



Pakistan

Pakistan,^[e] officially the **Islamic Republic of Pakistan**,^[f] is a country in South Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country, with a population of over 241.5 million,^[g] having the second-largest Muslim population as of 2023. Islamabad is the nation's capital, while Karachi is its largest city and financial centre. Pakistan is the 33rd-largest country by area. Bounded by the Arabian Sea on the south, the Gulf of Oman on the southwest, and the Sir Creek on the southeast, it shares land borders with India to the east; Afghanistan to the west; Iran to the southwest; and China to the northeast. It shares a maritime border with Oman in the Gulf of Oman, and is separated from Tajikistan in the northwest by Afghanistan's narrow Wakhan Corridor.

Pakistan is the site of several ancient cultures, including the 8,500-year-old Neolithic site of Mehrgarh in Balochistan, the Indus Valley Civilisation of the Bronze Age,^[10] and the ancient Gandhara civilisation.^[11] The regions that compose the modern state of Pakistan were the realm of multiple empires and dynasties, including the Achaemenid, the Maurya, the Kushan, the Gupta;^[12] the Umayyad Caliphate in its southern regions, the Samma, the Hindu Shahis, the Shah Miris, the Ghaznavids, the Delhi Sultanate, the Mughals,^[13] and most recently, the British Raj from 1858 to 1947.

Spurred by the Pakistan Movement, which sought a homeland for the Muslims of British India, and election victories in 1946 by the All-India Muslim League, Pakistan gained independence in 1947 after the Partition of the British Indian Empire, which awarded separate statehood to its Muslim-majority regions and was accompanied by an unparalleled mass migration and loss of life.^{[14][15]} Initially a Dominion of the British Commonwealth, Pakistan officially drafted its constitution in 1956, and emerged as a declared Islamic republic. In 1971, the exclave of East Pakistan seceded as the new country of Bangladesh after a nine-month-long civil war. In the following four decades, Pakistan has been ruled by governments whose descriptions, although complex, commonly alternated between civilian and military, democratic and authoritarian, relatively secular and Islamist.^[16]

Pakistan is considered a middle power nation,^{[17][h]} with the world's sixth-largest standing armed forces. It is a declared nuclear-weapons state, and is ranked amongst the emerging and growth-leading economies,^[18] with a large and rapidly-growing middle class.^{[19][20]} Pakistan's political history since independence has been characterized by periods of significant economic and military growth as well as those of political and economic instability. It is an ethnically and linguistically diverse country, with similarly diverse geography and wildlife. The country continues to face challenges, including poverty, illiteracy, corruption, and terrorism.^{[21][22][23]} Pakistan is a member of the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the Organisation of

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان (Urdu)
Islāmī Jumhūriyah Pākistān^[1]



Flag



State emblem
(Coat of arms)

Motto: *Īmān, Ittihad, Nazam* (Urdu)

ایمان، اتحاد، نظم
"Faith, Unity, Discipline"^[2]

Anthem: *Qaumī Tarānah* (Urdu)

قومی ترانہ

"The National Anthem"

▶ 0:00 / 0:00 — 🔊 ⋮



Land controlled by Pakistan shown in dark green; land claimed but not controlled shown in light green

Capital	Islamabad 33°41′30″N 73°03′00″E﻿ / ﻿33.69167°N 73.05000°E﻿ / 33.69167; 73.05000
Largest city	Karachi 24°51′36″N 67°00′36″E﻿ / ﻿24.86000°N 67.01000°E﻿ / 24.86000; 67.01000
Official languages	Urdu · English ^[a]
Native languages	Over 77 languages ^[4]
Religion	96.3% Islam (official) 2.2% Hinduism

Islamic Cooperation, the Commonwealth of Nations, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, and the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition, and is designated as a major non-NATO ally by the United States.

Etymology

The name *Pakistan* was coined by Choudhry Rahmat Ali, a Pakistan Movement activist, who in January 1933 first published it (originally as "Pakstan") in a pamphlet *Now or Never*, using it as an acronym.^{[24][25][26]} Rahmat Ali explained: "It is composed of letters taken from the names of all our homelands, Indian and Asian, *Panjab*, *Afghania*, *Kashmir*, *Sindh*, and *Baluchistan*." He added, "Pakistan is both a Persian and Urdu word... It means the land of the Paks, the spiritually pure and clean."^[27] Etymologists note that پاک *pāk*, is 'pure' in Persian and Pashto and the Persian suffix *-ستان* *-stan* means 'land' or 'place of'.^[25]

Rahmat Ali's concept of Pakistan only related to the northwestern area of the Indian subcontinent. He also proposed the name "Banglasthan" for the Muslim areas of Bengal and "Osmanistan" for Hyderabad State, as well as a political federation between the three.^[28]

History

Indus Valley Civilisation

Some of the earliest ancient human civilisations in South Asia originated from areas encompassing present-day Pakistan.^[30] The earliest known inhabitants in the region were Soanian during the Lower Paleolithic, of whom artefacts have been found in the Soan Valley of Punjab.^[31] The Indus region, which covers most of the present-day Pakistan, was the site of several successive ancient cultures including the Neolithic (7000–4300 BCE) site of Mehrgarh,^{[32][33][34]} and the 5,000-year history of urban life in South Asia to the various sites of the Indus Valley Civilisation, including Mohenjo-daro and Harappa.^{[35][36]}

Vedic period

Following the decline of the Indus valley civilization, Indo-Aryan tribes moved into the Punjab from Central Asia in several waves of migration in the Vedic period (1500–500 BCE),^[38] bringing with them their distinctive religious traditions and practices which fused with local culture.^[39] The Indo-Aryans religious beliefs and practices from the Bactria–Margiana culture and the native Harappan Indus beliefs of the former Indus Valley civilization eventually gave rise to Vedic culture and tribes.^[39] Most notable among them was Gandhara civilization, which flourished at the crossroads of India, Central Asia, and the Middle East, connecting trade routes and absorbing cultural influences from diverse

	1.4% Christianity <div>0.1% other</div>
Demonym(s)	Pakistani
Government	Federal parliamentary republic, Islamic republic
	<div> <div><div>•</div><div>President</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Prime Minister</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Chairman of the Senate</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Speaker of the National Assembly</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Chief Justice</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Asif Ali Zardari</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Shehbaz Sharif</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Yusuf Raza Gilani</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Ayaz Sadiq</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Qazi Faez Isa</div></div> </div>
Legislature	Parliament
	<div> <div><div>•</div><div>Upper house</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Lower house</div></div> <div><div></div><div>Senate</div></div> <div><div></div><div>National Assembly</div></div> </div>
Independence	from the United Kingdom
	<div> <div><div>•</div><div>Declaration</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Recognized dominion</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Republic</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Last territory's acquisition</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Eastern territory withdrawn</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Current constitution</div></div> <div><div></div><div>23 March 1940</div></div> <div><div></div><div>14 August 1947</div></div> <div><div></div><div>23 March 1956</div></div> <div><div></div><div>8 December 1958</div></div> <div><div></div><div>16 December 1971</div></div> <div><div></div><div>14 August 1973</div></div> </div>
Area	
	<div> <div><div>•</div><div>Total</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Water (%)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>881,913 km² (340,509 sq mi)^{[b][6]} (33rd)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>2.86</div></div> </div>
Population	
	<div> <div><div>•</div><div>2023 census</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Density</div></div> <div><div></div><div>▲ 241,499,431^[c] (5th)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>273.8/km² (709.1/sq mi) (56th)</div></div> </div>
GDP (PPP)	2024 estimate
	<div> <div><div>•</div><div>Total</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Per capita</div></div> <div><div></div><div>▲ \$1.643 trillion^[7] (24th)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>▲ \$6,955^[7] (137th)</div></div> </div>
GDP (nominal)	2023 estimate
	<div> <div><div>•</div><div>Total</div></div> <div><div>•</div><div>Per capita</div></div> <div><div></div><div>▼ \$338.237 billion^[7] (43rd)</div></div> <div><div></div><div>▼ \$1,461^[7] (158th)</div></div> </div>
Gini (2018)	▼ 29.6 ^[8] <div>low inequality</div>
HDI (2022)	▲ 0.540 ^[8] <div>low (164th)</div>
Currency	Pakistani rupee (Rs)

civilizations.^[40] The initial early Vedic culture was a tribal, pastoral society centered in the Indus Valley, of what is today Pakistan.^[41] During this period the Vedas, the oldest scriptures of Hinduism, were composed.^{[42][i]}

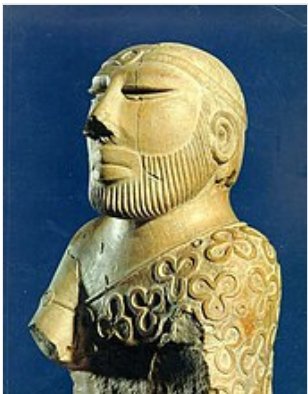
Classical period

The western regions of Pakistan became part of Achaemenid Empire around 517 BCE.^[44] In 326 BCE, Alexander the Great conquered the region by defeating various local rulers, most notably, the King Porus, at Jhelum.^[45] It was followed by the Maurya Empire, founded by Chandragupta Maurya and extended by Ashoka the Great, until 185 BCE.^{[46][47][48]} The Indo-Greek



Cremation urn, Gandhara grave culture, Swat Valley, c. 1200 BCE^[37]

Kingdom founded by Demetrius of Bactria (180–165 BCE) included Gandhara and Punjab and reached its greatest extent under Menander (165–150 BCE), prospering the Greco-Buddhist culture in the region.^{[49][50][51]} Taxila had one of the earliest universities and centres of higher education in the world, which was established during the late Vedic period in the 6th century BCE.^[52] The ancient university was documented by the invading forces of Alexander the Great and was also recorded by Chinese pilgrims in the 4th or 5th century CE.^{[53][54][55]} At its zenith, the Rai dynasty (489–632 CE) ruled Sindh and the surrounding territories.^[56]



Priest-King from Mohenjo-daro (c. 2500 BCE)^[29]

Islamic conquest

The Arab conqueror Muhammad ibn Qasim conquered Sindh and some regions of Punjab in 711 CE.^{[46][57]} The Pakistan government's official chronology claims this as the time when the foundation of Pakistan was laid.^[58] The Early Medieval period (642–1219 CE) witnessed the spread of Islam in the region.^[59] Before the arrival of Islam beginning in the 8th century, the region of Pakistan was home to a diverse plethora of faiths, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism.^{[60][61]} During this period, Sufi missionaries played a pivotal role in converting a majority of the regional population to Islam.^[62] Upon the defeat of the Turk and Hindu Shahi dynasties which governed the Kabul Valley, Gandhara (present-day Khyber Pakhtunkwa), and western Punjab in the 7th to 11th centuries CE, several successive Muslim empires ruled over the region, including the Ghaznavid Empire (975–1187 CE), the Ghorid Kingdom, and the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526 CE).^[63] The Lodi dynasty, the last of the Delhi Sultanate, was replaced by the Mughal Empire (1526–1857 CE).^[64]



Badshahi Mosque, Lahore

The Mughals introduced Persian literature and high culture, establishing the roots of Indo-Persian culture in the region.^[65] In the region of modern-day Pakistan, key cities during the Mughal period were Multan, Lahore, Peshawar and Thatta,^[66] which were chosen as the site of impressive Mughal buildings.^[67] In the early 16th century, the region remained under the Mughal Empire.^[68] In the 18th century, the slow disintegration of the Mughal Empire was hastened by the emergence of the rival powers of the Maratha Confederacy



Standing Buddha from Gandhara (1st–2nd century CE)^[43]

and later the Sikh Empire, as well as invasions by Nader Shah from Iran in 1739 and the Durrani Empire of Afghanistan in 1759.^{[9][69]} The growing political power of the British in Bengal had not yet reached the territories of modern Pakistan.^[70]

Colonial rule

None of modern Pakistan was under British rule until 1839 when Karachi, a small fishing village governed by Talpurs of Sindh with a mud fort guarding the harbour, was taken,^{[75][76]} and used as an enclave with a port and military base for the First Afghan War that ensued.^[77] The remainder of Sindh was acquired in 1843,^[78] and subsequently, through a series of wars and treaties, the East India Company, and later, after the post-Sepoy Mutiny (1857–1858), direct rule by Queen Victoria of the British Empire, acquired most of the region.^[79] Key conflicts included those against the Baloch Talpur dynasty, resolved by the Battle of Miani (1843) in Sindh,^[80] the Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845–1849),^[81] and the Anglo-Afghan Wars (1839–1919).^[82] By 1893, all modern Pakistan was part of the British Indian Empire, and remained so until independence in 1947.^[83]

Under British rule, modern Pakistan was primarily divided into the Sind Division, Punjab Province, and the Baluchistan Agency. The region also included various princely states, with the largest being Bahawalpur.^{[84][85]}

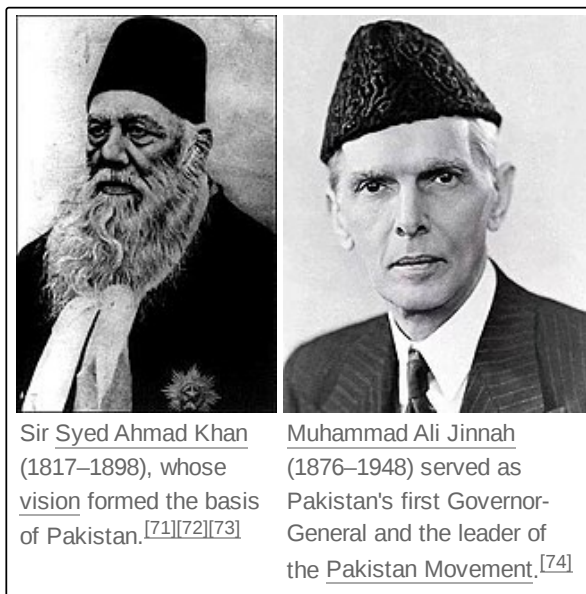
The major armed struggle against the British in the region was the rebellion known as the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857.^[86] Divergence in the relationship between Hinduism and Islam resulted in significant tension in British India, leading to religious violence. The language controversy further exacerbated tensions between Hindus and Muslims.^{[73][87]} A Muslim intellectual movement, led by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to counter the Hindu renaissance, advocated for the two-nation theory and led to the establishment of the All-India Muslim League in 1906.^{[71][72][73]}

