

## Kashmir

### Recent history

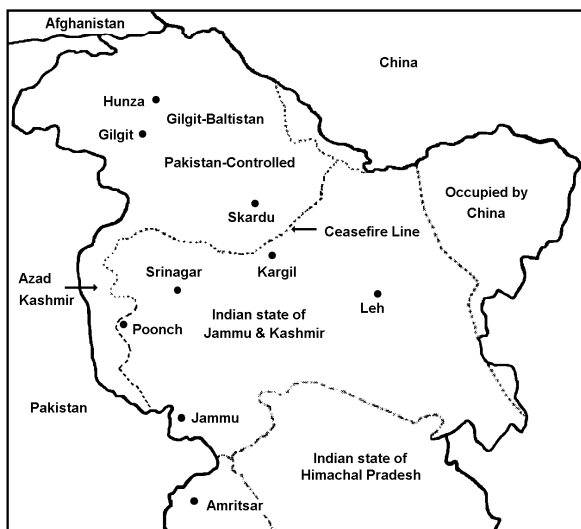
In 1947, at the time of independence from Britain, British India was partitioned into two sovereign nations - India and Pakistan. The rulers of the princely states of British India were given the option of choosing which nation they would join. Although three-fourths of the population of Kashmir was Muslim, the Hindu ruler Maharajah Hari Singh chose to join India and signed an Instrument of Accession to the Indian Union. Pakistan claimed the territory and war broke out between the two nations.

India took the issue before the UN in January 1948. The UN adopted a resolution on 4 May 1948 calling for a referendum to determine opinion in Kashmir. India agreed in principle for a referendum but has never implemented the proposal in spite of Pakistan's insistence. A cease-fire was enforced by the UN in 1949, leaving India holding east and south of Kashmir and Pakistan occupying north and the west. India and Pakistan went to war again in 1965 over Kashmir and fighting took place in Kashmir during the Bangla Desh War in 1971.

The countries signed agreements in 1966 (Tashkent Declaration) and in 1972 (Simla Agreement) to solve the dispute by peaceful means. Under the Simla Agreement, both sides recognized a line of control (LoC) resulting from the ceasefire of 17 December 1971. The LoC remains the dividing line between Pakistan-held and Indian-administered Kashmir. But the conflict has continued, both sides taking inflexible positions. Since the attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001, tension between India and Pakistan has risen and both countries have massed a million troops in Kashmir. Both nations possess nuclear weapons and the international community is extremely concerned that a war in the region would have more far-reaching implications.

### Mc Mahon Line

The Mc Mahon Line is a boundary line dividing Tibet and India and runs from the eastern end of Bhutan to the great bend of the Brahmaputra (Yarlung Zangbo) River. It was marked out by a team led by Sir Henry Mc Mahon at a conference in Simla in 1914 between Britain, China and Tibet. But China refused to ratify the agreement. After the assertion of control by China over Tibet in 1951, boundary disputes arose culminating in the Indo-Chinese war of 1962. Chinese troops occupied parts of eastern and north-eastern Kashmir.



### Militant groups

India says that since 1989 Pakistan-based groups have infiltrated the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. India accuses Pakistan of supporting cross border terrorism and terrorist groups within Jammu and Kashmir. A large number of Afghan fighters are involved in the conflict. Many nationalistic groups have also sprung seeking independence or accession to Pakistan. These include the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and the Hizbul Mujahideen. The separatist movement is represented by an alliance known as All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). The ideological emphasis of separation is increasingly shifting from nationalistic to an Islamic one and, as a result, the prominence of groups such as JKLF is fading. India fought a brief war in 1999 with Pakistani-backed forces, who had infiltrated the Kargil area in Indian-controlled Kashmir. Kashmiri groups Harakat

Mujahideen and Jaish e-Mohammed and Pakistan-based Kashmiri group Lashkar-e-Taiba are banned in Britain under the Terrorism Act 2000. The APHC has denied accusations by US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that Al-Qaida members may be involved in the fighting in Kashmir.

## Human Rights

India has placed a large number of troops in the state of Jammu and Kashmir to counter the activities of militant groups. Ordinarily 200,000 troops are said to be in the state but the number has now increased. The civilian population has been subject to a high level of violence in the conflict between militant groups and the Indian security forces. Indian troops are accused of human rights violations. According to Amnesty International, hundreds of cases of torture, deaths in custody, extra-judicial executions and disappearances are reported every year.

