

PAKISTAN — GENERAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION — JUNE 13, 2021



PRESIDENT: Dr. Arif Alvi was sworn in as the 13th President of Islamic Republic of Pakistan on September 9, 2018.

PRIME MINISTER: Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi is the 22nd and current Prime Minister of Pakistan.

LAND AREA: 300,664 square miles

POPULATION (2014 EST.) 196,174,380

CAPITAL: Islamabad, 919,000

LARGEST CITIES: Karachi 13.876 million; Lahore 7.566 million; Faisalabad 3.038 million; Rawalpindi 2.164 million; Multan 1.775 million

MONETARY UNIT: Pakistan rupee

PRINCIPAL LANGUAGES: Punjabi 48%, Sindhi 12%, Saraiki (a Punjabi variant) 10%, Pashto (alternate name, Pashtu) 8%, Urdu (official) 8%, Balochi 3%, Hindko 2%, Brahui 1%, English (official; lingua franca of Pakistani elite and most government ministries), Burushaski, and other 8%.

ETHNICITY/RACE: Punjabi 44.68%, Pashtun (Pathan) 15.42%, Sindhi 14.1%, Sariaki 8.38%, Muhajirs 7.57%, Balochi 3.57%, other 6.28%.

RELIGIONS: Muslim (official) 96.4% (Sunni 85-90%, Shia 10-15%), other (includes Christian and Hindu) 3.6% (2010 est.)

GEOGRAPHY: Pakistan is situated in the western part of the Indian subcontinent with Afghanistan and Iran on the west, India on the east, and the Arabian Sea on the south. The name Pakistan is derived from the Urdu words Pak (meaning pure) and stan (meaning country). It is nearly twice the size of California.

The northern and western highlands of Pakistan contain the towering Karakoram and Pamir mountain ranges, which include some of the world's highest peaks. The 1,000-mile-long Indus River and its tributaries flow through the country from the Kashmir region to the Arabian Sea.

HISTORY: Pakistan was one of the two original successor states to British India, which was partitioned along religious lines in 1947. Pakistan is a populous multiethnic country of South Asia. Having a predominately Indo-Iranian speaking population, Pakistan has historically and culturally been associated with its neighbors Iran, Afghanistan, and India. Since Pakistan and India achieved independence in 1947, Pakistan has been distinguished from its larger southeastern neighbor by its overwhelmingly Muslim population (as opposed to the predominance of Hindus in India).

Pakistan has struggled throughout its existence

to attain political stability and sustained social development. Its capital is Islamabad, in the foothills of the Himalayas in the northern part of the country, and its largest city is Karachi, in the south on the coast of the Arabian Sea.

10 FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT PAKISTAN by Noreen Gulwani – 6 January 2018

One constant in modern journalism, the brunt of which has been felt by many nations like Pakistan, is the negative bias in reporting. When discussing politics and social trends with international friends/colleagues often Pakistanis find themselves either at the butt of ignorant jokes or having to explain the reality of their country and culture.

1. One of the world's earliest and largest civilizations flourished in the region.

The Indus Valley Civilization, which blossomed around the Indus river and delta, is one of the world's oldest societies. The Indus civilization along with the ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilization are the earliest three civilizations of the old world.

2. Home to the youngest Nobel Laureate.

Pakistan's pride Malala Yousufzai is the youngest Nobel Prizewinner in the world who was awarded the honor for championing universal education even after being shot by the Taliban at the age of 15 for reporting on the situation of girl's education in her city.

3. Home to the second highest mountain K2, third highest Tirich Mir and the three highest mountain ranges in the world.

Pakistan's killer K2 is the world's second highest peak and is part of the Greater Himalaya Mountain range also called the Karakoram Range which extends to China and India as well.

4. The world's largest deep sea port in size.

Pakistan's superior position in Asia makes it a center of trade in the region and that is to increase further in the coming years as the country is working hand in hand with China on CPEC plan to develop the infrastructure of the Gwader port at Arabian Sea, Balochistan which is the largest natural deep port of the world.

5. World's highest paved road.

Also called the eighth wonder of the world or the

China-Pakistan friendship highway the Karakoram Highway is the highest road ever built. The road runs for 800 miles from Abbottabad in Pakistan to Kashgar in Xinjiang, West China. The highest point of the road lies at the Khunjerab Pass at 4800 meters. Every turn of the highway is accompanied by incredible views as the path runs through hills, mountains, valleys, glaciers and along lakes and rivers.

6. The largest volunteer ambulance service in the world.

Pakistan's Edhi Foundation proudly runs the world's largest volunteer ambulance service, which is a record that has been held by Pakistan since 1997. Headquartered in Karachi the foundation runs the 24 hour emergency ambulance service along with providing other services like shelter for the homeless, free health care, drug rehabilitation, orphanage and adoption services, and local and international disaster relief.

7. Pakistan's Sialkot produces over half the world's footballs.

It was the British back in the days of colonial rule who grew impatient with the waiting time for the shipments of footballs, and so tried out local repairs for punctured balls. Pleased with the results, they placed some manufacturing orders which kick-started the industry to become of the largest in the world today.

8. The fourth largest irrigation system in the world.

As most of Pakistan's population depend on a livelihood in agriculture the country had to develop a complex and massive system of irrigation to cultivate 202,000 square kilometers of land. The system runs on the Indus Basin.

9. World's second largest salt mines.

Khewra Mines of Pakistan produce 325,000 tons of salt per year and are fabled to be discovered by Alexander's Army.

10. The highest polo ground in the world.

Located at Shandur Top is the highest polo ground at 3700 meters, where the traditional game of polo was started by Balti Prince Ali Sher Khan. Held annually since 1936, the Shandur Polo Festival is a tournament between local teams that invites visitors to view the game along with shows of folk music, dance and celebration.

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