

## Geographical Importance of Pakistan and its Potential 2022

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Pakistan is a culturally diverse and populous South Asian country. Pakistan has historically and culturally been linked to its neighbors Iran, Afghanistan, and India due to its Indo-Iranian speaking population. Pakistan has been separated from its larger southeastern neighbor by its mainly Muslim population since the two countries gained independence in 1947. Pakistan has battled for political stability and long-term socio-economic development throughout its history.

The awful image of Pakistan that has been projected by the media as a result of terrorism does not reflect reality. It portrays a picture of chaos and disaster that is distant from truth. Terrorism has occurred, but not in the way that the media portrays it. To be honest, it is the polar opposite of reality. Pakistan is extremely safe to travel now and people from all over the world come here to visit and enjoy the beauty of it. If you are wondering if Pakistan Is Safe To Travel, head on to our article now.

Pakistan is also home to some of the most magnificent cold places. Head on to our article about Cold Places in Pakistan to know more about it.

In this article, we'll discuss the Geography of Pakistan along with its importance. So, let's start the article without wasting any more time.

### Geography of Pakistan

Pakistan's geography is a complex mix of landforms ranging from plains to deserts, forests, and plateaus, from the Arabian Sea's coastal sections in the south to the Karakoram, Hindukush, and Himalayan peaks in the north. Pakistan shares geological boundaries with both the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates.

It has Sindh and Punjab provinces located on the Indian plate's northwestern corner. Balochistan and the majority of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are part of the Eurasian Plate, which includes the Iranian Plateau. Where the two tectonic plates contact, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, which lie at the edge of the Indian plate, are prone to strong earthquakes.

Moving on, do read our articles on places to visit in Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.

Pakistan is bordered on the east by India, on the northwest by Afghanistan, on the west by Iran, and on the northeast by China. The country is geographically located along some of the most contentious regional borders.

Pakistan has the Kashmir Line with India and the Durand Line with Afghanistan, which has frequently exacerbated military tensions between the countries. The Khyber Pass and Bolan Pass, which serve as traditional migration routes between Central Eurasia and South Asia, are located on their western boundaries.

Pakistan is the 33rd largest country by area, with 881,913 square kilometers (340,509 square miles), somewhat larger than the US state of California and slightly smaller than the Canadian province of Alberta.

#### International Boundaries of Pakistan

Pakistan shares borders with four neighboring countries: the People's Republic of China, Afghanistan, India, and Iran, except Tajikistan, which is separated by the narrow Wakhan Corridor. It adds up to about 7,307 km (4,540.4 mi) in length. This is after excluding the coastal areas.

##### 1) Afghanistan–Pakistan border

The Durand Line spans from the Hindu Kush to the Pamir Mountains. It is a 2,670 km (1,659.1 mi) border with Afghanistan. Between Pakistan and Tajikistan sits the Wakhan Corridor, a tiny stretch of Afghan land.

##### 2) China–Pakistan border

The Sino-Pak border stretches for 559 kilometers between the People's Republic of China and Pakistan. It begins at the eastern end of the Wakhan Corridor (347.3 mi). It continues south-eastward till it reaches the Karakoram Pass. This line was established through a series of negotiations between China and Pakistan between 1961 and 1965, with both countries formally agreeing on 3 March 1963. If the Kashmir dispute is settled, it is expected that the border will need to be revisited.

### 3) India–Pakistan border

The Northern Areas are home to five of the world's seventeen tallest peaks, as well as the Karakoram and Himalayan mountain ranges. It also has so many glaciers that it is frequently referred to as the "Third Pole." Since 1947, the international border between Pakistan and India has been a source of contention.

Also, the Siachen Glacier in northern Kashmir has been a major battleground between the two sides since 1984. This is even though far more soldiers have died from exposure to the cold than from any conflicts between their National Armies.

The Pakistan-India ceasefire line stretches west-southwest from the Karakoram Pass to roughly 130 kilometers northwest of Lahore. This 770-kilometer line was built with the help of the United Nations (UNO) towards the end of the 1947–48 Indo-Pakistani War.

The ceasefire line was last altered and agreed upon by the two countries according to the Shimla Agreement of 2 July 1972 between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. This came into effect after eighteen months of warfare between Indian and Pakistani forces. Since then, it has been referred to as the Line of Control or the Control Line (LoC).

The India–Pakistan border follows the Radcliffe line for around 1,280 kilometers. It is named after Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the head of the British Boundary Commission on the division of British India's Punjab and Bengal provinces on August 13, 1947.

The southern Pakistani border is significantly less problematic than the northern Pakistani border (Kashmir). A barrier that was first drawn in 1923–24 separates the Thar Desert in Sindh's province from the salt flats of the Rann of Kachchh (Kutch) in the south. Following independence and the breakdown of the Empire, independent and free Pakistan fought over Sindh's southern border. This resulted in a series of border incidents.

