The [Malaysian Armed Forces](/wiki/Malaysian_Armed_Forces) have three branches, the [Royal Malaysian Navy](/wiki/Royal_Malaysian_Navy), the [Malaysian Army](/wiki/Malaysian_Army), and the [Royal Malaysian Air Force](/wiki/Royal_Malaysian_Air_Force). There is no conscription, and the required age for voluntary military service is 18. The military uses 1.5% of the country's GDP, and employs 1.23% of Malaysia's manpower.[[88]](#cite_note-88) The [Five Power Defence Arrangements](/wiki/Five_Power_Defence_Arrangements) is a regional security initiative which has been in place for almost 40 years. It involves joint military exercises held among Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom.[[89]](#cite_note-89) Joint exercises and war games also been held with Brunei,[[90]](#cite_note-90) China,[[91]](#cite_note-91) Indonesia[[92]](#cite_note-92) and the United States.[[93]](#cite_note-93) Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam have agreed to host joint security force exercises to secure their maritime border and tackle issues such as illegal immigration, [piracy](/wiki/Piracy) and [smuggling](/wiki/Smuggling).[[94]](#cite_note-94)[[95]](#cite_note-95)[[96]](#cite_note-96) There are fears that extremist militants activities in the Muslim areas of the [southern Philippines](/wiki/Moro_conflict_in_the_Philippines)[[97]](#cite_note-97) and [southern Thailand](/wiki/South_Thailand_insurgency)[[98]](#cite_note-98) would spill over into Malaysia.

## Subdivisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

[Template:Malaysia Labelled Map](/wiki/Template:Malaysia_Labelled_Map)

Malaysia is a [federation](/wiki/Federation) of 13 states and three federal territories.[[99]](#cite_note-99) These are divided between two regions, with 11 states and two federal territories on [Peninsular Malaysia](/wiki/Peninsular_Malaysia) and the other two states and one federal territory in [East Malaysia](/wiki/East_Malaysia). Each state is divided into [districts](/wiki/Districts_of_Malaysia), which are then divided into [mukim](/wiki/Mukim). In [Sabah](/wiki/Sabah) and [Sarawak](/wiki/Sarawak) districts are grouped into divisions.[[100]](#cite_note-100) Governance of the states is divided between the federal and the state governments, with different powers reserved for each, and the Federal government has direct administration of the federal territories.[[101]](#cite_note-101) Lower-level administration is carried out by local authorities, which include city councils, district councils, and municipal councils, although autonomous statutory bodies can be created by the federal and state governments to deal with certain tasks.[[102]](#cite_note-102) The federal constitution puts local authorities outside of the federal territories under the exclusive jurisdictions of the state government,[[103]](#cite_note-103) although in practice the federal government has intervened in the affairs of state local governments.[[104]](#cite_note-104) There are 144 local authorities, consisting of 11 city councils, 33 municipal councils, and 97 district councils.[[105]](#cite_note-105) The 13 states are based on historical Malay kingdoms, and 9 of the 11 Peninsular states, known as the [Malay states](/wiki/Malay_states), retain their royal families. The King is elected by and from [the nine rulers](/wiki/Conference_of_Rulers) to serve a five-year term.[[28]](#cite_note-28) This King appoints governors serving a four-year term for the states without monarchies, after consultations with the chief minister of that state. Each state has a unicameral legislature known as the [State Legislative Assembly](/wiki/State_Legislative_Assembly), and its own written constitution.[[106]](#cite_note-106) Sabah and Sarawak have considerably more autonomy than the other states, most notably having separate immigration policies and controls, and a unique residency status.[[107]](#cite_note-107)[[108]](#cite_note-108)[[109]](#cite_note-109) Federal intervention in state affairs, lack of development, and disputes over oil [royalties](/wiki/Royalties) have occasionally led to statements about [secession](/wiki/Secession) from leaders in several states such as [Johor](/wiki/Johor), [Kelantan](/wiki/Kelantan), Sabah and Sarawak, although these have not been followed up and no serious independence movements exist.[[110]](#cite_note-110)[[111]](#cite_note-111)[[112]](#cite_note-112)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [left|thumb|alt=Malaysia on a satellite map globe|Malaysia is within the](/wiki/File:Malaysia_on_satellite_map_(NASA_World_Wind).PNG) [equatorial region](/wiki/Tropics), where a [tropical rainforest climate](/wiki/Tropical_rainforest_climate) is apparent all year round. Malaysia is the [66th largest country by total land area](/wiki/List_of_countries_and_outlying_territories_by_total_area), with a land area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). It has land [borders](/wiki/Borders_of_Malaysia) with Thailand in West Malaysia, and [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia) and [Brunei](/wiki/Brunei) in East Malaysia.[[113]](#cite_note-113) It is linked to [Singapore](/wiki/Singapore) by a narrow causeway and a bridge. The country also has [maritime boundaries](/wiki/Maritime_boundary) with [Vietnam](/wiki/Vietnam)[[114]](#cite_note-114) and the Philippines.