In March 1929, in response to the Nehru Report, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, issued his fourteen points, which included proposals to safeguard the interests of the Muslim minority in a united India. These proposals were rejected.^{[88][89][90]} In his December 29, 1930 address, Allama Iqbal advocated the amalgamation of Muslim-majority states in North-West India, including Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan.^{[90][91]} The perception that Congress-led British provincial governments neglected the Muslim League from 1937 to 1939 motivated Jinnah and other Muslim League leaders to embrace the two-nation theory.^{[92][93]} This led to the adoption of the Lahore Resolution of 1940, presented by Sher-e-Bangla A.K. Fazlul Haque, also known as the Pakistan Resolution.^[94]

By 1942, Britain faced considerable strain during World War II, with India directly threatened by Japanese forces. Britain had pledged voluntary independence for India in exchange for support during the war. However, this pledge included a clause stating that no part of British India would be compelled to join the resulting dominion, which could be interpreted as support for an independent Muslim nation. Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement, demanding an immediate end to British rule. In contrast, the Muslim League chose to support the UK's war efforts, thereby nurturing the possibility of establishing a Muslim nation.^{[95][96]}

Independence

The 1946 elections saw the Muslim League secure 90 percent of the Muslim seats, supported by the landowners of Sindh and Punjab. This forced the Indian National Congress, initially skeptical of the League's representation of Indian Muslims, to acknowledge its significance.^[97] Jinnah's emergence as the voice of the Indian Muslims,^[58] compelled the British to consider their stance, despite their reluctance to partition India. In a final attempt to prevent partition, they proposed the Cabinet Mission Plan.^[98]



As the Cabinet Mission failed, the British announced their intention to end rule by June 1948.^{[99][100]} Following rigorous discussions involving Viceroy of India, Lord Mountbatten of Burma, Muhammad Ali Jinnah of the All-India Muslim League, and Jawaharlal Nehru of Congress, the formal declaration to partition British India into two independent dominions—namely Pakistan and India—was issued by Mountbatten on the evening of 3 June 1947. In Mountbatten's oval office, the prime ministers of around a dozen major princely states gathered to receive their copies of the plan before its worldwide broadcast. At 7:00 P.M., All India Radio transmitted the public announcement, starting with the viceroy's address, followed by individual speeches from Nehru, and Jinnah. The founder of Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah concluded his address with the slogan *Pakistan Zindabad* (Long Live Pakistan).^[101]



The partition of India: green regions were all part of Pakistan by 1948, and orange ones part of India. The darker-shaded regions represent the Punjab and Bengal provinces partitioned by the Radcliffe Line. The grey areas represent some of the key princely states that were eventually integrated into India or Pakistan.

As the United Kingdom agreed to the partitioning of India,^[101] the modern state of Pakistan was established on 14 August 1947 (27th of Ramadan in 1366 of the Islamic Calendar, considered to be the most blessed date from an Islamic perspective).^{[102][103]} This new nation amalgamated the Muslim-majority eastern and northwestern regions of British India, comprising the provinces of Balochistan, East Bengal, the North-West Frontier Province, West Punjab, and Sindh.^[104]

In the riots that accompanied the partition in Punjab Province, between 200,000 and 2,000,000 people were killed in what some have described as a retributive genocide between the religions.^[105] Around 50,000 Muslim women were abducted and raped by Hindu and Sikh men, while 33,000 Hindu and Sikh women experienced the same fate at the hands of Muslims.^[106] Around 6.5 million Muslims moved from India to West Pakistan and 4.7 million Hindus and Sikhs moved from West Pakistan to India.^[107] It was the largest mass migration in human history.^[108] A subsequent dispute over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir eventually sparked the Indo-Pakistani War of 1947–1948.^[109]

Post Independence



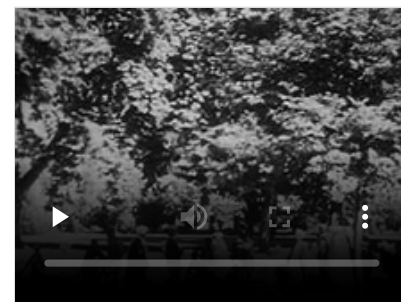
Liaquat Ali Khan was elected 1st Prime Minister of Pakistan.^{[110][111]}

After independence in 1947, Jinnah, the President of the Muslim League, became Pakistan's first Governor-General and the first President-Speaker of the Parliament, but he succumbed to tuberculosis on 11 September 1948.^{[111][112]} Meanwhile, Pakistan's founding fathers agreed to appoint Liaquat Ali Khan, the secretary-general of the party, the nation's first Prime Minister.^{[110][111]} From 1947 to 1956, Pakistan was a monarchy within the Commonwealth of Nations, and had two monarchs before it became a republic.^[113]

The creation of Pakistan was never fully accepted by many British leaders including Lord Mountbatten.^[114] Mountbatten expressed his lack of support and faith in the Muslim League's idea of Pakistan.^[115] Jinnah refused Mountbatten's offer to serve as Governor-General of Pakistan.^[116] When Mountbatten was asked by Collins and Lapierre if he would have sabotaged Pakistan had he known that Jinnah was dying of tuberculosis, he replied 'most probably'.^[117]

Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, a respected Deobandi *alim* (scholar) who held the position of Shaykh al-Islam in Pakistan in 1949, and Maulana Mawdudi of Jamaat-i-Islami played key roles in advocating for an Islamic constitution. Mawdudi insisted that the Constituent Assembly declare the "supreme sovereignty of God" and the supremacy of the *shariah* in Pakistan.^[119]

The efforts of Jamaat-i-Islami and the ulama led to the passage of the Objectives Resolution in March 1949. This resolution, described by Liaquat Ali Khan as the second most significant step in Pakistan's history, affirmed that "sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust". It was later included as a preamble to the constitutions of 1956, 1962, and 1973.^[120]



The American CIA film on Pakistan, made in 1950, examines the history and geography of Pakistan.

Democracy faced setbacks due to the martial law imposed by President Iskander Mirza, who was succeeded by General Ayub Khan. After adopting a presidential system in 1962, Pakistan witnessed significant growth until the second war with India in 1965, resulting in an economic downturn and widespread public discontent in 1967.^{[121][122]} In 1969, President Yahya Khan consolidated control, but faced a devastating cyclone in East Pakistan resulting in 500,000 deaths.^[123]

In 1970, Pakistan conducted its first democratic elections since independence, intending to transition from military rule to democracy. However, after the East Pakistani Awami League emerged victorious over the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Yahya Khan and the military refused to transfer power.^[124] This led to Operation Searchlight, a military crackdown, and eventually sparked the war of liberation by Bengali Mukti Bahini forces in East Pakistan,^[125] described in West Pakistan as a civil war rather than a liberation struggle.^[126]

"You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the State."

—Muhammad Ali Jinnah's first speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan.^[118]

Independent researchers estimate that between 300,000 and 500,000 civilians died during this period while the Bangladesh government puts the number of dead at three million,^[128] a figure that is now nearly universally regarded as excessively inflated.^[129] Some academics such as Rudolph Rummel and Rounaq Jahan say both sides committed genocide;^[130] others such as Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose believe there was no genocide.^[131] In response to India's support for the insurgency in East Pakistan, preemptive strikes on India by Pakistan's air force, navy, and marines sparked a conventional war in 1971 that resulted in an Indian victory and East Pakistan gaining independence as Bangladesh.^[132]

With Pakistan surrendering in the war,^[133] Yahya Khan was replaced by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as president; the country worked towards promulgating its constitution and putting the country on the road to democracy.^{[134][135]} In 1972 Pakistan embarked on an ambitious plan to develop its nuclear deterrence capability with the goal of preventing any foreign invasion; the country's first nuclear power plant was inaugurated in that same year.^{[136][137]} India's first nuclear test in 1974 gave Pakistan additional justification to accelerate its nuclear program.^[137]



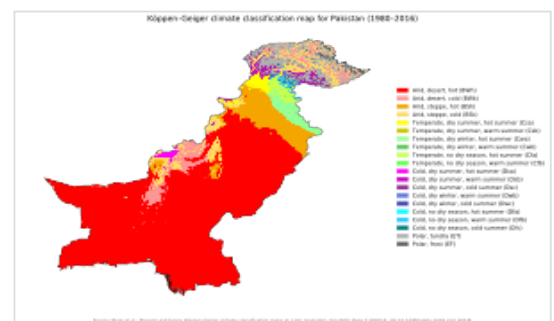
Signing of the Tashkent Declaration to end hostilities with India in 1965 in Tashkent, USSR, by President Ayub alongside Bhutto (centre) and Aziz Ahmed (left)^[127]

Democracy ended with a military coup in 1977 against the leftist PPP, which saw General Zia-ul-Haq become the president in 1978.^[138] From 1977 to 1988, President Zia's corporatisation and economic Islamisation initiatives led to Pakistan becoming one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia.^[139] While building up the country's nuclear program, increasing Islamisation, and the rise of a homegrown conservative philosophy, Pakistan helped subsidise and distribute US resources to factions of the mujahideen against the USSR's intervention in communist Afghanistan.^{[140][141][142]} Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province became a base for the anti-Soviet Afghan fighters, with the province's influential Deobandi ulama playing a significant role in encouraging and organising the 'jihad'.^[143]

Military tension between the two countries in the Kargil district led to the Kargil War of 1999,^{[150][151]} and turmoil in civil-military relations allowed General Pervez Musharraf to take over through a bloodless coup d'état.^[152] Musharraf governed Pakistan as chief executive from 1999 to 2002 and as President from 2001 to 2008^[153]—a period of enlightenment,^{[154][155]} social liberalism,^[156] extensive economic reforms,^[157] and direct involvement in the US-led war on terrorism.^[155] By its own financial calculations, Pakistan's involvement in the war on terrorism has cost up to \$118 billion, over eighty one thousand casualties,^[158] and more than 1.8 million displaced civilians.^[159]

Zardari.^[162] Clashes with the judicature prompted Gilani's disqualification from the Parliament and as the Prime Minister in June 2012.^[163] The general election held in 2013 saw the PML (N) achieve victory,^[164] following which Nawaz Sharif was elected as Prime Minister for the third time.^[165] In 2018, PTI won the general election and Imran Khan became the 22nd Prime Minister.^[166] In April 2022, Shehbaz Sharif was elected as prime minister, after Imran Khan lost a no-confidence vote.^[167] During 2024 general election, PTI-backed independents became the largest bloc,^[168] but Shehbaz Sharif was elected prime minister for a second term, as a result of a coalition between PML (N) and PPP.^[169]

Pakistan's diverse geography and climate host a wide array of wildlife.^[170] Covering 881,913 km² (340,509 sq mi),^[171] Pakistan's size is comparable to France and the UK combined.^[172] It ranks as the 33rd-largest nation by total area,^[173] but this varies based on Kashmir's disputed status. Pakistan boasts a 1,046 km (650 mi) coastline along the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman,^{[174][175]} and shares land borders totaling 6,774 km (4,209 mi), including 2,430 km (1,510 mi) with Afghanistan, 523 km (325 mi) with China, 2,912 km (1,809 mi) with India, and 909 km (565 mi) with Iran.^[176] It has a maritime border with Oman,^[177] and shares a border with Tajikistan via the Wakhan Corridor.^[178] Situated at the crossroads of South Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia,^[179] Pakistan's location is geopolitically significant.^[180] Geologically, Pakistan straddles tectonic plate in Sindh and Punjab, while Balochistan and most of Gilgit-Baltistan are primarily on the Iranian plateau. Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir experience powerful earthquakes.^[181]



Pakistan's landscapes vary from coastal plains to glaciated mountains, offering deserts, forests, hills, and plateaus.^[183] Pakistan is divided into three major geographic areas: the northern highlands, the Indus River plain, and the Balochistan Plateau.^[184] The northern highlands feature the Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Pamir mountain ranges, hosting some of the world's highest peaks, including five of the fourteen eight-thousanders (mountain peaks over 8,000 metres or 26,250

feet), notably K2 (8,611 m or 28,251 ft) and Nanga Parbat (8,126 m or 26,660 ft).^{[185][186]} The Balochistan Plateau lies in the west and the Thar Desert in the east.^[2] The 1,609 km (1,000 mi) Indus River and its tributaries traverse the nation from Kashmir to the Arabian Sea, sustaining alluvial plains along the Punjab and Sindh regions.^[187]

The climate varies from tropical to temperate, with arid conditions in the coastal south. There is a monsoon season with frequent flooding due to heavy rainfall, and a dry season with significantly less rainfall or none at all.^[188] Pakistan experiences four distinct seasons: a cool, dry winter from December through February; a hot, dry spring from March through May; the summer rainy season, or southwest monsoon period, from June through September; and the retreating monsoon period of October and November.^[189] Rainfall varies greatly from year to year, with patterns of alternate flooding and drought common.^[190]



A satellite image showing the topography of Pakistan.^[182]

Flora and fauna

The diverse landscape and climate in Pakistan support a wide range of trees and plants.^[191] From coniferous alpine and subalpine trees like spruce, pine, and deodar cedar in the northern mountains to deciduous trees like shisham in the Sulaiman Mountains,^[188] and palms such as coconut and date in the southern regions.^{[192][193]} The western hills boast juniper, tamarisk, coarse grasses, and scrub plants.^[194] Mangrove forests dominate the coastal wetlands in the south.^[195] Coniferous forests span altitudes from 1,000 to 4,000 metres (3,300 to 13,100 feet) in most northern and northwestern highlands.^[196] In Balochistan's xeric regions, date palms and *Ephedra* are prevalent.^{[192][197]} In Punjab and Sindh's Indus plains, tropical and subtropical dry and moist broadleaf forests as well as tropical and xeric shrublands thrive.^[198] Approximately 4.8% or 36,845.6 square kilometres (3,684,560 ha) of Pakistan was forested in 2021.^{[199][j]}

Pakistan's fauna mirrors its diverse climate. The country boasts around 668 bird species,^[201] including crows, sparrows, mynas, hawks, falcons, and eagles. Palas, Kohistan, is home to the western tragopan, with many migratory birds visiting from Europe, Central Asia, and India.^[202] The southern plains harbor mongooses,^[203] small Indian civet,^[204] hares,^[205] the Asiatic jackal,^[206] the Indian pangolin,^[207] the jungle cat,^[208] and the sand cat.^[209] Indus is home to mugger crocodiles,^[210] while surrounding areas host wild boars,^[211] deer,^[212] and porcupines.^[213] Central Pakistan's sandy scrublands shelter Asiatic jackals,^[206] striped hyenas,^[214] wildcats, and leopards. The mountainous north hosts a variety of animals like the Marco Polo sheep,^[215] urial, markhor goat, ibex goat, Asian black bear, and Himalayan brown bear.^[188]

