

Reimagine Pakistan

An exercise in
country branding

August 2025

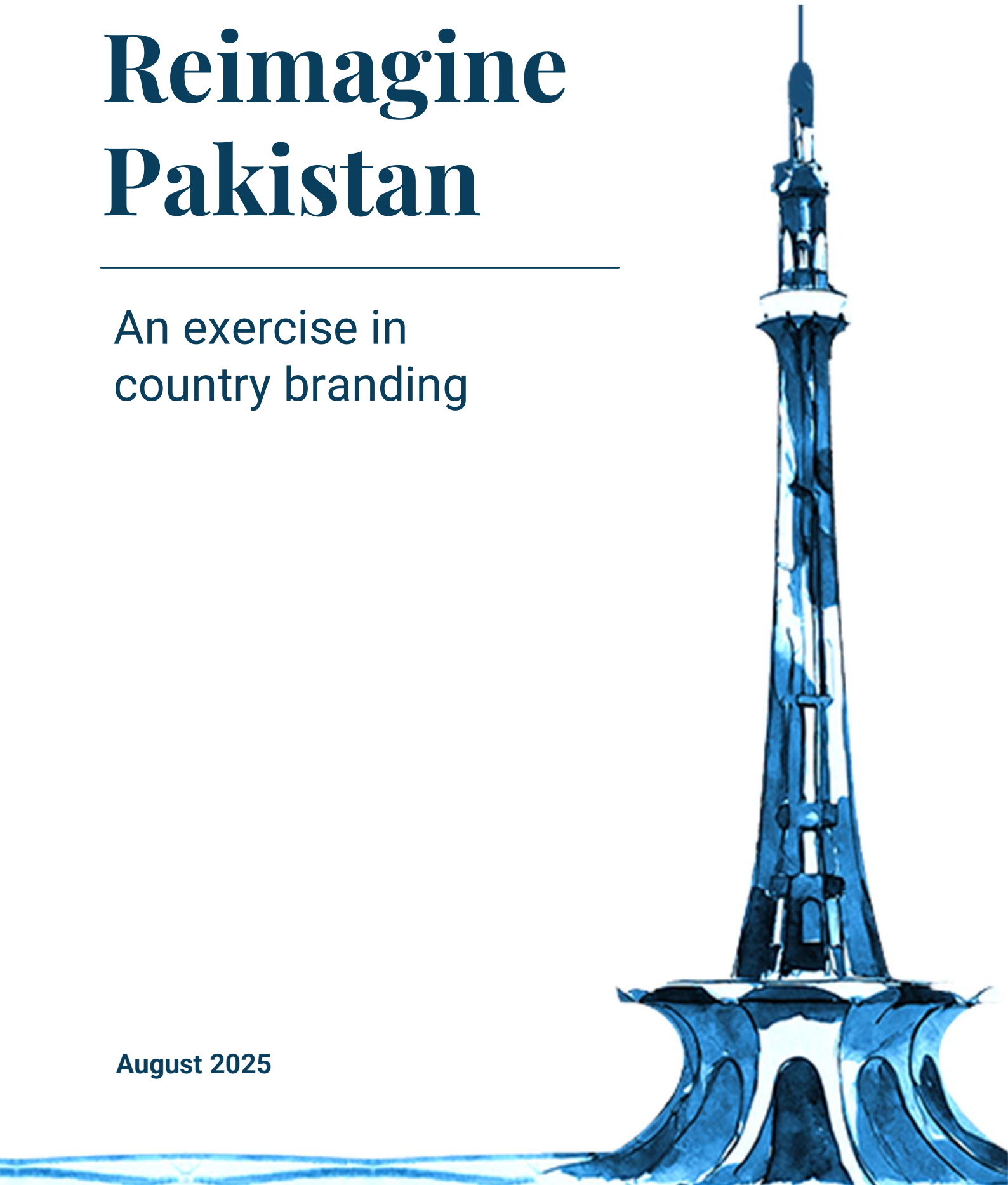


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Introduction

The name of most any country sparks certain perceptions and emotions. In a nutshell, that (and not a logo, tagline or marketing campaign) is its brand.

When you think about France, for example, romance, high fashion, and cuisine might come immediately to mind.

The precise perceptions and emotions that are invoked will influence your behavior as a potential buyer, visitor, or social media follower and can therefore be priced as an intangible asset. In the right context, the simple mention of France will elevate an ordinary association: coffee maker to French press, onion soup to French onion soup, and vanilla (the very definition of plain) to French vanilla.

Country branding is a deliberate attempt by a country to manage its overall brand. If a country neglects to focus on national branding and to craft its own narrative, its influence wanes and it becomes subject to the perceptions and narratives imposed by stronger and more influential countries.

Pakistan's country brand is at risk

In limited cases, the mention of Pakistan can elevate an association (basmati rice or mangoes, for example). Too often, the reverse is true: the country's mention gives the buyer (and, by the same token, the visitor, investor or voter) pause.

It is no secret that the country has been lurching from crisis—financial, economic, political, geopolitical—to crisis. Notwithstanding minor victories on the battlefield or in the sports arena, internal and external observers alike are more pessimistic about Pakistan today than they have been in decades.

If we can look beyond the moment, however, it is possible to rebuild Pakistan's image.

