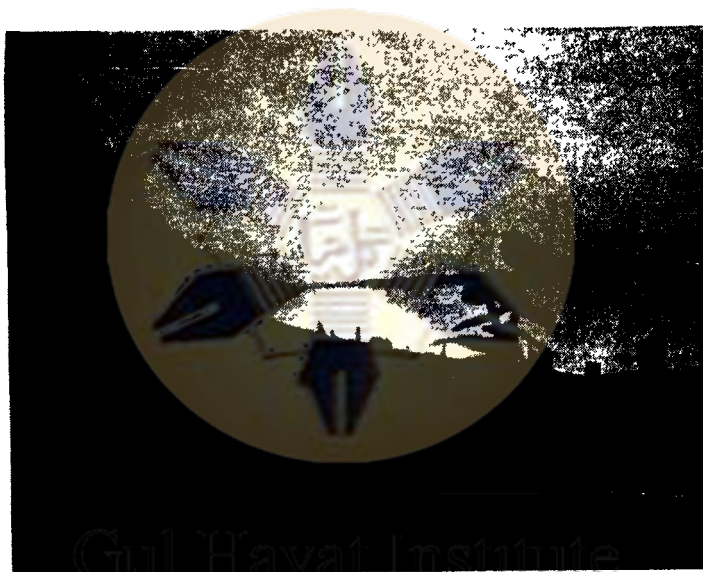




AN INTRODUCTION TO KARACHI



THE LLOYD (SUKKUR) BARRAGE
(Karachi's Hinterland)
At Sunset Time

AN INTRODUCTION TO KARACHI:

ITS ENVIRONS AND HINTERLAND



BY

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PRESS OPINION

“ Dr. Pithawalla's knowledge of the geography of Sind is unrivalled. He is our first geographical researcher to receive the Doctorate of Science and has received the warmest tributes of academic colleagues all over the world. He has seventeen publications to his credit. And indeed in the words of a book review that appeared in the paper six years ago, he may rightly be called the *pioneer of regional geographical research in this country*. His knowledge of the geography Dr. Pithawalla applies practically Any pronouncement of his on the Sukkur Barrage should also be most carefully considered, for it has behind it the authority of specialised scholarship.”


The TIMES' ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA,
Bombay, March 7, 1943.



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Gul Hayat Institute

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TO
MY NOBLE MOTHER SUNABAT
WHO OFFERED TO SELL
HER ONLY GOLD BANGLES
TO HELP ME IN MY COLLEGE STUDIES.

Gul Hayat Institute

FOREWORD

The need of a suitable introductory treatise on the city of Karachi and its environs has been keenly felt for a long time and, with the permanent establishment of the Government of Pakistan in the city, this need has become greater than ever before. In 1946, the present author published an exhaustive study of the Karachi area, entitled "Geology and Geography of Karachi and its Neighbourhood" in two Parts. Owing to the difficulties of printing and publishing books at the time, only a limited number of copies of it was issued and the publication is now out of print. Before a second edition of it can be prepared, it is hoped that this little book will help persons interested in the city, particularly students and tourists.

Though haphazardly extended on almost every side from time to time, the city is attractive and well worth visiting. It is beautiful, if not grand; habitable, if not quite healthy; and growing, if not industrially yet. If it is to be the worthy capital of the Dominion of Pakistan, it needs a Master Plan reminiscent of its oriental character, its brief but brilliant past and its great future. Such a plan has been already indicated by the author in his Karachi monograph. Although only a century old, the present city has decidedly outgrown its limits. Its water supply as well as its drainage system is far from satisfactory. In spite of the fact that Karachi now enjoys a much higher status than before and has a dignity of its own as the proud capital of Pakistan, its destiny is closely linked with that of its parent province of Sind. Sind's prosperity is Karachi's prosperity no doubt. To this very book, therefore, a brief chapter on Sind has been added towards the end, particularly for the benefit of those who wish to explore the hinterland and who want to help in national planning work in the province.

