

Overview of Chin State

Chin State Profile

Location: western Myanmar

Shared borders: Rakhine State to the south, Magway and Sagaing Regions to the east, India to the north, and Bangladesh to the west

Areas: 36,071.58 sq. km

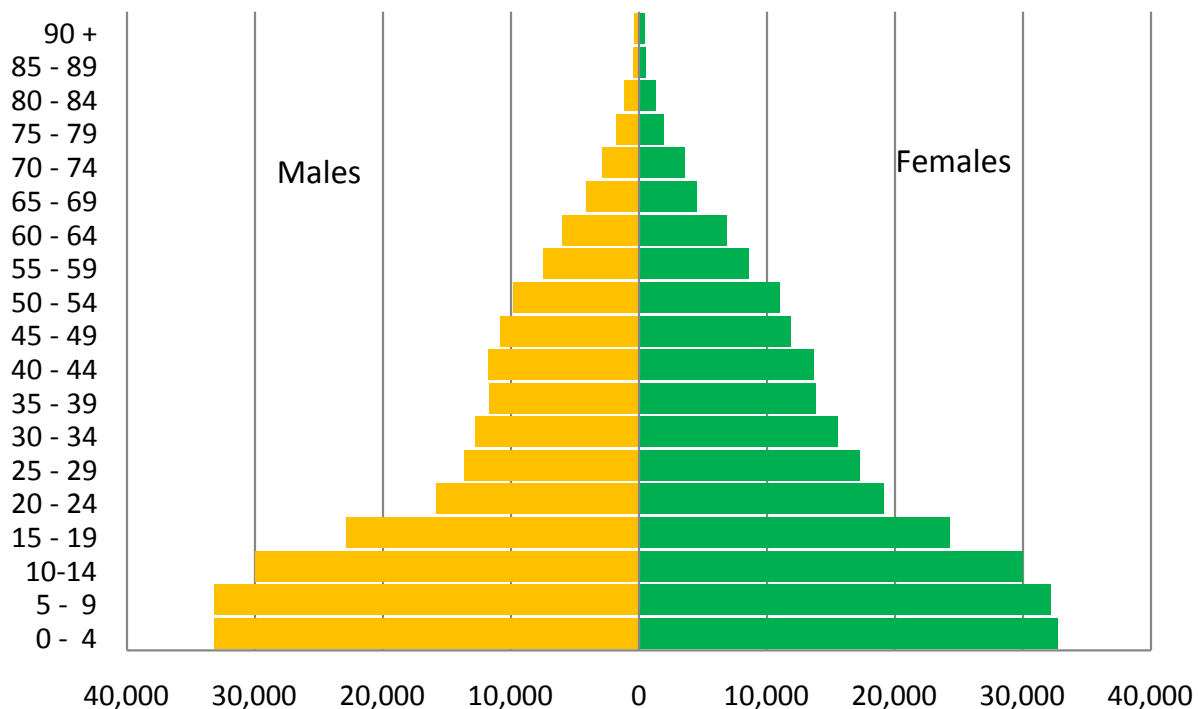
Ethnicity: Chin (there are about forty to forty-five dialects of the Chin language)

Religion: the majority of Chin today are Christians, with most being Protestant, especially Baptist.

Population: the total population of Chin State was 478,801 persons, and there were 229,604 males and 249,197 females (2014 Myanmar National Population and housing census). Chin State population represented only 0.93 percent of the total population in Myanmar.

Population Density: the population density in Chin State was 13.3 persons per square kilometer. It was the lowest among all States and Regions in Myanmar.

Population Pyramid, Chin State, 2014



Geography

Chin state is located in the southern part of northwestern Myanmar. It is also well-known as the “Chin Hills” due to its geography. The land is rich in natural resources that are primarily forest based. However, the region remains the least developed area of the country. Deeply isolated, it

lacks basic infrastructure and suffers from frequent natural disasters, including landslides, particularly during the monsoon season. Chin State is composed of nine townships: Kanpatlat, Mindat, Palatwa, Matupi, Haka, Falam, Tiddim, Tonzang and Htantalan townships.

Map



Chin State Government (April 2016 – present)

Name	Position
Salai Lian Luai	Chief Minister
Col. Kyaw Kyaw	Minister of Security and Border Affairs
Wi Kaw	Minister of Planning and Finance
Mang Hen Dal	Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry and Mines
Shwe Htee Ooe	Minister of Road and Transportation
Salai Issac Khen	Minister of Municipal Affairs, Electricity and Industry
Pau Lun Min Thang	Minister of Social Affairs
Htan Kyone (or Sani Zar Hoe)	State Advocate
Larr Tin Man or David Lar Tin Maung	State Auditor

Transportation

Chin State is a mountainous region with few transportation links. However, Chin State government is working to improve the transportation sector to promote the rapid flow of commodities. At present, the road linking the southernmost and northernmost part of Chin State is under-implemented. The completion of the road would reduce the travel time to 12 hours for the more than 500 miles distance between the southernmost and northernmost part of Chin State.

In the past, travelling by road from Tedim and Falam to Kalaymyo was nearly impossible during the height of the rainy season. However, a two-lane highway is now paved for use throughout the year. If the road becomes fully paved, there will be more opportunities to connect Kalaymyo, northern Chin State, to the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway.