[[115]](#cite_note-115) The land borders are defined in large part by geological features such as the [Perlis River](/wiki/Perlis_River), the [Golok River](/wiki/Golok_River) and the Pagalayan Canal, whilst some of the maritime boundaries are the subject of ongoing contention.[[113]](#cite_note-113) Brunei forms what is almost an enclave in Malaysia,[[116]](#cite_note-116) with the state of Sarawak dividing it into two parts. Malaysia is the only country with territory on both the Asian mainland and the Malay archipelago.[[117]](#cite_note-117) [Tanjung Piai](/wiki/Tanjung_Piai), located in the southern state of [Johor](/wiki/Johor), is the southernmost tip of continental Asia.[[118]](#cite_note-118) The [Strait of Malacca](/wiki/Strait_of_Malacca), lying between [Sumatra](/wiki/Sumatra) and Peninsular Malaysia, is one of the most important thoroughfares in global commerce, carrying 40 per cent of the world's trade.[[119]](#cite_note-119) The two parts of Malaysia, separated from each other by the [South China Sea](/wiki/South_China_Sea), share a largely similar landscape in that both Peninsular and East Malaysia feature coastal plains rising to hills and mountains.[[113]](#cite_note-113) Peninsular Malaysia, containing 40 per cent of Malaysia's land area,[[117]](#cite_note-117) extends [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) from north to south, and its maximum width is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[120]](#cite_note-120) It is divided between its east and west coasts by the [Titiwangsa Mountains](/wiki/Titiwangsa_Mountains),[[121]](#cite_note-121) rising to a peak elevation of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) at [Mount Korbu](/wiki/Mount_Korbu),[[122]](#cite_note-122)part of a series of mountain ranges running down the centre of the peninsula.[[117]](#cite_note-117) These mountains are heavily forested,[[123]](#cite_note-123) and mainly composed of [granite](/wiki/Granite) and other igneous rocks. Much of it has been eroded, creating a [karst](/wiki/Karst) landscape.[[117]](#cite_note-117) The range is the origin of some of Peninsular Malaysia's river systems.[[123]](#cite_note-123) The coastal plains surrounding the peninsula reach a maximum width of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and the peninsula's coastline is nearly [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long, although harbours are only available on the western side.[[120]](#cite_note-120) [thumb|right|alt=Limestone pinnacles jutting out of a mountainside forest on Mount Api|The limestone pinnacles at](/wiki/File:Pinnacles_at_Mulu_2.jpg) [Mount Api](/wiki/Mount_Api), part of the [Gunung Mulu National Park](/wiki/Gunung_Mulu_National_Park). East Malaysia, on the island of [Borneo](/wiki/Borneo), has a coastline of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[113]](#cite_note-113) It is divided between coastal regions, hills and valleys, and a mountainous interior.[[117]](#cite_note-117) The [Crocker Range](/wiki/Crocker_Range) extends northwards from Sarawak,[[117]](#cite_note-117) dividing the state of Sabah. It is the location of the [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) high [Mount Kinabalu](/wiki/Mount_Kinabalu),[[124]](#cite_note-124)[[125]](#cite_note-125) the tallest mountain in Malaysia. Mount Kinabalu is located in the [Kinabalu National Park](/wiki/Kinabalu_National_Park), which is protected as one of the four UNESCO [World Heritage Sites](/wiki/World_Heritage_Site) [in Malaysia](/wiki/List_of_World_Heritage_Sites_in_Malaysia).[[126]](#cite_note-126) The highest mountain ranges form the border between Malaysia and Indonesia. Sarawak contains the Mulu Caves, the largest cave system in the world, in the [Gunung Mulu National Park](/wiki/Gunung_Mulu_National_Park) which is also a World Heritage Site.[[117]](#cite_note-117) Around these two halves of Malaysia are [numerous islands](/wiki/List_of_islands_of_Malaysia), the largest of which is [Banggi](/wiki/Banggi_Island).[[127]](#cite_note-127) The local climate is [equatorial](/wiki/Tropical_climate) and characterised by the annual southwest (April to October) and northeast (October to February) [monsoons](/wiki/Monsoon).[[120]](#cite_note-120) The temperature is moderated by the presence of the surrounding oceans.[[117]](#cite_note-117) Humidity is usually high, and the average annual rainfall is [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[120]](#cite_note-120) The climates of the Peninsula and the East differ, as the climate on the peninsula is directly affected by wind from the mainland, as opposed to the more maritime weather of the East. Local climates can be divided into three regions, highland, lowland, and coastal. [Climate change](/wiki/Climate_change) is likely to affect sea levels and rainfall, increasing flood risks and leading to droughts.[[117]](#cite_note-117)