The lack of vegetative cover, severe climate, and grazing impact on deserts have endangered wild animals.^[216] The chinkara is the only animal found in significant numbers in Cholistan,^[217] with a few nilgai along the Pakistan–India border and in some parts of Cholistan.^[218] Rare animals include the snow leopard and the blind Indus river dolphin,^[188] of which there are believed to be about 1,816 remaining, protected at the Indus Dolphin Reserve in Sindh.^[219] In total, 174 species of mammals, 177 species of reptiles, 22 species of amphibians, 198 species of freshwater fish, 668 species of birds, over 5,000 species of insects, and over 5,700 species of plants have been recorded in Pakistan.^[201] Pakistan faces deforestation, hunting, and pollution, with a 2019 Forest Landscape Integrity Index mean score of 7.42/10, ranking 41st globally out of 172 countries.^[220]



Markhor is the national animal of Pakistan.^[200]

Government and politics

Pakistan operates as a democratic parliamentary federal republic, with Islam designated as the state religion.^{[221][222]} Initially adopting a constitution in 1956, Pakistan saw it suspended by Ayub Khan in 1958, replaced by a second constitution in 1962.^[223] A comprehensive constitution emerged in 1973, suspended by Zia-ul-Haq in 1977 but reinstated in 1985, shaping the country's governance.^[176] The military's influence in mainstream politics has been significant throughout Pakistan's history.^[224] The eras of 1958–1971, 1977–1988, and 1999–2008 witnessed military coups, leading to martial law and military leaders governing de facto as presidents.^[225] Presently, Pakistan operates a multi-party parliamentary system,^[226] with distinct checks and balances among government branches.^[227] The first successful democratic transition occurred in May 2013.^[228] Pakistani politics revolves around a blend of socialism, conservatism, and the third way,^[229] with the three main political parties being the conservative PML (N), socialist PPP, and centrist PTI.^[230] Constitutional amendments in 2010 curtailed presidential powers, enhancing the role of the prime minister.^[231]



Parliament House

- **Head of State:** The ceremonial head of the state and civilian commander-in-chief of the Pakistan Armed Forces is the President, elected by an Electoral College.^[230] The Prime Minister advises the President on key appointments, including military and judicial positions, and the President is constitutionally bound to act on this advice.^{[232][233]} The President also holds powers to pardon and grant clemency.^[234]
- **Legislative:** The bicameral legislature includes a 96-member Senate (upper house) and a 336-member National Assembly (lower house). National Assembly members are elected via first-past-the-post under universal adult suffrage, representing National Assembly constituencies. The constitution reserves 70 seats for women and religious minorities, allocated to political parties based on proportional representation. Senate members are elected by provincial legislators, ensuring equal representation across all provinces.^[235]



Prime Minister's Office

- **Executive:** The Prime Minister, typically the leader of the majority rule party or coalition in the National Assembly (the lower house),^[236] serves as the country's chief executive and head of government. Responsibilities include forming a cabinet,^[237] making executive decisions,^[232] and appointing senior civil servants, subject to executive confirmation.^[238]
- **Provincial governments:** Each of the four provinces follows a similar governance system, with a directly elected Provincial Assembly choosing the Chief Minister, usually from the largest party or coalition. Chief Ministers lead the provincial cabinet and oversee provincial governance.^{[239][240]} The Chief Secretary, appointed by the Prime Minister, heads the provincial bureaucracy.^[241] Provincial assemblies

legislate and approve the provincial budget, typically presented by the provincial finance minister annually.^{[240][242]} Ceremonial heads of provinces, the Provincial Governors, are appointed by the President based on the binding advice of the Prime Minister.^{[239][243]}

- **Judicature:** The judiciary in Pakistan has two classes: the superior and subordinate judiciary. The superior judiciary includes the Supreme Court of Pakistan,^[244] Federal Shariat Court, and five high courts,^[245] with the Supreme Court at the top. It's responsible for safeguarding the constitution.^[244] Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan have their own court systems.^{[246][247]}



Supreme Court of Pakistan

Role of Islam

Pakistan, the only country established in the name of Islam,^[248] had overwhelming support among Muslims, especially in provinces like the United Provinces, where Muslims were a minority.^[249] This idea, articulated by the Muslim League, the Islamic clergy, and Jinnah, envisioned an Islamic state.^[250] Jinnah, closely associated with the ulama, was described upon his death by Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani as the greatest Muslim after Aurangzeb, aspiring to unite Muslims worldwide under Islam.^[251]

The Objectives Resolution of March 1949 marked the initial step towards this goal, affirming God as the sole sovereign.^{[120][252]} Muslim League leader Chaudhry Khaliquzzaman asserted that Pakistan could only truly become an Islamic state after bringing all believers of Islam into a single political unit.^[253] Keith Callard observed that Pakistanis believed in the essential unity of purpose and outlook in the Muslim world, expecting similar views on religion and nationality from Muslims worldwide.^[254]

Pakistan's desire for a united Islamic bloc, called Islamistan, wasn't supported by other Muslim governments,^[255] though figures like the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Al-Haj Amin al-Husseini, and leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood were drawn to the country. Pakistan's desire for an international organization of Muslim countries was fulfilled in the 1970s when the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) was formed.^[256] East Pakistan's Bengali Muslims, opposed to an Islamist state, clashed with West Pakistanis who leaned towards Islamic identity.^{[257][258]} The Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami backed an Islamic state and opposed Bengali nationalism.^[259]



Eid Prayers at the Badshahi Mosque in Lahore

After the 1970 general elections, the Parliament crafted the 1973 Constitution.^[260] It declared Pakistan an Islamic Republic, with Islam as the state religion, and mandated laws to comply with Islamic teachings laid down in the Quran and Sunnah and that no law repugnant to such injunctions could be enacted.^[261] Additionally, it established institutions like the Shariat Court and the Council of Islamic Ideology to interpret and apply Islam.^[262]

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto faced opposition under the banner of *Nizam-e-Mustafa* ("Rule of the Prophet"),^[263] advocating an Islamic state. Bhutto conceded to some Islamist demands before being ousted in a coup.^[264]

General Zia-ul-Haq, after seizing power, committed to establishing an Islamic state and enforcing *sharia* law.^[264] He instituted Shariat judicial courts,^[265] and court benches,^{[266][267]} to adjudicate using Islamic doctrine.^[268] Zia aligned with Deobandi institutions,^[269] exacerbating sectarian tensions with anti-Shia policies.^[270]

Most Pakistanis, according to a Pew Research Center (PEW) poll, favor Sharia law as the official law,^[271] and 94 percent of them identify more with religion than nationality compared to Muslims in other nations.^[272]

Administrative units

Administrative unit ^[273]	Capital ^{[274][275][276]}	Population ^{[277][278][279]}
 Balochistan	Quetta	14,894,402
 Punjab	Lahore	127,688,922
 Sindh	Karachi	55,696,147
 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Peshawar	40,856,097
Gilgit-Baltistan	Gilgit	1,492,924
 Azad Kashmir	Muzaffarabad	4,179,428
Islamabad Capital Territory	Islamabad	2,363,863

Pakistan, a federal parliamentary republic, consists of four provinces: Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, and Balochistan, along with three territories: Islamabad Capital Territory, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Kashmir.^[280] The Government of Pakistan governs the western parts of the Kashmir Region, organized into separate political entities, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.^[281] In 2009, the constitutional assignment (the *Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment and Self-Governance Order*) granted Gilgit-Baltistan semi-provincial status, providing it with self-government.^[282]

The local government system consists of districts, tehsils, and union councils, with an elected body at each tier.^[283]

Clickable map of the four provinces and three federal territories of Pakistan.



Foreign relations

Since independence, Pakistan has aimed to maintain an independent foreign policy.^[284] Pakistan's foreign policy and geostrategy focus on the economy, security, national identity, and territorial integrity, as well as building close ties with other Muslim nations.^[285] According to Hasan Askari Rizvi, a foreign policy expert, "Pakistan highlights sovereign equality of states, bilateralism, mutuality of interests, and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs as the cardinal features of its foreign policy."^[286]

The Kashmir conflict remains a major issue between Pakistan and India, with three of their four wars fought over it.^[287] Due partly to strained relations with India, Pakistan has close ties with Turkey and Iran, both focal points in its foreign policy.^[288] Saudi Arabia also holds importance in Pakistan's foreign relations.^[289]

As a non-signatory of the Treaty on Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Pakistan holds influence in the IAEA.^[290] For years, Pakistan has blocked an international treaty to limit fissile material, arguing that its stockpile does not meet its long-term needs.^[291] Pakistan's nuclear program in the 20th century aimed to counter India's nuclear ambitions in the region, and reciprocal nuclear tests ensued after India's nuclear tests, solidifying Pakistan as a nuclear power.^[292] Pakistan maintains a policy of Full spectrum deterrence, considering its nuclear program vital for detering foreign aggression.^[293]

Located strategically in the world's major maritime oil supply lines and communication fiber optic corridors, Pakistan also enjoys proximity to the natural resources of Central Asian countries.^[295] Pakistan actively participates in the United Nations with a Permanent Representative representing its positions in international politics.^[296] It has advocated for the concept of "enlightened moderation" in the Muslim world.^[297] Pakistan is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, SAARC, ECO,^{[298][299]} and the G20 developing nations.^[300]



Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at the 2022 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit^[294]

Pakistan is designated as an "Iron Brother" by China, emphasizing the significance of their close and supportive relationship.^[302] In the 1950s, Pakistan opposed the Soviet Union for geopolitical reasons. During the Soviet–Afghan War in the 1980s, it was a close ally of the United States.^[286] Relations with Russia have improved since the end of the Cold War,^[303] but Pakistan's relationship with the United States has been "on-and-off."^[286] Initially a close ally during the Cold War,^[304] Pakistan's relations with the US soured in the 1990s due to sanctions over its secretive nuclear program.^[305] Since 9/11, Pakistan has been a US ally on counterterrorism, but their relationship has been strained due to diverging interests and mistrust during the 20-year war and terrorism issues. Although Pakistan was granted major non-NATO ally status by the U.S. in 2004,^[306] it faced accusations of supporting the Taliban insurgents in Afghanistan.^[307]



President of Pakistan Ayub Khan with US President John F. Kennedy in 1961^[301]

Pakistan does not have formal diplomatic relations with Israel; nonetheless, an exchange occurred between the two countries in 2005, with Turkey acting as an intermediary.^[308] Due to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, Pakistan has not established diplomatic relations with Armenia.^{[309][310]}

Relations with China

Pakistan was among the first nations to establish formal diplomatic ties with the China,^[313] forging a strong relationship since China's 1962 conflict with India, culminating in a special bond.^[314] During the 1970s, Pakistan played a crucial role in China's global outreach,^[315] facilitating US President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China.^[316] Despite changes in Pakistani governance and regional/global dynamics, China's influence in Pakistan remains paramount.^[315]

In reciprocation, China stands as Pakistan's largest trading partner, with substantial investment in Pakistani infrastructure, notably the Gwadar port.^[317] In 2015 alone, they inked 51 agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for cooperative efforts.^[318] Both nations signed a Free Trade Agreement in the 2000s, with China making its largest investment in Pakistan's history through CPEC.^[319] Pakistan acts as China's liaison to the Muslim world, and both nations support each other on sensitive issues like Kashmir, Taiwan, Xinjiang, and more.^[320]



Pakistan Prime Minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai signing the Treaty of Friendship Between China and Pakistan.^[311] Pakistan is host to China's largest embassy.^[312]

Relations with the Muslim world

After Independence, Pakistan vigorously pursued bilateral relations with other Muslim countries.^[321] The Ali brothers sought to project Pakistan as the natural leader of the Islamic world, partly due to its significant manpower and military strength.^[322] Khaliquzzaman, a prominent Muslim League leader, declared Pakistan's ambition to unite all Muslim countries into Islamistan, a pan-Islamic entity.^[323]

These developments, alongside Pakistan's creation, didn't receive approval from the United States, with British Prime Minister Clement Attlee expressing a hope for India and Pakistan to reunite.^[324] However, due to a nationalist awakening in the Arab world at that time, there was little interest in Pakistan's Pan-Islamic aspirations.^[325] Some Arab countries perceived the 'Islamistan' project as Pakistan's bid to dominate other Muslim states.^[326]

Pakistan vigorously advocated for self-determination among Muslims globally. Its efforts in supporting independence movements in countries like Indonesia, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Eritrea fostered strong ties.^[327] Although initially tense due to the secession war, relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh have deepened recently.^[328]

Conversely, Pakistan's relations with Iran have faced strains over sectarian tensions.^[329] Iran and Saudi Arabia have used Pakistan as a battleground for their proxy sectarian war. By the 1990s, Pakistan's support for the Sunni Taliban in Afghanistan posed a challenge for Shia-led Iran, which opposed a Taliban-controlled Afghanistan.^[330] Tensions escalated in 1998 when Iran accused Pakistan of war crimes after Pakistani warplanes bombed Afghanistan's last Shia stronghold in support of the Taliban.^[331] As the Taliban regains power in the 2020s, Pakistan advocates for cooperation among neighboring countries, arguing against the use of Afghanistan for geopolitical rivalry.^[332]

Pakistan, a prominent member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), prioritizes maintaining cultural, political, social, and economic relations with Arab and other Muslim-majority nations in its foreign policy.^[333]

Leadership in World governance initiatives

Pakistan signed the agreement to convene a convention for drafting a world constitution, leading to the establishment of the Constitution for the Federation of Earth in 1968.^{[334][335][336]} Ayub Khan, then president of Pakistan, endorsed the agreement to convene a World Constituent Assembly.^{[337][338]} Member of Parliament and adviser to the Prime Minister, Ahmed Ebrahim Haroon Jaffer, represented Pakistan at the World Constituent Assembly in Interlaken, Switzerland in August 1968.^[339]

In 1982, the inaugural Provisional World Parliament (PWP) convened in Brighton, United Kingdom, with Pakistani jurist and diplomat Sir Chaudhry Mohammad Zafarullah Khan presiding over the session at the Royal Pavilion.^{[340][341]}

Kashmir conflict

Kashmir, a Himalayan region at the northern tip of the Indian subcontinent, was governed as the autonomous princely state of Jammu and Kashmir during the British Raj before the Partition of India in August 1947. This sparked a major territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, resulting in several conflicts over the region. India controls about 45.1% of Kashmir, including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, while Pakistan controls roughly 38.2%, comprising Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan. Additionally, about 20% of the region, known as Aksai Chin and the Shaksgam Valley, is under Chinese control.^[342] India claims the entire Kashmir region based on the Instrument of Accession signed by the princely state's ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, while Pakistan argues for its Muslim-majority population and geographical proximity to Pakistan. The United Nations was involved in resolving the conflict, leading to a ceasefire in 1949 and the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC) as a *de facto* border.^[343] India, fearing Kashmir's secession, did not hold the promised plebiscite, as it believed Kashmiris would vote to join Pakistan.^[344]



The areas shown in green are the Pakistani-controlled areas.