In particular, we can apply the lens of country branding to answer five strategic questions:

1. What does Pakistan mean?
2. Who is Pakistan for?
3. How do we win hearts and minds?
4. What is the right peer set?
5. How do we keep track?

Brand is the image or reputation of something, whether intended or unintended.

Country brand is the image or reputation of a country, locally and internationally.

Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a modern Muslim nation-state in South Asia, with more than 240 million people. It was founded in 1947 upon the partition of British India as a homeland for the Muslims of South Asia and declared an Islamic republic in 1951. The name "Pakistan" alludes to the historical areas of Punjab, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Sindh and Baluchistan, as well as to "land of the pure".

What does Pakistan mean?

Pakistan has always been as much an idea as a place. In fact, fitting the ideology of Pakistan to its territorial boundaries has been one of the thorniest issues at the heart of Pakistani identity and Pakistani history.

For the newly independent country, there were at least three intellectual claims that continue to influence the self-image of Pakistanis today:

1. Pakistan is a homeland for the Muslims of India and the free practice of Islam (by Mohammed Iqbal).
2. Pakistan is also a safe space for people of all faiths (by Mohammed Ali Jinnah).
3. *Pakistan ka matlab kya? La ilaha illallah!* (see sidebar).

These claims continue to inspire Pakistanis seventy-eight years later, but exactly how they should be understood and implemented has been hotly debated throughout the country's history.

For the purposes of reimagining Pakistan, here are some new possibilities to consider in 2025:

From past to future

Pakistan is no longer a homeland or destination for the Muslims of South Asia. The original impetus for Pakistan never translated to a perpetual or global mandate to settle Muslims (in contrast with Israel, for example, which continues to court Jews from around the world). With the partition of British India three quarters of a century behind us and the partition of Pakistan a half century ago, the country needs a new vision.

What can a large Muslim country with a young population offer its people and the world? The future is necessarily open-ended and contains yet unrealized possibilities. Indeed, Pakistan's founding ideas can continue to inspire future generations to constitute and reconstitute a social order based on certain universalist ideals.



شبِ ظلمت میں گزاری ہے
اٹھو وقتِ بیداری ہے
جنگِ شجاعت جاری ہے
آتش و آہن سے لڑ جا
پاکستان کا مطلب کیا؟
لا الہ الا اللہ

The night has been spent in darkness.
Wake! It is time to rise.
The war of bravery is being fought.
Stand against fire and steel.
What is the meaning of Pakistan?
There is no god but God!

Pakistan ka matlab kya? La ilaha illallah! was penned in 1943 by Asghar Sodai, a Sialkot-born poet and close associate of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. It quickly became a rallying cry for the Pakistan movement and lives on as a shorthand for the country's raison d'être.

We must also not judge matters too early. Pakistan is still a young country. While politicians and economic planners might think in five-year cycles, nation building and country branding require a longer timeline.

What might Pakistan look like in two decades? When it celebrates its centennial in 2044 (in Hijri years) or 2047 (in Gregorian years), the country may well have a new generation of political leadership, a transformed economic environment, and a digitally connected citizenry. In technological, geopolitical, and environmental terms, we may also be living in a very different world.

In all these ways and for all these reasons, we must retrain ourselves to look forward, not back.

From nation-state to community

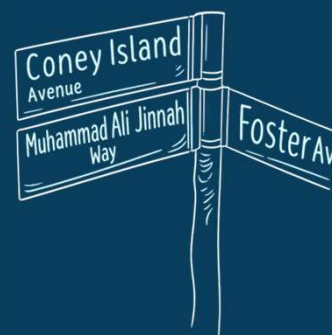
The modern nation-state is a creature of modern politics (since the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648), mapping political boundaries to individual nations: a separate country for every people. And yet a large population of Pakistanis now live outside Pakistan. As with other diaspora nations, we need not limit Pakistan to territorial terms. “Chinatown” and “Little Korea” in New York and the splitting of Devon Avenue in Chicago into “Gandhi Marg”, “Muhammad Ali Jinnah Way” and “Sheikh Mujib Way” attest that country brands can exist outside their countries of origin.

By simply reframing Pakistan as “where Pakistanis live”, the Pakistani community suddenly includes cities from countries and continents around the world. When Pakistan beats India in a cricket match in Sharjah, Sharjah is a Pakistani city. When a person of Pakistani origin becomes First Minister of Scotland, it is a win for Pakistan.

The inexorable march of digital and social media also expand the notion of Pakistan as a community. Zoom calls bind migrant workers with families and tech companies with development teams. Crowdfunding campaigns give donors the opportunity to see and support schools and wells in Pakistan from around the world. In fact, the anthropological term “imagined community” applied to nations within nation-states might also be applied to national communities interconnected by heritage, travel, trade and investment.



Area 2071 in Dubai’s Jumeirah Twin Towers offers a great example of looking forward: a physical center of government innovation dedicated to a vision of the United Arab Emirates 100 years after its founding in 1971 (hence the name 2071).



