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Introduction

Burma

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Background:

Britain conquered Burma over a period of 62 years (1824-1886) and

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incorporated it into its Indian Empire. Burma was administered as a province of India until 1937 when it became a separate, self-governing colony; independence from the Commonwealth was attained in 1948. Gen. NE WIN dominated the government from 1962 to 1988, first as military ruler, then as self-appointed president, and later as political kingpin. Despite multiparty legislative elections in 1990 that resulted in the main opposition party - the National League for Democracy (NLD) - winning a landslide victory, the ruling junta refused to hand over power. NLD leader and Nobel Peace Prize recipient AUNG SAN SUU KYI, who was under house arrest from 1989 to 1995 and 2000 to 2002, was imprisoned in May 2003 and subsequently transferred to house arrest, where she remains virtually incommunicado. In February 2006, the junta extended her detention for another year. Her supporters, as well as all those who promote democracy and improved human rights, are routinely harassed or jailed.

Geography **Burma**

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Location:  

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

Geographic coordinates:  

22 00 N, 98 00 E

Map references:  

[Southeast Asia](#)

Area:   

total: 678,500 sq km

land: 657,740 sq km

water: 20,760 sq km

Area - comparative:  

slightly smaller than Texas

Land boundaries:  

total: 5,876 km

border countries: Bangladesh 193 km, China 2,185 km, India 1,463 km, Laos 235 km, Thailand 1,800 km

Coastline:  

1,930 km

Maritime claims:  

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territorial sea: 12 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

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

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

Elevation extremes:  

lowest point: Andaman Sea 0 m

highest point: Hkakabo Razi 5,881 m

Natural resources:  

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

Land use:  

arable land: 14.92%

permanent crops: 1.31%

other: 83.77% (2005)

Irrigated land:  

18,700 sq km (2003)

Natural hazards:  

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

Environment - current issues:  

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

Environment - international agreements:  

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:  

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strategic location near major Indian Ocean shipping lanes

People**Burma**[Top of Page](#)**Population:**   

47,373,958

note: estimates for this country take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population growth rates, and changes in the distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected (July 2007 est.)

Age structure:  

0-14 years: 26.1% (male 6,277,073/female 6,084,001)

15-64 years: 68.6% (male 16,089,764/female 16,425,299)

65 years and over: 5.3% (male 1,075,868/female 1,421,953) (2007 est.)

Median age:  

total: 27.4 years

male: 26.8 years

female: 28 years (2007 est.)

Population growth rate:  

0.815% (2007 est.)

Birth rate:   

17.48 births/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Death rate:   

9.33 deaths/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Net migration rate:  

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2007 est.)

Sex ratio:  

at birth: 1.06 male(s)/female

under 15 years: 1.032 male(s)/female

15-64 years: 0.98 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.757 male(s)/female

total population: 0.98 male(s)/female (2007 est.)

Infant mortality rate:   

total: 50.68 deaths/1,000 live births

male: 57.33 deaths/1,000 live births

female: 43.63 deaths/1,000 live births (2007 est.)

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Life expectancy at birth:   

total population: 62.49 years

male: 60.29 years

female: 64.83 years (2007 est.)

Total fertility rate:   

1.95 children born/woman (2007 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:   

1.2% (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:   

330,000 (2003 est.)

HIV/AIDS - deaths:   

20,000 (2003 est.)

Major infectious diseases:  

degree of risk: very high

food or waterborne diseases: bacterial and protozoal diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever

vectorborne diseases: dengue fever and malaria are high risks in some locations

note: highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza has been identified among birds in this country or surrounding region; it poses a negligible risk with extremely rare cases possible among US citizens who have close contact with birds (2007)

Nationality:  

noun: Burmese (singular and plural)

adjective: Burmese

Ethnic groups:  

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

Religions:  

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

Languages:  

Burmese, minority ethnic groups have their own languages

Literacy:  

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 89.9%

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male: 93.9%*female:* 86.4% (2000 est.)**Government** **Burma**[Top of Page](#)**Country name:**  *conventional long form:* Union of Burma*conventional short form:* Burma*local long form:* Pyidaungzu Myanma Naingngandaw (translated by the US Government as Union of Myanma and by the Burmese as Union of Myanmar)*local short form:* Myanma Naingngandaw*former:* Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma*note:* since 1989 the military authorities in Burma have promoted the name Myanmar as a conventional name for their state; this decision was not approved by any sitting legislature in Burma, and the US Government did not adopt the name, which is a derivative of the Burmese short-form name Myanma Naingngandaw**Government type:**  

military junta

Capital:  *name:* Rangoon (Yangon)*geographic coordinates:* 16 47 N, 96 10 E*time difference:* UTC+6.5 (11.5 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)*note:* Nay Pyi Taw is administrative capital**Administrative divisions:**  