Neelum Valley in Azad Kashmir is part of Pakistani-controlled Kashmir.

Pakistan claims that its position is for the right of the Kashmiri people to determine their future through impartial elections as mandated by the United Nations,^[345] while India has stated that Kashmir is an "integral part" of India, referring to the 1972 Simla Agreement and to the fact that regional elections take place regularly.^[346] In recent developments, certain Kashmiri independence groups believe that Kashmir should be independent of both India and Pakistan.^[347]

Military

The armed forces of Pakistan rank sixth globally in personnel size, with about 660,000 on active duty and 291,000 paramilitary personnel as of 2024.^[348] Established in 1947, they've wielded significant influence over national politics.^[349] The main branches include the Army, Navy, and Air Force, supported by numerous paramilitaries.^[350]

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCSC) is the highest-ranking military officer, advising the civilian government.^[351] However, they lack direct command over the branches and serve as intermediaries, ensuring communication between the military and civilian leadership.^[351] Overseeing the Joint Staff Headquarters, they coordinate inter-service cooperation and joint military missions.^{[351][352]}



Pakistan Air Force's JF-17 Thunder flying in front of the 8,130-metre-high (26,660-foot) Nanga Parbat

Command and control over Pakistan's strategic arsenal development and employment is vested in the National Command Authority, overseeing work on nuclear doctrine to maintain Full spectrum deterrence.^[148]

The United States, Turkey, and China maintain close military relations with Pakistan Armed Forces, regularly exporting military equipment and technology transfer.^[353] According to SIPRI, Pakistan was the 5th-largest recipient and importer of arms between 2019 and 2023.^[354]

Joint exercises and war games are occasionally conducted with the militaries of China and Turkey.^{[350][355]}

The Constitution of Pakistan introduces the philosophical basis for the military draft in times of emergency, though it has never been imposed.^[356]

Military history

Since 1947, Pakistan has been involved in four conventional wars with India. The first conflict occurred in Kashmir, with Pakistan gaining control of Western Kashmir and India retaining Eastern Kashmir. Territorial disputes led to another war in 1965. The 1971 war resulted in Pakistan's unconditional surrender of East Pakistan.^[357] Tensions in Kargil brought the two countries to the brink of war.^[358] Since 1947, unresolved territorial problems with Afghanistan saw border skirmishes kept mostly at the mountainous border. In 1961, the military and intelligence community repelled an Afghan incursion near the Durand Line border.^[359]

During the Soviet-Afghan War, Pakistan's intelligence community, mostly the ISI, coordinated US resources to support Afghan mujahideen and foreign fighters against Soviet presence. The PAF engaged with Soviet and Afghan Air Forces during the conflict.^[360] Pakistan has been an active participant in UN peacekeeping missions, playing a major role in operations like the rescue mission in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993.^{[361][362]} According to UN reports, the Pakistani military is the third largest troop contributor to UN peacekeeping missions after Ethiopia and India.^[363]

Pakistan has deployed its military in some Arab countries, providing defense, training, and advisory roles.^[364] The PAF and Navy's fighter pilots served in Arab nations' militaries against Israel in the Six-Day War and the Yom Kippur War.^[361] Pakistani special forces assisted Saudi forces in Mecca during the Grand Mosque Seizure.^[365] Pakistan also sent 5,000 troops as part of a US-led coalition for the defense of Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War.^[366]

Despite the UN arms embargo on Bosnia, the ISI under General Javed Nasir airlifted anti-tank weapons and missiles to Bosnian mujahideen, shifting the tide in favor of Bosnian Muslims. ISI, under Nasir's leadership, supported Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang, rebel groups in the Philippines, and religious groups in Central Asia.^{[367][368]}

Since 2004, the military has been engaged in an insurgency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, primarily against Tehrik-i-Taliban factions. Major operations include Operation Black Thunderstorm, Operation Rah-e-Nijat, and Operation Zarb-e-Azb.^{[369][370]}

Law enforcement

Law enforcement in Pakistan consists of federal and provincial police agencies. Each of the four provinces (Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan) has its own police force, while the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) has the Islamabad Police.^[371] Provincial police forces are led by an Inspector-General of Police (IGP) appointed by provincial governments. However, top officers are from the Police Service of Pakistan (PSP), ensuring national standards across provincial forces.

Specialized Units:

- National Highways & Motorway Police (NHMP): Enforces traffic laws and ensures safety on Pakistan's inter-provincial motorway network.
- Elite Police Units: Each provincial police force, such as the Punjab Elite Force, focuses on counter-terrorism operations and high-risk situations.

The Civil Armed Forces (CAF) support regular law enforcement agencies, aiding in tasks like riot control, counter-insurgency, and border security, enhancing Pakistan's law enforcement capabilities.^[372]

The National Intelligence Coordination Committee oversees intelligence activities at federal and provincial levels, including the ISI, MI, IB, FIA, Police, and Civil Armed Forces.^[373] Pakistan's primary intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), was established within a year of Pakistan's independence in 1947.^{[374][375]}

Human rights

In 2018, Pakistan ranked 139 out of 180 countries in the Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders, highlighting restrictions on freedom of the press.^[376] Television stations and newspapers face closures for publishing reports critical of the government or military.^[377] Male homosexuality is illegal in Pakistan, punishable with up to life in prison.^[378]

Economy

Pakistan's economy ranks 24th globally by purchasing power parity (PPP) and 43rd by nominal GDP. Historically, Pakistan was part of the wealthiest region in the first millennium CE, but lost ground to regions like China and Western Europe by the 18th century.^[386] Pakistan is a developing country,^[387] and part of the Next Eleven, poised to become one of the world's largest economies in the 21st century, alongside the BRICS.^[388]

In recent years, Pakistan has faced social instability and macroeconomic imbalances, with deficiencies in services like rail transportation and electrical energy generation.^[389] The semi-industrialized economy has growth centers along the Indus River.^{[390][391][392]} The diversified economies of Karachi and Punjab's urban centers coexist with less-developed areas in other parts of the country, particularly in Balochistan.^[391] Pakistan ranks as the 67th-largest export economy and the 106th-most complex economy globally, with a negative trade balance of US\$23.96 billion in fiscal year 2015–16.^{[393][394]}

Economic indicators		
GDP (PPP)	\$1.254 trillion (2019)	[379]
GDP (nominal)	\$284.2 billion (2019)	[380]
Real GDP growth	3.29% (2019)	[381]
CPI inflation	10.3% (2019)	[382]
Unemployment	5.7% (2018)	[383]
Labor force participation rate	48.9% (2018)	[384]
Total public debt	\$106 billion (2019)	
National wealth	\$465 billion (2019)	[385]



Statue of a bull outside the Pakistan Stock Exchange, Islamabad, Pakistan

As of 2022, Pakistan's estimated nominal GDP is US\$376.493 billion.^[395] The GDP by PPP is US\$1.512 trillion. The estimated nominal per capita GDP is US\$1,658, the GDP (PPP)/capita is US\$6,662 (international dollars),^[379] According to the World Bank, Pakistan has important strategic endowments and development potential. The increasing proportion of Pakistan's youth provides the country with both a potential demographic dividend and a challenge to provide adequate services and employment.^[396] 21.04% of the population live below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 a day. The unemployment rate among the aged 15 and over population is 5.5%.^[397] Pakistan has an estimated 40 million middle class citizens, projected to increase to 100 million by 2050.^[398] A 2015 report published by the World Bank ranked Pakistan's economy at 24th-largest^[399] in the world by purchasing power and 41st-largest^[400] in absolute terms. It is South Asia's second-largest economy, representing about 15.0% of

regional GDP.^[401]

Pakistan's economic growth varied over time, with slow progress during democratic transitions but robust expansion under martial law, lacking sustainable foundations.^[122] Rapid reforms in the early to mid-2000s, including increased development spending, reduced poverty by 10% and boosted GDP by 3%.^{[371][402]} The economy cooled post-2007,^[371] with inflation peaking at 25.0% in 2008,^[403] necessitating IMF intervention to prevent bankruptcy.^[404] The Asian

Development Bank later noted easing economic strain in Pakistan.^[405] Inflation for fiscal year 2010–11 stood at 14.1%.^[406] Since 2013, Pakistan's economy has seen growth under an IMF program. Goldman Sachs predicted Pakistan's economy could grow 15 times by 2050,^[407] and Ruchir Sharma in his 2016 book anticipated a transformation to a middle-income country by 2020.^[408]

Pakistan's vast natural commodity production and 10th-largest labour market, along with a US\$19.9 billion contribution from its 7-million-strong diaspora in 2015–16,^{[409][410][411]} position it significantly. However, Pakistan's global export share is declining, accounting for just 0.13% in 2007 according to the World Trade Organization.^[412]

Agriculture and mining sector



Surface mining in Sindh. Pakistan has been termed the 'Saudi Arabia of Coal' by Forbes.^[413]

The Pakistani economy has shifted from agriculture to services, with agriculture contributing only 20.9% of the GDP as of 2015.^[414] Despite this, Pakistan's wheat production in 2005 surpassed Africa's and nearly matched South America's, highlighting its agricultural significance.^[415] The sector employs 43.5% of the labor force and is a major source of foreign exchange.^{[414][416]}

Manufactured exports, heavily reliant on agricultural raw materials like cotton and hides, face inflationary pressures due to supply shortages and market disruptions. Pakistan ranks fifth in cotton production, self-sufficient in sugarcane, and the fourth-largest milk producer globally. Though land and water resources haven't increased proportionately, productivity gains, especially from the Green Revolution in the late 1960s and 1970s, significantly boosted wheat and rice

yields. Private tube wells and High Yielding Varieties (HYVs) further augmented crop yields.^[417] Meat industry accounts for 1.4 percent of overall GDP.^[418]

Industry

Industry, constituting 19.74% of GDP and 24% of total employment, is the second-largest sector. Large-scale manufacturing (LSM) dominates, representing 12.2% of GDP, with cement production thriving due to demand from Afghanistan and the domestic real estate sector.^[420] In 2013, Pakistan exported 7,708,557 metric tons of cement, with an installed capacity of 44,768,250 metric tons.^[421] The textile industry, a key player in Pakistan's manufacturing, contributes 9.5% to GDP and employs around 15 million people. Pakistan ranks fourth globally in cotton production, with substantial spinning capacity, making it a major exporter of textile products in Asia.^[422] China is a significant buyer of Pakistani textiles, importing US\$1.527 billion worth of textiles last fiscal year.^[423]



Television assembly factory in Lahore. Pakistan's industrial sector accounts for about 20.3% of the GDP, and is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises.^[419]

Services

As of 2014–15, the services sector contributes 58.8% to GDP,^[414] serving as the main driver of economic growth in Pakistan,^[424] with a consumption-oriented society. The sector's growth rate surpasses that of agriculture and industry, accounting for 54% of GDP and over one-third of total employment. It has strong linkages with other sectors, providing essential inputs to agriculture and manufacturing.^[425] Pakistan's IT sector is one of the fastest-growing, ranked 110th for ICT development by the World Economic Forum.^[426] With around 82 million internet users as of May 2020, Pakistan ranks 9th globally,^{[427][428]} and its ICT industry is projected to exceed \$10 billion by 2020.^[429] With 12,000 employees, Pakistan



Rising skyline of Karachi, with several under construction skyscrapers

is among the top five freelancing nations,^[430] and its export performance in telecom, computer, and information services has notably improved.^[431]

Tourism

With its diverse cultures, landscapes, and attractions, Pakistan drew around 6.6 million foreign tourists in 2018.^[432] However, this was a decline from the peak of tourism in the 1970s driven by the popular Hippie trail.^[433] Pakistan boasts attractions from mangroves in the south to Himalayan hill stations in the northeast, including ancient Buddhist ruins of Takht-i-Bahi and Taxila, the 5,000-year-old Indus Valley civilization sites such as Mohenjo-daro and Harappa,^[434] and numerous mountain peaks over 7,000 metres (23,000 feet).^[435] The northern part of Pakistan boasts numerous old fortresses, showcasing ancient architecture. It encompasses the Hunza and Chitral valleys, where the small pre-Islamic Kalasha community resides, claiming descent from Alexander the Great.^[436] Lahore, Pakistan's cultural capital, showcases numerous examples of Mughal architecture, including the Badshahi Masjid, the Shalimar Gardens, the Tomb of Jahangir, and the Lahore Fort. Following the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, *The Guardian* highlighted "The top five tourist sites in Pakistan" to boost tourism, featuring destinations like Taxila, Lahore, the Karakoram Highway, Karimabad, and Lake Saiful Muluk.^[437] Festivals and government initiatives aim to promote Pakistan's cultural heritage.^[438] In 2015, the World Economic Forum ranked Pakistan 125th out of 141 countries in its Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report.^[439]



Shangrila Lake and adjoining resort in Gilgit-Baltistan

Infrastructure

Pakistan was lauded as the top nation for infrastructure development in South Asia during the 2016 annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank.^[440]

Power and energy

As of May 2021, Pakistan operates six licensed commercial nuclear power plants.^[441] The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) oversees these plants, while the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority ensures their safe operation.^[442] These plants contribute approximately 5.8% to Pakistan's electricity supply, while fossil fuels (crude oil and natural gas) provide 64.2%, hydroelectric power provides 29.9%, and coal contributes 0.1%.^{[443][444]} The KANUPP-I, Pakistan's first commercial nuclear power plant, was supplied by Canada in 1971. Sino-Pakistani nuclear cooperation began in the 1980s, leading to the establishment of CHASNUPP-I. In 2005, both countries proposed a joint energy security plan, aiming for a generation capacity exceeding 160,000 MWe by 2030. Pakistan's Nuclear Energy Vision 2050 targets a capacity of 40,000 MWe,^[445] with 8,900 MWe expected by 2030.^[446]



Tarbela Dam, the largest earth filled dam in the world, was constructed in 1968.