The success of such a book depends upon the co-operation of the readers. Everyday some new changes are taking place in the city. The author is conscious that even before this book is out, some information or the other

will be out of date or lacking in its contents. If, therefore, the readers notice in this publication any such information, any mis-statements, omissions or changes that have taken place, they will render not only a great help to the author but also a real service to the city, by informing him about the same.

There can be very little originality in a work of this kind. In fact it is a compilation with some reflexions here and there. The author is indebted to the Government reports and publications, particularly the year books and the Census Reports of Karachi. He has found "The Karachi Handbook and Directory for 1927 28", edited by Sir Montagu de Webb and published by the Daily Gazette Press, Ltd., very useful and instructive; but, unfortunately the subsequent issues of the Directory are not to be found. Personal enquiries and experiences have also helped the author to make this hand-book as up-to-date as possible.

JAMSHEDI NAOROZ,

M. B. P.

21st March 1949.

Gul Hayat Institute

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PLATES TO ACCOMPANY

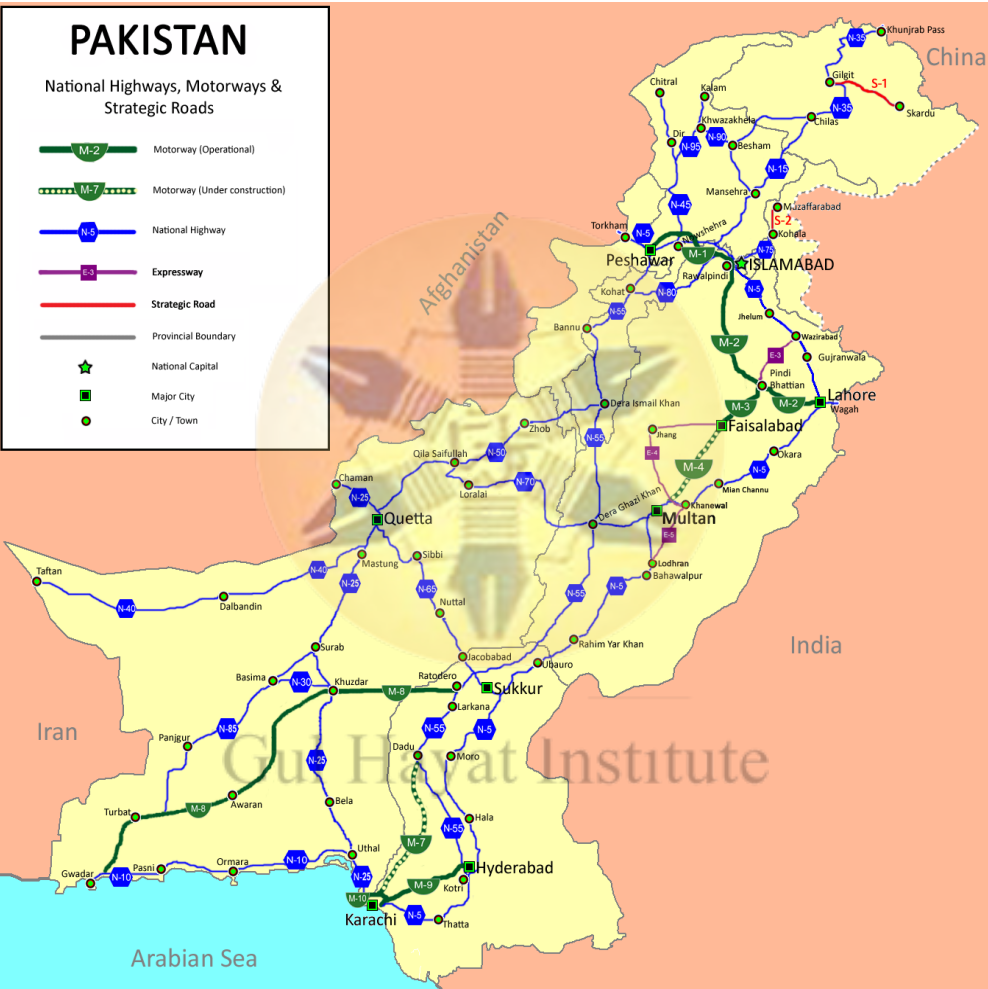
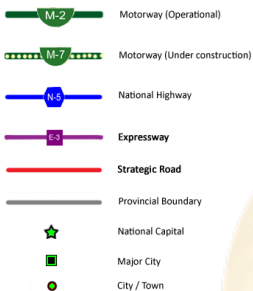
Frontispiece : The Lloyd (Sukkur) Barrage : View at Sunset time.