## Biodiversity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|left|alt=Wildlife of Malaysia|Native species in Malaysia, clockwise from top-right:](/wiki/File:Wildlife_of_Malaysia.jpg) [oriental pied hornbills](/wiki/Oriental_pied_hornbill), [hawksbill sea turtle](/wiki/Hawksbill_sea_turtle), [proboscis monkey](/wiki/Proboscis_monkey), [Malayan tiger](/wiki/Malayan_tiger). Malaysia signed the Rio [Convention on Biological Diversity](/wiki/Convention_on_Biological_Diversity) on 12 June 1993, and became a party to the convention on 24 June 1994.[[128]](#cite_note-128) It has subsequently produced a [National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan](/wiki/Biodiversity_action_plan), which was received by the convention on 16 April 1998.[[129]](#cite_note-129) The country is [megadiverse](/wiki/Megadiverse_countries) with a high number of species and high levels of [endemism](/wiki/Endemism).[[130]](#cite_note-130) It is estimated to contain 20 per cent of the world's animal species.[[131]](#cite_note-131) High levels of endemism are found on the diverse forests of Borneo's mountains, as species are isolated from each other by lowland forest.[[117]](#cite_note-117) There are about 210 mammal species in the country.[[124]](#cite_note-124) Over 620 species of birds have been recorded in Peninsular Malaysia,[[131]](#cite_note-131) with many endemic to the mountains there. A high number of endemic bird species are also found in Malaysian Borneo.[[117]](#cite_note-117) 250 reptile species have been recorded in the country, with about 150 species of snakes[[132]](#cite_note-132) and 80 species of lizards.[[124]](#cite_note-124) There are about 150 species of frogs,[[124]](#cite_note-124) and thousands of insect species.[[124]](#cite_note-124) Malaysia's [exclusive economic zone](/wiki/Exclusive_economic_zone) is 1.5 times larger than its land area,[[133]](#cite_note-133) and some of its waters are in the [Coral Triangle](/wiki/Coral_Triangle), a biodiversity hotspot.[[134]](#cite_note-134) The waters around [Sipadan island](/wiki/Sipadan_island) are the most biodiverse in the world.[[131]](#cite_note-131) Bordering East Malaysia, the [Sulu Sea](/wiki/Sulu_Sea) is a biodiversity hotspot, with around 600 coral species and 1200 fish species.[[135]](#cite_note-135) The unique biodiversity of Malaysian Caves always attracts lovers of [ecotourism](/wiki/Ecotourism) from all over the world.[[136]](#cite_note-136) Nearly 4,000 species of fungi, including lichen-forming species have been recorded from Malaysia. Of the two fungal groups with the largest number of species in Malaysia, the [Ascomycota](/wiki/Ascomycota) and their asexual states have been surveyed in some habitats (decaying wood, marine and freshwater ecosystems, as parasites of some plants, and as agents of biodegradation), but have not been or have been only poorly surveyed in other habitats (as endobionts, in soils, on dung, as human and animal pathogens); the [Basidiomycota](/wiki/Basidiomycota) are only partly surveyed: [bracket fungi](/wiki/Bracket_fungi), and mushrooms and [toadstools](/wiki/Toadstool) have been studied, but Malaysian rust and smut fungi remain very poorly known. Without doubt, many more fungal species in Malaysia have not yet been recorded, and it is likely that many of those, when found, will be new to science.[[137]](#cite_note-137) [thumb|right|alt=Red flower made of 5 petals surrounding a depressed centre, on the forest floor surrounded by dead leaves and small green plants|Some species of](/wiki/File:Rafflesia_80_cm.jpg) [*Rafflesia*](/wiki/Rafflesia) can grow up to [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in diameter, making them the largest flowers in the world. About two thirds of Malaysia is covered in forest,[[120]](#cite_note-120) with some forests believed to be 130 million years old.[[124]](#cite_note-124) The forests are dominated by [dipterocarps](/wiki/Dipterocarpaceae).[[138]](#cite_note-138) Lowland forest covers areas below [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert),[[120]](#cite_note-120) and formerly East Malaysia was covered in [such rainforest](/wiki/Borneo_lowland_rain_forests),[[138]](#cite_note-138) which is supported by its hot wet climate.[[117]](#cite_note-117) There are around 14,500 species of flowering plants and trees.[[124]](#cite_note-124) Besides rainforests, there are over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of [mangroves](/wiki/Mangroves) in Malaysia,[[120]](#cite_note-120) and a large amount of peat forest. At higher altitudes, oaks, chestnuts, and rhododendrons replace dipterocarps.[[117]](#cite_note-117) There are an estimated 8,500 species of [vascular plants](/wiki/Vascular_plant) in Peninsular Malaysia, with another 15,000 in the East.[[139]](#cite_note-139) The forests of East Malaysia are estimated to be the habitat of around 2,000 tree species, and are one of the most biodiverse areas in the world, with 240 different species of trees every hectare.[[117]](#cite_note-117) These forests host many members of the [Rafflesia](/wiki/Rafflesia) genus, the largest flowers in the world,[[138]](#cite_note-138) with a maximum diameter of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[140]](#cite_note-140)

### Conservation issues[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Logging](/wiki/Logging), along with cultivation practices has devastated tree cover, causing severe environmental degradation in the country. Over 80 per cent of Sarawak's rainforest has been cleared.[[117]](#cite_note-117) Floods in East Malaysia have been worsened by the loss of trees, and over 60 per cent of the Peninsular's forest have been cleared.[[140]](#cite_note-140) With current rates of deforestation, the forests are predicted to be extinct by 2020.[[117]](#cite_note-117) [Deforestation](/wiki/Deforestation_in_Malaysia) is a major problem for animals, fungi and plants, as the forest is cut to make room for plantations.[[141]](#cite_note-141) Most remaining forest is found inside national parks.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Habitat destruction has proved a threat for marine life.