In June 2008, the nuclear complex at Chashma in Punjab Province expanded with the installation of Chashma-III and Chashma-IV reactors, each with 325–340 MWe, costing Rs129 billion, with Rs80 billion from international sources, mainly China. Another agreement for China's assistance was signed in October 2008, seen as a response to the US–India agreement. The project's cost was then US\$1.7 billion, with a foreign loan of US\$1.07 billion. In 2013, Pakistan established a second nuclear complex in Karachi with plans for additional reactors, similar to Chashma.^[447] Electrical energy in Pakistan is generated by various corporations and distributed evenly among the four provinces by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). However, Karachi-based K-Electric and Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) generate much of the electricity used in Pakistan and collect revenue nationwide.^[448] In 2023,

Pakistan's installed electricity generation capacity was ~45,885 MWt.^[449] Pakistan produced 1,135 megawatts of renewable energy for the month of October 2016. Pakistan expects to produce 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy by 2025.^[450]

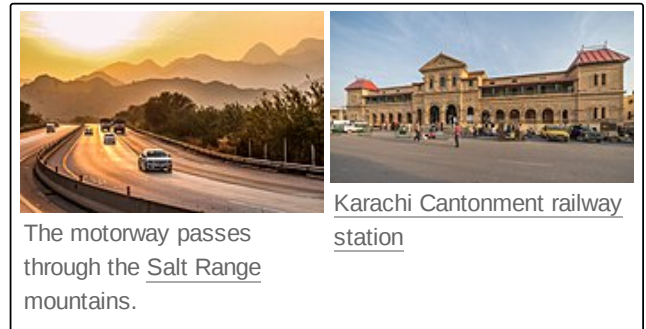
Transport

Pakistan boasts 2567 km of motorways and approximately 263,942 km of highways, which handle 92% of passengers and 96% of freight traffic. Despite constituting only 4.6% of the total road length, these north-south links manage 85% of the nation's traffic. They connect southern seaports such as Karachi port and Port Qasim in Sindh, along with Gwadar Port and Port of Pasni in Balochistan, to populous provinces like Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa domestically, and neighboring countries like Afghanistan, Central Asia, and China through the China Pakistan Economic Corridor.^[451]^[452]^[453]^[454] According to the WEF's Global Competitiveness Report, Pakistan's port infrastructure quality ratings rose from 3.7 to 4.1 between 2007 and 2016.^[455] The railway's share of inland traffic is reduced to below 8% for passengers and 4% for freight.^[414] This shift led to a decrease in total rail track from 8,775 kilometres (5,453 miles) in 1990–91 to 7,791 kilometres (4,841 miles) in 2011.^[452]^[451]

The transport landscape of Pakistan features various modern transit systems. The Orange Line Metro Train in Lahore, inaugurated in 2020,^[456] spans 27.1 km (16.8 mi),^[457] and includes both elevated and underground sections, accommodating over 250,000 passengers daily.^[458] Lahore also boasts the Lahore Metrobus, the first of its kind in Pakistan, operational since February 2013.^[459] The Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metrobus, stretching 48.1 km, commenced its first phase in June 2015, with subsequent extensions, and employs e-ticketing and an Intelligent Transportation System.^[460]^[461] Multan Metrobus, inaugurated in January 2017, serves Multan with its rapid transit services.^[462]^[463] Peshawar's Bus Rapid Transit, inaugurated in August 2020, marks the fourth BRT system in Pakistan. Karachi's Green Line Metrobus, operational since December 2021, is part of a larger metrobus project financed by the Government of Pakistan and initiated in February 2016.^[464]^[465]^[466] Meanwhile, Faisalabad awaits its proposed rapid transit project, the Faisalabad Metrobus.^[467] Karachi Circular Railway, partially revived in November 2020, offers public transit services in the Karachi metropolitan area.^[468]^[469] Additionally, plans are underway to resurrect Karachi's tramway service, which ceased operations in 1975, in collaboration with Austrian experts.^[470]^[471]

As of 2013, Pakistan boasts approximately 151 airports and airfields, encompassing both military and civilian installations.^[472] Despite Jinnah International Airport serving as the primary international gateway, significant international traffic also flows through Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar, Quetta, Faisalabad, Sialkot, and Multan airports. The civil aviation industry, deregulated in 1993, operates with a blend of public and private entities while state-owned Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) dominates, carrying 73% of domestic passengers and all domestic freight.

Science and technology



Karakoram Highway, connecting Pakistan to China, is one of the highest paved roads in the world.



Boeing 737 owned and operated by Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) at Skardu International Airport

Developments in science and technology have played a significant role in Pakistan's infrastructure, linking the nation to the global community.^[473] Each year, the Pakistan Academy of Sciences and the government invite scientists worldwide to the International Nathiagali Summer College on Physics.^[474] In 2005, Pakistan hosted an international seminar on "Physics in Developing Countries" for the International Year of Physics.^[475] Pakistani theoretical physicist Abdus Salam won a Nobel Prize in Physics for his work on the electroweak interaction.^[476] Pakistani scientists have made notable contributions in mathematics, biology, economics, computer science, and genetics.^[477]

In chemistry, Salimuzzaman Siddiqui identified the medicinal properties of the neem tree's components.^{[478][479]} Ayub K. Ommaya developed the Ommaya reservoir for treating brain conditions.^[480] Scientific research is integral to Pakistani universities, national laboratories, science parks, and the industry.^[481] Abdul Qadeer Khan spearheaded Pakistan's HEU-based gas-centrifuge uranium enrichment program for its atomic bomb project.^[482] He established the Kahuta Research Laboratories (KRL) in 1976, serving as both its senior scientist and the Director-General until his retirement in 2001. Besides atomic bomb project, he made significant contributions in molecular morphology, physical martensite, and their applications in condensed and material physics.^[483]

In 2010, Pakistan ranked 43rd globally in published scientific papers.^[484] The influential Pakistan Academy of Sciences guides the government on science policies.^[485] Pakistan climbed from 107th to 88th in the Global Innovation Index by 2023.^{[486][487][488]}

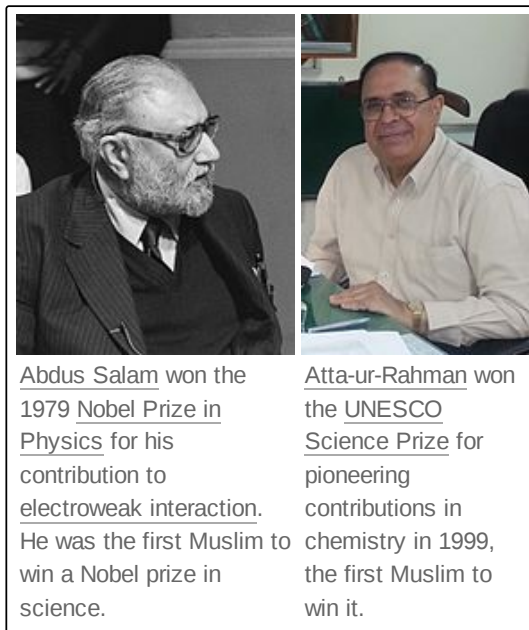
The 1960s marked the rise of Pakistan's space program, led by SUPARCO, yielding advancements in rocketry, electronics, and aeronomy. Notably, Pakistan launched its first rocket into space, pioneering South Asia's space exploration.^[489] In 1990, it successfully launched its first satellite, becoming the first Muslim nation and second in South Asia to achieve this milestone.^[490]

Pakistan witnessed a fourfold increase in its scientific productivity in the past decade surging from approximately 2,000 articles per year in 2006 to more than 9,000 articles in 2015. Making Pakistan's cited article's higher than the BRIC countries put together.

—Thomson Reuters's Another BRIC in the Wall 2016 report^[491]

Following the 1971 war with India, Pakistan hastily developed atomic weapons to deter foreign intervention and entered the atomic age.^[492] Tensions with India led to Pakistan's 1998 underground nuclear tests, making it the seventh country to possess such weapons.^[493]

Pakistan is the sole Muslim nation active in Antarctica research, maintaining its Jinnah Antarctic Research Station since 1992.^[494] By May 2020, Pakistan had 82 million internet users, ranking ninth globally.^{[427][428]} The government invests heavily in information technology projects, focusing on e-government and infrastructure.^[495]



Abdus Salam won the 1979 Nobel Prize in Physics for his contribution to electroweak interaction. He was the first Muslim to win a Nobel prize in science.

Atta-ur-Rahman won the UNESCO Science Prize for pioneering contributions in chemistry in 1999, the first Muslim to win it.

Demographics

Pakistan had a population of 241,492,197 according to the final results of the 2023 Census.^{[496][497][498]} This figure includes Pakistan's four provinces e.g. Punjab, Sindh, KPK, Balochistan and Islamabad Capital Territory. AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan's census data is yet to be approved by CCI Council of Pakistan. Pakistan is the world's fifth most populous country.^[499]

Between 1951 and 2017, Pakistan's population expanded over sixfold, going from 33.7 million to 207.7 million. The country has a relatively high, although declining, growth rate supported by high birth rates and low death rates. Between 1998 and 2017, the average annual population growth rate stood at +2.40%.

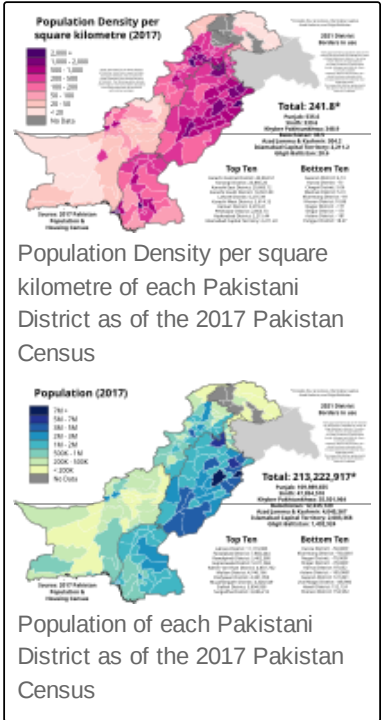
Dramatic social changes have led to urbanization and the emergence of two megacities: Karachi and Lahore. The country's urban population more than tripled between 1981 and 2017 (from 23.8 million to 75.7 million), as Pakistan's urbanisation rate rose from 28.2% to 36.4%. Even with this, the nation's urbanisation rate remains one of the lowest in the world, and in 2017, over 130 million Pakistanis (making up nearly 65% of the population) lived in rural areas.

Due to a high fertility rate, which was estimated at 3.5 in 2022, Pakistan has one of the world's youngest populations. The 2017 census recorded that 40.3% of the country's population was under the age of 15, while only 3.7% of Pakistanis were aged 65 or more.^[500] The median age of the country was 19,^[500] while its sex ratio was recorded to be 105 males per 100 females.^[496]

The demographic history of Pakistan from the ancient Indus Valley civilization to the modern era includes the arrival and settlement of many cultures and ethnic groups in the modern region of Pakistan from Eurasia and the nearby Middle East. Because of this, Pakistan has a multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic society. Despite Urdu being Pakistan's lingua franca, estimates on how many languages are spoken in the country range from 75 to 85,^{[501][502]} and in 2023, the country's three largest ethnolinguistic groups were the Punjabis (making up 36.98% of the total population), the Pashtuns (18.15%), and the Sindhis (14.31%).^[503] Pakistan is also thought to have the world's fourth-largest refugee population, estimated at 1.4 million in mid-2021 by the UNHCR.^[504]

Urbanisation


Since independence due to the partition of India, urbanisation has surged for various reasons. In the south, Karachi stands as the most populous commercial hub along the Indus River.^[505] In the east, west, and north, a dense population arc spans cities like Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gujrat, Jhelum, Sheikhupura, Nowshera, Mardan, and Peshawar. By 1990–2008, city dwellers constituted 36% of Pakistan's population, making it South Asia's most urbanized nation, with over 50% living in towns of 5,000+ inhabitants.^[506] Immigration, both domestic and international, significantly fuels urban growth. Migration from India, especially to Karachi, the largest metropolis, and from nearby countries, accelerates urbanization, posing new political and socio-economic challenges. Economic shifts like the green revolution and political developments also play crucial roles.^[507]




Largest cities or towns in Pakistan

According to the 2017 Census^[508]


Rank	Name	Province	Pop.	Rank	Name	Province	Pop.
1	Karachi	Sindh	14,916,456	11	Bahawalpur	Punjab	762,111
2	Lahore	Punjab	11,126,285	12	Sargodha	Punjab	659,862
3	Faisalabad	Punjab	3,204,726	13	Sialkot	Punjab	655,852
4	Rawalpindi	Punjab	2,098,231	14	Sukkur	Sindh	499,900
5	Gujranwala	Punjab	2,027,001	15	Larkana	Sindh	490,508
6	Peshawar	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	1,970,042	16	Sheikhupura	Punjab	473,129
7	Multan	Punjab	1,871,843	17	Rahim Yar Khan	Punjab	420,419
8	Hyderabad	Sindh	1,734,309	18	Jhang	Punjab	414,131
9	Islamabad	Capital Territory	1,009,832	19	Dera Ghazi Khan	Punjab	399,064




Karachi



Lahore



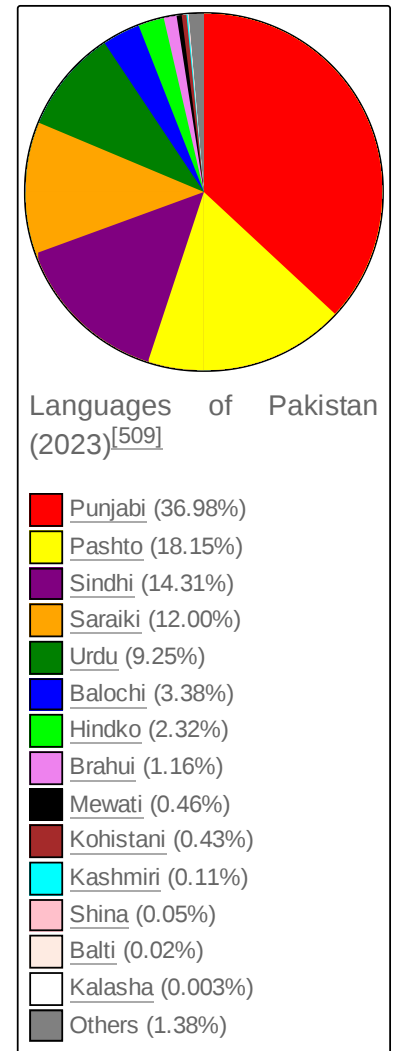
Faisalabad



Rawalpindi

Ethnicity and languages

Pakistan is a diverse society with estimates suggesting it has between 75 to 85 languages.^{[510][511]} Urdu and English serve as the official languages, with Urdu being a unifying force among over 75% of Pakistanis.^{[512][513]} According to the 2023 national census, the largest ethnolinguistic groups include the Punjabis (36.98%), Pashtuns (18.15%), Sindhis (14.31%), Saraikis (12%), Urdu speaking people (9.25%), Balochs (3.38%), Hindkowans/Hazarewals (2.32%), and Brahuis (1.16%).^{[514][515]} The remaining population consists of various ethnic minorities such as Kashmiris, Paharis, Chitralis, various peoples of Gilgit-Baltistan, Kohistanis, Torwalis, Meos, Hazaras, Kalash and Siddis.^{[516][517]} The Pakistani diaspora, numbering over seven million, is the sixth largest in the world.^[518]