- I. Map of Greater Karachi, showing the Scheme of Satellites, etc. (Inset : Mascall's Sketch Map of Karachi Harbour 1774).
- II. Road Map of Karachi, showing Streets, Roads, and the Bus and Tram Routes.
- III. Aerial Photograph, showing the Keamari Harbour, West Wharf, and a portion of the City.
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- VI. 1 to 15 Photographs showing Well-known Places and Phases of Karachi Life and Environment.

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PAKISTAN

National Highways, Motorways & Strategic Roads



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCING THE CITY

Karachi is now the capital city of the young Dominion of Pakistan. It has been the "Glory of the East", the "Liverpool of India and Pakistan" and the "Croydon of the East". It rose to be the first Air Port and the third Sea Port of the undivided India within a brief period of 100 years, having been established by Sir Charles Napier in 1843. It is a queenly city, grown to be Sind's metropolis amidst the innumerable and unstable villages in the province, the only other city worth the name being Hyderabad, the old capital of the Sindhi Mirs. No other city in India or Pakistan has had such a brief history but at the same time such a rapid rise and such an extraordinary growth.

A mere fishing village, it grew at first, in the days of its Hindu traders, to be a town of "low mud hovels and tall mud houses with flat mud roofs", mud being plentifully found in the adjoining Lyari valley; then during the last four decades it had quite a phenomenal growth with over 600% rise in population. The census of 1941 disclosed its strength to be 3,86,655 and just before the Partition in August 1947, it boasted of thousands of palatial buildings and a population of nearly 425,000 which, due to the influx of the refugees and others from the sister Dominion, is now said to have increased to almost 1,000,000 people, with a very solid Muslim majority. As the capital of Sind it covered in its extended form an area of nearly 72 square miles as far as Mauripur on the west, the trans-Lyari quarters on the north-west, a few scattered hills on the north and north-east, the dry Malir river valley on the east and the south-east and the Manora Island, Oyster Rocks and the Clifton and Ghizri Beach on the south. With the establishment of the capital of Pakistan in the city, it has been

contemplated to build Greater Karachi, a metropolis enormously extended to cover an area of over 20,000 acres, so that there may be established in this locality a capital city, worthy of the world's largest Muslim State.

Karachi owes its greatness to its unique location at the extreme west-end of the Indus delta (latitude 24°51' north and longitude 67°4' east) and its most favourable geographical situation as a centre of three great continents, Europe, Africa and Asia, some 200 miles nearer to Southampton and 400 miles nearer to Croydon than the city of Bombay, besides commanding the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. It is actually 4,903 miles distant from the air-fields of Croydon and 9,792 miles from the city of New York, by air, taking hardly 24 and 48 flying hours, respectively, by the direct routes.

Among its many attractions may be mentioned the following :

There is a harbour, partly artificial and partly natural, and protected by the solid rock of Manora at the very mouth of the Lyari. It has a vast and rich hinterland, covering not only the whole of the Indus Valley but also parts of the neighbouring Iran plateau. It took the British engineers some 60 years to build the harbour and to have Karachi declared as a first-class port in 1907. Before the last World War the sea-borne trade was nearly 52 crores of rupees. The import and export trade of Karachi exceeds 22 lakhs of tons at present, while the unloaded and off-loaded air mails come to over 100,000 lbs.

Although it lies on the outskirts of the Thar desert on the one side and the dry parts of Baluchistan and Makran on the other, it has an equable climate throughout the year, due to the influence of the sea and the south-west monsoon and in spite of very scanty and variable rainfall, the eastern and western depressions causing cyclonic storms and the frequently varying weather conditions during the year.

