TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

pcgn The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

Malaysia

Country name	Malaysia
State title	Malaysia
Official language	Malay (*msa*)[1]
Country name in official language	Malaysia (*Rumi*), ملیسیا (*Jawi*)
Script	Malay is written in *Rumi* (Roman script) or *Jawi* (modified Arabic script)[2]
Romanization System	*Not required*
ISO-3166 code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	MY/MYS
Capital	Kuala Lumpur[3]
Population / Area	34.4 million[4] / 330,803 km^2

Introduction

Malaysia consists of two main regions: Peninsular Malaysia (West Malaysia) and Malaysian Borneo (East Malaysia)[5], which includes the states of Sabah and Sarawak as well as the federal territory of Labuan. Malaysia is a federation of partially self-governing states and territories under a central government. It comprises 13 states (Malay: *negeri*) and three federal territories (Malay: *wilayah persekutuan*). Historically, British Malaya was the name for the group of states on the Malay Peninsula and the island of Singapore that were under British control during the 18th to 20th centuries. The Federation of Malaya was established in 1948 and became an independent nation on 31st August 1957. In 1963, Malaysia was formed through the union of the Singapore, North Borneo (now Sabah) and Sarawak Crown Colonies. Singapore later separated from Malaysia to become an independent state on 9 August 1965[6].

Geographical names policy

Geographical names should be taken as found on official Malaysian-produced Roman-script sources. The main sources for geographical names are topographic maps published by the Department of Survey and Mapping of Malaysia (JUPEM)[7]. The Malaysian National Committee on Geographical

[1] It is called *Bahasa Malaysia* ("Malaysian language") or *Bahasa Melayu* ("Malay language") in Malay. Language codes given in this Factfile are ISO-639 codes.
[2] Historically, Malay has been written using various scripts. The modified Arabic script *Jawi* is used to write Malay for religious, cultural and some administrative purposes but has largely been replaced by the Roman script.
[3] Due to congestion in Kuala Lumpur, the seat of government was moved to the new city of Putrajaya in 1999 (construction began about 25km south of Kuala Lumpur in 1995). Kuala Lumpur remains the country's capital, the seat of the King and Parliament and the principal financial and commercial centre, while Putrajaya functions as the administrative seat of the federal government.
[4] https://open.dosm.gov.my/
[5] The term "Peninsular Malaysia" is the official and widely used name for the part of Malaysia on the Malay Peninsula. While "East Malaysia" and "West Malaysia" are sometimes used informally, official references typically distinguish between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan to avoid any implication that Malaysia consists of two separate countries.
[6] http://thecommonwealth.org/our-member-countries/malaysia/history
[7] https://www.jupem.gov.my

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Names (MNCGN) is responsible for geographical naming activities in Malaysia. They maintain the Malaysian Geographic Names and Web Gazetteer Application (MyGeoName)[8]. It stores authoritative Roman-script geographical names and their locations across the country.

Languages

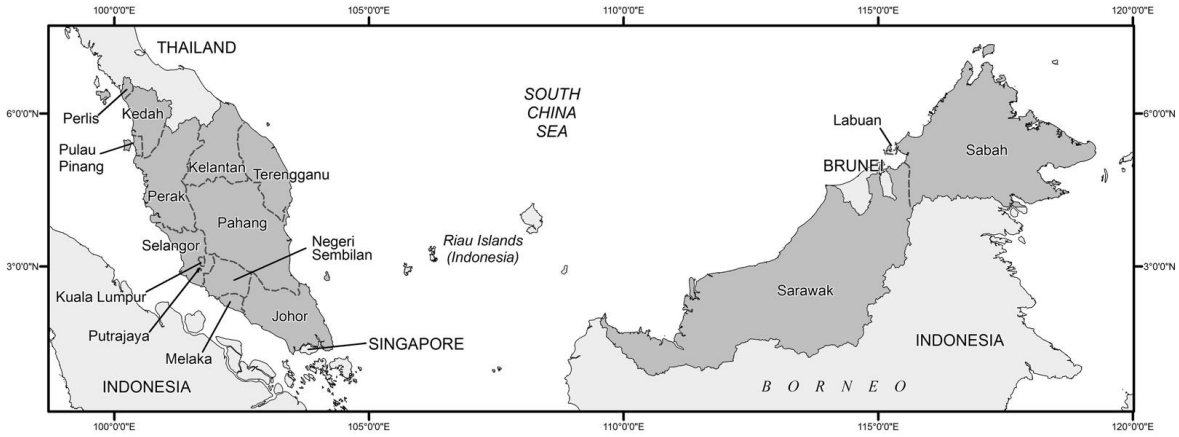
Malaysia's official language is Malay (*Bahasa Malaysia*)[9], a standardised form of the Malay language, but English is an active second language, serving as the language for business and instruction in many schools. Malaysia has over 130 minority languages, including Iban, Chinese (including Cantonese, Mandarin and Hokkien), Tamil and Thai[10]. A cultural pact in 1972 between Malaysia and Indonesia led to a common Roman-script spelling system for the two countries.