Immigration



Afghan children near Islamabad fetching water from water pump. (Pakistan hosts the second largest refugee population globally after Turkey.^[519])

Even post-1947 partition, Indian Muslims kept migrating to Pakistan, especially Karachi and Sindh province.^[520] Wars in neighboring Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s pushed millions of Afghan refugees into Pakistan, mainly in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and tribal areas, with some in Karachi and Quetta. Pakistan hosts one of the world's largest refugee populations.^[521] Additionally, around 2 million Bangladeshis and half a million undocumented individuals, purportedly from Myanmar, Iran, Iraq, and Africa, reside in

Pakistan.^[522] In October 2023, Pakistan ordered the expulsion of Afghans from Pakistan.^[523]

Migration of Bengalis and Rohingya to Pakistan started in the 1980s and continued till 1998. Karachi hosts a significant number of Bengali settlements, and large Rohingya migration made it one of their largest populations outside Myanmar.^[524] Karachi's Burmese community resides in various slums across the city.^[525]

Thousands of Uyghur Muslims sought refuge in Gilgit-Baltistan, fleeing persecution in Xinjiang, China.^[526] Since 1989, thousands of Kashmiri Muslim refugees fled to Pakistan, alleging rape and forced displacement by Indian soldiers.^[527]

Diaspora

According to the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Pakistan has the sixth-largest diaspora globally.^[518] Approximately 7 million Pakistanis reside abroad, mainly in the Middle East, Europe, and North America.^[528] Pakistan ranks 10th globally for remittances sent home.^{[410][529]} Saudi Arabia is the largest source of remittances, contributing \$5.9 billion as of 2016.^[530] The term Overseas Pakistani is officially recognized by the Government of Pakistan, with the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development addressing their needs, welfare, and issues. Overseas Pakistanis constitute the second-largest source of foreign exchange remittances to Pakistan, with remittances increasing by over 100% from US\$8.9 billion in 2009–10 to US\$19.9 billion in 2015–16.^{[409][529]}

Religion

Islam is the state religion,^[222] with freedom of religion guaranteed by the constitution.^{[532][533]} The majority are Muslims (96.47%), followed by Hindus (2.14%) and Christians (1.27%). Minorities include Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians (Parsi), and the unique Kalash people who practice animism.^[534] Additionally, a small percentage profess no faith, as seen in the 1998 census.

Islam

Islam dominates in Pakistan, with about 96.5% of the population being Muslim.^[535] Pakistan ranks second globally in Muslim population,^[536] and is home to 10.5% of the world's Muslims.^[537] Karachi is the largest Muslim city in the world.^[538]

The majority follow Sunni Islam, with a significant presence of Sufism, while Shia Muslims constitute a minority.^{[539][540]} Shias represent between 5–25%.^{[541][371][542]} The Shia population in Pakistan was estimated at 42 million in 2019.^[543] As of 2012, 12% of Pakistani Muslims self-identify as non-denominational Muslims.^[544]

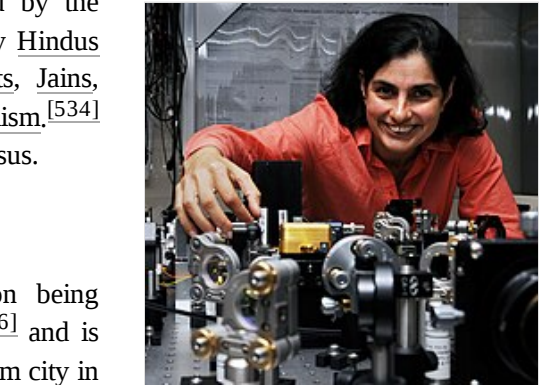


Faisal Mosque, built in 1986 by Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay on behalf of King Faisal bin Abdul-Aziz of Saudi Arabia

The Ahmadis are a minority, officially considered non-Muslims.^{[545][546]} Ahmadis face persecution, banned from calling themselves Muslims since 1974.^[547]

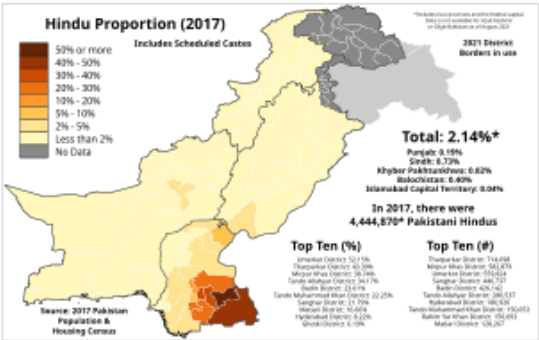
Hinduism

Hinduism is the second-largest religion, followed by 2.14% of the population according to 2017 census.^{[548][549]} Pakistan had the fifth-largest Hindu population globally in 2010.^[550] In 2017, Hindus numbered 4,444,437.^[551] They reside across Pakistan but are concentrated in Sindh, where they make up 8.73% of the population.^[548] Umerkot district is the only Hindu majority area. Tharparkar district hosts the largest Hindu population. Four districts – Umerkot, Tharparkar, Mirpurkhas, and Sanghar – have over half of Pakistan's Hindus.^[552]



Nergis Mavalvala is a Pakistani American Professor of Physics at MIT who is known for her role in the first observation of gravitational waves.

Religions in Pakistan (2023 Census) ^[531]	
Religions	Percent
Islam	96.3%
Hinduism	2.2%
Christianity	1.4%
others	0.1%



Hindu proportion of each Pakistani District in 2017 according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics

At Pakistan's inception, the 'hostage theory' suggested fair treatment of Hindus to safeguard Muslims in India.^{[553][554]} However, some Pakistani Hindus felt marginalized, leading to emigration to India.^[555] They faced violence post the Babri Masjid demolition,^[556] enduring forced conversions and abductions.^[557]

Christianity and other religions

Christians are the next largest religious minority after Hindus, constituting 1.27% of the population.^[512] They are concentrated in Lahore District (5%) and Islamabad Capital Territory (over 4%). Karachi hosts a historic Roman Catholic community established by Goan and Tamil migrants during British colonial rule.^[552]

Following Christianity, the Bahá'í Faith had 30,000 followers in 2008, followed by Sikhism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism, each with around 20,000 adherents in 2008,^[558] alongside a small Jain community.

In 2005, 1% of the population identified as atheist. By 2012, this figure had risen to 2.0% according to [Gallup](#).^[559]

Education

Pakistan's [constitution](#) mandates [free](#) primary and secondary education,^[560] with public universities established in each province, including [Punjab University](#), [Sindh University](#), [Peshawar University](#), [Karachi University](#), and [Balochistan University](#). The country's educational landscape encompasses both [public](#) and [private](#) universities, fostering collaboration to enhance research and [higher education](#) opportunities, albeit with concerns regarding teaching quality in newer institutions.^[561] [Technical and vocational institutions](#) in Pakistan number approximately 3,193,^[562] complemented by [madrasahs](#) providing free Islamic education to students,^[563] with government efforts to [regulate and monitor](#) their quality amidst concerns over extremists recruitment.^[564] [Education](#) is divided into six main levels, including nursery, primary, [middle](#), [matriculation](#), [intermediate](#), and university programs.^[562] Additionally, [private schools](#) offer a parallel secondary education system based on the curriculum set by the [Cambridge International Examinations](#),^[565] with 439 international schools reported in Pakistan.^[566]



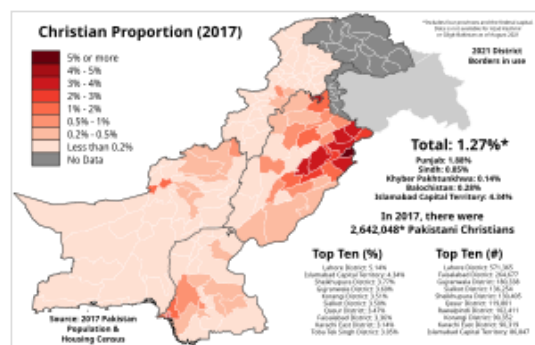
[Malala Yousafzai](#) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, alongside [Kailash Satyarthi](#) of India, for her advocacy of educational initiatives, particularly girls' education worldwide.

Initiatives since 2007 made [English medium education](#) mandatory nationwide. Following a 2012 attack on activist [Malala Yousafzai](#) by the [Taliban](#), she became the youngest Nobel laureate for her education advocacy.^[567] Reforms in 2013 mandated Chinese language courses in Sindh, reflecting China's growing influence. As of 2018, Pakistan's literacy rate stands at 62.3%, with significant regional and gender disparities.^[568] Government initiatives, including computer literacy since 1995, aim to eradicate illiteracy, targeting 100% enrollment among primary school-age children and an ~86% literacy rate by 2015.^[569] Pakistan allocates 2.3% of its GDP to education,^[570] among the lowest in South Asia.^[571]

Culture

[Civil society](#) in Pakistan is hierarchical, emphasizing [local cultural etiquette](#) and traditional Islamic values. The primary family unit is the [extended family](#), but there's a rising trend towards [nuclear families](#) due to socio-economic factors.^{[572][573]} Both men and women typically wear [Shalwar Kameez](#); men also favor trousers, jeans, and shirts.^[574] The middle class has grown to about 35 million, with another 17 million in the upper and upper-middle classes, leading to a shift in power from rural landowners to urban elites.^[575] Festivals like [Eid-ul-Fitr](#), [Eid-ul-Azha](#), Ramadan, Christmas, [Easter](#), [Holi](#), and [Diwali](#) are primarily religious.^[572] Pakistan ranks 56th on the [A.T. Kearney/FP Globalization Index](#) due to increasing globalization.^[576]

Architecture



Christian proportion of each Pakistani District in 2017 according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics



[NUST](#) in Islamabad is a top ranked Engineering University.



The Lahore Fort, a landmark built during the Mughal era, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site

Four periods define Pakistani architecture: pre-Islamic, Islamic, colonial, and post-colonial. The onset of the Indus civilization around the mid-3rd millennium BCE heralded an urban culture, evidenced by surviving large structures.^[577] Notable pre-Islamic settlements include Mohenjo-daro, Harappa, and Kot Diji.^[578] The fusion of Buddhism and Greek influences birthed a distinctive Greco-Buddhist style from the 1st century CE, exemplified by the renowned Gandhara style.^[579] Notable Buddhist architectural remnants include the Takht-i-Bahi monastery in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.^[580]



Artwork by Sadequain on the ceiling of Frere Hall. Having painted around 15,000 paintings, Sadequain is considered one of the finest painters and calligraphers Pakistan has ever produced.

The advent of Islam in present-day Pakistan marked the cessation of Buddhist architecture, ushering in Islamic architecture. The notable Indo-Islamic structure, the tomb of Shah Rukn-i-Alam in Multan, remains significant. During the

Mughal era, Persian-Islamic design merged with Hindustani art, seen in Lahore's architectural gems like the Badshahi Mosque and the Lahore Fort with the iconic Alamgiri Gate. Lahore also boasts the vibrant Wazir Khan Mosque,^[581] and the lush Shalimar Gardens. In the British colonial period, Indo-European buildings emerged, blending European and Indian-Islamic styles. Post-colonial identity shines through modern landmarks like the Faisal Mosque, Minar-e-Pakistan, and Mazar-e-Quaid. British architectural influence persists in structures across Lahore, Peshawar, and Karachi.^[582]

Clothing, arts, and fashion

The Shalwar Kameez is Pakistan's national dress, worn in all provinces: Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Kashmir. Each province has its own style. Pakistanis wear a variety of fabrics like silk, chiffon, and cotton. In addition to the national dress, men often wear domestically tailored suits and neckties, especially in offices, schools, and social gatherings.^[583]

Pakistan's fashion industry has thrived, blending traditional and modern styles to create a unique cultural identity. Regional and traditional dress remain significant symbols of native tradition, evolving into both modern and purer forms. Organizations like the Pakistan Fashion Design Council in Lahore and the Fashion Pakistan Council in Karachi host events like PFDC Fashion Week and Fashion Pakistan Week. Pakistan's inaugural fashion week took place in November 2009.^[584]



A depiction of traditional clothing of women from Sindh

Literature and philosophy

Pakistan boasts literature in various languages including Urdu, Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto, Baluchi, Persian, English, and more.^[585] The Pakistan Academy of Letters actively promotes literature and poetry both domestically and internationally.^[586] National Library contributes to literary dissemination. Historically, Pakistani literature consisted mainly of lyric, religious, and folkloric works, later diversifying under colonial influence into prose fiction, now widely embraced.^{[587][588]}

The national poet of Pakistan, Muhammad Iqbal, wrote influential poetry in Urdu and Persian, advocating for Islamic civilizational revival.^[589] Notable figures in contemporary Urdu literature include Josh Malihabadi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Saadat Hasan Manto.^[588] Popular Sufi poets like Shah Abdul Latif and Bulleh Shah are revered.^[590] Mirza Kalich

Beg is hailed as the father of modern Sindhi prose.^[591] Pakistani philosophy has been shaped by influences from British and American philosophy, with notable figures like M. M. Sharif contributing to its development.^[592] Post-1971, Marxist thought gained prominence in Pakistani philosophy through figures like Jalaludin Abdur Rahim.^[593]

Media and entertainment

The private print media, state-owned Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV), and Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) dominated media until the 21st century. Pakistan now boasts a vast network of domestic, privately owned 24-hour news media and television channels.^[594] A 2021 report by the Reporters Without Borders ranked Pakistan 157th among 180 nations on the Press Freedom Index, citing pressures faced by Pakistani reporters, particularly when reporting against the army or government.^[595] The BBC describes Pakistani media as "among the most outspoken in South Asia".^[596] Pakistani media has been instrumental in exposing corruption.^[597]



Muhammad Iqbal, Pakistan's national poet who conceived the idea of Pakistan

The Lollywood, Punjabi, and Pashto film industry is centered in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar. Although Bollywood films were banned from public cinemas from 1965 to 2008, they remained influential in Pakistani popular culture.^[598] However, in 2019, the screening of Bollywood movies faced an indefinite ban.^[599] Despite challenges faced by the Pakistani film industry, Urdu televised dramas and theatrical performances remain popular, frequently broadcast by many entertainment media outlets.^[600] Urdu dramas dominate the television entertainment industry, renowned for their quality since the 1990s.^[601] Pakistani music encompasses diverse forms, from provincial folk music and traditional styles like Qawwali and Ghazal Gayaki to modern fusions of traditional and western music.^[602] Pakistan boasts numerous renowned folk singers, and the arrival of Afghan refugees in western provinces has sparked interest in Pashto music, despite occasional intolerance.^[603]

Cuisine

Pakistani cuisine, rooted in the royal kitchens of 16th-century Mughal emperors, blends influences from British, Indian, Central Asian, and Middle Eastern culinary traditions.^[604] Unlike Middle Eastern fare, Pakistani dishes are heavily spiced with garlic, ginger, turmeric, chili, and garam masala. Roti, a wheat-based flatbread, accompanies most meals, alongside curry, meat, vegetables, and lentils. Rice is also common, served plain, spiced, or in sweet dishes.^{[179][605]} Lassi, a traditional drink from the Punjab region, and black tea with milk and sugar are popular beverages enjoyed nationwide.^{[574][606]} Sohan halwa, a beloved sweet dish from southern Punjab, is savored across Pakistan.^[607]



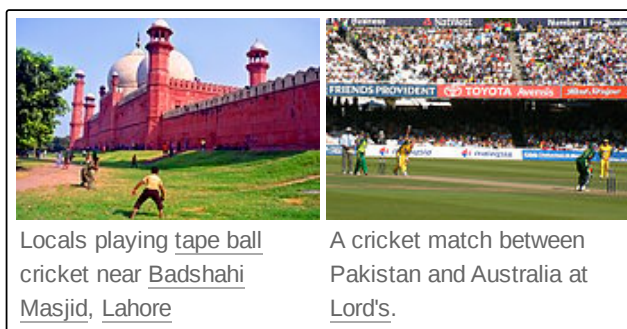
Chapatis served with various side dishes are considered a staple food in Pakistan

Sports

Cricket is the most popular sport in Pakistan, followed by football. Field hockey is the national sport. Other sports like Squash, Polo, and traditional games are also enjoyed.