It has a very wide scope for expansion almost on every side, except towards the sea coast in the south, so that it gives an excellent opportunity to the city's town-planners to provide for zonal planning with several satellite towns around the parent city.

In spite of the province being largely Muslim in character, Karachi has all along been one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the East. According to the last census, it had actually a Hindu majority of population. With the influx of the refugees a new impetus has been given to the city's growth and culture.

Most of the Karachi-ites, both new and old, are engaged in trade and business, which the harbour and the hinterland richly afford. It is a pointer to an all-Pakistan civilisation, so urgently needed in our country today. It is expected that from the clash of various cultures, which have now gathered together after the Partition of India, Karachi will rise higher and higher. With its door opened widely towards the sea, the world's men and materials can still go on entering. Thus it is likely to remain fresh and rejuvenated for all future times.

KARACHI AT A GLANCE

The accompanying map of Karachi will help the visitors to see the city at a glance and to keep their bearings in some of its crowded parts. The two dry river beds, one on the left and the other on the right, are the most prominent landmarks. The city is actually sandwiched between them. The area shaded dark marks the cantonment limits with the Keamari harbour to its extreme south-west, while some of the well laid-out and fashionable parts of the city are in the Civil Lines and Saddar Bazar, in which areas English is spoken side by side with Urdu. Most of the new Colonies are established like a ribbon growth on both sides of the Bundar Road, which is the most important and busiest thoroughfare in Karachi. Other main roads lead the visitors to the suburbs and satellites, forming the frame-work of Greater Karachi,

which is now in the making. The fringes of hilly Kohistan just touch Karachi in the north, which circumstance has helped the city with the building materials, stone quarries, water works, high level reservoirs and other sites. A vast open space is noticeable towards the north-east of the city so that there is good scope for expanding the city particularly in this direction.



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CHAPTER II

APPROACH TO KARACHI

Karachi's beauty is not only in its inherent natural features but also in the approach to it from different directions. Modern scientific transport has enabled the people to travel here by air, sea and land quickly and conveniently. In all these three ways the journey to Karachi is not only pleasant but also instructive.

1. BY AIR

The approach to the city by air is exceptionally attractive on account of the blue sky, the clear visibility, the favourable wind directions, the extensive landing grounds and the absence of any natural barriers. These circumstances enable the passengers to see the city from a distance of many miles. The route is easy to operate and the landing is facilitated by the most suitable runways, dry grounds and enormous open fields. While passing through Karachi, aeroplanes from the west to the east follow the old caravan routes across the continent of Asia.

A visitor to Karachi arriving from the south by air and flying at a low height can easily discern on his extreme right the exceptionally low and irregular coastal line forming the growing delta of the classic Indus river. Passengers by aeroplane arriving from the West along the Makran coast will see other beauties of the vast Baluchistan plateau, sandy river beds and some mud volcanoes, until they reach the only perennial river Hab, which marks the boundary between Makran and Sind. A few creeks and small bays are noticed on this side. As the plane moves northwards, and eastwards, small gulfs and shallow mangrove swamps with the waterless bed of the Malir are found. A few flat-topped hills, which were once sea-girt islands, are noticeable towards the right, while, towards the left, the smaller river Lyari opens its mouth into the Keamari harbour, where the visitor can find one of the busiest ports in the world. In