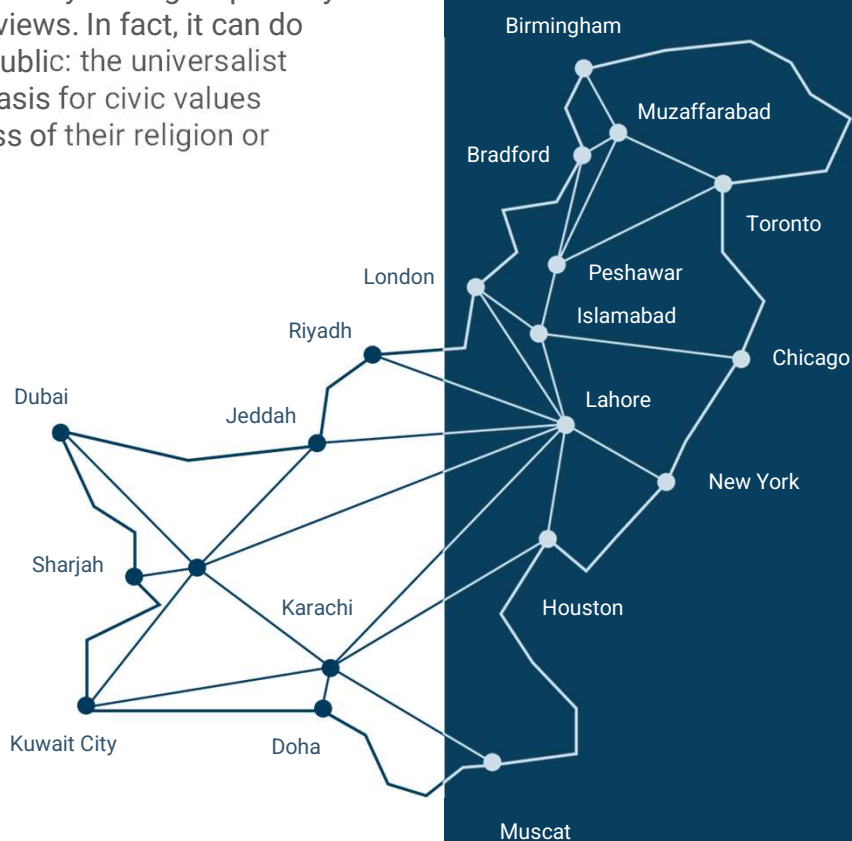
Muhammad Ali Jinnah Way is a street in Chicago, IL named after the founder of Pakistan.

From purity to plurality

The quest for purity has been part of Pakistan's national project, beginning with the country's name (*pak*, or "pure" in Urdu) and at various points in subsequent history. At this point in time, however, the notion of purity is at odds with Pakistan's global perception (right or wrong) and with the lived reality of Pakistanis (whether we consider the country's ideological divisions, environmental pollution, or political corruption).

The opposite of purity need not be impurity. We can look instead to a different value that is also Pakistani: plurality.

Living with difference will be a necessary ingredient to peaceful co-existence in the future. Instead of purity, a reimagined Pakistan must successfully manage a plurality of cultures, languages, and worldviews. In fact, it can do so while remaining an Islamic republic: the universalist ideals of the religion can be the basis for civic values shared by all its citizens regardless of their religion or religiosity.



The Pakistani community includes cities from around the globe, reflecting an increasingly connected world.

FOR DISCUSSION

- What does Pakistan mean today?
- Should we shift our focus from past to future?
- Should we shift our focus from nation-state to community?
- Should we shift our focus from purity to plurality?

Who is Pakistan for?

Country brands depend on a variety of local and international stakeholders. While some use the ballot box, others vote with their feet or with their pockets. Identifying a country's most important stakeholders and prioritizing among them is critical to developing a strong and coherent country brand.

In the contemporary Pakistani context, three stakeholders require particular attention:

1. The Pakistani diaspora

Among international stakeholders, the Pakistani diaspora is strategically significant for a number of interrelated reasons:

- Expatriate Pakistanis and their children have family and cultural ties with Pakistan, resulting in a higher emotional investment than other people outside the country.
- They are likely to send remittances to Pakistan, visit Pakistan on vacation, buy property in Pakistan, and invest in businesses in Pakistan, making them a significant source of capital.
- Their greater familiarity with Pakistan makes them less susceptible to negative perceptions and more able to mitigate attendant risks.
- After attaining academic credentials and business or career success outside Pakistan, some expatriates (or "Wapistanis") can reverse the brain drain by advising, investing in and mentoring future generations of Pakistani talent.
- By serving as cultural ambassadors abroad, they have the ability to influence perceptions of Pakistan in the wider international community.
- At a time when it may not be realistic to expect the wider international community to have a positive image of Pakistan, there is no shortage of Pakistanis abroad well positioned to contribute to Pakistan and its country brand.

Wapistani (from *wapis*, or return, and Pakistani) is an emerging term for a person in the Pakistani diaspora who, having achieved some measure of professional or commercial success, returns to or re-engages with Pakistan as an investor, business owner, advisor, or activist.

2. Pakistan's business sector

Among local stakeholders, the commercial and civic sectors are especially significant at this juncture:

- At a time when the country's military and political institutions lack widespread support, the business sector can be a source of soft power at home and abroad.
- As non-state actors, businesses can also freely partner with international stakeholders.
- As a result of the genocide in Palestine, greater consumer awareness has led to a disaffection towards multi-national brands and new pride in local Pakistani brands.
- By incorporating cultural symbols in their own branding, Pakistani businesses can enrich their own design vocabulary while giving those symbols new forms and wider reach.

