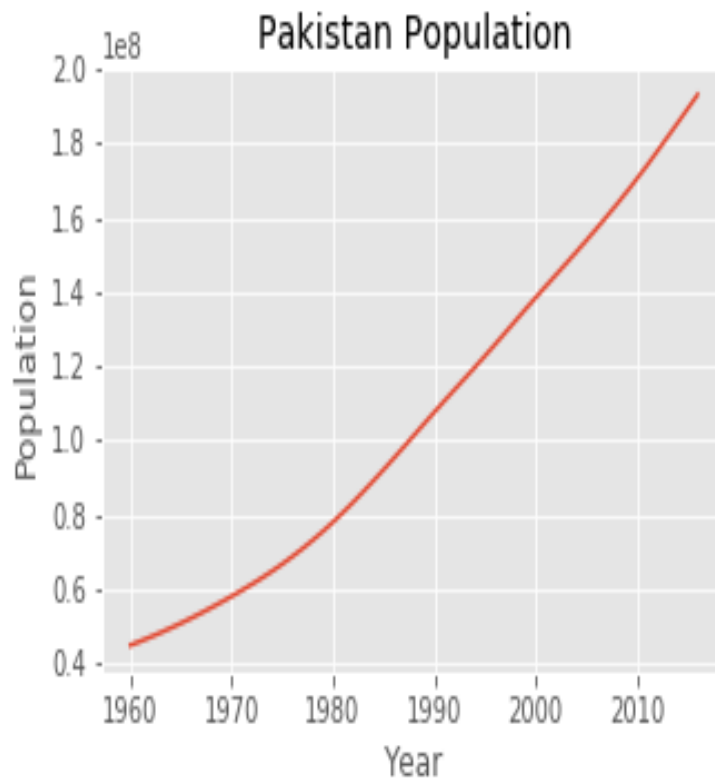


# Pakistan



Coordinates: 30°N 70°E / 30°N 70°E / 30; 70Pakistan[b] (Urdu: پاکستان), officially the Islamic Republic of Pakistan (Urdu: اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان), is a country in South Asia and crossroads of Middle East and Central Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country with a population exceeding 209,970,000 people. In area, it is the 33rd-largest country, spanning 881,913 square kilometres (340,509 square miles). Pakistan has a 1,046-kilometre (650-mile) coastline along the Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman in the south and is bordered by India to the east, Afghanistan to the west, Iran to the southwest, and China in the far northeast. It is separated narrowly from Tajikistan by Afghanistan's Wakhan Corridor in the northwest, and also shares a maritime border with Oman. The territory that now constitutes Pakistan was the site of several ancient cultures, including the Mehrgarh of the Neolithic and the Bronze Age Indus Valley Civilisation, and was later home to kingdoms ruled by people of different faiths and cultures, including Hindus, Indo-Greeks, Muslims, Turco-Mongols, Afghans, and Sikhs. The area has been ruled by numerous empires and dynasties, including the Persian Achaemenid Empire, Alexander III of Macedon, the Indian Mauryan Empire, the Arab Umayyad Caliphate, the Gupta Empire, the Delhi Sultanate, the Mongol Empire, the Mughal Empire, the Afghan Durrani Empire, the Sikh Empire (partially), and, most recently, the British Empire.