Djibouti

Location

This republic is located in the Northeastern part of Africa. It is located at the Bab el Mandeb Strait and links the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. The country is named after a city called Dijbouti which was a city located at an important trade route connecting the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean Sea and Africa with the Middle East. It can also be said that this country is located just north of the Horn of Africa. This Djibouti also shares a border with Somalia and Eritrea.

Geography

The country has an area of about 23,200 sq. km. The distance between the country’s northern most and southern most part is 190 kms. The western most and eastern most parts are separated by 225 kms. Ethiopia borders the country to the north, west, and south, and Somalia borders the southeastern part of the country. The Gulf of Aden lies on the eastern side and the Gulf of Tadjoura extends 100 kms from the eastern part of the coast. The highest point in the country is the Moussa Ali with an elevation of 2,063 meters above sea level. The western part of the country is desert lowland with several salt lakes. Lake Abbe is the largest of the lakes which lies on the Ethiopian border. Lake Asal is the deepest lake in the country and is 153 meters deep.

Climate

It is hot and dry throughout the year. The summer is hotter and drier because of the desert inland winds blowing across the country. The daily temperature in winter is approximately 23-29 degrees Celsius and during summer it is 106 degree Fahrenheit. The
mountainous part of the country receives 3 times more rain than the inland area. The inland receives about 5 inches of rain per year.

**History**

The early humans are thought to have migrated to this part of the world approximately 100,000 years ago from Africa to the Middle East. This ancient port region played host to merchants from Persia, Arabia, Ethiopia, and the Mediterranean. Arab traders brought Islam to this area sometime in the 9\textsuperscript{th} Century and the first Islamic King of the region, called the Sultanate of Adal, was placed at Zeila, a port city close to Somalia. Somalis moved to Djibouti and by 1500 Adal ruled Djibouti. In 1527 Ahmed al-Ghazi, the ruler of Adal, led Afar and Somali troops in a holy war against Christian Ethiopia. The Muslims won a major victory in 1529, destroying an entire Ethiopian army, and went on to capture several Ethiopian provinces. However, in 1543, an Ethiopian force with Portuguese assistance, defeated and killed Ahmed, and Adal collapsed. European traders flourished under the Sultanate’s rule by trading for coffee and perfumes. In 1888, France established the colony of French Somaliland of which Djibouti was part. The Republic of Djibouti achieved full independence on June 27, 1977.

**Population**

The estimated population is 2004 in 466,900 with 53\% of the population in the reproductive age and 43\% in the pre-reproductive stage. A major concern is the high prevalence of HIV in the reproductive population of the country.

**Religion**

This is predominantly an Islamic country with 94\% of the population following Islam and the rest following Christianity.
Languages

The official languages are French and Arabic but Somali and Afar are also spoken.

Economy, Trade and Agriculture

The economy revolves around the seaport. The country relies on economic aid from France and other countries. Services account for 82% of the GDP and industry 14% followed by agriculture which results in 4% of the GDP. Very little agriculture is accomplished in the country and most agricultural products has to be imported. The country also lacks industries.

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