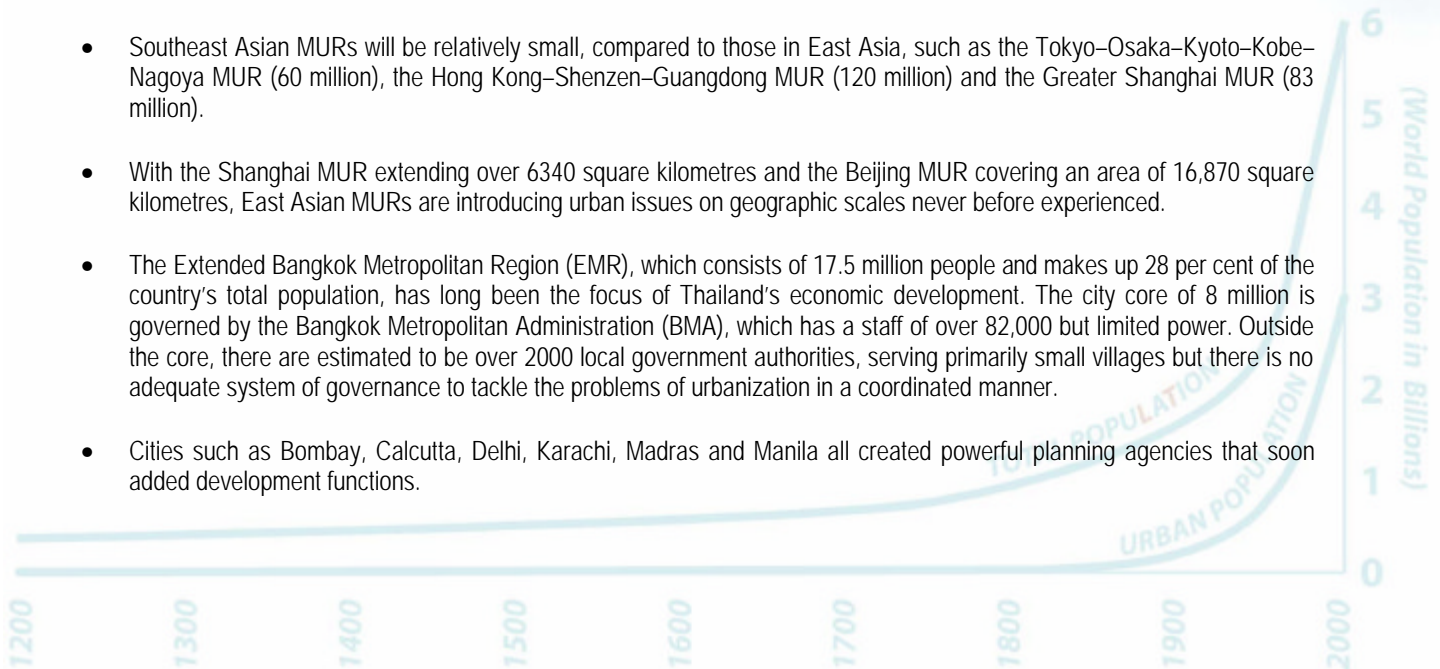


State of the World's Cities: Trends in Asia & the Pacific *Urbanization & Metropolitanization*

- Asia now holds 61 per cent of the global population and its share of the global urban population has risen from 9 per cent in 1920 to 48 per cent in 2000 and is expected to rise to 53 per cent by 2030.
- Currently, Asia holds more than half of the world's cities, with more than 10 million people, and that number is rapidly rising. The growth of Asian cities is astounding, with many doubling their population every 15 to 20 years.
- Whereas London took 130 years to grow from 1 to 8 million, Bangkok took 45 years, Dhaka 37 years and Seoul only 25 years. By 2015, Asian developing countries will hold three of the world's five largest urban agglomerations: Mumbai, Dhaka and Delhi.
- Dhaka, from a mere 417,000 inhabitants in 1950, is currently the world's ninth largest urban agglomeration, with 12.5 million inhabitants. Within a decade, it will grow to become the world's second largest metropolis, with 22.8 million people.
- Mumbai's (Bombay's) generating one sixth of the gross domestic product (GDP) of India confirming the synergy of private entrepreneurs and investment in a single location, despite insufficient infrastructure. During the late 1990s, the GDP of Seoul, Republic of Korea, equalled the GDP of Argentina.
- The combined outcome of demographic growth, global economic reorganization and changes in state–society–capital relations in parts of Pacific-Asia is leading to hyper-urbanization never before seen in world history. Bangkok, for example, grew from 67 square kilometres during the late 1950s to 426 square kilometres by the mid 1990s.
- It is expected that, by 2020, two-thirds of the entire Association of East Asian States (ASEAN) urban population will live in only five Mega-Urban-Regions (MURs): the Bangkok-centred MUR (30 million); the Kuala Lumpur–Klang MUR (6 million); the Singapore Triangle (10 million); the Java MUR (100 million); and the Manila MUR (30 million).
- Southeast Asian MURs will be relatively small, compared to those in East Asia, such as the Tokyo–Osaka–Kyoto–Kobe–Nagoya MUR (60 million), the Hong Kong–Shenzen–Guangdong MUR (120 million) and the Greater Shanghai MUR (83 million).
- With the Shanghai MUR extending over 6340 square kilometres and the Beijing MUR covering an area of 16,870 square kilometres, East Asian MURs are introducing urban issues on geographic scales never before experienced.
- The Extended Bangkok Metropolitan Region (EMR), which consists of 17.5 million people and makes up 28 per cent of the country's total population, has long been the focus of Thailand's economic development. The city core of 8 million is governed by the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA), which has a staff of over 82,000 but limited power. Outside the core, there are estimated to be over 2000 local government authorities, serving primarily small villages but there is no adequate system of governance to tackle the problems of urbanization in a coordinated manner.
- Cities such as Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Karachi, Madras and Manila all created powerful planning agencies that soon added development functions.