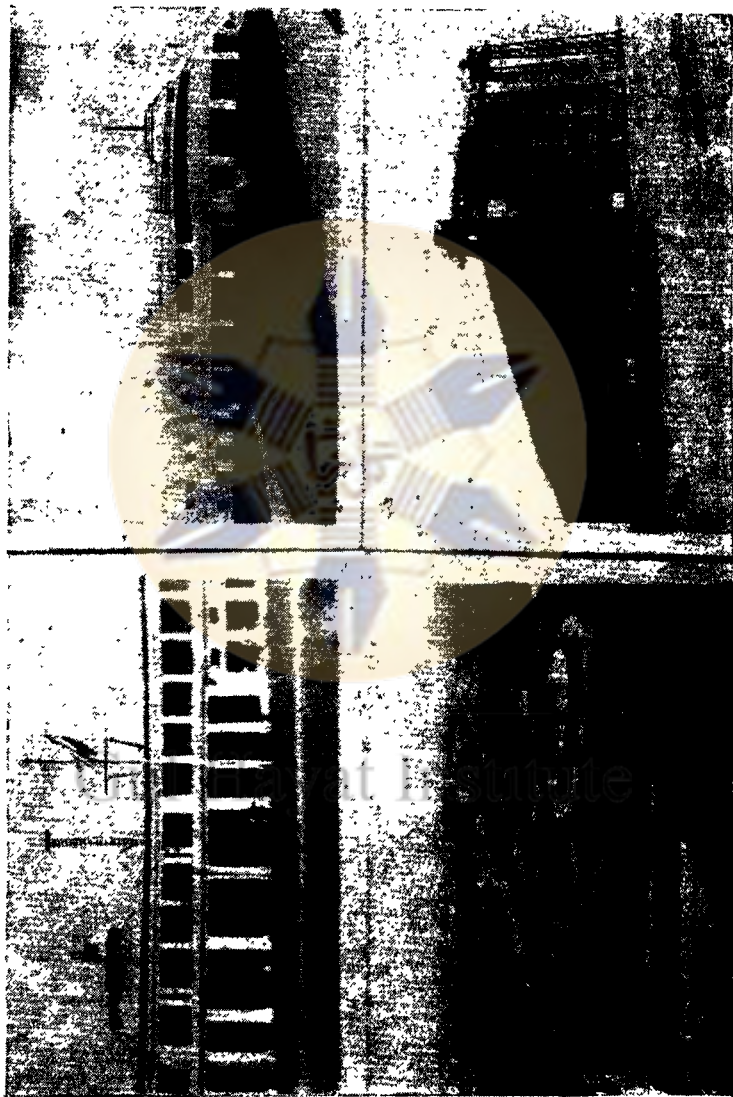
the centre, the congested heart of the city, the Old Town, looks like a tiny living spot amidst the vast expanse of space. Then the more modern and well-planned quarters of Saddar Bazar, the Civil Lines and the Cantonment area are seen. Towards the north-east and beyond the congested Lyari quarters a few arterial roads, especially the 10-mile long Bundar Road and its Extension are marked. In the same direction, as the flight continues, there can be discerned a strange ribbon-like growth of the numerous colonies on the left and some barren and rocky outcrops on the right with the most prominent Exhibition Hill, now containing the last remains of the architect and first Governor-General of Pakistan.

Seen from the air the city appears to be a hybrid, due to its irregular labyrinths, its crowded hovels and godowns in the heart of the city and a properly oriented new town with rectangular blocks on wide roads and some of the public and private buildings of Saddar Bazar and Civil Lines. The visitor can also discern from the air some of the most massive stone structures, viz., the Kothari Parade and Lady Lloyd Pier at Clifton, and the Governor-General's House, the Consensus Buildings, the High Court and Municipal Buildings in the middle of the city. Far in the distance can be marked the Mauripur Air Port and the General Headquarters of the R. P. A. F. on one side and the Drigh Road Halt Station on the other. At the West Wharf Marine Air Port and also at Korangi Creek, beyond the Malir river towards the east, passengers travelling by sea planes can land safely.

Karachi is exceptionally lucky in its expansion of these air ports during recent years. Passengers and goods to and from all parts of the world are handled here. Easily can it be styled the "Crew of the Skyways", as a powerful impetus was received by it during the air operations of the last World War. During 1945 actually, several lakhs of pounds of freight and some 5,000 passengers were handled per month. But these figures are only fractions of those of the present day. About 500 day and 500 night landings are made in Karachi nowadays.