[[135]](#cite_note-135) Illegal fishing is another major threat,[[135]](#cite_note-135) with fishing methods such as [dynamite fishing](/wiki/Dynamite_fishing) and poisoning depleting marine ecosystems.[[142]](#cite_note-142) [Leatherback turtle](/wiki/Leatherback_turtle) numbers have dropped 98 per cent since the 1950s.[[132]](#cite_note-132) Hunting has also been an issue for some animals,[[140]](#cite_note-140) with overconsumption and the use of animal parts for profit endangering many animals, from marine life[[135]](#cite_note-135) to tigers.[[141]](#cite_note-141) Marine life is also detrimentally affected by uncontrolled tourism.[[143]](#cite_note-143) The Malaysian government aims to balance economic growth with environmental protection, but has been accused of favouring big business over the environment.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Some state governments are now trying to counter the environmental impact and pollution created by deforestation;[[138]](#cite_note-138) and the federal government is trying to cut logging by 10 per cent each year. [28 national parks](/wiki/List_of_national_parks_of_Malaysia) have been established; 23 in East Malaysia and five in the Peninsular.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Tourism has been limited in biodiverse areas such as Sipadan island.[[143]](#cite_note-143) Animal trafficking is a large issue, and the Malaysian government is holding talks with the governments of Brunei and Indonesia to standardise anti-trafficking laws.[[144]](#cite_note-144)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|alt=A blue Proton Suprima|The](/wiki/File:Proton_Suprima_S_Front_Three_Quarter_Facing_Left.jpg) [Proton](/wiki/Proton_(automobile)) company is a Malaysian car manufacturer. Malaysia is a relatively [open](/wiki/Open_economy) state-oriented and [newly industrialised](/wiki/Newly_industrialised_country) [market economy](/wiki/Market_economy).[[145]](#cite_note-145)[[146]](#cite_note-146) The state plays a significant but declining role in guiding economic activity through macroeconomic plans. Malaysia has had one of the best economic records in Asia, with GDP growing an average 6.5 per cent annually from 1957 to 2005.[[28]](#cite_note-28) Malaysia's economy in 2014–2015 was one of the most competitive in Asia, ranking 6th in Asia and 20th in the world, higher than countries like [Australia](/wiki/Australia), [France](/wiki/France) and [South Korea](/wiki/South_Korea).[[147]](#cite_note-147) In 2014, Malaysia's economy grew 6%, the second highest growth in ASEAN behind Philippines' growth of 6.1%.[[148]](#cite_note-148) The economy of Malaysia (GDP PPP) in 2014 was $746.821 billion, the third largest in ASEAN behind more populous [Indonesia](/wiki/Indonesia) and [Thailand](/wiki/Thailand) and the [28th largest in the world](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)).[[149]](#cite_note-149) In 1991, former Prime Minister of Malaysia, [Mahathir Mohamad](/wiki/Mahathir_Mohamad) outlined his ideal in [Vision 2020](/wiki/Wawasan_2020), in which Malaysia would become a self-sufficient industrialised nation by 2020.[[150]](#cite_note-150) [Najib Razak](/wiki/Najib_Razak) has said Malaysia could attain developed country status much earlier from the actual target in 2020, adding the country has two program concept such as [Government Transformation Programme](/wiki/Government_Transformation_Programme_(Malaysia)) and the [Economic Transformation Programme](/wiki/Economic_Transformation_Programme).[[151]](#cite_note-151) According to a [HSBC](/wiki/HSBC) report, Malaysia will become the world's 21st largest economy by 2050, with a GDP of $1.2 trillion (Year 2000 dollars) and a GDP per capita of $29,247 (Year 2000 dollars). The report also says "The electronic equipment, petroleum, and liquefied natural gas producer will see a substantial increase in income per capita. Malaysian life expectancy, relatively high level of schooling, and above average fertility rate will help in its rapid expansion".[[152]](#cite_note-152) Viktor Shvets, the managing director of [Credit Suisse](/wiki/Credit_Suisse), has said "Malaysia has all the right ingredients to become a developed nation".[[153]](#cite_note-153) In the 1970s, the predominantly mining and agricultural-based economy began a transition towards a more multi-sector economy. Since the 1980s, the industrial sector, with a high level of investment, has led the country's growth.[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[154]](#cite_note-154) The economy recovered from the [1997 Asian Financial Crisis](/wiki/1997_Asian_Financial_Crisis) earlier than neighbouring countries did, and has since recovered to the levels of the pre-crisis era with a GDP per capita of $14,800.<ref name=Globalization>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Principles>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref> Economic inequalities exist between different ethnic groups. The Chinese make up about one-quarter of the population, but accounts for 70 per cent of the country's market capitalisation.[[155]](#cite_note-155) Chinese businesses in Malaysia are part of the larger [bamboo network](/wiki/Bamboo_network), a network of [overseas Chinese](/wiki/Overseas_Chinese) businesses in the Southeast Asian market sharing common family and cultural ties.