Migration

- International migrants in the Asia and Pacific region total about 19 million and the rate of migrants, as a percentage of the total population, at 2.3 per cent, is very low.
- In Southeast Asia, the percentage of foreigners is the highest in the region (about 5 per cent), with very significant percentages in Singapore (33 per cent) and Malaysia (7 per cent). This is probably associated with the rapid industrialization that has occurred during the last few decades.
- In South-central Asia (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), the rate is quite low (1.5 per cent), even though the sub-region has the highest number of international migrants (about 12 million), mainly of people moving from Afghanistan to Pakistan and from Bangladesh and Nepal to India. In general terms, cities of the Asian and Pacific countries do not receive significant numbers of international migrants because people tend to migrate to other continents (Europe, Northern America, Australia and Arab States) or to rural areas (as in Thailand, Malaysia or India).
- In Asian cities, the living conditions of migrants are poor and include overcrowded and unhygienic housing. They normally reside in illegal squatter areas. For instance, in Bangkok there is a very high concentration of Burmese migrants in the slum of Klong Toey; in Karachi there are about 1.5 to 2.5 million illegal immigrants (Bengalese, Afghan and Burmese), mostly in the unplanned areas (known as katchi abadis) of Baldia and Orangi.
- New waves of Vietnamese immigrants began to come to Cambodia during the 1990s, after the Peace Accord between the two countries. There is no account of the number of Vietnamese immigrants; but according to some approximations, there should be about 1 million persons (about 8.7 per cent of the population) of Vietnamese origin in Cambodia. While the major impetus for the Vietnamese to come to Cambodia has been a 'push factor' (Viet Nam presents the paradox of a country having relatively high skills, and yet a low capacity to fully utilize them), in effect there has been a 'pull factor' operating within Cambodia, since the nascent Cambodian economy lacked (and, to an extent, still lacks) some critical skills.
- Singapore constantly needs to import foreign manpower at all levels to augment the local work force and support economic growth. According to the 2000 census, foreigners working in Singapore comprise about 600,000 individuals, or 29 per cent of the work force. The majority (more than 50 per cent) have below secondary education, and three out four are employed in unskilled jobs. Only a few have managerial tasks. It is not easy to migrate to Singapore and illegal migration is very limited due to the severe entry norms. But once in the country, migrants enjoy the highest social and economic conditions in the region. Singapore has a policy of equal treatment for local and foreign workers under its laws. **Developing economies**

Poverty and Slums

- There has been an unprecedented decline in poverty in the Asia and the Pacific region. The more recent progress in poverty reduction in the region has been described as 'one of the largest decreases in mass poverty in human history'.
- During the early 1970s, more than half the population of Asia and the Pacific was poor, average life expectancy was 48 years, and only 40 per cent of the adult population was literate. Today, the percentage of poor people has decreased to about one fourth of the population, life expectancy has increased to 65 years, and about 70 per cent of the adults are literate.
- The proportion of poor in China declined from 33 per cent in 1970 to 4.6 per cent in the late 1990s. In Indonesia, it decreased from 60 to 27 per cent; in Malaysia from 18 to 8 per cent; in Pakistan from 54 to 33 per cent; in the Republic of Korea from 23 to 12 per cent; and in Thailand from 26 to 14 per cent.
- The experience of the 'Asian Miracle' and the subsequent financial crisis in 1997 has shown what can work, but also what can go wrong. The crisis led to sharp economic declines in 1998 in several countries. In Indonesia, poverty incidence rose from 11.3 per cent in 1996 to 16.7 per cent in 1998, with an additional 10 to 12 million people thrown into poverty. In Malaysia, poverty incidence rose from 8.2 per cent in 1997 to 11.2 per cent in 1998. In the Philippines, 17 per cent of the families reported job loss in the country and 5 per cent reported job loss as migrant workers in the region. In Thailand, the poverty head count grew from 11.4 per cent in 1996 to almost 13 per cent in 1998, meaning an additional 1.1 million below the poverty line.

