

# MALAYSIA

## Location

Southeast Asia.

## Area

329,750 sq km (127,317 sq miles).

## Population

25.2 million (2008 estimate).

## Population Density

76.4 per sq km.

## Capital

Kuala Lumpur.

Population: 1.8 million (2007 estimate).

## Government

Constitutional monarchy since 1963. Gained independence from the UK in 1957.

## Language

Bahasa Melayu is the national and official language, but English is widely spoken. Other languages such as Chinese (Cantonese and Hokkien), Iban and Tamil are spoken by minorities.

## Religion

Malaysia's official religion is Islam. The country also has a large Buddhist community. Other religions, including Christian, Taoist, Confucianist, Hindu and animist, are also practiced.

## Time

GMT + 8.

## Electricity

220-240 volts AC, 50Hz. Square three-pin plugs are generally used.

## Head of Government

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak since 2009.

## Head of State

Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin since 2006.

## Telephone

Country code: 60. International calls can be made from public telephones with card facilities or at any *Telekom* office. Public coin-operated phones can be found in many areas, such as supermarkets and post offices. Cards can be purchased at airports, petrol stations and some shops.

## Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with some international mobile phone companies. Coverage is good.

## Internet

There are numerous Internet cafes. Hotels offer Internet access.

## Media

Malaysia has some very tough censorship laws. Authorities exert substantial control over the media and restrictions may be imposed in the name of 'national security'. The government strives hard to shield the Malaysian population from foreign influences that are deemed 'harmful'. News is subject to censorship, as are other programs and films, particularly those showing swearing or kissing. Private radio

stations broadcast in Malay, Tamil, Chinese and English. Newspapers renew their publication licenses annually, and the danger of suspension or abolition always lurks.

### **Post**

There are post offices in the commercial center of all towns.

**Post office hours:** Mon-Sat 0800-1700.

### **Press**

- English-language dailies include *Business Times*, *The Edge*, *Malay Mail*, *Malaysiakini*, *New Straits Times* and *The Star*.
- The major Malay-language newspapers are *Utusan* and *Berita Harian*.
- English-language newspapers available in Sarawak include the *Borneo Post*.
- English-language dailies in Sabah include the *Borneo Mail*, *Daily Express* and *Sabah Times*.

### **Radio**

- *Radio Television Malaysia (RTM)* operates some 30 state-run radio stations across the country, plus an external service.
- *Time Highway Radio* is a private FM station in Kuala Lumpur.
- *Era FM* is another private FM station in Malaysia.

### **Note**

\*Putrajaya, Kuala Lumpur and Labuan only.

\*\*Except Labuan and Sarawak.

(a) Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Hari Raya Puasa, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Some restaurants are closed during the day and there may be restrictions on smoking and drinking. Some disruption may continue into Hari Raya Puasa itself and Hari Raya Qurban may last anything from two to 10 days, depending on the region. (b) Buddhist festivals are also timed according to phases of the moon and variations may occur.

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2010-December 2011 period.

**1 Jan** *New Year's Day*.

**2 Mar** *Chinese New Year*.

**1 Feb** *\*Federal Territory Day*.

**15 Feb** *Mawlid al-Nabi (Birth of Prophet Muhammad)*.

**1 May** *Labor Day*.

**9 May** *Wesak Day (Birth of Buddha)*.

**4 Jun** *King's Birthday*.

**31 Aug** *Merdeka Day (National Day)*.

**31 Aug** *Hari Raya Puasa (End of Ramadan)*.

**26 Oct** *\*\*Deepavali*.

**6 Nov**

**7 Nov** *Hari Raya Qurban (Feast of the Sacrifice)*.

**26 Nov** *Awal Muharram (Islamic New Year)*.

**25 Dec** *Christmas*.