[[156]](#cite_note-156) [thumb|left|alt=Petronas Towers|The](/wiki/File:Petronas_Panorama_II.jpg) [Petronas Towers](/wiki/Petronas_Towers) house the headquarters of the national oil company [Petronas](/wiki/Petronas) and are the tallest twin-towers in the world. International trade, facilitated by the shipping route in adjacent [Strait of Malacca](/wiki/Strait_of_Malacca), and manufacturing are the key sectors.[[157]](#cite_note-157)[[158]](#cite_note-158)[[159]](#cite_note-159) Malaysia is an exporter of natural and agricultural resources, and petroleum is a major export.[[28]](#cite_note-28) Malaysia has once been the largest producer of [tin](/wiki/Tin),[[160]](#cite_note-160) [rubber](/wiki/Rubber) and [palm oil](/wiki/Palm_oil) in the world. Manufacturing has a large influence in the country's economy,[[161]](#cite_note-161) although Malaysia's economic structure has been moving away from it.[[162]](#cite_note-162) Malaysia remains one of the world's largest producers of palm oil.[[163]](#cite_note-163) In an effort to diversify the economy and make it less dependent on export goods, the government has pushed to increase [tourism to Malaysia](/wiki/Tourism_in_Malaysia). As a result, tourism has become Malaysia's third largest source of foreign exchange, although it is threatened by the negative effects of the growing industrial economy, with large amounts of air and water pollution along with deforestation affecting tourism.[[164]](#cite_note-164) The tourism sector came under some pressure in 2014 when the national carrier Malaysia Airlines had [one of its planes disappear](/wiki/Malaysia_Airlines_Flight_370) in March, while [another was brought down by a missile](/wiki/Malaysia_Airlines_Flight_17) over Ukraine in July, resulting in the loss of a total 537 passengers and crew. The state of the airline, which had been unprofitable for 3 years, prompted the government in August 2014 to nationalise the airline by buying up the 30 per cent it did not already own.[[165]](#cite_note-165) Between 2013 and 2014, Malaysia has been listed as one of the best places to retire in the world too, with the country in third position on the Global Retirement Index. This in part was the result of the [Malaysia My Second Home](/wiki/Malaysia_My_Second_Home) programme to allow foreigners to live in the country on a long-stay [visa](/wiki/Visa_(document)) for up to 10 years.[[166]](#cite_note-166) In 2015, Malaysia ranked in fourth position on The World's Best Retirement Havens while getting in the first place as the best place in Asia to retire. Warm climate with British colonial background made foreigners easy to interact with the locals.[[167]](#cite_note-167) The country has developed into a centre of [Islamic banking](/wiki/Islamic_banking), and is the country with the highest numbers of female workers in that industry.[[168]](#cite_note-168) Knowledge-based services are also expanding.[[162]](#cite_note-162) To create a self-reliant defensive ability and support national development, Malaysia privatised some of its military facilities in the 1970s. The privatisation has created defence industry, which in 1999 was brought under the [Malaysia Defence Industry Council](/wiki/Malaysia_Defence_Industry_Council). The government continues to promote this sector and its competitiveness, actively marketing the defence industry.[[169]](#cite_note-169) [Science policies in Malaysia](/wiki/Science_and_technology_in_Malaysia) are regulated by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation. The country is one of the world's largest exporters of semiconductor devices, electrical devices, and IT and communication products.[[28]](#cite_note-28)Malaysia began developing [its own space programme](/wiki/Malaysian_National_Space_Agency) in 2002,[[170]](#cite_note-170)[[171]](#cite_note-171) and in 2006, Russia agreed to transport [one Malaysian](/wiki/Sheikh_Muszaphar_Shukor) to the [International Space Station](/wiki/International_Space_Station) as part of a multibillion-dollar purchase of 18 Russian Sukhoi Su-30MKM fighter jets by the [Royal Malaysian Air Force](/wiki/Royal_Malaysian_Air_Force).[[172]](#cite_note-172) The government has invested in building satellites in through the [RazakSAT](/wiki/RazakSAT) programme.[[173]](#cite_note-173)

### Infrastructure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

The overall infrastructure of Malaysia is one of the most developed in Asia[[174]](#cite_note-174) and ranked 8th in Asia and 25th in the world.[[175]](#cite_note-175) Malaysia is ranked 19th in the world for its quality roads, quality of port infrastructure and quality of air transport infrastructure but ranked 39th in quality of electricity supply.[[175]](#cite_note-175) Its [telecommunications](/wiki/Telecommunication) network is second only to Singapore's in Southeast Asia, with 4.7 million fixed-line subscribers and more than 30 million cellular subscribers.[[176]](#cite_note-176)[[177]](#cite_note-177) The country has seven international ports, the major one being the [Port Klang](/wiki/Port_Klang). There are 200 [industrial parks](/wiki/Industrial_park) along with specialised parks such as [Technology Park Malaysia](/wiki/Technology_Park_Malaysia) and [Kulim Hi-Tech Park](/wiki/Kulim_Hi-Tech_Park).[[178]](#cite_note-178) Fresh water is available to over 95 per cent of the population. During the colonial period, development was mainly concentrated in economically powerful cities and in areas forming security concerns. Although rural areas have been the focus of great development, they still lag behind areas such as the West Coast of Peninsular Malaysia.[[179]](#cite_note-179) The telecommunication network, although strong in urban areas, is less available to the rural population.[[176]](#cite_note-176)

#### Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|](/wiki/File:BakunDam.jpg)[Bakun Dam](/wiki/Bakun_Dam) under construction in 2009 Malaysia's energy infrastructure sector is largely dominated by [Tenaga Nasional](/wiki/Tenaga_Nasional), the largest [electric utility](/wiki/Electric_utility) company in [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Southeast_Asia), with over RM99.03 billion of assets. Customers are connected to electricity through the [National Grid](/wiki/National_Grid_(Malaysia)), with more than 420 [transmission substations](/wiki/Electrical_substation#Transmission_substation) in the Peninsular linked together by approximately 11,000 km[[180]](#cite_note-180) of transmission lines operating at 132, 275 and 500 [kilovolts](/wiki/Kilovolts). In 2013, Malaysia's total power generation capacity was over 29,728 [megawatts](/wiki/Megawatts). Total electricity generation was 140,985.01 [GWh](/wiki/GWh) and total electricity consumption was 116,087.51 [GWh](/wiki/GWh).[[181]](#cite_note-181) Energy production in Malaysia is largely based on oil and natural gas, owing to Malaysia's oil reserves and natural gas reserves, which is the fourth largest in [Asia-Pacific](/wiki/Asia-Pacific) after [China](/wiki/China), [India](/wiki/India) and [Vietnam](/wiki/Vietnam).[[182]](#cite_note-182)

#### Transportation[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:NorthSouth-Expressway.jpg) [North–South Expressway](/wiki/North–South_Expressway_(Malaysia)), the longest highway in Malaysia Malaysia's road network is one of the most comprehensive in Asia and covers a total of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The main national road network is the [Malaysian Federal Roads System](/wiki/Malaysian_Federal_Roads_System), which span over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Most of the federal roads in Malaysia are 2-lane roads. In town areas, federal roads may become 4-lane roads to increase traffic capacity. Nearly all federal roads are paved with [tarmac](/wiki/Tarmac) except parts of the [Skudai–Pontian Highway](/wiki/Skudai–Pontian_Highway) which is paved with [concrete](/wiki/Concrete), while parts of the [Federal Highway](/wiki/Federal_Highway,_Malaysia) linking Klang to Kuala Lumpur, is paved with [asphalt](/wiki/Asphalt). Malaysia has over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of highways and the longest highway, the [North–South Expressway](/wiki/North–South_Expressway_(Malaysia)), extends over [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) on the West Coast of [Peninsular Malaysia](/wiki/Peninsular_Malaysia), connecting major urban centres like [Kuala Lumpur](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur), [Penang](/wiki/Penang) and [Johor Bahru](/wiki/Johor_Bahru). In 2015, the government announced a RM27 billion (US$8.23 billion) [Pan-Borneo Highway](/wiki/Pan-Borneo_Highway) project to upgrade all [trunk roads](/wiki/Trunk_road) to [dual carriage expressways](/wiki/Dual_carriageway), bringing the standard of [East Malaysian](/wiki/East_Malaysia) highways to the same level of quality of Peninsular highways.[[183]](#cite_note-183)[[184]](#cite_note-184) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Ktmb_class_91_and_class_92_ipoh_station.jpg)[KTM ETS Class 91](/wiki/KTM_Class_91) (left) and [KTM Komuter Class 92](/wiki/KTM_Class_92) (right) at [Ipoh railway station](/wiki/Ipoh_railway_station) There is currently [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of railways in Malaysia, [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) are [double tracked](/wiki/Double_track) and [electrified](/wiki/Electrified_railways). Rail transport in Malaysia comprises [heavy rail](/wiki/Heavy_rail) ([KTM](/wiki/Keretapi_Tanah_Melayu)), [light rapid transit](/wiki/Light_rapid_transit) and [monorail](/wiki/Monorail) ([Rapid Rail](/wiki/Rapid_Rail)), and a [funicular](/wiki/Funicular) railway line ([Penang Hill Railway](/wiki/Penang_Hill_Railway)). Heavy rail is mostly used for intercity passenger and freight transport as well as some urban public transport, while LRTs are used for intra-city urban public transport. There two [commuter rail](/wiki/Commuter_rail) services linking Kuala Lumpur with the [Kuala Lumpur International Airport](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur_International_Airport). The sole [monorail](/wiki/Monorail) line in the country is also used for public transport in [Kuala Lumpur](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur), while the only [funicular](/wiki/Funicular) railway line is in [Penang](/wiki/Penang). A [rapid transit](/wiki/Rapid_transit) project, the [KVMRT](/wiki/KVMRT), is currently under construction to improve [Kuala Lumpur's](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur) public transport system. The railway network covers most of the 11 states in [Peninsular Malaysia](/wiki/Peninsular_Malaysia). In East Malaysia, only the state of [Sabah](/wiki/Sabah) has railways. The network is also connected to the [Thai railway](/wiki/State_Railway_of_Thailand) [Template:RailGauge](/wiki/Template:RailGauge) network in the north. If the [Burma Railway](/wiki/Burma_Railway) is rebuilt, services to Myanmar, India, and China could be initiated.