At an industry level (among lobbies and professional associations, for example) as well as at the level of individual corporations, businesses can and should develop a Pakistan strategy. For some, it will be a risk management or loss mitigation exercise. For others, it might uncover opportunities from sourcing to talent to positioning and marketing.

3. Pakistani youth

Looking to the future, perhaps the most important stakeholders are the next generations of Pakistanis. This is not mere poetry:

- Making decisions based on political elections or budget crises will inevitably favor short-term fixes. Pakistan's return to progress, on the other hand, is a long climb.
- Reimagining a different future for Pakistan requires looking beyond current debates and divisions. By solving for the interests of their children and grandchildren, decision-makers will be more likely to embrace sustainable and inclusive solutions.

FOR DISCUSSION

- Which stakeholders should we prioritize to help lift Pakistan's country brand?
- How best can we engage them and what role should they play?



PERSONA:
BASHIR, THE BUSINESS OWNER

Profile

- 54, married with children
- Runs second-generation family business with brothers
- Country-wide office network with a Dubai sales office

Business ambitions

- Increasing local market share
- Expansion to global markets
- Attracting foreign venture capital and JV partners
- Retaining top talent

Business pain points

- Unstable macroeconomic environment
- Energy crises
- Customers have reduced purchasing power

Personal ambitions

- Commercial success
- Mentoring future leaders
- Putting company or country on the world map

Personal pain points

- Physical and financial insecurity
- Frustration with national and international politics
- Keeping family in Pakistan

Areas of impact

- Shareholders
- Employees
- Clients
- Regulators
- International partners

How do we win hearts and minds?

Country branding is both a science and an art, combining a structured process with an emotional appeal to relevant audiences.

Five key dimensions

Over the long-term, we can win hearts and minds by engaging stakeholders across five key dimensions (adapted from Bloom Consulting's work on nation branding): tourism, exports, talent, investment, and general perception.

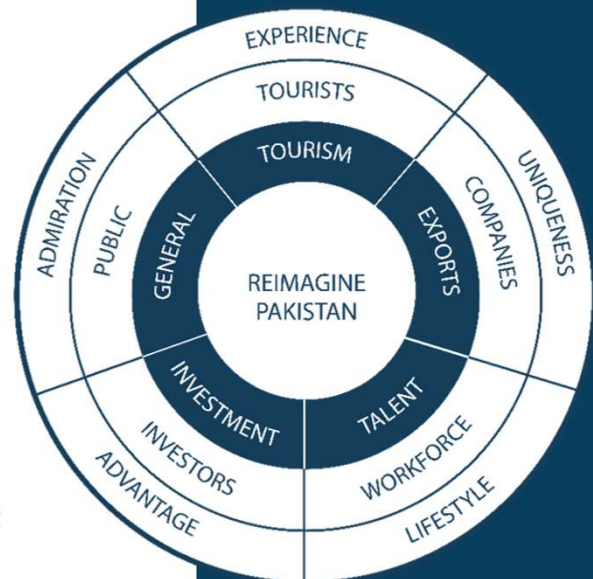
Let's take each one in turn.

Tourism

In recent years, foreign travel bloggers such as Luke Damant and Dale Phillip have visited and highlighted the northern regions of the country, drawing increased interest from international travelers. According to a 2023 report by the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, the number of international visitors to these areas has seen a steady rise, with a 20% increase over the last two years.

Despite this growing attention, there are still challenges when it comes to infrastructure and connectivity. Road networks and mobile coverage in some areas remain unreliable, which can be a deterrent for travelers. However, the potential to promote Pakistan's tourism is significant. By improving infrastructure, creating virtual maps, promoting travel agents and tour guides, highlighting safe travel zones, and sharing resources such as the best seasons to visit, Pakistan can rebrand itself as a budget-friendly yet appealing travel destination.

Fortunately, the natural beauty of Pakistan's mountains and valleys speaks for itself. With some targeted social media efforts and collaborations with influencers, the country can enhance its visibility and attract a broader range of international visitors.



An adaptation of Bloom Consulting's branding wheel featuring five key dimensions: tourism, exports, talent, investment, and general perception.

Exports

Pakistan has demonstrated significant potential in exports, exceeding the target of \$30.64 billion in FY24. Key export categories include rice, knitwear, ready-made garments, bedsheets, and a wide range of textile items, which have long been Pakistan's economic stronghold. However, in order to maintain momentum and increase global competitiveness, Pakistan must diversify its export profile, particularly by focusing on value-added products beyond textiles.

Currently, Pakistan relies heavily on raw materials and semi-finished goods in the textile sector. To truly harness its export potential, the country needs to shift toward a broader range of finished goods in various categories. This can open doors to new markets and allow Pakistani products to compete more effectively on quality, not just price.

Bateel (Saudi Arabia), the leading luxury brand of dates, offers an instructive example. It has successfully elevated a simple product into a global delicacy. Where dates were traditionally sold by type and origin, Bateel switched the focus to an array of date-themed luxury products with premium packaging and an experiential retail model that includes high-end cafés. Staying true to its Saudi roots while embracing global design and service standards, the company has positioned itself as both a brand ambassador for Saudi Arabia and a competitive player in the international gourmet market.

Pakistan, with its rich array of specialty foods, can learn from this approach. Saffron from Hunza, Himalayan pink salt from Chitral, and organic honey from Swat all have the right ingredients but not yet the brand to command a premium or appeal to a global audience.



