

Thailand

Geography

Location: Southeastern Asia, bordering the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand, southeast of Burma

Area:

total area: 514,000 sq km

land area: 511,770 sq km

Land boundaries: total 4,863 km, Burma 1,800 km, Cambodia 803 km, Laos 1,754 km, Malaysia 506 km

Coastline: 3,219 km

Maritime claims:

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

territorial sea: 12 nm

Climate: tropical; rainy, warm, cloudy southwest monsoon (mid-May to September); dry, cool northeast monsoon (November to mid-March); southern isthmus always hot and humid

Terrain: central plain; Khorat plateau in the east; mountains elsewhere

Natural resources: tin, rubber, natural gas, tungsten, tantalum, timber, lead, fish, gypsum, lignite, fluorite

Land use:

arable land: 34%

permanent crops: 4%

meadows and pastures: 1%

forest and woodland: 30%

other: 31%

Irrigated land: 42,300 sq km (1989 est.)

Environment:

current issues: air pollution from vehicle emissions; water pollution from organic and factory wastes; deforestation; soil erosion; wildlife populations threatened by illegal hunting

natural hazards: land subsidence in Bangkok area resulting from the depletion of the water table; droughts

Note: controls only land route from Asia to Malaysia and Singapore

People

Population: 60,271,300 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 29% (female 8,545,362; male 8,866,271)

15-64 years: 66% (female 19,733,773; male 20,185,392)

65 years and over: 5% (female 1,636,426; male 1,304,076) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 1.24% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 18.87 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 6.48 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 35.7 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 68.42 years

male: 64.94 years

female: 72.08 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 2.04 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Thai (singular and plural)

adjective: Thai

Ethnic divisions: Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, other 11%

Religions: Buddhism 95%, Muslim 3.8%, Christianity 0.5%,
Hinduism 0.1%, other 0.6% (1991)

Languages: Thai, English the secondary language of the elite,
ethnic and regional dialects

Literacy:

total population: 93%

male: 96%
female: 91%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Kingdom of Thailand

conventional short form: Thailand

Type: constitutional monarchy

Capital: Bangkok

Flag: five horizontal bands of red (top), white, blue (double width), white, and red

Economy

Overview:

Industries: tourism is the largest source of foreign exchange; textiles and garments, agricultural processing, beverages, tobacco, cement, light manufacturing, such as jewelry; electric appliances and components, integrated circuits, furniture, plastics; world's second-largest tungsten producer and third-largest tin producer

Agriculture: accounts for 11% of GDP and 62% of labor force; leading producer and exporter of rice and cassava (tapioca); other crops - rubber, corn, sugarcane, coconuts, soybeans; except for wheat, self-sufficient in food

Illicit drugs: a minor producer of opium and marijuana; major illicit transit point for heroin, particularly from Burma and Laos, for the international drug market; eradication efforts have reduced the area of cannabis cultivation and shifted some production to neighboring countries; opium poppy cultivation has been reduced by eradication efforts; also a major drug money laundering center; rapidly growing role in amphetamine production for regional consumption; increasing indigenous abuse of heroin and cocaine

Transportation

Railroads:
total: 3,940 km

Highways:
total: 77,697 km

Inland waterways: 3,999 km principal waterways; 3,701 km with navigable depths of 0.9 m or more throughout the year; numerous minor waterways navigable by shallow-draft native craft

Pipelines: petroleum products 67 km; natural gas 350 km

Ports: Bangkok, Laem Chabang, Pattani, Phuket, Sattahip, Si Racha, Songkhla

Airports:
total: 105

Defence Forces

Branches: Royal Thai Army, Royal Thai Navy (includes Royal Thai Marine Corps), Royal Thai Air Force, Paramilitary Forces