[thumb|right|alt=Kuala Lumpur International Airport|](/wiki/File:KLIA_MTB&Tower.jpg)[Kuala Lumpur International Airport](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur_International_Airport), Malaysia's busiest airport Malaysia has 118 airports, of which 38 are paved. The [national airline](/wiki/Flag_carrier) is [Malaysia Airlines](/wiki/Malaysia_Airlines), providing international and domestic air services. Major international routes and domestic routes crossing between [West Malaysia](/wiki/West_Malaysia) and [East Malaysia](/wiki/East_Malaysia) are served by [Malaysia Airlines](/wiki/Malaysia_Airlines), [AirAsia](/wiki/AirAsia) and [Malindo Air](/wiki/Malindo_Air) while smaller domestic routes are supplemented by smaller airlines like [MASwings](/wiki/MASwings), [Firefly](/wiki/Firefly_(airline)) and [Berjaya Air](/wiki/Berjaya_Air). Major cargo airlines include [MASkargo](/wiki/MASkargo) and [Transmile Air Services](/wiki/Transmile_Air_Services). [Kuala Lumpur International Airport](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur_International_Airport) is the main and busiest airport of Malaysia. In 2014, it was the world's [13th busiest airport by international passenger traffic](/wiki/List_of_the_world's_busiest_airports_by_international_passenger_traffic), recording over 25.4 million international passenger traffic. It was also the world's [20th busiest airport by passenger traffic](/wiki/List_of_the_world's_busiest_airports_by_passenger_traffic), recording over 48.9 million passengers. Other major airports include [Kota Kinabalu International Airport](/wiki/Kota_Kinabalu_International_Airport), which is also Malaysia's second busiest airport and busiest airport in [East Malaysia](/wiki/East_Malaysia) with over 6.9 million passengers in 2013, and [Penang International Airport](/wiki/Penang_International_Airport), which serves Malaysia's second largest urban area, with over 5.4 million passengers in 2013.

[thumb|](/wiki/File:Northport_Malaysia_Wharve.JPG)[Port Klang](/wiki/Port_Klang) in Selangor, the biggest and busiest port in Malaysia. Malaysia is strategically located on the [Strait of Malacca](/wiki/Strait_of_Malacca), one of the most important shipping lanes in the world. Malaysia has two ports that are listed in the top 20 busiest ports in the world, [Port Klang](/wiki/Port_Klang) and [Port of Tanjung Pelepas](/wiki/Port_of_Tanjung_Pelepas), which are respectively the 2nd and 3rd busiest ports in [Southeast Asia](/wiki/Southeast_Asia) after the [Port of Singapore](/wiki/Port_of_Singapore). Port Klang is Malaysia's busiest port, and the [13th busiest port in the world](/wiki/List_of_world's_busiest_container_ports) in 2013, handling over 10.3 million [TEUs](/wiki/Twenty-foot_equivalent_unit). Port of Tanjung Pelepas is Malaysia's second busiest port, and the [19th busiest port in the world](/wiki/List_of_world's_busiest_container_ports) in 2013, handling over 7.6 million TEUs.

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|alt=Percentage distribution of Malaysian population by ethnic group, 2010|The percentage distribution of Malaysian population by ethnic group based on 2010 census.](/wiki/File:Percentage_distribution_of_Malaysian_population_by_ethnic_group,_2010.svg) As of the 2010 census, the population of Malaysia was 28,334,135,[[185]](#cite_note-185) making it the [42nd most populated country](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population_in_2010). 91.8 per cent of the population are Malaysian citizens.[[186]](#cite_note-186) Malaysian citizens are divided along ethnic lines, with 67.4 per cent considered [*bumiputera*](/wiki/Bumiputera_(Malaysia))[[186]](#cite_note-186) The largest group of *bumiputera* are [Malays](/wiki/Malays_(ethnic_group)), who are defined in the constitution as [Muslims](/wiki/Muslim) who practice Malay customs and culture. They play a dominant role politically.[[187]](#cite_note-187) *Bumiputera* status is also accorded to certain non-Malay [indigenous peoples](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples), including ethnic [Thais](/wiki/Thai_people), [Khmers](/wiki/Khmer_people), [Chams](/wiki/Cham_(Asia)) and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak. Non-Malay *bumiputera* make up more than half of Sarawak's population and over two thirds of Sabah's population.[[113]](#cite_note-113) There also exist [aboriginal](/wiki/Indigenous_peoples) groups in much smaller numbers on the peninsula, where they are collectively known as the [Orang Asli](/wiki/Orang_Asli).[[188]](#cite_note-188) Laws over who gets *bumiputera* status vary between states.[[189]](#cite_note-189) Other minorities lack *bumiputera* status. 24.6 per cent of the population are [of Chinese descent](/wiki/Malaysian_Chinese), while [those of Indian descent](/wiki/Malaysian_Indian) comprise 7.3 per cent of the population.[[186]](#cite_note-186) The Chinese have historically been dominant in the business and commerce community, and form a plurality of the population of [Penang](/wiki/Penang). Immigrants from India, the majority of them [Tamils](/wiki/Tamil_people), began arriving in Malaysia early in the 19th century.[[190]](#cite_note-190)[[191]](#cite_note-191) [Malaysian citizenship](/wiki/Malaysian_citizenship) is not automatically granted to those born in Malaysia, but is granted to a child born of two Malaysian parents outside Malaysia. Dual citizenship is not permitted.