Administrative structure

At first-order administrative level (ADM1), Malaysia is divided into 13 states[11] (Malay: *negeri*) and three federal territories (Malay: *wilayah persekutuan*)[12]. Peninsular Malaysia comprises 11 states and two federal territories: Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. Malaysian Borneo consists of two states, Sabah and Sarawak and one federal territory, Labuan. The federal government has direct administration of the federal territories. Governance of the states is divided between the federal and the state governments with 9 of the 13 states retaining their royal families.

At second-order (ADM2) level, the states in Peninsular Malaysia are subdivided into districts (Malay: *daerah* or *jajahan*) and further subdivided into sub-districts (Malay: *mukim*). In East Malaysia, the states of Sabah and Sarawak are split into divisions (Malay: *bahabian*) and further subdivided into districts (Malay: *daerah*). The federal territories are structured differently, being divided into districts, administrative villages (Malay: *kampong*) or precincts (Malay: *presint*). Details of Malaysia's ADM1s are listed on the next page.

Malaysia States and Federal Territories



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

[8] http://mygeoname.mygeoportal.gov.my/index.jsp
[9] https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Brunei_2006.pdf?lang=en
[10] https://www.ethnologue.com/country/MY ; https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/article/page/234/
[11] Based on historical Malay Kingdoms.
[12] https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/article/page/236/

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States

PCGN recommended name	Honorific name[13]	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre and location	Administrative divisions (ADM2)
Johor	Darul Ta'zim	MY-01	Johor Bahru 01°27'56"N/103°45'28"E	10 districts
Kedah	Darul Aman	MY-02	Alor Setar 06°07'16"N/100°21'36"E	12 districts
Kelantan	Darul Naim	MY-03	Kota Bharu 06°08'00"N/102°14'19"E	10 districts
Melaka[14]	Bandaraya Bersejarah	MY-04	Melaka 02°15'00"N/102°15'00"E	3 districts
Negeri Sembilan	Darul Khusus	MY-05	Seremban 02°43'47"N/101°56'17"E	7 districts
Pahang	Darul Makmur	MY-06	Kuantan 03°48'28"N/103°19'34 E	11 districts
Perak	Darul Ridzuan	MY-08	Ipoh 04°35'03"N 101°04'58" E	12 districts
Perlis	-[15]	MY-09	Kangar 06°26'29"N/100°11'55"E	As Perlis is a very small state it is not divided into districts
Pulau Pinang	Pulau Mutiara	MY-07	George Town 05°24'40"N/100°20'08"E	2 districts
Sabah	Negeri Di Bawah Bayu	MY-12	Kota Kinabalu 05°58'30"N/116°04'21"E	5 divisions and 26 districts
Sarawak	Bumi Kenyalang	MY-13	Kuching 01°33'00"N/110°20'00"E	12 divisions and 40 districts
Selangor	Darul Ehsan	MY-10	Shah Alam 03°05' N/101°32'E[16]	9 districts
Terengganu	Darul Iman	MY-11	Kuala Terengganu 05°19'49" N/103°08'27"E	8 districts

[13] In Malaysia, many states have honorific titles which reflect cultural, historical, or religious significance; these titles are typically used in formal, ceremonial, and official contexts, but are less common in everyday use.
[14] Sometimes seen as Malacca, Settlement of Malacca, State of Melaka. Note that the conventional English name, Strait of Malacca, should be used for the stretch of water between Peninsular Malaysia and the Indonesian island of Sumatra since it is an international feature.
[15] The honorific name of Perlis was Indera Kayangan until 2015, when the Raja of Perlis decreed that the state would be known simply as Perlis.
[16] Klang was the state capital of Selangor before it moved to Kuala Lumpur and then Shah Alam.

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Federal Territories

PCGN recommended name	Long form name	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre	Administrative divisions
Labuan	Wilayah Persekutuan Labuan	MY-15	Bandar Labuan (Victoria) 05°17' N/ 115°14' E	Administratively divided into the capital of the territory, Bandar Labuan, and 27 *kampung* (administrative villages)
Kuala Lumpur	Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur	MY-14	Kuala Lumpur 03°08'52" N/ 101°41'43"E	The national capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur is divided into 11 districts
Putrajaya	Wilayah Persekutuan Putrajaya	MY-16	Putrajaya 02°55'48" N/ 101°41'24"E	The city of Putrajaya is divided into 20 precincts

Useful references

- Administrative divisions; https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/article/page/236/
- BBC Country Profile (no longer updated): https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15356257
- CIA World Factbook – Malaysia: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/my.html
- FCDO Travel Advice: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/malaysia
- Government of Malaysia: https://www.malaysia.gov.my/public/cms/
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com
- Malaysia Department of Statistics: https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/
- Malaysia Department of Surveys and Mapping https://www.jupem.gov.my
- Malaysia geoportal: http://mygeoname.mygeoportal.gov.my/index.jsp
- Malaysian Centre for geospatial data infrastructure (MaCGDI), Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment: https://www.mygeoportal.gov.my/en/home
- US Board on Geographic Names Server (GNS): https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSHome/welcome.html

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