Laws such as the Public Security Act and the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, grant security forces vast powers of arrest and protect them from prosecution. Amnesty says, since 1989, 34,000 people have died and over 1,740 civilians have disappeared. During 2001, around 1,200 civilians, including many children, were killed. Abductions of unarmed civilians has also been used by armed opposition groups. Amnesty says that human rights violations are also committed in the Pakistan-controlled territory.

According to Human Rights Watch, India, like Pakistan, continued to deny political rights and to restrict freedoms of expression and assembly in Kashmir. With the war in Afghanistan, as relations with Pakistan deteriorated and violence in Kashmir escalated, Indian security measures in response, including the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance (POTO), have come under attack, for curtailing civil liberties in the name of fighting terrorism.

## Terrain

The region of Kashmir lies in the vicinity of the western Himalayan mountain ranges extending from 32° 78' to 36° 58' N and from 73° 27' to 80° 72' E in the northern-most part of the Indian sub-continent. It borders China in the north and east, Afghanistan in the north-west, Pakistan in the west and the Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Punjab in the south. The Kashmir region is 85,500 sq.miles (222,230 sq km) in extent. It is fed by six major rivers, including the Indus. Jhelum river flows through the fertile Vale of Kashmir (Valley of Kashmir) and forms Lake Wular, which is the largest freshwater lake in the region. Kashmir is covered by ten mountain ranges, including the Ladakh Range and the Greater Himalayas.

## Agriculture

The majority of the population of Kashmir is engaged in subsistence agriculture. Major crops are rice, corn, wheat, barley, pulses, oil seed and tobacco. Kashmir is the largest supplier of Saffron to the whole of the Indian sub-continent. Large orchards in the Vale of Kashmir produce apples, pears, peaches, mulberry, walnut and almonds. Kashmir is also known for handicrafts, including carpets and woodwork.

## Refugees

Thousands of Kashmiri people were displaced when the conflict began in 1947. Since then, civilian displacement has become a regular feature. Some 350,000 people have been displaced as a result of the conflict. Most of the displaced are in and around Jammu and many are accommodated in refugee camps.

Over 29,000 refugee families are registered with the authorities (240,000 people) in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Some 27,700 of these families are Hindu Pandits, who were displaced from the Vale of Kashmir, 15,000 Muslim and 1,800 Sikh. There are another 15,000 Muslim refugees in the Pakistan-held Azad Kashmir, living in camps and makeshift shelters.

## Political control

The northern and western parts of Kashmir, extending 33,000 sq. miles are held by Pakistan and include three areas - Azad Kashmir, Baltistan and Gilgit (the last two are known as Northern Areas). India claims these parts. The north-eastern parts, an extent of 14,500 sq. miles including the areas of Aksai, Chin and Ladakh, occupied by China since the 1962 Indo-China war, are claimed by India. The southern and south-eastern parts, which are 38,000 sq. miles, form the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan has staked a claim to this area.

## Population

The total population of the Kashmir region is estimated at 13.65 million.

	<b>Area (sq. miles)</b>	<b>Population (millions)</b>	
Indian-held	38,000	9.45	
Pakistani-held	33,000	4.20	
Chinese-held	14,500	*	
Total	85,500	13.65	*No permanent population

## Language

The Kashmiri language belongs to the Dardic branch of the Indo-Aryan group of languages. The vocabulary is mixed containing Dardic, Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian elements. Muslims employ Persian and Arabic words freely. Hindus favour words derived from Sanskrit.

	Language	% of Speakers*	
Indian-held			
Kashmir	Kashmiri	90	
Jammu	Dogri	54	
Ladakh	Tibetan	90	
Pakistani-held			
Azad Kashmir	Punjabi	85	
Northern areas	Shina	-	*The percentage of the total population in the area

## Religion

Around 70% of the 13 million people living in Kashmir are Muslims. The rest include Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. Most Hindus live in the south and around the city of Jammu. The majority of the Buddhist people are of Tibetan origin and live in the eastern Ladakh region. Sikhism, Christianity and Jainism are minority religions in Indian-held Kashmir.

