

COUNTRY PROFILE



Location

Myanmar, the largest country in mainland South-East Asia with a total land area of 676,578 square kilometers, is approximately the size of France and England combined. It stretches 2200 kilometers from north to south and 925 kilometers from east-west at its widest point. It is bounded on the north and north-east by the People's Republic of China, on the east and south-east by the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Thailand, on the west and south by the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, on the west by the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Republic of India. It lies between 09° 32' N and 28° 31' N latitudes and 92°10' E and 101°11' E longitudes.

Geography

The country is divided administratively, into 14 States and Divisions. It consists of 65 districts, 325 townships, 59 subtownships, 2759 wards, 13729 village tracts and 64986 villages. Myanmar falls into three wellmarked natural divisions, the western hills, the central belt and the shan plateau on the east, with a continuation of this high land in the Tanintharyi.

Three parallel chains of mountain ranges from north to south divide the country into three river systems, the Ayeyarwaddy, Sittaung and Thanlwin. Myanmar has abundant natural resources including land resources, water resources, forest resources, natural gas and coal resources, petroleum, mineral and marine resources. Great diversity exists between the region due to the rugged terrain in the hilly north which makes communication extremely difficult. In the southern plains and swampy marshlands there are numerous rivers and tributaries of these rivers criss-cross the land in many places.

Climate

Myanmar enjoys a tropical climate with three distinct seasons, the rainy, the cold and the hot season. The rainy season comes with the southwest monsoon, which lasts from mid-May to mid-October. Then the cold season follows from mid-October to mid-February. The hot season precedes rainy season and lasts from mid-February to mid-May.

During the 10 years period covering 1992-2001, the average rainfall in the Coastal regions of the Rakhine and Tanintharyi was over 5000 mm annually. The Ayeyarwady delta had a rainfall of about 3000 mm, the mountains in the extreme north had about 2500 mm and the hills of the east about 1400 mm. The dry zone had between 600 and 1400 mm due to the Rakhine Yomas (hills) cutting off the monsoon. The average temperature experienced in the delta ranged between 23°C to 32°C, while in the dry zone, it was between 20°C and 34°C. The temperature was between 14°C and 29°C in hilly regions and even lower in Chin state ranging between 10°C and 23°C.

Yangon, the capital city, had the average annual rainfall of 2903 mm with temperature ranging between 22°C & 33°C during that ten year period.

Demography

The population of Myanmar in 2003-2004 is estimated at 53.22 million with the growth rate of 2.02 percent. About 70 percent of the population reside in the rural areas, whereas the remaining are urban dwellers.

The population density ranges from 390 per square kilometers in Yangon Division, where in lies the city of Yangon, the capital, to 10 per square kilometers in Chin State, the western part of the country.

Estimates of population and it's structure (1980-2003)

Population / Structure (in million)	1980-81		1990-91		2000-01		2001-02		2002-03	
	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%	Estimate	%
0-14 years	13.03	38.77	14.70	36.05	16.43	32.77	16.73	32.71	17.05	32.68
15-59 years	18.44	54.86	23.47	57.55	29.72	59.29	30.33	59.31	30.92	59.27
60 years and above	2.14	6.37	2.61	6.40	3.98	7.94	4.08	7.98	4.20	8.05
Total	33.61	100	40.78	100	50.13	100	51.14	100	52.17	100
Female	16.93	50.37	20.57	50.44	25.22	50.31	25.72	50.29	26.23	50.28
Male	16.68	49.63	20.21	49.56	24.91	49.69	25.42	49.71	25.94	49.72
Sex Ratio (M /100 F)	98.52		98.25		98.77		98.83		98.89	

Source: Statistical Year Book 2002, CSO

People and Religion

The Union of Myanmar is made up of 135 national groups speaking over 100 languages and dialects. The major ethnic groups are Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Chin, Mon, Bamar, Rakhine and Shan. About 89.4% of the population mainly Bamar, Shan, Mon, Rakhine and some Kayin are Buddhists. The rest are Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Animists.



Economy

Myanmar is a country with a large land area rich in natural and human resources. Accepting the view that the agricultural sector can contribute to overall economic growth of the country the government has accorded top priority to agricultural development as the base for all round development of the economy as well.

Since adopting market oriented economy from centralized economy the government has carried out liberal economic reforms to ensure participation of private sector in every sphere of economic activities.

Encouragement for the development of the industrial sector has been provided since 1995. In order to support and to render assistance to small and medium size industries scattered all over the countries in an organized manner, the government has established 19 industrial zones in states and divisions.

Myanmar is now in the process of implementing the five year economic plan from 2001-2002 to 2005-2006 and enjoyed trade surplus for two consecutive years during the first three years of the plan.

Social Development

Development of social sector has kept pace with economic development. Expansion of schools and institutes of higher education has been considerable especially in the States and Divisions. Adult literacy rate for the year 2003 was 91.9% with 94.8% for male and 89.4% for female. Expenditure for health and education have risen considerably, equity and access to education and health and social services have been ensured all over the country.

With prevalence of tranquility, law and order in the border regions, social sector development can be expanded throughout the country. Twenty four special development regions have been designated in the whole country where health and education facilities are developed or upgraded along with other development activities. Some towns or villages in these regions have also been upgraded to subtownship level with development of infrastructure to ensure proper execution of administrative, economic and social functions.

Gross Domestic Product (kyats in million)

GDP	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002*
Current	604729.1	791980.0	1119509.2	1609775.6	2190319.7	2552732.5	3523514.8
At 1985-86 Constant Producers' Prices	66741.6	71042.4	75123.1	79460.2	88157.0	100274.8	992399.6**
Growth (%)	6.9	6.4	5.7	5.8	10.9	13.7	10.5

Source: Statistical Year Book 2002, CSO

* Provisional actual

** 1995-96 Constant Producer's Prices