Potential for Trade and Investment

Chin State has poor road accessibility, lack of power supply, a weak private sector, and poor housing facilities. According to the Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA), Chin State is the only state or region in the country with zero investment between fiscal year 1994-1995 and October of the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

It is the least developed state among Myanmar's 14 states and regions. Thus, in order to boost economic development, the Chin State Chambers of Commerce and Industry was established in early 2017, and DICA started operating in Hakha in September 2017.

The State Minister identified five key potential areas for investment in Chin State: (1) hydropower and wind power; (2) hotels and tourism; (3) organic farming; (4) traditional weaving; and (5) urban development.

Hydropower and Wind Power

According to Salai Isaac Khen, State Minister for Development, Electricity and Industry, Chin State government welcomes local and foreign investment in hydropower production. The government is in discussion with three foreign companies to carry out feasibility studies on

whether it will be suitable to build a medium-sized hydropower station on the Manipur River in Tonzang Township.

At present, Chin State electricity coverage is relatively low: only 30 percent of Chin State has access to electricity, which is mainly concentrated in Falam, Hakha, and Htantlang townships. Chin State would benefit if a dam on the Manipur River in Falam Township is approved. The said dam has an estimated capacity of 380 MW.

The state government is also of the view that if the two hydropower projects on Laymyo River, in the neighbouring region is approved, Chin State will also benefit from more electricity. Moreover, Chin State needs more power to meet the Union Government's national electrification goal of 50 percent by 2020, 75 percent by 2025, and 100 percent access by 2030.

Hotels and Tourism

The tourism industry is one of the economic priorities of the Chin State government. The State is preparing for tourism development by organizing training sessions in hotels and tourism. Chin State is well-known for its mountainous terrain, unique culture, handicrafts, and warm hospitality of its people. Chin State is also famous as the "Chin Hills" due to its mountainous geography that has an average elevation of 5000-8000 feet. Nat Ma Taung (also called Mount Victoria), the highest mountain in Chin State, is also a popular tourist destination. In winter, the temperature drops to as low as 2 degrees Celsius.

Ecotourism: Chin State has huge potential for ecotourism due to its landscape. Currently, very few tourists visit Chin State due to limited transportation, as well as time-consuming and only basic guesthouses in the region. The landscape of Chin State is breathtaking and has led many visitors to hike, trek between villages, and to enjoy the cool weather. Natmataung is one of the highest peaks in Southeast Asia. It is also an ASEAN Heritage Park and an important bird area. Visitors can trek from Kanpetlet to Natmataung National Park. Thus, there is potential for local nature guide services, including birdwatching in the area.

Chin State is famous for its diverse ethnic groups. Each group has its own unique pattern for material. Particularly unique to this region is the traditional tattoo-faced Chin women. However, the tradition of tattooing faces is declining among Chin women, although it is still prominent in the southern part of Chin State, particularly in Mindat and Kanpetlet.

The heart shaped natural lake in Falam Township has significant cultural and spiritual importance for the local community. Every year, locals and visitors from neighbouring India visit the lake to worship and pay homage to the spirit guards of the lake. The lake is famous for turning red in winter, from mid-December, for approximately one to two months. Due to its rich heritage and natural environment, including mountainous terrain, beautiful lake, unique culture and warm hospitality of its people, Chin State has high potential in tourism.

Agriculture

Most people in Chin State make their living from agriculture, which includes locally grown rice, corn and millet. Most farmers in northern Chin State are practicing shifting cultivation, a rotating seasonal cycle of clearing land for planting by cutting and burning existing vegetation. Shifting

cultivation does not always cause great harm, but it can lead to erosion, soil depletion and habitat loss if large tracts of land are not available.

Chin State has huge potential to grow organic fruit. Apple, oranges, damsons and other garden fruits are produced in large quantities and grapes are also cultivated. Some experts believe that promotion of terracing, intercropping and irrigation, a system of “Sloping Agricultural Land Technology (SALT)” can increase productivity in Chin State.

Economic connectivity to the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway

The Trilateral Highway is expected to be complete in 2020. India has been awarded the contract for the final stage, which is the road construction from Paletwa to Zorinpui, on the border with Mizoram in India. There are also plans to construct a road connecting Rhi on the border of Chin State to the town of Tiddim in Chin State.

Chin State plays a very important part role in India’s look East Policy, which was enunciated in 1992. Altogether, the North Eastern States of India, and the contiguous states of Sagaing Region and Chin State hold large potential for future Thai trade and investment.

Comparison of India-Myanmar Border Trade

Chin State border trade with India has the least trade volume when compared to other border trade stations. However, due to its geographical location, Chin State has huge potential after transportation is upgraded and a trade zone is implemented in the area.

In USD Million

No	Station	2015-2016			2016-2017			2017-2018 (up to January)		
		Export	Import	Trade Volume	Export	Import	Trade Volume	Export	Import	Trade Volume
1.	Tamu	32.771	12.791	45.562	38.465	9.779	48.244	28.027	3.063	31.090
2.	Rhi	20.256	5.826	26.082	24.996	14.656	39.652	20.473	13.368	33.841

Contact details of government agencies and private sector for further information:

Directorate of Investment and Company Administration (DICA)

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Chin State Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Address: No. 110, Bogyoke Aung San Street, Hahka, Chin State

Chairman: U Par Kyone

Phone: 09 500 8638, 09 4302 5229

Email: cunghngel@gmail.com

Reference:

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