Saffron
from Hunza



Himalayan pink salt
from Chitral



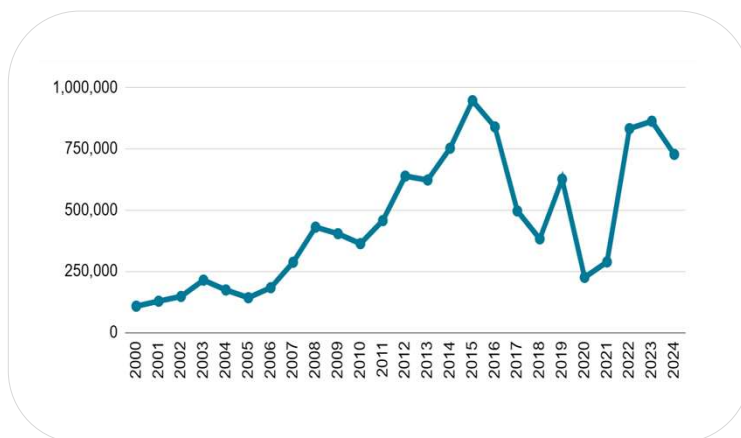
Organic honey
from Swat

Elevating Pakistani commodities to desirable brands in the international marketplace can benefit from and reinforce Pakistan's own country brand.

Ethical consumerism offers another opportunity. In the wake of the Palestinian genocide, dominant Western brands have taken a hit in Muslim majority markets while local brands have won new followers (step aside Coca-Cola, Next Cola is here). By aligning its export strategy with ethical consumerism, Pakistan can boost demand for Pakistani products in countries where support for the BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanctions) movement is strong. The benefits are both moral and strategic: by giving consumers ethical alternatives, Pakistan can burnish its reputation as a nation founded on universal Islamic values.

Talent

While Pakistan has suffered from a brain drain for several decades, it has spiked since 2021 (2018 notwithstanding Covid-19 lockdowns). One might conclude that no marketing will change the economic reality that whoever can migrate will find better jobs abroad.



*Pakistani emigration
1999 – 2024*

*Source: Bureau of Emigration
and Overseas Employment*

We can change tactics. Instead of convincing people to stay in Pakistan, we might expand opportunities for Pakistani expatriates to contribute their talent to Pakistan from abroad. Forming and strengthening academic, commercial, and cultural links between foreign universities, employers and non-profits and their Pakistani counterparts can help.

In parallel, we can showcase success stories in Pakistan to underscore opportunities at home. Strategies vary: employer awards (Great Place to Work), pitch competitions (see *Shark Tank on the next page*), and a mentorship network connecting business leaders with top talent (the recently launched Qimam Fellowship). Across the spectrum, promoting local champions not only strengthens the business sector but also attracts and retains local talent.

There is also a middle space between “stay” and “go”. With globalization and the continued rise of digital and social media, we can imagine a workforce that is both in and outside Pakistan. The gig economy and remote work are early beneficiaries of these trends. What would it look like for every Pakistani employee in the country to also have a job outside Pakistan, and for every Pakistani employee abroad to also have a job in Pakistan?

Investment

In the fiscal year 2025, Pakistan received \$2.46 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI), showing a slight rise from \$2.35 billion in the previous year. In June 2025 alone, FDI inflows grew 27.3% over the previous year to \$310.4 million. However, outflows also rose significantly, reaching \$103.8 million.

For global investors, the projects completed or underway under CPEC are an obvious starting point. With the support of two governments and a spelled-out framework for infrastructure development, trade facilitation, and industrial cooperation, CPEC offers a credible platform to demonstrate Pakistan’s long-term growth trajectory. Leveraging these successes in investment promotion materials can reinforce the country’s positioning as a strategic hub connecting South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.

For individual investors, repositioning Pakistan as an investment destination relies more on the right mix of investor-friendly policies and incentives, especially for the Pakistani diaspora. Streamlined remittance channels, preferential tax treatment, and simplified business registration (illustrated by initiatives like the Roshan Digital Account) build trust and attract capital, turning diaspora communities into active partners in Pakistan's growth story.

While a smaller segment of the economy, startups represent an important area of innovation (and lever of change for country branding). The country's burgeoning startup ecosystem includes in-person events like +92Disrupt and Future Fest Pakistan, start-up incubation centers like the National Incubation Center, and impact-oriented platforms like Acumen Fund and Endeavour Pakistan. On the media front, the launch of Shark Tank Pakistan (and now Bazaar) has injected new energy by bringing these conversations to a wider audience.

Overseas entrepreneur networks and international tech events also play a key role. OPEN (Organization of Pakistani Entrepreneurs), Paklaunch, Pakistan Tech Summit, LEAP (Saudi Arabia) and Web Summit (Qatar) not only showcase Pakistani talent but also help change the narrative on Pakistan.

General perception

The general perception of Pakistan on the global stage has historically been fraught with challenges. Negative stereotypes have long overshadowed the country's rich heritage and diversity. In fact, "Paki" is a derogatory term in the United Kingdom, reflecting the prejudice faced by Pakistani communities abroad.

In popular media too, Pakistan has traditionally been portrayed through a dark lens, with American TV shows like *Homeland* depicting the country as unstable and rife with extremism.