7 divisions (taing-myar, singular - taing) and 7 states (pyi ne-myar, singular - pyi ne)

divisions: Ayeyarwady, Bago, Magway, Mandalay, Sagaing, Tanintharyi, Yangon*states:* Chin State, Kachin State, Kayah State, Kayin State, Mon State, Rakhine State, Shan State**Independence:**  

4 January 1948 (from UK)

National holiday:  

Independence Day, 4 January (1948); Union Day, 12 February (1947)

Constitution:  

3 January 1974; suspended since 18 September 1988; national convention convened in 1993 to draft a new constitution but

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collapsed in 1996; reconvened in 2004 but does not include participation of democratic opposition

Legal system:  

based on English common law; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Suffrage:  

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:  

chief of state: Chairman of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) Sr. Gen. THAN SHWE (since 23 April 1992)

head of government: Acting Prime Minister, Gen THEIN SEIN (since 18 May 2007)

cabinet: Cabinet is overseen by SPDC; military junta assumed power 18 September 1988 under name State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC)

elections: none

Legislative branch:  

unicameral People's Assembly or Pyithu Hluttaw (485 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms)

elections: last held 27 May 1990, but Assembly never allowed by junta to convene

election results: percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - NLD 392 (opposition), SNLD 23 (opposition), NUP 10 (pro-government), other 60

Judicial branch:  

remnants of the British-era legal system are in place, but there is no guarantee of a fair public trial; the judiciary is not independent of the executive

Political parties and leaders:  

National League for Democracy or NLD [AUNG SHWE, AUNG SAN SUU KYI]; National Unity Party or NUP (pro-regime) [TUN YE]; Shan Nationalities League for Democracy or SNLD [HKUN HTUN OO]; and other smaller parties

Political pressure groups and leaders:  

Ethnic Nationalities Council or ENC (based in Thailand); Federation of Trade Unions-Burma or FTUB (exile trade union and labor advocates); National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma or NCGUB (self-proclaimed government in exile) ["Prime Minister" Dr.

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SEIN WIN] consists of individuals, some legitimately elected to the People's Assembly in 1990 (the group fled to a border area and joined insurgents in December 1990 to form parallel government in exile); Kachin Independence Organization or KIO; Karen National Union or KNU; Karenni National People's Party or KNPP; National Council-Union of Burma or NCUB (exile coalition of opposition groups); several Shan factions; United Wa State Army or UWSA; Union Solidarity and Development Association or USDA (pro-regime, a social and political mass-member organization) [HTAY OO, general secretary]; 88 Generation Students (pro-democracy movement) [MIN KO]

International organization participation:



APT, ARF, AsDB, ASEAN, BIMSTEC, CP, EAS, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, ISO (correspondent), ITU, NAM, OPCW (signatory), UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:



chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires MYINT LWIN

chancery: 2300 S Street NW, Washington, DC 20008

telephone: [1] (202) 332-3344

FAX: [1] (202) 332-4351

consulate(s) general: New York

Diplomatic representation from the US:



chief of mission: Ambassador (vacant); Charge d'Affaires Shari VILLAROSA

embassy: 581 Merchant Street, Rangoon (GPO 521)

mailing address: Box B, APO AP 96546

telephone: [95] (1) 379-880, 379-881

FAX: [95] (1) 256-018

Flag description:



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

Economy

Burma

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Economy - overview:



Burma, a resource-rich country, suffers from pervasive government

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controls, inefficient economic policies, and rural poverty. The junta took steps in the early 1990s to liberalize the economy after decades of failure under the "Burmese Way to Socialism," but those efforts stalled, and some of the liberalization measures were rescinded. Lacking monetary or fiscal stability, the economy suffers from serious macroeconomic imbalances - including rising inflation, fiscal deficits, multiple official exchange rates that overvalue the Burmese kyat, a distorted interest rate regime, unreliable statistics, and an inability to reconcile national accounts to determine a realistic GDP figure. Most overseas development assistance ceased after the junta began to suppress the democracy movement in 1988 and subsequently refused to honor the results of the 1990 legislative elections. In response to the government of Burma's attack in May 2003 on AUNG SAN SUU KYI and her convoy, the US imposed new economic sanctions in August 2003 against Burma - including a ban on imports of Burmese products and a ban on provision of financial services by US persons. Further, a poor investment climate hampers attracting outside investment slowing the inflow of foreign exchange. The most productive sectors will continue to be in extractive industries, especially oil and gas, mining, and timber with the latter especially causing environmental degradation. Other areas, such as manufacturing and services, are struggling with inadequate infrastructure, unpredictable import/export policies, deteriorating health and education systems, and endemic corruption. A major banking crisis in 2003 shuttered the country's 20 private banks and disrupted the economy. As of 2006, the largest private banks operate under tight restrictions limiting the private sector's access to formal credit. Official statistics are inaccurate. Published statistics on foreign trade are greatly understated because of the size of the black market and unofficial border trade - often estimated to be as large as the official economy. Though the Burmese government has good economic relations with its neighbors, better investment and business climates and an improved political situation are needed to promote serious foreign investment, exports, and tourism.

