

PAKISTAN

Country name in English (PCGN recommended name)	Pakistan
Country name in Urdu (romanized in brackets)¹	پاکستان (Pākistān)
State title in English (PCGN recommended name)	Islamic Republic of Pakistan
State title in Urdu (romanized in brackets)¹	اسلامی جمہوریہ پاکستان (Islāmī Jumhūrīyah Pākistān)
Name of citizen	Pakistani
Official languages	Urdu (<i>urd</i>) ^{2, 3}
Script	Roman (<i>eng</i>); modified Perso-Arabic (<i>urd</i>)
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	PK/PAK
Capital	Islamabad
Population	241.49 million ⁴

Introduction

Pakistan came into existence upon the partition of former British India in 1947. At that point it comprised two parts, East and West Pakistan, but took its current form in 1971 with the secession of East Pakistan as Bangladesh. It is bordered by Iran to the west, Afghanistan to the northwest, China to the northeast and India to the east, with the coastline of the Arabian Sea forming the southern border. Afghanistan's narrow Wakhan Corridor separates it from Tajikistan in the north.

Geographical names policy

It is PCGN policy to reflect Roman-script geographical names as found on official Pakistani sources, if available. Maps produced by the [Survey of Pakistan](#) are a primary source. Names can be taken from these, with any diacritics (macrons) omitted as explained in the paragraph below. Names may also be taken from the [NGA GEOnet Names Server](#) (GNS).

Place names on Survey of Pakistan products were originally field-collected in the language of origin and transcribed into Urdu. They were then transliterated into Roman-script using the Hunterian System, developed in the 1860s by William Wilson Hunter, Director-General of Statistics for India. The Hunterian System was based on a principle of uniform transliteration, irrespective of the language of origin, and employed the basic Roman alphabet used in English. The only deviation from the English alphabet was the use of the macron to indicate vowel length, although recent Pakistani sources tend not to use any diacritical marks and PCGN now follows this practice.

¹ Using the BGN/PCGN 2007 System for the Romanization of Urdu.

² ISO 639-3 codes are given for languages mentioned in this Fact File.

³ See section on Languages on page 2.

⁴ <http://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/population-census>

Although there is a [BGN/PCGN Romanization System for Urdu](#), names resulting from its application are not recommended for use on HMG products, though they could be used for academic purposes where an accurate representation of the Urdu language is required. In the absence of official Roman-script sources, official Pakistani Urdu sources could be used for identification and cross-reference purposes, with the BGN/PCGN 2007 System for the Romanization of Urdu applied. It should be noted that the spellings resulting from applying this romanization system will be different to those found on official Roman-script sources and should not be used on HMG products.

Languages

Following independence in 1947 until 2015, Pakistan recognized solely English as an official language. Article 251 of the 1973 Constitution⁵ states that “*The National language of Pakistan is Urdu, and arrangements shall be made for its being used for official and other purposes within fifteen years from the commencing day... the English language may be used for official purposes until arrangements are made for its replacement by Urdu.*” Hence, the Constitution and laws of Pakistan are all written in English, and English continues to be widely used by both civil servants and business professionals⁶. On 8th September 2015, the Pakistan Supreme Court directed federal and provincial governments to adopt Urdu as the official language in Pakistan. Although the Punjabi language is the most widely spoken first language in Pakistan, Urdu, as the national language of Pakistan, is understood and spoken as a second or third language widely across the country. Urdu is an Indo-Aryan language written in a modified Perso-Arabic script, from right to left, usually in *Nastaliq* style (see Figure 1).

ا	ب	پ	ت	ٹ	ث	ج	چ	ح	خ	د		Isolated Urdu character
الف	بے	پے	تے	ٹے	ثے	جیم	چے	ھے	خے	دال		Written in Nastaliq style
	b	p	t	ṭ	ṯ	jīm	che	ḥe	ḫe	dāl		Letter name
	b	p	t	ṭ	ṯ	j	c	h	kh	d		Hunterian romanization
	[b]	[p]	[t]	[ṭ]	[ṯ]	[j]	[ç]	[h]	[x]	[d]		IPA⁷

Figure 1: Section of the Urdu alphabet written in *Nastaliq* style
[<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/urdu.htm>]

Other recognized regional languages include: Baluchi (*bal*), Pashto (*pus*), Punjabi (*pan*), Seraiki (*skr*) (a dialect of Punjabi), and Sindhi (*snd*). Part 2, Chapter 1, Article 28 of the Pakistan Constitution provides for the promotion and preservation of regional languages⁸ and Article 251 allows a Provincial Assembly to prescribe “*measures for the teaching, promotion and use of a Provincial language in addition to the National language*”⁹. Punjabi, also an Indo-Aryan language, is written in Pakistan using a variant of Perso-Arabic script, known as *Shahmukhi*¹⁰. Sindhi uses an extended Perso-Arabic script¹¹ in Pakistan; Baluchi and Pashto also employ a modified Perso-Arabic script.