As more Pakistani writers and directors enter Hollywood, however, we are beginning to see more nuanced portrayals. The film *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the mainstream success of comedian and actor Kumail Nanjiani, and the comic book miniseries Ms. Marvel offer American audiences (and thereby the world) a more sympathetic glimpse of Pakistani culture and heritage,



Shark Tank Pakistan is a local adaptation of the global franchise, spotlighting Pakistani startups, providing them with an opportunity to pitch to wealthy investors.



Ms Marvel on Disney+ not only showcases Pakistani culture but also educates audiences about the Partition of 1947.

breaking away from stereotypes and showcasing a multidimensional view of Pakistani identity.

Even negative portrayals can be humanizing. Filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, who has won two Oscars for her compelling documentaries, has shown the world a more complex, often overlooked side of Pakistani society. While the subjects of her documentaries have received criticism and sparked controversy domestically, it is important not to shy away from these topics because they bring crucial issues to light, encourage dialogue, and challenge societal norms that hinder progress.

Sports is another arena of influence for country brands. The opiate of the masses has found new roles beyond the stadium: as a potent source of national pride, as a dramatization of national rivalries or international relations, and as a basis for friendship across boundaries.

In Pakistan's case, the Pakistan Super League (PSL) serves as a tool of cultural diplomacy and international goodwill. In 2024, 254 foreign players registered for the league. As Pakistan's socio-political climate sees improvement, the Pakistan Cricket Board can attract more foreign players and turn both Pakistani and foreign athletes into brand ambassadors for the country at large.



Pakistan Super League (PSL) boosts tourism and cultural diplomacy by attracting international players, fans, and media to Pakistan.

In fact, the proliferation of social media has made the selection and promotion of brand ambassadors easier than ever. Even Pope Leo is joining the fray, with a first-ever program for Catholic influencers hosted by the Vatican in July 2025. Now imagine a systematic program for Pakistan that collaborates with rising influencers (Pakistani, Pakistani origin, and foreign talent) across content categories (e.g., business, current affairs, religion, fitness, travel, lifestyle and entertainment).

Perceptions don't change overnight—but we have the ingredients and tools to shift them incrementally, audience by audience and from one generation to the next.

Building a new vocabulary

While country branding aims at ideas and perceptions, its ammunition is words and images. Reimagining Pakistan therefore also requires building a new verbal and visual vocabulary.

Symbols

Pakistan's national symbols are one point of departure for this exercise: its flag, founding figures, historical monuments, and so on. Rather than taking these symbols as they are, however, we must evaluate which have gained or lost utility. The same symbols can also be given new meanings if used in a different context or novel combination.



1982



1992



2024

Historic victories in sports become national symbols. Different sports step into this role at different times: hockey at the 1982 World Cup, cricket at the 1992 World Cup, and javelin at the 2024 Summer Olympics.

Heroes

Storytelling also requires heroes. Beyond the country's founding figures, we must have fresh faces that can inspire sentiment and embody the best of what it means to be Pakistani today. Inevitably, a list of living heroes will reflect a variety of political, socioeconomic and religious views. While individual heroes may have both supporters and detractors (Nobel laureate Malala Yousufzai comes to mind), together they should exemplify the country brand.

Words

Building a list of keywords can also inform marketing campaigns for different audiences. In each case, we must choose a posture of cautious optimism. Between despair and naivete, country branding requires cultivating an achievable image.

How to describe...	Despair	Optimism	Naivete
Pakistani society	at war	vibrant	in harmony
Pakistan's economy	Impoverished	a study in contrasts	prosperous
Pakistanis	depressed	resilient	content
Pakistan's governance	dysfunctional	inefficient	well managed
Pakistan as a tourist destination	dangerous	off the beaten path	heaven on Earth
Pakistan as an investment destination	uncertain	overlooked	attractive

FOR DISCUSSION

- Which domain should we tackle first?
- What is the right point of intervention in each domain?
- Should we retain or replace Pakistan's national symbols?
- Do we need new heroes? Where shall we find them?



Sitara-e-Imtiaz is a symbol of exemplary achievement and honor awarded annually by the Government of Pakistan. Award winners—selected for their heroism and excellence—are natural brand ambassadors for Pakistan.

What is the right peer set?

Picking the right peer set is necessary to evaluate the performance of a country brand.

To see where Pakistan stands among other country brands, we must select a peer set against whom to benchmark Pakistan's position on a regular basis. Like measuring economic or human development, this is a moving target: a country might improve on its past performance only to realize that it has fallen behind others who improved faster.

Geographic neighbors

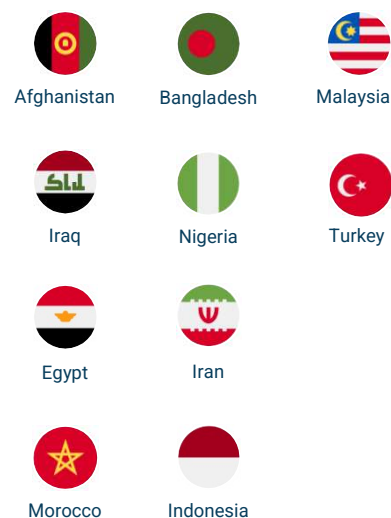
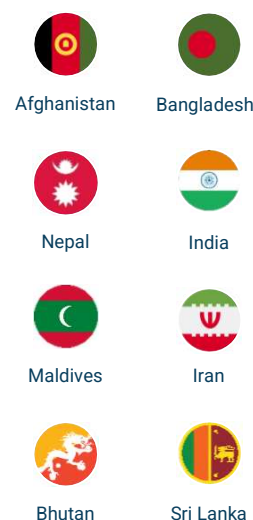
Pakistan's traditional points of comparison have been its geographic neighbors: India, first and foremost, but also Iran, Afghanistan, or the South Asian bloc as a whole.