[[192]](#cite_note-192) Citizenship in the states of Sabah and Sarawak in Malaysian Borneo are distinct from citizenship in Peninsular Malaysia for immigration purposes. Every citizen is issued a biometric smart chip [identity card](/wiki/Identity_document) known as [*MyKad*](/wiki/MyKad) at the age of 12, and must carry the card at all times.[[193]](#cite_note-193) [thumb|left|alt=A map of Malaysia depicting the expected 2010 estimated population density.|Population density (person per km2) in 2010.](/wiki/File:Malaysia_population_density_2010b.png) The [education system](/wiki/Education_in_Malaysia) features a non-compulsory kindergarten education followed by six years of compulsory primary education, and five years of optional secondary education.[[194]](#cite_note-194) Schools in the primary education system are divided into two categories: national primary schools, which teach in Malay, and vernacular schools, which teach in Chinese or Tamil.[[195]](#cite_note-195) Secondary education is conducted for five years. In the final year of secondary education, students sit for the [Malaysian Certificate of Education examination](/wiki/Sijil_Pelajaran_Malaysia).[[196]](#cite_note-196) Since the introduction of the [matriculation programme](/wiki/Malaysian_Matriculation_Programme) in 1999, students who completed the 12-month programme in matriculation colleges can enroll in local universities. However, in the matriculation system, only 10 per cent of places are open to non-*bumiputera* students.[[197]](#cite_note-197) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Maulidur_Rasul_(8414773898).jpg)[Putra Mosque](/wiki/Putra_Mosque) in [Putrajaya](/wiki/Putrajaya) The [infant mortality rate](/wiki/Infant_mortality_rate) in 2009 was 6 deaths per 1000 births, and life expectancy at birth in 2009 was 75 years.[[198]](#cite_note-198) With the aim of developing Malaysia into a medical tourism destination, 5 per cent of the government social sector development budget is spent on [health care](/wiki/Healthcare_in_Malaysia).[[199]](#cite_note-199) The population in concentrated on Peninsular Malaysia[[200]](#cite_note-200) where 20 million of approximately 28 million Malaysians live.[[28]](#cite_note-28) 70 per cent of the population is urban.[[113]](#cite_note-113) [Kuala Lumpur](/wiki/Kuala_Lumpur) is the capital[[113]](#cite_note-113) and the largest city in Malaysia,[[201]](#cite_note-201) as well as its main commercial and financial centre.[[202]](#cite_note-202) [Putrajaya](/wiki/Putrajaya), a purpose-built city constructed from 1999, is the seat of government,[[203]](#cite_note-203) as many executive and judicial branches of the federal government were moved there to ease growing congestion within Kuala Lumpur.[[204]](#cite_note-204) Due to the rise in labour-intensive industries,[[205]](#cite_note-205) the country is estimated to have over 3 million migrant workers; about 10 per cent of the population.[[206]](#cite_note-206) Sabah-based NGOs estimate that out of the 3 million that make up the population of Sabah, 2 million are illegal immigrants.[[207]](#cite_note-207) Malaysia hosts a population of refugees and asylum seekers numbering approximately 171,500. Of this population, approximately 79,000 are from Burma, 72,400 from the Philippines, and 17,700 from Indonesia. Malaysian officials are reported to have turned deportees directly over to human smugglers in 2007, and Malaysia employs [RELA](/wiki/RELA_Corps), a volunteer militia with a history of controversies, to enforce its immigration law.[[208]](#cite_note-208)[Template:Largest cities of Malaysia](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Malaysia) [Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|right|alt=Percentage distribution of Malaysian population by religion, 2010.|The percentage distribution of Malaysian population by religion based on 2010 census.](/wiki/File:Percentage_distribution_of_Malaysian_population_by_religion,_2010.svg) The Malaysian constitution says it guarantees [freedom of religion](/wiki/Freedom_of_religion) while making [Islam](/wiki/Islam) the state religion.[[209]](#cite_note-209) According to the Population and Housing Census 2010 figures, ethnicity and religious beliefs correlate highly. Approximately 61.3% of the population practice [Islam](/wiki/Islam_in_Malaysia), 19.8% practice [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism_in_Malaysia), 9.2% [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity_in_Malaysia), 6.3% [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism_in_Malaysia) and 1.3% practice [Confucianism](/wiki/Confucianism), [Taoism](/wiki/Taoism) and other traditional [Chinese religions](/wiki/Chinese_folk_religion). 0.7% declared no religion and the remaining 1.4% practised other religions or did not provide any information.[[185]](#cite_note-185) [Sunni Islam](/wiki/Sunni_Islam) of [Shafi'i](/wiki/Shafi'i) school of [jurisprudence](/wiki/Jurisprudence) is the dominant branch of [Islam in Malaysia](/wiki/Islam_in_Malaysia),[[210]](#cite_note-210)[[211]](#cite_note-211) while 18% are [nondenominational Muslims](/wiki/Nondenominational_Muslims).[[212]](#cite_note-212)