They were, however, less hazardous and extensive than the conflict that erupted in Kashmir during the Indo-Pakistani War in August 1965, which began with this pivotal problem. During Harold Wilson's presidency, British mediation brought an end to the southern hostilities, and both sides accepted the

award of the UN secretary general's Indo-Pakistan Western Boundary Case Tribunal. The tribunal issued its decision on February 19, 1968, delimiting a line of 403 kilometers that was later delineated by joint survey teams.

Pakistan was only given roughly 780 square kilometers of its original claim of 9,100 square kilometers. The final length of Pakistan's border with India is about 80 kilometers long. It spans east and southeast of Sindh to an inlet of the Arabian Sea beyond the western terminus of the tribunal's award.

#### 4) Iran–Pakistan border

A British commission first delineated the 959 km (595.9 mi) border with Iran in the same year as the Durand Line. It separates Iran from what was British India's Balochistan region. Sistan va Balochistan is a province in modern Iran that borders Pakistan and has a Baluchi ethnic majority. Pakistan and Iran signed a boundary agreement in Rawalpindi in 1957, according to which the line was officially declared and the two nations have never had a serious disagreement over it.

#### Geographical Regions of Pakistan

The northern highlands, the Indus River plain, with two major sections, roughly corresponding to the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, and the Balochistan Plateau are the three primary geographic areas of Pakistan. Additional main regions are designated by some geographers. The mountain ranges along Afghanistan's western border are occasionally defined separately from the Balochistan Plateau. The Thar Desert on India's eastern border, south of the Sutlej River, is often described separately from the Indus Plain.

Nonetheless, an imaginary line extended eastward from the Khyber Pass and another run southwest from Islamabad down the middle of the country can be used to divide the country into three halves. The northern highlands are about north of the imaginary east-west line. The Balochistan Plateau is west of the imaginary southwest line. And the Indus Plain is east of the imaginary southwest line.

#### 1) The Northern Highlands

Parts of the Hindu Kush, the Karakoram Range, and the Himalayas are found in the northern highlands. This region includes well-known peaks like K2 (Mount Godwin Austen, at 8,611 meters the second highest peak in the world). K2 is a part of the Karakoram Range and that's how it got its name. Over half of the peaks are higher than 4,500 meters, while more than fifty peaks are higher than 6,500 meters.

Although the government is seeking to turn select sections into tourist and hiking destinations, travel across the area is arduous and risky. The northern highlands and the Himalayas to the east have always been significant impediments to travel into Pakistan due to their mountainous geography and harsh climate.

The Safed Koh Range along the Afghanistan border, as well as the Sulaiman and Kirthar Ranges, define the western edge of Sindh. They reach practically the southern shore and are located south of the northern highlands and west of the Indus River plain. The lower parts are significantly more arid than those in the north, and they branch into ranges that run across the province of Balochistan, generally to the southwest. People's migration along the Makran Coast on the Arabian Sea east toward the plains has been hindered by north-south valleys in Balochistan and Sindh.

Several significant passes cut through the hills at the Afghan border. The Kojak Pass, located about 80 kilometers northwest of Quetta in Balochistan, the Khyber Pass, located forty kilometers west of Peshawar and leading to Kabul, and the Broghol Pass, located in the extreme north and offering access to the Wakhan Corridor, are among them.

Only about a fifth of Pakistan's land is suitable for intense agricultural usage. Almost all of the arable area is cultivated, but yields are low by international standards. The northern highlands, southern deserts, and western plateaus have little cultivation. But, the Indus River basin in Punjab and northern Sindh offers fertile soil that allows Pakistan to feed its population under normal climatic conditions.

## 2) The Indus plain

The term Indus is derived from the Sanskrit word Hindu, which means "ocean," and from which the words Sindh, Hindu, and India are derived. The Indus, one of the world's great rivers, rises roughly 160 kilometers west of the Sutlej River. It flows through Punjab, India, before joining the Indus in Pakistani Punjab, and the Brahmaputra, which flows eastward before turning southwest and continuing through India and Bangladesh.

The Indus has a catchment area of almost 1 million square kilometers, and it receives all of Pakistan's major rivers, including the Kabul, Jhelum, and Chenab. The Indus River basin is a vast, fertile alluvial plain produced by the Indus River's sediment. Agricultural civilizations have lived in this area for at least 5,000 years.

### 3) Balochistan

Balochistan is located on the Iranian plateau's eastern edge, on the border of Southwest, Central, and South Asia. With 347,190 km<sup>2</sup> (134,051 square miles) of Pakistani territory. It is the largest of the four provinces, accounting for 48 percent of the country's total land area. Due to the rugged terrain and paucity of water, the population density is quite low. Makran is the name for the southern region. Kalat is the name of the center area.

The Sulaiman Mountains dominate the northeast, and the Bolan Pass is a natural entry point into Afghanistan on the way to Kandahar. Much of the province south of Quetta is a sparsely populated desert landscape with pockets of livable cities located largely near rivers and streams. The Kharan Desert, which covers the majority of the Kharan District, is the largest.

Because the tectonic plate beneath the Indian plate collides with the plate beneath Eurasia as it continues to migrate northward, the Himalayas are prone to regular seismic disturbances. Earthquakes are common in the area surrounding Quetta. A powerful earthquake struck in 1931, followed by another in 1935. Quetta, a small city, was nearly completely devastated, while the nearby military cantonment was severely damaged. There were at least 20,000 individuals dead.

Tremors continue to shake the area around Quetta; the most recent significant earthquake, which killed almost 10,000 people, struck in October 2008, killing 30,000 people. A powerful earthquake struck Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa in January 1991, destroying entire villages, however much fewer people were killed than in 1935. In 1965, a strong earthquake in the Kohistan district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa caused extensive damage.

### Traditional Geographical Importance of Pakistan

Pakistan's geographical importance has been defined in the following ways: Pakistan's northwestern border can be exploited as an access point to the Central Asian Republics (CARs), which are rich in natural resources. Wakhan, a tiny region of Afghanistan between Tajikistan and Pakistan, can advantage all countries in trade if it is used as a transit route.

In trading with this oil and gas-rich country, Pakistan's southwestern border with Iran is crucial.

Pakistan's eastern border with India has been underutilized in comparison to its potential. If the primary problems between the two republics are overcome, this might be a free trade route with India (e.g. The Kashmir Issue).

Pakistan's northern border with China provides another key channel for Chinese goods to enter Pakistan.

Pakistan is the world's seventh most powerful country and the Islamic world's lone nuclear state.

Pakistan is nearly in the middle of the Islamic block, which runs from Indonesia in the east to Morocco in the west.

Pakistan has some of the best agricultural fields and canal irrigation systems in the world.

Pakistan is placed in the top 10 countries for numerous crops such as wheat, cotton, and sugarcane.

Pakistan's army is the world's sixth most equipped and powerful force. It serves on a variety of missions, rehabilitation, and peacekeeping duties all over the globe.

#### Modern Geographical Importance of Pakistan

Though the country's geography remains the same, the interpretations of interests associated with it have improved slightly as regional and international dynamics have changed. The following new headings can be used to evaluate this:

##### 1) China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

The \$46 billion 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' initiative has been dubbed a 'Game-Changer.' It is more than a network of roadways connecting Kashgar, China, with the Gulf States via Gwadar, Pakistan. CPEC is a comprehensive bundle of energy and trade initiatives for Pakistan. It is the most prized fruit in Pakistan's historical-geographical significance. However, some credit must be given to Pakistan's foreign policymakers, who have always kept the Sino-Pak mutual interests in mind.

Following CPEC, China will have the shortest route access to the Middle Eastern, African, and European markets ever available. It may be a fresh advantage for Pakistan, but for China, this access is part of a long-term strategy to wrest control of the region from the US.

##### 2) Gwadar port is the nearest warm-water port to energy-rich Central Asian Countries

Gwadar was purchased from Oman in 1958 and built into a warm-water harbor, which is now operated by the Chinese business 'China Overseas Port Holding Company' under a 43-year lease agreement. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is built around the port (CPEC). Gwadar is another indication of

Pakistan's geographical importance, as it is the closest deep-sea port to the landlocked Central Asian Republics.

### 3) The Persian Gulf and Pars Gas Field

The Gwadar Port in Pakistan provides access to the 'Gulf of Oman,' which connects to the 'Persian Gulf' via the 'Strait of Hormuz.' Iran, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and Iraq encircle the gulf. Access to the Persian Gulf through Gwadar port gives access to all of these countries, the majority of which are energy-rich.

The 'Pars Gas Field,' which is shared by Iran and Qatar, is the world's largest natural gas reservoir. When Pakistan has been dealing with energy scarcity for lengthy periods. Its geographic importance grows due to its accessibility to such mega-fields of natural resources.

### 4) Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided funding for the TAPI gas pipeline project. Its goal is to supply natural gas to the four countries indicated above from the Caspian Sea. Pakistan is hoping to benefit from the project because of its proximity to this Central Asian republic. It also indicates India's reliance on Pakistan for access to Central Asian Republics' natural resources (CARs). The project's construction began in December 2015, and it is expected to be completed in 2019.

### 5) Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline

The project, also known as the 'Peace Pipeline,' is another result of Pakistan's strategic location. The pipeline project was formally launched in 2013, however, it is still far from being operational due to several issues. Pakistan was encouraged to cancel the project by the United States' anti-Iran stance. Things have changed since the US-Iran Nuclear Deal, and Iran is no longer subject to crippling sanctions. Pakistan, on the other hand, never completely abandoned the project. The future of this initiative appears to be bright.

### 6) Pakistan shares Marine Border with Oman

In 2000, Pakistan and Oman reached an agreement to resolve their maritime dispute, under the International Law of the Sea. The fact that Pakistan shares a maritime border with Oman, a brotherly country, can be seen as access to Oman's underwater energy resources. Access to the Persian Gulf and its coastal states can also be gained via the sea route.