Pakistan's preoccupation with India was a historical necessity. On the eve of independence, the two countries scrambled for resources previously administered by the British. Moreover, the very idea of Pakistan was defined in opposition to India. However, India's advantages in size and resources have only been compounded with time (first with the division of Pakistan and more recently with India's sustained economic success), making any comparisons less and less useful. As the country matures, Pakistan must step out of India's shadow.

It is certainly possible to retain Pakistan's neighbors as its peer set. The result is a very mixed bag, however: different cultural groups (many of whom share ties with Pakistan), religious majorities, population sizes, and levels of economic development.

Large Muslim majority countries

If we scan the countries of the world for an alternate point of comparison, a distinct profile emerges: large Muslim majority countries at an intermediate level of economic development, a strong military, and mixed results with democratic politics. Like Pakistan, these countries share a religious identity and hold potential for economic and political prominence on the world stage.



Pakistan's peers have been investing in country branding initiatives across the five domains we've reviewed: tourism, exports, talent, investment and general perception. Each of these can yield insights for Pakistan's own efforts.

Here is a partial list:

Digital Bangladesh Sonar Bangla	
Experience Egypt Egypt's 2030 Vision	
Made in Nigeria for Export (MINE) Nigeria Tourism Promotion	
Invest in Iraq Tourism rebirth	
Malaysia Truly Asia Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H)	
Discover the Potential (DTP) Invest in Turkey	
Wonderful Indonesia Campaign Indonesia Digital Economy 2020	
Moroccan Craftmanship Promotion Invest in Morocco	
Tourism Iran Initiative Iran's Cultural Diplomacy Program	

Country branding initiatives by large Muslim majority countries

On Pakistan's part, Uraan Pakistan is a five-year strategic plan (corresponding to (2024-2029) that focuses on key areas such as tourism, investment, and economic growth. While it doesn't touch on country branding directly (its aim being economic development), it can be an effective starting point to align economic priorities with managing the country's image.

The government ministry charged with Uraan Pakistan, the Ministry of Planning Development and Special Initiatives, has very recently also formed a National Centre for Brand Development (NCBD) to promote Pakistan and Pakistani brands globally. While still in its formative stage, we might finally have an institutional home for managing Pakistan's country brand.

FOR DISCUSSION

- How important is India to Pakistan's country brand?
- Should Pakistan look to its immediate neighbors or to other large Muslim countries for comparison?
- What can we learn from Pakistan's peers?

How do we keep track?

While we cannot overlook the importance of tangible metrics such as GDP, export revenues, and performance across key sectors like investments, trade, and tourism, it is equally critical to acknowledge the role of perception in shaping these outcomes. A nation's image in these areas can directly impact its economic success. Therefore, in addition to focusing on traditional performance indicators, Pakistan should aim to benchmark itself against its peers in global indices such as the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and the Country Brand Ranking for Trade and Tourism, published by Bloom Consultancy. These indices not only reflect how Pakistan is perceived but also help identify areas for improvement.

Furthermore, it is essential to monitor public opinion and investor sentiment by leveraging global reputation trackers and media sentiment analysis tools. This balanced approach will ensure that Pakistan can effectively gauge both its performance and perception on the global stage, allowing for more informed strategies that enhance its standing across key sectors.

Monitor Pakistan's image across dimensions

To effectively monitor Pakistan's image across dimensions such as trade, tourism, and talent, a multi-faceted approach can be adopted, leveraging both quantitative metrics and perception-based indices.

Dimension	Index	Additional metrics
Tourism	Country Brand Ranking for Tourism (Bloom Consulting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel and tourism data (World Economic Forum) Sentiment analysis of news and social media
Trade	Country Brand Ranking for Trade (Bloom Consulting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Trade Organization (WTO) data Sentiment analysis on global trade platforms
Investment	Global Competitiveness Index (World Economic Foundation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign direct investment (FDI) data (State bank of Pakistan) Sentiment analysis of news and social media
Talent	Country Brand Ranking for Talent (Bloom Consulting)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global human capital trends (Deloitte) Sentiment analysis of news and social media
General Perception	Corruption Perceptions Index	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current life evaluation data (World Happiness Report) Sentiment analysis of news and social media

Country Brand Ranking (Trade)

Pakistan has shown an overall improvement over the years in the country brand ranking index for trade by, with its rank progressing from 52 in 2015 to 43 in 2024, despite fluctuations. Notably, Pakistan reached its best position of 41 in 2022. Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka appear to be on upward trajectories in their country brand rankings, while India, despite its strong performance, shows a minor decline in recent years. Additionally, regional competitors like Bangladesh are closing the gap with Pakistan, signaling the need for Pakistan to enhance its efforts in trade branding to stay ahead.