AN INTRODUCTION TO KARACHI

SEA AND AIR PORTS



Thousands of passengers and nearly a lakh of pounds of freight are dealt with monthly even now. The B. O. A. C., Pan-American Airways, Air France, K. L. M., Iranian and Iraqi Airways and other companies use our airport. Two more Pakistani Airlines, the Orient Airways and the Pak Air are to start operations on the Indo-Pakistan and foreign routes soon. With the fastest machines now operating, the distance between Karachi and London can be covered in 24 hours, non-stop. This is a great achievement of the flying world. Not to and from one country but several countries the traffic is going on. European and American tourists, officials from almost all countries and businessmen from far-off centres gather here almost every day. Among the facilities provided at the Air-port are a Radar Homing Aid Device, a Radio Range and Beacons, a restaurant and hotel, a quarantine and isolation hospital, and an air cinema. Karachi's very location is so fortunate that it has become a most natural geographical centre of almost all world air routes. Thus Karachi and Pakistan are becoming gradually a centre of the flying world. A writer in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* some time ago has put it beautifully: "Where once camels roamed and kites hovered undisturbed over mud and sand wastes of Sind desert's coastal strip, is now the busiest air port in the world. Karachi, ancient gateway to India from the Arabian Sea, is now the cross-roads of the skies. The hundreds of tarmacadam acres of its three aerodromes and the sheltered waters of a dockland creek hourly carpet the arrival and departure of land and sea planes flying to the four corners of the earth."

2. BY SEA

The journey by sea towards Karachi is equally interesting, though not so thrilling as by air. Although the whole Sind coast is uninviting on account of the unstable delta land, the solid rock of Manora has given the Karachi harbour a more or less permanent security. Ocean-going steamers from foreign countries and coasting

steamers from India and the Persian Gulf find their berths here. Numerous native jetties also arrive here from Indian ports such as those of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Cutch and Kathiawar. These tiny native boats still persist in spite of the large steamers belonging to different nationalities, so lucrative is the coastal trade. The Scindia Steam Navigation Co., Bombay Persian Steam Navigation Co., Asiatic Steam Navigation Co., and P. & O., City and Hall Lines, all have their bee-hives here.

Here, too, the arrival at the port of Karachi is attractive. Due to low levels of the Karachi city, hardly exceeding 50 feet above sea level, the city is not quite visible even by day as the steamer approaches, but the passengers can catch a glimpse of the Cape Monze and the Hab and Mangho Pir hills easily in the distance. The night arrival is particularly attractive by the flash lights of the Manora and Cape Monze lighthouses, which can be seen from even a distance of 70 miles, weather permitting. Here is found a wide semi-circular harbour, with a lagoon in the centre. As the ship doubles the Manora point, the Keamari docks are found on the right and the West Wharf with the Sandspit and the Baba and Bhit islands on the left. During the last 60 years and more, much has been done by the Karachi Port Trust for the betterment of the harbour. The numerous docks, the Napier Mole, the Keamari Groyne, the East Pier, the Chinna Creek, the Manora Break-waters, the West Wharf and the Marine Air Port, etc., have helped to make Keamari a first-class harbour. A dry dock, both for the Navy and the Mercantile Marine, has been projected. Both the World Wars have stimulated the development of Keamari during the present century. Enormous reclamation work has been done and several square miles of land have been reclaimed from the mangrove swamps surrounding the harbour, by means of intense dredging and dumping of the material into the swamps. The Lido is also rapidly converted into a port of flying boats both for the Royal Pakistan Airways and for civil aviation. Thus Keamari can be called a doubly advantageous haven and a prosperous port. The total tonnage

of overseas trade at the Karachi harbour was nearly 3 million tons and fetched an income of Rs. 107 crores with a daily average of 7,800 tons in 1944 for the city. The pre-war average of the total export trade of Karachi was only 48 crores of rupees. The coming of the Pakistan Government into this new capital is a happy augury for the future of this lucky harbour. A number of shipping companies, European, Indian and Pakistani, have been established for services to Europe, U. S. A. and the Middle East. The Muhammadi Steamship Co. has started both a passenger and a cargo service from Karachi to Chittagong.

