

PAKISTAN

Location

South Asia.

Area

796,095 sq km (307,374 sq miles) excluding data for the disputed territories of Jammu and Kashmir.

Population

164.7 million (CIA estimate 2007).

Population Density

206.9 per sq km.

Capital

Islamabad.

Population: 800,000 (2005).

Government

Federal Islamic Republic since 1973. Gained independence from the UK in 1947.

Language

Urdu is the official language, though it is only used by 8% of Pakistanis. English is widely spoken. Regional languages include Punjabi, which is spoken by 48% of the population, Pashto, Sindhi, Saraiki and Balochi. There are numerous local dialects.

Religion

97% Muslim (77% Sunni, 20% Shi'a), the remainder are Hindu or Christian.

Time

GMT + 6.

Electricity

220 volts AC, 50Hz. Round two- or three-pin plugs are in use.

Head of Government

Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gillani since March 2008.

Head of State

President Asif Ali Zardari since September 2008.

Telephone

Country code: 92.

Mobile Telephone

Roaming agreements exist with some international mobile phone companies. Coverage is largely limited to main cities.

Internet

Internet is available in urban areas where Internet cafes can be found.

Media

President Pervez Musharraf's rule has been marked by increased freedom for the print media and liberalization of broadcasting policies; the state's monopoly has been diminished by the expansion of private radio and TV stations. In 2005, issued licenses for private FM radio stations totalled around 100, but private stations are not allowed to broadcast news. Pakistani censorship, however, remains far more rigorous than in India. The Pakistani Government uses a range of legal and constitutional powers to curb press freedom. The country's law on blasphemy has been used against journalists. Nevertheless, Pakistan's print media are among the most outspoken in South Asia. Media rules were tightened in 2007 after an opposition campaign against President Musharraf.

Post

Airmail takes four to five days to reach Western Europe.

Post office hours: General post offices in major cities offer 24-hour services.

Press

- The English-language press enjoys a great deal of influence in business circles.
- Dailies include *Business Recorder*, *The Dawn*, *Financial Post*, *Frontier Post*, *The Nation* and *The News* (an English-language daily).
- *Daily Jang* and *Daily Ausuf* are Urdu-language.

Radio

- *Radio Pakistan* is state-run and operates more than 20 stations nationwide, an external service and the FM 101 network, aimed at younger listeners.
- *Azad Kashmir Radio* is also state-run.
- *FM 100* is a commercial, music-based FM network.

Note

(a) Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon and the dates given above are approximations. During the lunar month of Ramadan that precedes Eid al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night and normal business patterns may be interrupted. Most restaurants are closed during the day and there is a restriction on smoking and drinking in public places. Eid al-Fitr and Eid ul-Azha may last from two to four days, depending on the region. (b) Christian holidays are observed by the Christian community only.

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2011-December 2011 period.

15 Feb *Eid-e-Milad-un-Nabi (Birth of the Prophet).*

23 Mar *Pakistan Day.*

14 Aug *Independence Day.*

31 Aug *Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan).*

9 Nov *Allama Muhammad Iqbal Day.*

6 Nov

7 Nov *Eid ul-Azha (Feast of the Sacrifice).*

25 Dec *Quaid-e-Azam's Birthday.*

5 Dec *Ashoura.*