

## PAKISTAN

### GENERAL INFO

Pakistan is a country of some 803,943 sq. km. The population is 105 million and is growing at the rate of 3.1% per annum. The predominant ethnic group is Punjabi, with a smaller number of Sindhis and a variety of tribal peoples. The official language is Urdu, with other languages being Punjabi, Sindhi, Pushtu, Baluch. The population is 97% Muslim, with the remaining 3% being Christians, Hindus, and Parsis.

The independent state of Pakistan was created from the partition of India by the British in 1947.

### POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

Since 1947 Pakistan has been ruled by a succession of military governments and civilian regimes. Shortly after the death of General Zia in 1988, democratic elections saw the Pakistan People's Party obtain the largest number of seats in the National Assembly. Its leader, Benazir Bhutto, was sworn in as Prime Minister in December 1988. Acting President Ishaq Khan was confirmed as President later the same month.

The per capita income is \$375 U.S. The agricultural sector plays a major role in the Pakistan economy. However the recent Seventh Five Year Plan focuses on modernizing industrial growth, partly through joint ventures. Foreign debt has reached \$16.5 bn with debt servicing accounting for 25% of the current account receipts. Pakistan is currently running a trade deficit of \$2,542 million U.S. Real growth of GDP is about 5.8%.

### FOREIGN RELATIONS

The impact of the war in Afghanistan on Pakistan's foreign policy has been significant. Three million Afghan refugees are living within Pakistan's borders. Pakistan has followed a strongly pro-western policy, one born out of its strategic location. Pakistan's relations with the USSR show signs of improving with the withdrawal of the USSR's forces from Afghanistan.

Pakistan's relationship with India, and their common border, is of paramount importance. Their relationship seems to be improving, with the two countries having just signed three bi-lateral agreements, including an agreement not to attack each other's nuclear facilities, and another one on Double Taxation.

Pakistan is a member of the U.N., the Organization for Islamic Conferences and South Asia Association for Regional Co-operation. The most recent SAARC meeting was held in Islamabad.

Major trading partners are the USA, Japan, W. Germany, UK and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan has benefitted economically from US support for the Afghanistan Mujahadeen refugees in Pakistan.

### BILATERAL RELATIONS

Canada enjoys good relations with Pakistan dating back to Pakistan's independence. Initially based on Canadian aid (third largest recipient in Asia), it is now based on Canada's strong support for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan.