



## **Nearly 1mil M'sians residing in S'pore in 2019; emigration rate excluded from M'sia's population data**

Close to one million Malaysians have been residing in Singapore as of 2019, according to United Nations (UN) figures — making Singapore home to the largest Malaysian diaspora population.

According to Malaysia's Department of Statistics, the country's population for the first quarter of 2021 was estimated at 32.75 million. This is an increase of 0.4 per cent from 32.62 million in the first quarter of last year.

From the aforementioned figures, the citizen population increased from 29.62 million in the first quarter of last year to 29.91 million in the same period this year.

The non-citizen population, on the other hand, decreased from 3.01 million in the first quarter of last year to 2.84 million in the first quarter of 2021.

However, as observed in the population data, it appears that the country has excluded the number of Malaysian diaspora from its population data.

Stanford Computer Science found that it was "extremely difficult" to keep track of the Malaysian diaspora as it was "widely spread out".

Citing data from the World Bank, the article estimated that "at least 800,000 and up to 1.4 million Malaysians" were living abroad as of 2010.

"Among the diaspora, more than a third of them are over 25, which the World Bank has identified as the brain drain, or rather Malaysian citizens that are living abroad and contributing to countries other than their own," it stated.

On Wikipedia, it was stated that emigration from Malaysia is "a complex demographic phenomenon existing for decades" because Malaysia does not keep track of its emigration.

It also stated that the data is only available courtesy of statistics kept by the destination countries.

## **Nearly one million Malaysians moved to Singapore**

Malaysians who are based overseas are mostly found living in countries such as Singapore, Bangladesh, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Brunei.

Based on data from the UN's Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the number of Malaysian migrants in Singapore has gone up from 195,072 in 1990 to 952,261 in 2019.

It is noteworthy that these numbers do not include Malaysians who have converted to Singaporeans.

In addition, the number of Malaysian migrants in Bangladesh has also increased from 92,533 in 1990 to 206,244 in 2019, followed by Australia with 72,135 Malaysian migrants in 1990 to 174,136 in 2019.

The number of Malaysian migrants in the UK rose from 42,754 in 1990 to 84,638 in 2019.

The number of Malaysian migrants in Brunei jumped from 40,306 in 1990 to 52,001 in 2019.

### **Malaysia's brain drain reaching critical stage**

As many as 1.7 million Malaysians are employed overseas as of January this year, with Singapore being “the most favoured country” with 54 per cent of Malaysians being employed there, followed by Australia (15 per cent), the UK (5.0 per cent), and the US (10 per cent), Malay Mail reported on 11 January.

Citing the World Bank's Monitor Report, Stanford Computer Science highlighted that among the main factors behind the Malaysian brain drain phenomenon are the “less attractive salary and benefits” offered in the country, the lack of career prospects, and the unavailability of opportunities in certain fields.

“A majority of Malaysia's economy is based on production and manufacturing instead of research and development, which makes it a magnet for semi-skilled labour but results in the lack of skilled job opportunities,” it stated.

Another factor that contributed to the Malaysian brain drain is social injustice.

The article highlighted that 81 per cent of emigrants are Chinese.

It is inferred that the emigration of Chinese Malaysians from the country is driven by discriminatory policies that appear to favour Malays—which comprise 59 per cent of the nation's population—such as extra assistance in starting businesses and educational opportunities.

Singapore has become the top choice for such emigrants due to its close proximity in geographical and cultural terms, in addition to the Republic's relatively more advanced infrastructure and economy.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian government has attempted to lure the Malaysian diaspora back home through tax exemptions and heightened incentives, as reported by The ASEAN Post in 2019.

The report highlighted some of such initiatives, including Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad (TalentCorp)'s move to encourage Malaysian experts overseas to seize business and professional opportunities in the country and the implementation of the Productivity-Linked Wage System (PLWS).

<https://www.theonlinecitizen.com/2021/07/15/nearly-one-mil-msians-residing-in-spore-in-2019-emigration-rate-excluded-from-msia-population-data/>