The sea routes to Karachi are from the African and Arabian ports, through the Persian Gulf; and those of Europe, through the Suez Canal, *via* Aden. Others are from China and Japan, *via* Colombo. Coastal steamers ply weekly between Karachi and the Indian ports. During the monsoon period, i.e., from May to August, the coastal trade is held up for a while due to the onslaught of the monsoon, when the sea is very rough and storms are frequent. There is a good smooth coastal sailing thereafter during the winter season. On the whole, the sea journey to Karachi from far and near is pleasant, instructive and profitable.

3. BY LAND

The journey by land to the capital of Pakistan, also instructive and profitable, is not so delightful. Being on the fringe of the desert, dust and glare are the greatest nuisance. There is always a scarcity of fresh water on the routes. After the successful operation of the Sukkur Barrage the railway journeys in some parts of the Indus Valley have become delightful, the desert having grown into a garden and for many miles the green fields of Sind afford some joy in an otherwise dull and troublesome journey. Motorable roads to Karachi from outside are practically non-existent. In fact, there are few trunk roads in Sind. The Arab trade routes from the West did exist for centuries and through some of the mountain passes such as the Bolan, Gomal, Tochi, etc., in the Kirthar

range, men and materials moved into the province. The Arab hordes under Mohammad-bin-Kassim also used the Makran route through Las Bela to give battle to the Hindu King of Alor, but they found no roads worth the name and had to cross and re-cross the river by improvising boat bridges. Today the Kotri and Sukkur railway bridges are the only important ones. Karachi is served by a singular railway,—the North Western Railway, from Peshawar to Karachi; Lahore to Karachi, Duzdab (Zahidan) to Quetta and Karachi. The Jodhpur Railway passes through the desert and joins the N. W. R. at Hyderabad, thus connecting Sind with Rajputana, Gujarat and Bombay with Karachi *via* Ahmedabad and Marwar. There is no direct railway to these parts of India. The only link between Delhi and Karachi now is by the Rajputana Malwa Railway *via* Bhatinda and across the Indo-Pakistan border and the frontier regulations control the link between Lahore and Amritsar. Thus hardly a couple of mail trains arrive at Karachi during the day.

Traders from Afghanistan *via* Peshawar and Chaman, from Baluchistan *via* Quetta and Sibi, from Central Asia and Kashmir *via* Murree and Rawalpindi and from Iran *via* Duzdab (Zahidan), Nushki and Quetta also find a lucrative trade here.

Most of the railway journeys in the Indus valley can be completed within 24 hours and the arrival at Karachi is heralded by the appearance of the gigantic air-ship shed and hangars of Drigh Road and the top masts of the wireless installation of the Karachi Cantonment from a distance. Passengers for the business quarters of Karachi alight at the City Station about 3 miles further, while, others find the Cantonment Station quite convenient.

By road, the journey from Karachi can be undertaken *via* Gharo, Tatta, Jhirak, Kotri, Laki, Dadu, Larkana, Shikarpur and Kashmore, *via* Thano Bola Khan, Dadu Nasirabad, Shahdadkot, Jacobabad and Kashmore, *via* Hyderabad, Badin and Cutch and *via* Hyderabad, Nawabshah, Kandiaro and Multan.

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Whether one arrives by air, sea or land, one sees in Karachi a transit city, into which goods come and from which goods go, a veritable commercial city, a busy buzzing centre represented by the main road from Keamari to Bundar Road (Mahatma Gandhi and Mohammad Ali Jinnah Roads). The Old Town in the heart of the city is the marketing centre, while the chief residential parts are found in Saddar Bazar and Civil Lines. There are a few other fashionable quarters as well, *e.g.*, Staff Lines, Frere Town and the New Muslim Colony. Cultural zones are extended also in some of the colonies of the Bundar Road Extension *e.g.* New Town. There is practically no industrial township as yet established and no hill-station worthy of a capital like Karachi, except the sea-side resort of Clifton.

Life is expensive now-a-days but there are first-class hotels in Karachi both on the sea side and in the fashionable quarters for the passengers to choose from. For the greater part of the year the weather is cool and temperate but warm clothing is needed during the winter months of December, January and February. No umbrellas and rainproofs are required, as it rains hardly for a couple of days at a time during the year.

Gul Hayat Institute