⁵ <https://pakistanconstitutionlaw.com/article-251-national-language/>

⁶ Country Profile: Pakistan, Library of Congress, 2005 <https://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/cs/profiles/Pakistan.pdf>

⁷ International phonetic alphabet.

⁸ <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part2.ch1.html>

⁹ <https://pakistanconstitutionlaw.com/article-251-national-language/>

¹⁰ In India it is written in *Gurmukhi* script, written from left-to-right.

¹¹ In India it is written in *Devangari* script, written from left-to-right.

BGN and PCGN have developed and approved romanization systems for [Baluchi](#) and [Pashto](#), but these are not recommended for use on HMG products¹².

Territorial Disputes

China, India and Pakistan dispute all or part of the Kashmir region. Some sections were unilaterally ceded by Pakistan to China in 1963 and are under the *de facto* control of China. The two elements of Pakistan-administered Kashmir should be named *Gilgit-Baltistan*¹³ and *Azad Jammu and Kashmir*¹⁴, and on a map these should be shown in a different type style to that used to label Pakistan's provinces. There is also a further boundary dispute between Pakistan and India along Sir Creek in the Rann of Kutch.

Administrative structure

a) Current structure

The administrative structure of Pakistan presently comprises four provinces at first-order level (ADM1): Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh plus the Islamabad Capital Territory. Additionally, there are the two parts of Pakistan-administered Kashmir: Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan¹⁵.

In May 2018, the Pakistan government voted to merge the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) were previously administered by the governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as an agent to the President of Pakistan, under the supervision of the Ministry of States and Frontier Regions.

The division (ADM2) level of administration in the provinces of Pakistan was abolished in 2001, making districts the second-order level of administration. However, following the 18th Amendment to the Constitution of Pakistan in 2010¹⁶, the provinces reinstated divisions as ADM2s. The restored divisions are further sub-divided into districts (ADM3), which are further divided into tehsils (or talukas in Sindh Province) at the fourth-order level (ADM4).

¹² As for the Urdu system, these systems are for application for specific linguistic or academic purposes, rather than for general application for names in Pakistan.

¹³ Previously known as Northern Areas.

¹⁴ Sometimes seen as Azad Kashmir.

¹⁵ Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir are both parts of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, a disputed territory. PCGN recommends showing the names of these two areas in italics to acknowledge their disputed status on mapping. See page 'Territorial Disputes' for further details. Geographical names within these areas should be shown in the same font as names in the rest of the country.

¹⁶ <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/amendments/18amendment.html>



Map showing administrative divisions of Pakistan, and Pakistan-administered Kashmir.
Note: this map is for illustrative purposes. It is not to be taken as necessarily representing the view of the UK Government on boundaries or political status.

b) Proposed changes

As part of the disputed Kashmir region, Gilgit-Baltistan is not an official province of Pakistan, but has a semi-provincial status and has been administered by the government of Pakistan since the First Kashmir War in 1947-8. There is a proposal to merge the territory into Pakistan as a 5th Province¹⁷.

In January 2018, a bill was submitted to the National Assembly of Pakistan to create two new provinces of Bahawalpur¹⁸ and South Punjab (Saraiki), both to be split from the province of Punjab¹⁹. The proposal to create the South Punjab province was accepted, consisting of the Punjab divisions of Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan²⁰. In December 2022, a government body was formed by the National Assembly for the creation of South Punjab²¹. There has been no progress on the proposal to create Bahawalpur province.

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly adopted a resolution to create Hazara Province on 21st March 2014²² and a bill was introduced to the Pakistan National Assembly in January 2022²³. However, creation of the new province is not supported by all parties, and no further progress appears to have been made.

¹⁷ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/11/2/pakistani-pm-says-he-will-upgrade-status-of-part-of-kashmir>

¹⁸ Bahawalpur was a former (princely) state that became part of Punjab in the mid-1950s.

