

Singapore (Republic of)

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Location and area

Singapore is an independent city-state in South East Asia, comprising one major island and 59 small adjacent islets, located off the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula. Singapore Island, the major island, is separated from Malaysia to the north by the narrow Johor Strait. On the south, it is separated from the Riau archipelago of Indonesia by Singapore Strait. The city of Singapore is at the south-eastern end of the island; it is one of the most important port cities and commercial centres of South East Asia. The total area of the republic is 648 km² (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002) (636 km² according to www.geoanalytics.com/bims/in.htm)

Topography

Singapore Island is low-lying with no prominent relief features. A central area of hills rises to a maximum elevation of 165 m. Numerous short streams drain the island, the longest river, the Seletar, being less than 16 km long. Other important rivers, actually tidal inlets, are the Singapore and Rochor, which run through the centre of the city. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Climate

The country has a wet tropical climate, with an average annual temperature of 27° C showing little variation. Average annual precipitation is 2,415 mm, with high humidity; the wettest months are November to January, but there is no pronounced rainy season. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Land use

Most of Singapore's primary jungle and swamps have been removed for residential, industrial, and, to a lesser extent, agricultural use. Agriculture is relatively unimportant to the economy because of the limited land area and the relatively poor soils (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Singapore and 49 km² of gley soils.

Mire and peatland losses

Prior to the establishment of the British colony in 1819, the great bulk of the island was covered in pristine forest, comprising 82% lowland evergreen dipterocarp rain forest, 13% mangrove, and 5% freshwater swamp. As early as 1890, as much as 90% of this vegetation had been cleared. (www.geoanalytics.com/bims/in.htm)

Originally mangroves covered 55 km², against currently 22 km²

Still to be checked:

Corner (E.) 1978. The freshwater swamp-forest of south Johore and Singapore