In cricket, Pakistan boasts victories in all major ICC tournaments, including the ICC Cricket World Cup, ICC World Twenty20, and ICC Champions Trophy. The Pakistan Super League ranks among the top T20 leagues globally.^{[608][609]}

In football, Pakistan established the Pakistan Football Federation soon after its creation, and it is known for producing FIFA World Cup balls.^{[610][611]}



Locals playing tape ball cricket near Badshahi Masjid, Lahore

A cricket match between Pakistan and Australia at Lord's.

In field hockey, Pakistan boasts four Hockey World Cup wins, eight Asian Games gold medals, and three Olympic gold medals. Squash player Jahangir Khan holds the record for the longest winning streak in professional sport history, winning 555 consecutive matches.^{[612][613]} Pakistan has hosted various international events, including Cricket and Hockey World Cups and Asian Games.^[614]

See also



- Outline of Pakistan
- Government of Pakistan
- Administrative units of Pakistan

Notes

- Article 251 of the Constitution of Pakistan^[3]
- "Includes data for Pakistani territories of Kashmir; Azad Kashmir (13,297 km² or 5,134 sq mi) and Gilgit–Baltistan (72,520 km² or 28,000 sq mi).^[5] Excluding these territories would produce an area figure of 796,095 km² (307,374 sq mi)."
- "This figure does not include data for Pakistan-administered areas of Kashmir; Azad Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan."
- See Date and time notation in Pakistan.
- Urdu: پاکستان, Urdu pronunciation: [ˈpɑːkɪst̪ɑːn] ; Pronounced variably in English as /ˈpækɪstæn/ , /ˈpɑːkɪstɑːn/ , /ˌpækɪˈstæn/, and /ˌpɑːkɪˈstɑːn/.
- ISO: اِسْلامی جَمْہُورِیَہ پَاکِسْتَان, *Islāmi Jumhūriyāh Pākistān*
- "This figure does not include data for Pakistan-administered areas of Kashmir; Azad Kashmir and Gilgit–Baltistan."
- In the framework of their regional security complex theory (RSCT), Barry Buzan and Ole Waever differentiate between superpowers and great powers which act and influence the global level (or system level) and regional powers whose influence may be large in their regions but have less effect at the global level. This category of regional powers includes Brazil, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey.
- The precise time span of the period is uncertain. Philological and linguistic evidence indicates that the Rigveda, the oldest of the Vedas, was composed roughly between 1700 and 1100 BCE, also referred to as the early Vedic period. Oberlies gives an estimate of 1200–1100 BCE for the youngest hymns in book ten. Estimates for a *terminus post quem* of the earliest hymns are more uncertain. Other 'cumulative evidence' sets a wide range of 1700–1100.
- The World Bank data lists the total area of Pakistan as 770,880 km², excluding Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, and water areas.

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- James 2022.

6. Bhandari 2022.
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8. IMF 2023.
9. Haleem 2013.
10. Wright (2009) "The Indus civilisation is one of three in the 'Ancient East' that, along with Mesopotamia and Pharaonic Egypt, was a cradle of early civilisation in the Old World (Childe, 1950). Mesopotamia and Egypt were longer lived, but coexisted with Indus civilisation during its florescence between 2600 and 1900 B.C. Of the three, the Indus was the most expansive, extending from today's northeast Afghanistan to Pakistan and India."
11. Badian 1987.
12. Wynbrandt 2009.
13. Spuler 1969.
14. Copland (2001) "However, the real turning point for the new Muslim League came with the general election of December 1945 and January 1946. Despite facing a rejuvenated Congress, the League won four-fifths of all the Muslim-reserved seats ... The result left no one, not least the British, in doubt about where the locus of power within the Muslim community now lay ... In most respects, therefore, the League's success in the elections of 1945–46 can be interpreted as a clear Muslim mandate for Pakistan. (p 72)"
15. Metcalf & Metcalf (2006) "The loss of life was immense, with estimates ranging from several hundred thousand up to a million. But, even for those who survived, fear generated a widespread perception that one could be safe only among members of one's own community; and this in turn helped consolidate loyalties towards the state, whether India or Pakistan, in which one might find a secure haven. This was especially important for Pakistan, where the succour it offered to Muslims gave that state for the first time a visible territorial reality. Fear too drove forward a mass migration unparalleled in the history of South Asia. ... Overall, partition uprooted some 12.5 million of undivided India's people."
16. Talbot 2016.
17. Middle power: multiple sources:
 - Buzan (2004)
 - Solomon (1997)
 - Rajagopalan (2011)
 - Buzan & Waever (2003)
 - Paul (2012, p. 11) "The regional powers such as Israel or Pakistan are not simple bystanders of great power politics in their regions; they attempt to asymmetrically influence the major power system often in their own distinct ways."
 - Vandamme (2014, p. 14) "Countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan have enough influence to not be considered small, but not enough to be major powers. Within the limits of their regions, they play a significant political role. Thus instinctively, they would qualify as middle powers. While it is not the objective here to question the characteristics of Jordan's definition of middle powers, we argue that Pakistan is in fact a middle power despite its being nuclear-armed. When looking at the numbers, for instance, it appears that Saudi Arabia and Pakistan can be classified as middle powers."
18. Zia & Burton 2023.
19. Rais 2017.
20. Cornwall & Edwards 2014.
21. Joseph 2016.
22. Baqir 2018.
23. SATP 2024.
24. Aziz 1987.
25. Saqib & Malik 2018.
26. Lahiri 2023.
27. Tummala 1996.
28. Anand 1991.
29. Parker 2017.
30. Allchin & Petraglia 2007.
31. Ahmed 2014.

32. Coningham & Young (2015) "Mehrgarh remains one of the key sites in South Asia because it has provided the earliest known undisputed evidence for farming and pastoral communities in the region, and its plant and animal material provide clear evidence for the ongoing manipulation, and domestication, of certain species. Perhaps most importantly in a South Asian context, the role played by zebu makes this a distinctive, localised development, with a character completely different from other parts of the world. Finally, the longevity of the site, and its articulation with the neighbouring site of Nausharo (c. 2800—2000 BCE), provides a very clear continuity from South Asia's first farming villages to the emergence of its first cities (Jarrige, 1984)."
33. Fisher (2018) "The earliest discovered instance in India of well-established, settled agricultural society is at Mehrgarh in the hills between the Bolan Pass and the Indus plain (today in Pakistan) (see Map 3.1). From as early as 7000 BCE, communities there started investing increased labor in preparing the land and selecting, planting, tending, and harvesting particular grain-producing plants. They also domesticated animals, including sheep, goats, pigs, and oxen (both humped zebu [*Bos indicus*] and unhumped [*Bos taurus*]). Castrating oxen, for instance, turned them from mainly meat sources into domesticated draft-animals as well."
34. Dyson (2018) "The subcontinent's people were hunter-gatherers for many millennia. There were very few of them. Indeed, 10,000 years ago there may only have been a couple of hundred thousand people, living in small, often isolated groups, the descendants of various 'modern' human incomers. Then, perhaps linked to events in Mesopotamia, about 8,500 years ago agriculture emerged in Baluchistan."
35. Allchin & Allchin (1982) "During the second half of the fourth and early part of the third millennium B.C., a new development begins to become apparent in the greater Indus system, which we can now see to be a formative stage underlying the Mature Indus of the middle and late third millennium. This development seems to have involved the whole Indus system, and to a lesser extent the Indo-Iranian borderlands to its west, but largely left untouched the subcontinent east of the Indus system."
36. Dales, Kenoyer & Alcock 1986.
37. Burrison 2017.
38. Oursel 2015.
39. Vedic period: multiple sources:
- Ninan (2018)
 - Parmar (2018)
 - Consiglio (2015)
 - Carmichael (2022)
40. Behrendt 2007.
41. Rahmaan 2017.
42. Oberlies 2023.
43. Stonard 2017.
44. Dandamaev 2023.
45. Sadasivan 2011.
46. James 1980.
47. Khan 2022, p. 114.
48. Cooke 2017.
49. Pollitt 1986.
50. Quintanilla 2007.
51. Kubica 2023.
52. Westmoreland 2019.
53. Needham (1994) "When the men of Alexander the Great came to Taxila in India in the fourth century BCE they found a university there the like of which had not been seen in Greece, a university which taught the three Vedas and the eighteen accomplishments and was still existing when the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hsien went there about CE 400."
54. Kulke & Rothermund (2016) "In the early centuries the centre of Buddhist scholarship was the University of Taxila."
55. Mookerji 1989.
56. Banerjee 2022.
57. Mufti 2013.
58. Hoodbhoy 2023.

59. Cavendish 2006, p. 318.
60. Stubbs & Thomson (2016) "Perhaps best known as home to Asia's earliest cities, the Harappan sites of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa, Pakistan's rich history includes contributions from prominent Buddhist, Hindu, Hellenistic, Jain and Zoroastrian civilizations, as well as those connected to its Islamic heritage."
61. Malik 2006, p. 47.
62. Lapidus 2014.
63. Samad 2011.
64. Faroghi 2019.
65. Canfield 2002.
66. Chandra 2005.
67. Malik 2006, p. 79.
68. Metcalf & Metcalf 2006.
69. MacDonald 2017.
70. Simpson 2007.
71. Wolpert (1984, p. 17) "Barrister Jinnah of Bombay remained as remote from such feelings, as out of tune with such reasoning, as he had been in London in 1893, when Sir Sayyid first spoke of Hindus and Muslims as "different nationalities.""
72. Sengupta (2023) "Syed Ahmad Khan, the founder of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College (which later became Aligarh Muslim University), had declared in a speech in Meerut what would become famous as the "two nation theory."" "Is it possible that under these circumstances two nations — the Mahomedans and the Hindus — could sit on the same throne and remain equal in power? Most certainly not."
73. Holt & Curta 2016.
74. Wolpert 1984.
75. Rustomji 1952.
76. Walbridge 2012.
77. Gayer 2014.
78. Sharma, D'Angelo & Giri 2020.
79. Pirbhai 2009.
80. Harjani 2018.
81. Cook 1975.
82. Khan 2022, p. 119.
83. Cavendish 2006, p. 365.
84. Law 1999.
85. Hussain 2015.
86. Malleson 2016.
87. Hali & Akhtar 1993.
88. Hardy (1972) "Much has been made' of the failure of Congress and the Muslim parties to agree over the Nehru Report and of the rejection of Jinnah's 'Fourteen Points' as a significant milestone along the way to the partition of India. A great opportunity was lost, it is thought, for the abandonment of separate electorates by voluntary Muslim agreement."
89. Wuthnow (2013) "To satisfy Muslims' determination to have guaranteed rights in the future political system of India and to maintain territorial unity of the Indian state, by 1929 Jinnah produced the formula known as the Fourteen Points of Mr. Jinnah. The Fourteen Points included separate electorates for Muslims in the provinces of India, parity of electoral representation in the Punjab and Bengal, and electoral considerations for Muslims in those provinces in which they were a minority, although they would retain clear majority in the Northwest Frontier Province, Baluchistan, and Sind."
90. Singh & Shani (2021) "Jinnah's famous 'fourteen points' as a condition for support for India's unity, with strong provinces within a weak Indian federation, marked the parting of ways between the Congress and the Muslim national leadership (Jalal 1994, 10-11). At the 1930 session of the All-Indian Muslim Conference, Sir Mohammed Iqbal proposed a Muslim homeland that would serve 'as a symbolic cultural expression of the common striving of Muslim fulfilment - a political manifestation of a common mission' (Gilmartin 1988, 167). The idea of self-determination for India's Muslims was constructed mainly in fear of the majoritarian 'secular' (Hindu) nationalism of the Congress."

91. Iqbal (two-nation theory): multiple sources:

- N. Khan (2012)
- Basu & Miroshnik (2023) "Mohammed Iqbal was credited with coming up with the two-nation theory in his speech at Allahabad in 1930 to the Muslim League in a very formal way by saying: "I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind, and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Moslem State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Moslems, at least of NorthWest India" (Zaidi, 1993; Ahmed, 1970)."
- Hussain (2018) "After repeated demands for stronger constitutional safeguards to protect the rights of minorities, Iqbal eventually opted for a separate Islamic Republic instead. As opposed to putting the free and rational individual at the centre of his democratic theory, Iqbal's republic primarily required Muslims endowed with a specific character and smelted together by a peculiar vision of individuality. Like a number of his contemporaries, Iqbal warmed up to the two nation-theory. Unlike the mainstream view, however, which read an eternal struggle of Hindus and Muslims back into Indian history, Iqbal's concept of the Muslim nation was something to be striven towards, not something to be replanted from the past. Iqbal believed that the best way to actualize this national sentiment in the present, was through individual political action."

