**Digital population census**

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Digitisation is being introduced, encouraged and promoted in every sector of the national economy and activities both in public and private sectors in order to keep pace with scientific and technological innovations around the world. In furtherance of this quite appreciable objective and efforts, the 7th Population and Housing Census is being held in the country in February and March of 2023.

The Population and Housing Census, according to experts, is a vital national exercise which is linked with the provision of the latest data for key policy-making matters regarding development programmes, political representation and resource allocation at the federal, provincial and other levels.

A national census is mandated by the Constitution of Pakistan to be held every ten years. But there have been instances, quite unfortunately, that the census has either been delayed considerably or held earlier than the stipulated period for varying reasons in the country’s politically chequered history of 75 years.

[Pakistan welcomes EU's move to remove it from high-risk countries List](https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2023/pakistan-welcomes-eu-s-move-to-remove-it-from-high-risk-countries-list)

According to information available from official sources, the first-ever Digital Population and Housing Census are being held on the basis of comprehensive recommendations made by the Census Advisory Committee earlier last year. The main recommendations of the Census Advisory Committee include; conducting the census digitally with real-time online monitoring and geo-tagging of all structures. It must ensure universality, counting of the whole population residing in the country. De-jure method of enumeration is recommended. A Single Census questionnaire may be administered which must be strictly in relevance to the objectives of the census. Law enforcement agencies may be used for security but not for enumeration.

Furthermore, field data collection and monitoring may be carried out by provincial governments’ staff. Comprehensive trainings and involvement of graduate students in the remuneration process is recommended. Involvement of stakeholders from start to finish. Establishment of a National Census Coordination Centre (N3C) with representation of provincial governments for effective monitoring coordination and policy decisions. Effective publicity campaign with effective use of social media or clarity regarding the primary objective of census which may begin early and extend right up to the release of the first initial results.

[US expects Biden's nominee, Ajay Banga, to be elected World Bank chief](https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2023/us-expects-biden-s-nominee-ajay-banga-to-be-elected-world-bank-chief)

Statistically speaking, after the independence of Pakistan in 1947, the first census took place in February 1951. The Dominion of Pakistan, both West and East Pakistan had a population of 75.3 million of which West Pakistan had a population of 33.7 million and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) had a population of 42 million.

The second population census was conducted in January 1961.The population was 93 million with 42.9 million residing in West Pakistan and 50 million residing in East Pakistan.

Following the dismemberment of Pakistan and East Pakistan in 1971, the third census was held in 1972 according to which, the population of Pakistan was 65.3 million.

The fourth decennial population census of Pakistan was conducted in March 1981. According to the 1981 census, the population of Pakistan was 84.3 million.

The fifth population census was held in 1998 after a delay of 8 long years instead of 1991. The population of Pakistan then was 132.4 million.

The sixth census was conducted in two phases in 2017. According to the results, the country’s population was 207.7 million with an annual growth rate of 2.4 percent.

[Top court adjourns hearings on ongoing suo motu notices](https://www.nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2023/top-court-adjourns-hearings-on-ongoing-suo-motu-notices)

As is generally said and believed, figures speak much louder than words. The figures given above indeed reflect an alarming picture of the rapid population growth of Pakistan at a pace not in line with the national resources available. It is also indicative of the fact that all population welfare measures over the years have failed miserably to produce desired results as the population continues to grow unabatedly. More about the population growth bomb which is feared to explode with severe negative and quite disastrous consequences any time sometime later.