- The South Asian experience shows that without satisfactory growth, wealth distribution and poverty worsen and pro-equity, anti-poverty transfers become unsustainable. Studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines have shown that most of the decline in poverty rates has been attributed to economic growth rather than to improved distribution. However, growth alone can produce undesirable distributional outcomes even when reducing poverty. In China, where large-scale poverty reductions have been achieved, inequality has deepened, with income distribution now in favour of urban areas and coastal regions.
- Although there has been remarkable progress in reducing poverty in Asia over the last 25 years, the continent still accounts for two-thirds of the world's poor, affecting about 800 million people; 240 to 260 million of them reside in urban areas.
- The majority of the urban poor are concentrated in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Pakistan and the People's Republic of China. Six megacities in the region – namely, Beijing, Mumbai, Kolkata, Jakarta, Shanghai and Tianjin have the largest concentrations of urban poor. Nearly one third of the urban poor have no access to safe water and more than two-thirds do not have access to adequate sanitation.
- It is estimated that about half of the world's urban slum dwellers live in Asia and the Pacific. In 2001, 38 per cent of the region's 3.7 billion people were living in urban areas, with 43 per cent of its 1.2 billion urban residents living in slums. India and China alone accounted for 65 per cent of the overall Asian urban slum population.
- The region's group of least developed countries had an urban slum incidence of about 72 per cent, about 30 per cent more than the regional average.

Crime & safety

- Of all the world regions, developed and developing, Asia ranks lowest in almost all types of crime. While in Africa and Latin America up to two-thirds of the population living in cities with over 100,000 inhabitants or more are likely to be victims of crime once in five years, in Asia it is less than half of this proportion that is likely to be a victim during this same period of time. Although many crimes are at lower rates in Asian countries, during the past ten years there have been increases in crimes against property, organized violent crime and drug trafficking.
- Although the problem is worldwide, Southeast Asia could be referred to as the 'home' of the child sex tourism industry, where tours openly seek to cater to the child sex interests of wealthy adults. A 1999 study estimated that four-fifths of the foreign demand for child prostitution comes from the US, Germany, the UK, Australia, France and Japan.
- The Bantay Banay concept, or Family/Community Watch Group against Domestic and Gender Violence in Cebu, the Philippines, was conceived in 1992 by participants in a forum which revealed that 60 per cent of the women were battered by their spouses. The approach involves community members in order to respond to and reduce domestic violence. Group members, who include lawyers, regularly meet to share experiences and review their objectives and activities. Victims, who later become members, are provided temporary shelter, food, medical care, legal assistance and economic support to get them on their feet. The programme has been replicated in 60 urban centers throughout the Philippines.
- After a drastic decrease in 2001, illicit opium and heroin production recovered in 2002 due to resumption of large-scale opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan. The rapid re-growth of opium production has fuelled the escalation of the heroin market in this region, as well as in the transition economies of Central Asia and Central and Eastern Europe.
- In 2002, the main sources of opium were Afghanistan (76 per cent) and Myanmar (18 per cent). Lao People's Democratic Republic (2 per cent) and Colombia (1 per cent) were also smaller sources, followed by marginal production in Pakistan, Thailand and Viet Nam.

- Central Asian countries are facing a rapidly increasing drug problem, with a fourfold to sevenfold increase in the rate of new abusers during the past ten years. Opioids (heroin and opium) remain the main drugs of abuse in most of Asia, given that this is the primary area of their cultivation (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar and Lao PDR). This has serious implications in terms of the transmission of HIV, especially given that up to one third of heroin abusers inject the drug (with epidemic levels in northeast India, Myanmar, China's Yunnan Province and several cities in Viet Nam).

Governance & transparency

- An exception to low rates of almost all types of crime in Asia is the prevalence of corruption, particularly bribery. UNICRI's ICVS found that the prevalence rate for bribery in Asia (16.6 per cent) was second only to that of Latin America (19.5 per cent) and surpassed that of Africa (15 per cent). Bribery in Asia is reported most often to be practised by government officials, followed by police officers.
- Transparency International's 2003 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) ranked 15 of the countries in the region. The highest were Malaysia and the Republic of Korea (37 and 50, respectively). Three countries were grouped together from 66 to 70; but the remaining eight countries were below this level.

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