GDP (purchasing power parity):   
\$85.2 billion (2006 est.)

GDP (official exchange rate):  
\$9.6 billion (2006 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:   
3% (2006 est.)

GDP - per capita

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(PPP):   

\$1,800 (2006 est.)

**GDP - composition
by sector:**  *agriculture: 50%**industry: 15%**services: 35% (2006 est.)***Labor force:**   

28.49 million (2006 est.)

**Labor force - by
occupation:**  *agriculture: 70%**industry: 7%**services: 23% (2001 est.)***Unemployment
rate:**   

10.2% (2006 est.)

**Population below
poverty line:**  

25% (2000 est.)

**Household income
or consumption by
percentage share:**  *lowest 10%: 2.8%**highest 10%: 32.4% (1998)***Inflation rate
(consumer prices):**   

21.4% (2006 est.)

**Investment (gross
fixed):**   

11.8% of GDP (2006 est.)

Budget:  *revenues: \$2.18 billion**expenditures: \$2.36 billion; including capital expenditures of \$NA
(2006 est.)***Agriculture -
products:**  *rice, pulses, beans, sesame, groundnuts, sugarcane; hardwood; fish
and fish products***Industries:**  *agricultural processing; wood and wood products; copper, tin,
tungsten, iron; cement, construction materials; pharmaceuticals;
fertilizer; natural gas; garments, jade and gems***Industrial
production growth**   

rate: NA%

Electricity - production:   

6.02 billion kWh (FY05/06)

Electricity - consumption:   

5.325 billion kWh (FY05/06)

Electricity - exports:  

0 kWh (2006)

Electricity - imports:  

0 kWh (2006)

Oil - production:   

9,500 bbl/day (2006 est.)

Oil - consumption:   

20,460 bbl/day (2006 est.)

Oil - exports:   

5,000 bbl/day (2006 est.)

Oil - imports:   

14,230 bbl/day (2006 est.)

Oil - proved reserves:   

less than 100 million bbl (2005)

Natural gas - production:   

10.2 billion cu m (2004 est.)

Natural gas - consumption:   

2.7 billion cu m (2004 est.)

Natural gas - exports:   

7.5 billion cu m (2004 est.)

Natural gas - imports:   

0 cu m (2004 est.)

Natural gas - proved reserves:   

283.2 billion cu m (1 January 2005 est.)

Current account balance:   

\$1.247 billion (2006 est.)

Exports:   

\$3.56 billion f.o.b.

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note: official export figures are grossly underestimated due to the value of timber, gems, narcotics, rice, and other products smuggled to Thailand, China, and Bangladesh (2006 est.)

Exports - commodities:  

gas, wood products, pulses, beans, fish, rice, clothing, jade and gems

Exports - partners:  

Thailand 48.4%, India 12.6%, China 5.2%, Japan 5.1% (2006)

Imports:   

\$1.98 billion f.o.b.

note: import figures are grossly underestimated due to the value of consumer goods, diesel fuel, and other products smuggled in from Thailand, China, Malaysia, and India (2006 est.)

Imports - commodities:  

fabric, petroleum products, fertilizer, plastics, machinery, transport equipment; cement, construction materials, crude oil; food products, edible oil

Imports - partners:  

China 33.6%, Thailand 21.2%, Singapore 15.7%, Malaysia 4.6%, South Korea 4.1% (2006)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:   

\$1.01 billion (2006 est.)

Debt - external:   

\$7.162 billion (2006 est.)

Economic aid - recipient:  

\$127 million (2001 est.)