92. Pandeya 2003.

93. Basu & Miroshnik 2017.

94. M. H. Khan 2016.

95. Tucker (2020) "Gandhi's decision played directly into the hands of Jinnah. Jinnah's Muslim League strongly supported the Allied war effort and thereby greatly advanced the possibility of the creation of a separate Muslim state in the Indian subcontinent after the war."

96. Chandra 2008.

97. Mohiuddin (2007, p. 70) "In the elections of 1946, the Muslim League won 90 percent of the legislative seats reserved for Muslims. It was the power of the big zamindars in Punjab and Sindh behind the Muslim League candidates that led to this massive landslide victory (Alavi 2002, 14). Even Congress, which had always denied the League's claim to be the only true representative of Indian Muslims had to concede the truth of that claim. The 1946 election was, in effect, a plebiscite among Muslims on Pakistan."

98. Mohiuddin (2007, p. 71) "Despite the League's victory in the elections, the British did not want the partition of British India. As a last attempt to avoid it, Britain put forward the Cabinet Mission Plan, according to which India would become a federation of three large, self-governing provinces and the central government would be limited to power over foreign policy and defense, implying a weak center."

99. Wolpert 1984, p. 309.

100. Markovits 2012.

101. Wolpert 1984, pp. 328–329.

102. Hasanie 2013.

103. Akbarzadeh 2020.

104. Cohen 2004, p. 6.

105. Casualties/Genocide: multiple sources:

- Sikand (2004)
- Butalia (2000)
- Isaacs (1975) "2,000,000 killed in the Hindu-Muslim holocaust during the partition of British-India and the creation of India and Pakistan"
- Basrur (2008) "An estimated 12–15 million people were displaced, and some 2 million died. The legacy of Partition (never without a capital P) remains strong today ..."
- D'Costa (2011) "Estimates of the dead vary from 200,000 (the contemporary British figure) to 2 million (a subsequent Indian speculation). Today, however, it is widely accepted that nearly a million people died during Partition (Butalia, 1997)."
- Brass (2003) "In the event, largely but not exclusively as a consequence of their efforts, the entire Muslim population of the eastern Punjab districts migrated to West Punjab and the entire Sikh and Hindu populations moved to East Punjab in the midst of widespread intimidation, terror, violence, abduction, rape, and murder."

106. Rape figures: multiple sources:

- Visweswaran (2011)
- Daiya (2011) "The official estimate of the number of abducted women during Partition was placed at 33,000 non-Muslim (Hindu or Sikh predominantly) women in Pakistan, and 50,000 Muslim women in India."
- Abraham (2002) "In addition thousands of women on both sides of the newly formed borders (estimated range from 29,000 to 50,000 Muslim women and 15,000 to 35,000 Hindu and Sikh women) were abducted, raped, forced to convert, forced into marriage, forced back into what the two States defined as 'their proper homes', torn apart from their families once during partition by those who abducted them, and again, after partition, by the State which tried to 'recover' and 'rehabilitate' them."
- Singh, Iyer & Gairola (2016) "The horrific statistics that surround women refugees-between 75,000–100,000 Hindu, Muslim and Sikh women who were abducted by men of the other communities, subjected to multiple rapes, mutilations, and, for some, forced marriages and conversions-is matched by the treatment of the abducted women in the hands of the nation-state. In the Constituent Assembly in 1949 it was recorded that of the 50,000 Muslim women abducted in India, 8,000 of them were recovered, and of the 33,000 Hindu and Sikh women abducted, 12,000 were recovered."

107. Hasan & Raza (2009) "When the British Indian Empire was partitioned in 1947, 4.7 million Sikhs and Hindus left what is today Pakistan for India, and 6.5 million Muslims migrated from India to Pakistan."

108. Riggs 2024.

109. Bhaumik 1996.

110. Kazmi 2003.

111. Tucker 2017.

112. Akbar 2018.

113. Kumarasingham (2013) "Few today, including those who work on the subcontinent, recollect that India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka did not become republics the day British rule ended. Even distinguished scholars of Empire like Perry Anderson and A. G. Hopkins have made the common assumption that India naturally became a republic upon independence on 15 August 1947. Instead, all three of these South Asian states began their independent life as Realms within the British Commonwealth and mirrored the style and institutions of the Dominions of Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. Though their sovereignty was in no way impaired by this seemingly ambiguous position they all held the British sovereign as their head of state who was represented in each capital by a governor- general appointed on the advice of the local prime minister. India, Pakistan and Ceylon were Realms from 1947 to 1950, 1947 to 1956 and 1948 to 1972 respectively."

114. McGrath (1996) "Undivided India, their magnificent imperial trophy, was besmirched by the creation of Pakistan, and the division of India was never emotionally accepted by many British leaders, Mountbatten among them."

115. Ahmed (1997) "Mountbatten's partiality was apparent in his own statements. He tilted openly and heavily towards Congress. While doing so he clearly expressed his lack of support and faith in the Muslim League and its Pakistan idea."

116. Wolpert (2009) "Mountbatten tried to convince Jinnah of the value of accepting him, Mountbatten, as Pakistan's first governor-general, but Jinnah refused to be moved from his determination to take that job himself."

117. Lapierre & Collins (2015) "Not only was I not aware, but nobody was aware. Nobody had a clue. I'm glad I didn't because I just don't know what I would have done if I'd known that. You see, Jinnah was so much of a one-man band. If somebody had told me he's going to be dead in x months would I then -I am asking myself this question now-would I have said, Let's hold India together and not divide it? Would I have put back the clock, and held the position? Most probably. I have a feeling Jinnah may not have known himself he had tuberculosis. He was a very severe, cold and repressed person. Nothing would have surprised me about him. He was an extraordinary creature."

118. Wilson 2009.

119. Hussain (2008) "Mawlānā Shabbīr Ahmad Usmānī, a respected Deobandī 'ālim (scholar) who was appointed to the prestigious position of Shaykh al-Islām of Pakistan in 1949, was the first to demand that Pakistan become an Islamic state. But Mawdūdī and his Jamā'at-i Islāmī played the central part in the demand for an Islamic constitution. Mawdūdī demanded that the Constituent Assembly make an unequivocal declaration affirming the "supreme sovereignty of God" and the supremacy of the sharī'ah as the basic law of Pakistan."

120. Hussain (2008) "The first important result of the combined efforts of the Jamā'at-i Islāmī and the 'ulamā' was the passage of the Objectives Resolution in March 1949, whose formulation reflected compromise between traditionalists and modernists. The resolution embodied "the main principles on which the constitution of Pakistan is to be based". It declared that "sovereignty over the entire universe belongs to God Almighty alone and the authority which He has delegated to the State of Pakistan through its people for being exercised within the limits prescribed by Him is a sacred trust", that "the principles of democracy, freedom, equality, tolerance and social justice, as enunciated by Islam shall be fully observed", and that "the Muslims shall be enabled to order their lives in the individual and collective spheres in accord with the teaching and requirements of Islam as set out in the Holy Qur'an and Sunna". The Objectives Resolution has been reproduced as a preamble to the constitutions of 1956, 1962, and 1973."
121. Wynbrandt 2009, p. 190–197.
122. Chowdhury & Mahmud 2008.
123. Kathpalia 1986.
124. Koumar 2023.
125. Lewis 2011.
126. Bose 2005.
127. Khan 2008.
128. Sunkara, Walter & Rojas 2024.
129. Hiro 2015.
130. Rummel 1998.
131. Beachler 2011.
132. Totten 2000.
133. Agha 2021.
134. Paxton 2016.
135. Oldenburg 2010.
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138. Krasno & LaPides 2015.
139. Khanna 2002.
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144. Tucker 2015.
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147. Yap & Abeyratne 2023, p. 68.
148. Khan 2012.
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156. Zulfiqar 2011.
157. Mohiuddin 2007, p. 219.
158. Martini, Ford & Jackson 2020.
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160. United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 2008.
161. Jaffrelot 2015.

162. Kapoor 2009.
163. Waseem 2022.
164. Dede & Sadioglu 2016.
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168. Afzal 2024.
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176. Factbook 2024.
177. Karaman 2012.
178. Banerjee 2019.
179. Mohiuddin 2007, p. 3, 317, 323–324.
180. Kreft 2007.
181. Geology: multiple sources:
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 - DeVivo et al. (2021)
 - Alisibramulisi et al. (2022)
 - Britannica (Azad Kashmir) (2024)
182. Descloitres 2002.
183. Cavendish 2006, p. 297.
184. Blood 1996, p. 82.
185. Jiwani 2021.
186. Bright 2017.
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188. Chandrappa, Gupta & Kulshrestha 2011.
189. Blood 1996, p. 87.
190. Lane, Norton & Ryan 2017.
191. El-Esawi 2019.
192. Abul-Soad 2011.
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195. Sandhu 2010.
196. UNEP-WCMC 2024.
197. Akhtar & Mirza 2006.
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201. Faridah-Hanum et al. 2015.
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203. Hunter 2018.
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206. Srinivasulu & Srinivasulu 2012.
207. Waseem et al. 2020.

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219. WWF 2024.
220. Grantham et al. 2020.
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223. Cohen 2004, p. 65.
224. Cohen 2004.
225. Tertrais & Sokolski 2013.
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227. Bloor 2023.
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235. Yap & Abeyratne 2023, p. 272.
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243. Senate of Pakistan 2018.
244. Wu, Bandyopadhyay & Lee 2021.
245. Jha 2016.
246. Oberst 2018.
247. Ejaz 2022.
248. Esposito 2003.
249. Dhulipala (2015, p. 496) "The idea of Pakistan may have had its share of ambiguities, but its dismissal as a vague emotive symbol hardly illuminates the reasons as to why it received such overwhelmingly popular support among Indian Muslims, especially those in the 'minority provinces' of British India such as U.P."
250. Dhulipala (2015, p. 497) "As the book has demonstrated, local ML functionaries, (U.P.) ML leadership, Muslim modernists at Aligarh, the ulama and even Jinnah at times articulated their vision of Pakistan in terms of an Islamic state."

251. Dhulipala (2015, p. 489) "But what is undeniable is the close association he developed with the ulama, for when he died a little over a year after Pakistan was born, Maulana Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, in his funeral oration, described Jinnah as the greatest Muslim after the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb." "Similarly, Usmani asked Pakistanis to remember the Qaid's ceaseless message of Unity, Faith and Discipline and work to fulfil his dream to create a solid bloc of all Muslim states from Karachi to Ankara, from Pakistan to Morocco. He [Jinnah] wanted to see the Muslims of the world united under the banner of Islam as an effective check against the aggressive designs of their enemies."
252. Haqqani (2010, p. 16) "The first formal step toward transforming Pakistan into an Islamic ideological state was taken in March 1949 when the country's first prime minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, presented the Objectives Resolution in the constituent assembly."
253. Dhulipala (2015, p. 491) "Khaliq drew a sharp distinction between this Islamic state and a Muslim state. He claimed that as of now Pakistan was only a Muslim state in view of the majority of its population being Muslim, and indeed could never be an Islamic state by itself. It could certainly fulfill its promise and destiny by bringing together all the believers of Islam into one political unit and it is only then that an Islamic state would be achieved."
254. Haqqani (2010, p. 18) "One of the earliest Western scholars of Pakistani politics, Keith Callard, observed that Pakistanis seemed to believe in the essential unity of purpose and outlook in the Muslim world: Pakistan was founded to advance the cause of Muslims. Other Muslims might have been expected to be sympathetic, even enthusiastic. But this assumed that other Muslim states would take the same view of the relation between religion and nationality."
255. Haqqani (2010, p. 18) "Pakistan's pan-Islamic aspirations, however, were neither shared nor supported by the Muslim governments of the time. Nationalism in other parts of the Muslim world was based on ethnicity, language, or territory."
256. Haqqani (2010, p. 19) "Although Muslim governments were initially unsympathetic to Pakistan's pan-Islamic aspirations, Islamists from the world over were drawn to Pakistan. Controversial figures such as the pro-Nazi former grand mufti of Palestine, Al-Haj Amin al-Husseini, and leaders of Islamist political movements like the Arab Muslim Brotherhood became frequent visitors to the country."
257. Haqqani 2010, p. 19.
258. Cochrane (2009) "The social scientist, Nasim Ahmad Jawed has conducted a survey of nationalism in pre-divided Pakistan and identifies the links between religion, politics and nationalism in both wings of Pakistan. His findings are fascinating and go some way to explain the differing attitudes of West and East Pakistan to the relationship between Islam and Pakistani nationalism and how this affected the views of people in both wings, especially the views of the peoples of both wings towards each other. In 1969, Jawed conducted a survey on the type of national identity that was used by educated professional people. He found that just over 60% in the East wing professed to have a secular national identity. However, in the West wing, the same figure professed an Islamic and not a secular identity. Furthermore, the same figure in the East wing described their identity in terms of their ethnicity and not in terms of Islam. He found that the opposite was the case in the West wing where Islam was stated to be more important than ethnicity."
259. Lintner 2002.
260. Diamantides & Gearey (2011, p. 196) "The Constitution of 1973 was created by a parliament that was elected in the 1970 elections. In this first ever general elections ..."
261. Iqbal 2009.
262. Diamantides & Gearey (2011, p. 198) "The 1973 constitution also created certain institutions to channel the application and interpretation of Islam: the Council of Islamic Ideology and the Shariat Court."
263. Nasr 1996.
264. Kepel 2006.
265. Diamantides & Gearey (2011, p. 198) "The Shariat judicial courts were not present in the original Constitution of 1973 and were later inserted in 1979 by General Zia-ul Haq ..."
266. Haqqani 2010, p. 400.
267. Asia Watch Committee (U.S.) 1992.
268. Wynbrandt (2009, p. 216–217) "Zia, however, tried to bolster the influence of Islamic parties and the ulama on government and society."
269. Syed et al. (2016, p. 379) "... the military dictator Zia ul Haq (1977–1988) forged a strong alliance between the military and Deobani institutions and movements (e.g. the TJ)."
270. Syed et al. (2016, p. 346) "The grave impact of that legacy was compounded by the Iranian Revolution, and Zia-ul Haq's anti-Shia policies, which added the violence and regimentation of the organization."
271. Ziegfeld 2016.

272. PRC 2011.
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274. Wasti 2009.
275. Schuurmans 2023, p. 63.
276. Fischer-Tahir & Naumann 2013.
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307. Yousafzai 2021.
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309. Berg & Kursani 2021.
310. Babayev, Schoch & Spanger 2019.
311. van Tonder 2018.
312. Schuurmans 2023, p. 73.
313. Cohen 2011.
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