	Muslims* %	Hindus* %	Buddhist* %
Indian-held			
Kashmir	95	4	-
Jammu	30	66	-
Ladakh	46	3	51
Pakistani-held			
Azad Kashmir	99.8		
Northern areas	99.8		*The percentage of the total population in the area.

## The Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir

The state has less than 1% of the population of India and it is the only state in India with a two-thirds Muslim majority. The official language is Urdu.

Article 370 of the Indian Constitution provides for a special status for the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The state has its own constitution adopted in November 1956. The position of the state differs from other states of India in the following respects:

- 1) Provisions dealing with the governmental machinery in the other states do not apply to Jammu and Kashmir.
- 2) The legislative authority of the Indian Parliament over the state is limited and includes Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications.
- 3) Only those provisions of the Indian Constitution which the President of India specifies by order are applicable in Jammu and Kashmir.

A Governor appointed by the Indian President represents the Indian central government in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The executive power is vested in an elected Chief Minister and a council of ministers. The state has a legislature consisting of two chambers.

## Pakistan Kashmir

Azad Kashmir is headed by a state President and a state council of 12 members. The territory is overseen by the Pakistan Ministry of Kashmiri Affairs.

Gilgit and Baltistan areas are administered by political agents of the Pakistan government.

# Chronology

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**c.265-238 BC** - Buddhism was introduced in Kashmir by Emperor Asoka. Kashmir later became a centre for Hindu culture and ruled by Hindu dynasties until 1339 AD.

**1339 AD** - Shah Mir imprisoned the queen of Kashmir and her sons and became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir, assuming the title of Shams-ud-din Shah.

**1586** - Mughul emperor Akbar the Great sent an Army into Kashmir and annexed the region to the Mughul empire.

**1819** - Following the decline of the Mughul empire, Kashmir was captured by Sikhs and annexed to the Sikh Kingdom of Punjab.

**1846** - The British captured Kashmir and handed over the region to a Rajput chief named Gulab Singh who already ruled the Dogra (Hindu) kingdom of Jammu.

**1914** - The Mc Mahon Line serving as a frontier between India and Tibet was drawn.

**1947** - British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan. Conflict arose immediately between the two nations, including disputes over Kashmir and war broke out.

**August 1948** - A UN resolution called for the future status of Kashmir to be determined by the will of the people.

**August 1953** - Kashmir Chief Minister Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah was arrested under the Public Securities Act and removed from office.

**March 1957** - Pakistan presented a five-point proposal to solve the Kashmir issue to India.

**October 1962** - India and China went to war following disagreements over the Mc Mahon Line and Chinese troops occupied parts of Kashmir.

**August 1965** - War broke out again between India and Pakistan over Kashmir.

**January 1966** - Following a meeting between Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and President Ayub Khan, the Tashkent Declaration reaffirmed the commitment of India and Pakistan to obligations under the UN Charter not to have recourse to force and settle disputes through peaceful means without prejudice to their basic positions on Kashmir.

**December 1971** - Tension over Bangla Desh led to war between India and Pakistan. Fighting also took place in Kashmir.

**July 1972** - President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi signed the Simla Accord agreeing not to use force for the resolution of any dispute, including Kashmir.

**September 1982** - Dr Farooq Abdullah became Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir following the death of the Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

**January 1990** - The Jammu and Kashmir state assembly was dissolved and Indian central rule was imposed.

**September 1996** - The National Conference won the State Assembly elections, held after a six-year rule from the centre, and Farooq Abdullah was sworn in as Chief Minister.

**November 2000-June 2001** - An official ceasefire came into force between the Indian security forces and militant group Hizbul Mujahideen.

**July 2001** - A meeting in Agra, India, between the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf failed to produce a joint statement.

**October 2001** - Following a devastating attack on the Kashmir Assembly in Srinagar, in which 38 people were killed, Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah urged India to launch attacks on militant training camps in Pakistan.

**December 2001** - India accused Pakistan of involvement in the attack on the Indian Parliament.

**May 2002** - Tension increased as India and Pakistan massed troops along the common border. Pakistan carried out a series of tests on medium range ballistic missiles.

**June 2002** - Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah escaped an attempt on his life.

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Interactive on Conflict Resolution and Ethnicity -  
Internet sources on Kashmir:  
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