Currency (code):  

kyat (MMK)

Exchange rates:  

kyats per US dollar - 1,280 (2006), 5.761 (2005), 5.7459 (2004), 6.0764 (2003), 6.5734 (2002)

note: unofficial exchange rates ranged in 2004 from 815 kyat/US dollar to nearly 970 kyat/US dollar, and by yearend 2005, the unofficial exchange rate was 1,075 kyat/US dollar; data shown for 2002-05 are official exchange rates

Fiscal year:  

1 April - 31 March

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Communications Burma[Top of Page](#)

Telephones - main lines in use:   
476,200 (2005)

Telephones - mobile cellular:   
183,400 (2005)

Telephone system:  

general assessment: barely meets minimum requirements for local and intercity service for business and government; international service is fair

domestic: NA

international: country code - 95; satellite earth stations - 2, Intelsat (Indian Ocean), and ShinSat (2004)

Radio broadcast stations:  
AM 1, FM 1, shortwave NA (2004)

Television broadcast stations:  
2 (2004)

Internet country code:  
.mm

Internet hosts:   
42 (2006)

Internet users:   
78,000 (2005)

Transportation Burma[Top of Page](#)

Airports:   
85 (2006)

Airports - with paved runways:  
total: 21
over 3,047 m: 8
2,438 to 3,047 m: 7
1,524 to 2,437 m: 4
914 to 1,523 m: 1
under 914 m: 1 (2006)

Airports - with unpaved runways:  
total: 64
over 3,047 m: 1

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1,524 to 2,437 m: 13
 914 to 1,523 m: 18
 under 914 m: 32 (2006)

Heliports:  

1 (2006)

Pipelines:  

gas 2,224 km; oil 558 km (2006)

Railways:   

total: 3,955 km

narrow gauge: 3,955 km 1.000-m gauge (2005)

Roadways:   

total: 27,000 km

paved: 3,200 km

unpaved: 23,800 km (2005)

Waterways:   

12,800 km (2007)

Merchant marine:   

total: 34 ships (1000 GRT or over) 402,699 GRT/620,642 DWT

by type: bulk carrier 8, cargo 20, passenger 2, passenger/cargo 3, specialized tanker 1

foreign-owned: 9 (Germany 5, Japan 4) (2006)

Ports and terminals:  

Moulmein, Rangoon, Sittwe

Military

Burma

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Military branches:  

Myanmar Armed Forces (Tatmadaw): Army, Navy, Air Force (2005)

Military service age and obligation:  

18 years of age for voluntary military service for both sexes (2004)

Manpower available for military service:  

males age 18-49: 12,268,850

females age 18-49: 12,469,771 (2005 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:  

males age 18-49: 7,946,701

females age 18-49: 8,543,705 (2005 est.)

Manpower

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reaching military service age annually:   *males age 18-49: 469,841*
females: 455,689 (2005 est.)

Military expenditures - percent of GDP:    2.1% (2005 est.)

Transnational Issues

Burma

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Disputes - international:  

over half of Burma's population consists of diverse ethnic groups who have substantial numbers of kin in neighboring countries; Thailand must deal with Karen and other ethnic rebels, illegal cross-border activities, Karen and other refugees, and asylum seekers from Burma; Thailand is studying the feasibility of jointly constructing the Hatgyi Dam on the Salween River near the border with Burma; in 2004, international environmentalist pressure prompted China to halt construction of 13 dams on the Salween River which flows through China, Burma, and Thailand; India seeks cooperation from Burma to keep Indian Nagaland separatists, such as the United Liberation Front of Assam, from hiding in remote Burmese Uplands; Burmese Rohingya Muslim refugees reside in two camps in Bangladesh

Refugees and internally displaced persons:   *IDPs: 540,000 (government offensives against ethnic insurgent groups near the eastern borders; most IDPs are ethnic Karen, Karenni, Shan, Tavoyan, and Mon) (2006)*

Trafficking in persons:  

current situation: Burma is a source country for men, women, and children trafficked to East and Southeast Asia for sexual exploitation, domestic service, and forced commercial labor; a significant number of victims are economic migrants who wind up in forced or bonded labor and forced prostitution; to a lesser extent, Burma is a country of transit and destination for women trafficked from China for sexual exploitation; internal trafficking of persons occurs primarily for labor in industrial zones and agricultural estates; internal trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation occurs from villages to urban centers and other areas; the military junta's economic mismanagement, human rights abuses, and policy of using forced labor are driving factors behind Burma's large trafficking problem
tier rating: Tier 3 - Burma does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so

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Illicit drugs:  

remains world's second largest producer of illicit opium with an estimated production in 2005 of 380 metric tons, up 13% from 2004 and cultivation in 2005 was 40,000 hectares, a 10% increase from 2004; the decline in opium production in the United Wa State Army's areas of greatest control was more than offset by increases in south and east Shan state; lack of government will to take on major narcotrafficking groups and lack of serious commitment against money laundering continues to hinder the overall antidrug effort; major source of methamphetamine and heroin for regional consumption; currently under Financial Action Task Force countermeasures due to continued failure to address its inadequate money-laundering controls (2005)

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