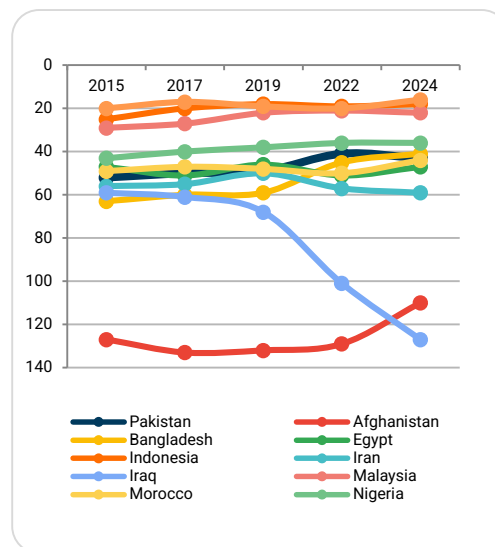
The rankings suggest that global perceptions of trade potential are highly dynamic, and even top performers like India can experience declines, emphasizing the importance of consistent branding efforts.

Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)

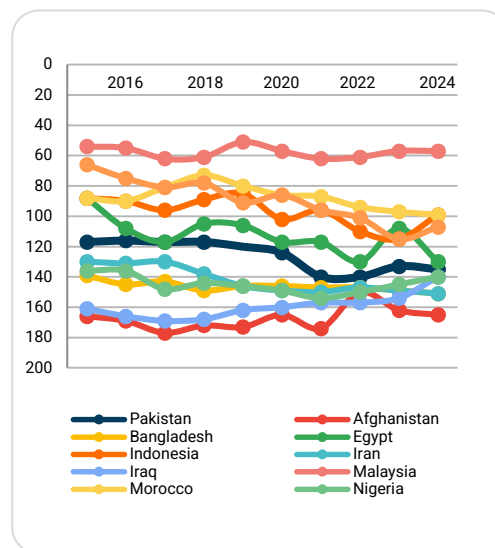
Pakistan's CPI ranking has fluctuated over the years but generally shows a downward trend (indicating increased perceived corruption). From a rank of 117 in 2015, Pakistan worsened to 140 in 2021 and remained there in 2022. However, there was an improvement in 2024 to 135.

Pakistan, India, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh seem to be facing persistent corruption-related challenges, as indicated by their consistently low rankings and downward trend. The fluctuations in CPI rankings across these countries suggest that while some are improving their governance and corruption control mechanisms (like Nepal and Bhutan), others face greater challenges (Pakistan, India, Afghanistan).

For Pakistan, improving its CPI ranking would be crucial to enhancing its global image, governance credibility, and ability to attract foreign investments.



Country Brand Ranking (Trade)
2015–2024



Corruption Perception Index (CPI)
2015–2024

FOR DISCUSSION

- What are the right metrics to monitor Pakistan's country brand?
- Should we focus on socioeconomic indices, perception indices, or both?
- To what use should we put this data?

Next steps

This concept paper is the beginning of a conversation aimed at reimagining Pakistan's image and potential across various sectors.

We are publishing this paper on LinkedIn and reaching out to individual experts and institutional partners to engage with the discussion questions outlined in this document. Their insights and yours will elicit a deeper understanding of the arguments made here.

If you would also like to provide feedback or engage in a conversation on this paper, please reach out to us at pakistan@algebra.co.

Further readings

Literature

Adeel Malik and Maya Tudor: "Pakistan's coming crisis", *Journal of Democracy* (Johns Hopkins University Press 2024). [Link](#)

Meg Rithmire, Salaar A. Sheikh and Hong Zhang: Pakistan at 75: When will the nazuk mor end? (Harvard Business Review, 2024). [Link](#)

Farzana Shaikh: *Making Sense of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009). [Link](#)

Muhammad Asad: "Calling All Muslims" (Radio Pakistan broadcasts, 1947), *This Law of Ours and Other Essays* (Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1987). [Link](#)

All-India Muslim League, "Pakistan Resolution of 1940" (Infopakistan.pk). [Link](#)

Qudrat-ullah Shahaab: "Pakistan ka matlab kya?", *Shahaab Nama* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1987). [Link](#)

Simon Anholt: *Competitive identity: The new brand management for nations, cities and regions*. (Palgrave Macmillan London: 2006). [Link](#)

Case studies

Uraan Pakistan	https://uraanpakistan.pk/
Brand South Africa	https://brandsouthafrica.com/
Digital Bangladesh	https://www.undp.org/bangladesh/blog/digital-bangladesh-innovative-bangladesh-road-2041
Egypt Vision 2030	https://mped.gov.eg/Files/Egypt_Vision_2030_EnglishDigitalUse.pdf
Malaysia Truly Asia	https://www.tourism.gov.my/campaigns/view/malaysia-truly-asia
Qatar Brand Toolkit	https://gba.gco.gov.qa/guidelines/brand-identity/
Visit Dubai	https://www.visitdubai.com/

Data

CIA World Factbook	https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/pakistan/
Gallup Pakistan	https://gallup.com.pk/
Pakistan Budget 2024 (visualization)	https://www.dawn.com/news/1854615
Pakistan's Export Basket 2021 (interactive)	https://atlas.cid.harvard.edu/countries/168/export-basket
UNDP: Pakistan	https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/PAK
World Bank	https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/pakistan

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