¹⁹ <https://www.dawn.com/news/1460373>

²⁰ <https://gulfnews.com/world/asia/pakistan/pakistan-to-create-new-south-punjab-province--guraishi-1.63962138>

²¹ <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/929892-bill-on-hazara-province-lands-in-senate>

²² <http://www.dawn.com/news/1094671>

²³ https://na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1556634798_787.pdf; <https://www.dawn.com/news/1463406>

Administrative divisions

Recommended forms for HMG products are shown in bold. The Perso-Arabic script names are provided below in italics for information only and have been romanized using the relevant BGN/PCGN Romanization Systems. The romanization systems can be found on the [PCGN website](http://www.pcgn.org).

1. Balochistan ²⁴ (28°28'43"N 65°38'37"E)	Centre: Quetta (30°11'56"N 67°00'35"E)
Name in Baluchi and Urdu: بلوچستان <i>Balochistān</i>	
Number of ADM2s: 8	Website: http://www.balochistan.gov.pk/
ISO 3166-2 code	PK-BA

2. Islamabad Capital Territory (33°42'37"N 73°08'02"E)	Centre: Islamabad (33°41'24"N 73°03'18"E)
Name in Urdu: اسلام آباد وفاقی دارالحکومت علاقہ <i>Islāmābād Wafāqī Dār al Hikūmat 'Alāqah</i>	
ISO 3166-2 code	PK-IS

3. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa ²⁵ (34°27'36"N 72°30'09"E)	Centre: Peshawar (34°00'29"N 71°34'43"E)
Name in Pashto: خيبر پښتونخوا <i>Khaybir Pashtūnkhwā</i>	
Name in Urdu: خيبر پختونخوا <i>Khyber Pakhtunkhwā</i>	
Number of ADM2s: 7	Website: http://kp.gov.pk/
ISO 3166-2 code	PK-KP

4. Punjab (30°51'37"N 72°19'11"E)	Centre: Lahore (31°32'59"N 74°20'37"E)
Name in Urdu: پنجاب <i>Punjāb</i>	
Number of ADM2s: 11	Website: https://www.punjab.gov.pk/
ISO 3166-2 code	PK-PB

5. Sindh ²⁶ (26°08'04"N 68°46'11"E)	Centre: Karachi (24°54'20"N 67°04'56"E)
Name in Urdu: سندھ <i>Sindh</i>	
Number of ADM2s: 7	Website: http://www.sindh.gov.pk/
ISO 3166-2 code	PK-SD

Pakistan-administered Kashmir

Azad Jammu and Kashmir (33°56'50"N 73°54'37"E)	
Name in Urdu: آزاد جموں و کشمیر <i>Āzād Jammūñ o Kashmīr</i>	
Number of ADM2s: 3	Website: http://www.ajk.gov.pk/
ISO 3166-2 code	PK-JK

²⁴ The Roman-script spelling was changed from Baluchistan by a Constitutional Amendment of April 2010.

²⁵ Previously North-West Frontier Province (NWFP); changed by Constitutional Amendment of April 2010. It is also known as Sarhad, meaning "frontier" in Urdu.

²⁶ The Roman-script spelling was changed from Sind by a Constitutional Amendment of April 2010.

Gilgit-Baltistan ²⁷ (33°56'50"N 73°54'37"E)	
Name in Urdu: گلگت بلتستان <i>Gilgit Baltistān</i>	
Number of ADM2s: 3	Website: http://www.gilgitbaltistan.gov.pk/
ISO 3166-2 code	PK-GB

Useful references

- BBC country profile: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12965779>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/pakistan/>
- Ethnologue: http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=PK
- FCDO country profile: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/living-in-pakistan>
- Government of Pakistan web portal: <http://www.pakistan.gov.pk/>
- ISO country codes: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#iso:code:3166:PK>
- Omniglot: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/urdu.htm>
- Pakistan Constitution: www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics: www.pbs.gov.pk
- Unicode: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names Geographic Names Server: [GNS Search & Download WebApp \(nga.mil\)](http://www.gns.gov/gns-search/)

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²⁷ Previously Northern Areas; the *Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order*, 2009, replaced the Northern Areas Governance Order of 1994 and redefined Pakistan’s administrative processes for the disputed Northern Areas. Whereas the area had hitherto been governed directly from Islamabad, under the act it was granted more autonomy through a Council and Legislative Assembly.