

REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

Republic of Singapore

The Republic of Singapore is an island city-state situated at the southern tip of the Peninsula of Malaysia, approximately 1° North of the Equator. The land area is about 648 km², including the islets. Singapore's coastline is about 150.5 km in length.

Singapore was founded in 1819 and remained under British administration except for the years (1942-1945) under the Japanese during World War II. In September 1963, with the formation of Malaysia, Singapore became independent

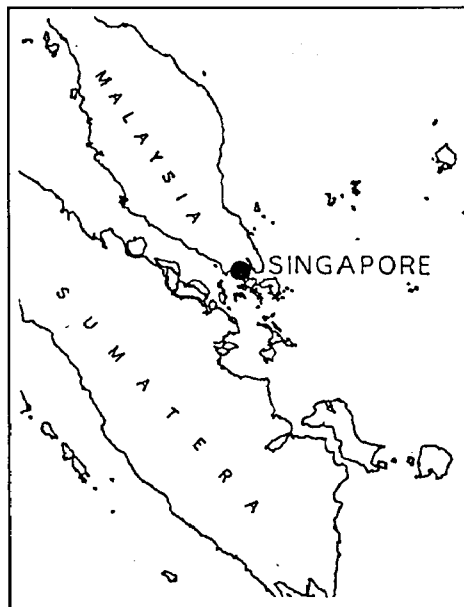


FIG. 1.- Singapore.

within the Federation of Malaysia. The merger was, however, short-lived and on 9 August 1965, Singapore became a fully independent, democratic and sovereign nation from Malaysia. On 21 September the same year Singapore became the 117th member of the United Nations. Also in December 1965, Singapore became a Republic.

Singapore is one of the most cosmopolitan cities in Asia. The Chinese make up about three-quarters of the population. The population as at June 1995 was about 2.99 million. Singapore enjoys a high standard of living with per capita indigenous GNP of \$30,770. About 86% of the population live in public flats. The official languages are Malay, Chinese (Mandarin), Tamil and English. Malay is the national language and English is the language of the administration.

From a trading post in 1819, under the British East India Company, Singapore developed rapidly, since gaining independence, into a modern, highly industrialised city. Singapore is the busiest port in the world in terms of shipping tonnage since 1986; it is also the world's second busiest container port. At any time there are more than 800 ships in the port. A ship arrives or departs every two to three minutes. In 1995, 104,014 vessels with a combined shipping tonnage of 710.6 million gross registered tons, called at Singapore. Singapore is also the world's third largest oil refinery centre.

Singapore's reputation as a global maritime hub stems from its strategic location at the crossroads of major shipping routes, and its excellent infrastructure. Good banking and financial services, an efficient telecommunications network, a stable government, a skilled and disciplined work force are some of the factors contributing to Singapore's success as an efficient maritime hub for the Asia-Pacific region.

The Port of Singapore

On 2 February 1996, Singapore's port and maritime history entered a new era with the formation of the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) which took over the regulatory functions of the Port of Singapore Authority (PSA). MPA is an independent statutory board responsible for the regulatory functions of the port and maritime affairs of Singapore. It has a mission to protect Singapore's strategic interests and to promote Singapore as a major port and international maritime centre. With the regulatory functions transferred to the MPA, the PSA is set to focus its efforts as a business entity and is ready to adopt an international perspective through investments or joint ventures overseas. Its port infrastructure and port facilities are in a continuous process to keep up with competition in the region.

Hydrographic Department

The Hydrographic Department which was under PSA before, is now structured under the MPA. The department's responsibilities include hydrographic surveying and charting, and the provision and maintenance of aids to navigation in Singapore waters. Since 1989, the department has embarked on a modernisation programme to adopt new technology in surveying and charting to increase efficiency and effectiveness in meeting the demand for hydrographic services and products. The modernisation programme involved computerisation of hydrographic surveys and data processing, chart production and maintenance, and management of hydrographic information.

The first Singapore nautical chart was published in May 1975 and to-date the department has published 30 charts covering the southern half of the Malacca Strait, Singapore Strait, the port waters, and the eastern approach to the Singapore Strait. It has also published a series of small craft charts of Singapore waters to service the harbour craft and pleasure boats community.

The Hydrographic Department also recognises the importance of electronic navigational charts which could enhance the safety of navigation in the Malacca and Singapore Straits, and in the port waters of Singapore. The production of ENC data, compliant with IHO S-57 format, commenced in 1994 and is scheduled for release to the commercial market by the end of 1997.

The existing two 15-metre, aluminum hull, survey launches are equipped with automated data acquisition systems integrated to differential global positioning systems and the Atlas Deso 20 and Odom EchoTrac DF 3200 Mk II echo sounders. A system of 12 automated tide gauges located around the port waters provides the means of monitoring tidal data from the department by remote telemetry. Also remotely monitored are data on wind and currents of the waters around the port.

The Hydrographic Department manages the operations and maintenance of 5 lighthouses, 61 beacons, 85 navigational buoys and about 140 mooring buoys. The operations of the aids to navigation lights are automated and they are powered by solar systems. A programme to modernise the lighthouse lighting equipment to enable the lighthouses lights to be monitored remotely from the office in an integrated PC-based monitoring system is scheduled to be completed in 1997. It is planned to expand the system to include the remote monitoring of beacon and buoy lights in one integrated system in the near future.

Singapore has been a member of the IHO since 1972.