

Extreme Contrasts Noted in East, West Pakistan

By JOHN F. BARTON
United Press International
KARACHI, Pakistan (UPI)—Overhead modern jet planes skimmed through a cloudless blue sky while down below on the parched earth a camel caravan slowly plodded its way along traditional routes, ignoring the blazing sun.

Wealthy women clad in colorful flowing saris, their faces covered only by sunglasses, hurried to stores on Elphinstone and Victoria streets to check most recent arrival from European fashion centers, while other women, covered from head to toe and wearing the traditional burqua veils, headed for local bazaars famous for their brass ornaments, fakirs, and snake charmers that remind one of this country's ancient heritage.

Such is Pakistan today, a

land of extreme contrasts — of immense wealth and dire poverty, education and illiteracy, modern methods and old customs existing side by side.

Pakistan's population of 100 million makes it the largest Moslem nation in the world and sixth most populous on the globe.

Created in 1947 when the subcontinent was divided between Hindus and Moslems when the British left colonial India, Pakistan is a young nation, proud possessor of a culture dating back thousands of years, but still struggling to sink its independent political roots.

Born out of intense Hindu-Moslem animosity and communal riots, the country found itself without any of the major developed ports on the subcontinent, with all communication and rail lines running to Delhi, and with its economy dominated by Indian banks.

Split into two parts separated by more than 1,000 miles of Indian territory, Indian officials had few serious objections to the creation of Pakistan because they simply didn't believe it could survive.

West Pakistan, which stretches 310,504 square miles

from the shore of the Arabian Sea, across the arid deserts of the southwest and the snow-capped Himalayan ranges, is known as the gateway between the Middle East and Asia.

Because of widespread illiteracy (85 per cent) and poor earnings—the per capita income is estimated at about 70 U.S. dollars per year, among the lowest in the world—the average person in West Pakistan does not take much interest in politics. He is content to let the wealthy people worry about political problems while he concerns himself with the more immediate problem of making a living.

Karachi, once the capital and still the home of the foreign office and embassies, is the industrial center of Pakistan.

Situated on the Arabian Sea, this sprawling city of 2 million persons is the nerve center of the country's economy. From it stretches Pakistan's economic lifelines with the outside world — by sea, rail, air and telecommunications.

Not far beyond the city limits starts the real desert area

which is sprinkled with a maximum of four inches of rain a year. This vast area—a wasteland save for the life-giving Indus River—reaches 800 miles north almost to Lahore.

Several hundred miles further north lies Rawalpindi, traditional seat of the army situated in the shadows of the Himalayan mountains and Kashmir, the major trouble spot between India and Pakistan.

Rawalpindi, with its wide whitewashed streets and well kept buildings, is the temporary capital of the country until Islamabad, now being constructed 10 miles beyond, is completed.

While nature's miseries with rain and other elements has been a major problem for suffers more from nature's excesses, East Pakistan ceases.

This province, once a part of Bengal in undivided India, houses more than half the nation's population in its 55,126 square miles, making it one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

East Pakistan is drenched with as much as 135 inches of rain a year, most of it falling during the monsoon season

which lasts from May through September.

Adding to its woes is the fact East Pakistan is a favorite target for hurricanes, cyclones and tidal waves which account for thousands of deaths annually, as well as destruction of vital food crops.

Nature's excesses have left some blessings in their wake, however, in the form of rich fields on which grow magnificent forests, tea plantations, and rice and jute crops.

Despite its smallness, the agricultural products of East Pakistan in fact account for more than half the country's foreign exchange.

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