
I. THE COUNTRY

Pakistan's 803 944 km² stretch from the Arabian Sea to the rugged mountains of central Asia. About one tenth the size of Canada, Pakistan has a population of over 110 million, making it the tenth most populous nation, with one of the highest annual population growth rates (3.1 per cent). Pakistan's strategic significance is underlined by the fact that it is bordered by China, India, Iran and Afghanistan. The country's four provinces — Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province (N.W.F.P.) — cover three major geographic areas:

- The high mountain regions in the north where the Himalayan, Karakoram, Pamir and Hindu Kush ranges merge.
- The plains of the Indus River and its five major tributaries. The Indus rises in Tibet, passes through northern India, and then divides the Himalayan and Karakoram ranges as it enters Pakistan. It subsequently flows through the plains of Punjab and Sind provinces, providing water for the largest irrigation system in the world.
- A vast arid plateau containing much of the largest province, Baluchistan, which is thinly populated.

The Government of Pakistan also has administrative jurisdiction over the tribal northern area of Azad Kashmir, consisting of the districts of Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu. Located in the mountainous regions of the north, these areas are a major tourist attraction. Islamabad, the capital city of Pakistan, is situated in the northeast. The major commercial and financial centre is the southern port city of Karachi, in Sind province. The other major cities are the provincial capitals of Lahore (Punjab), Quetta (Baluchistan) and Peshawar (N.W.F.P.). More than a third of the population lives in urban areas.

History and Government

Stone tools discovered on the banks of the Soan River were used by human beings as far back as 50 000 years ago. Other excavations suggest that settled agricultural communities were formed from around 7000 B.C. in areas now part of Pakistan. The first substantial indigenous civilization developed around 3000 B.C., the same period in which the