

## Southeast Asia

### Section 3



#### MAIN IDEAS

1. The area today is largely rural and agricultural, but cities are growing rapidly.
2. Myanmar is poor with a harsh military government, while Thailand is a democracy with a strong economy.
3. The countries of Indochina are poor and struggling to rebuild after years of war.

## Key Terms and Places

**Yangon** Myanmar's capital and major seaport

**human rights** rights that all people deserve, such as rights to equality and justice

**Bangkok** capital and largest city of Thailand

**klongs** canals

**Phnom Penh** Cambodia's capital and chief city

**Hanoi** capital of Vietnam, located in the north

## Section Summary

### THE AREA TODAY

Mainland Southeast Asia includes the countries of Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Because of war, harsh governments, and other problems, progress has slowed in much of this area. However, in an effort to promote political, economic, and social cooperation throughout the region, most of the countries of Southeast Asia have joined the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Most people in the region are farmers, living in small villages and growing rice. This area also has several big cities. They are growing rapidly as people move to them in search of work. Rapid growth, however, has led to crowding and pollution.

**Circle the countries of Mainland Southeast Asia.**

**What are the effects of the rapid growth on the area's cities?**

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### MYANMAR AND THAILAND

Although Myanmar, also called Burma, has many resources, it is a poor country. **Yangon**, or Rangoon, is its capital and a major port city. A harsh military government rules Myanmar. This government abuses

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**human rights**—rights that all people deserve. One woman, Aung San Suu Kyi, is working to reform Myanmar so people have more rights. Suu Kyi and others have been arrested, however. Because of Myanmar’s poor record on human rights, many countries will not trade with it. As a result, Myanmar’s economy has suffered.

Thailand, once called Siam, has a strong economy. Its capital and largest city is **Bangkok**, a city famous for its **klongs**, or canals. Bangkok’s klongs are used for trade and travel, and to drain floodwater. Thailand has a democratically elected government and rich resources. These factors have helped its economy grow.

**Why won’t some countries trade with Myanmar?**

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**THE COUNTRIES OF INDOCHINA**

After decades of war, the countries of Indochina—Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam—are working hard to improve their economies.

The capital and chief city of Cambodia, **Phnom Penh**, is a center of trade. However, years of war have left the country with little industry. Although farming has improved, many landmines still remain buried.

Laos is the area’s poorest country. It is landlocked, with few roads, no railroads, and little electricity. Most people are subsistence farmers, just growing enough food to support their families.

Vietnam’s main cities include its capital in the north, **Hanoi**, and Ho Chi Minh City in the south. Although still a Communist country, Vietnam’s government has been allowing more economic freedoms. Industry and services are growing, but most people still farm.

**How has war affected the countries of Indochina?**

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**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Summarizing** Summarize the information about the countries of Mainland Southeast Asia, using a graphic organizer.