75 YEARS OF PARTITION

RUPTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

NUS National University of Singapore
ISAS Institute of South Asian Studies

About the Institute of South Asian Studies

The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) is dedicated to research on contemporary South Asia. It was established in July 2004 as an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore (NUS). The establishment of ISAS reflects South Asia's increasing economic and political importance and the strong historical links between South Asia and Southeast Asia.

The Institute seeks to promote understanding of this vital region of the world and communicate knowledge and insights about it to policymakers, the business community, academia, and civil society in Singapore and beyond.

ISAS Special Report: ISAS Annual Conference 2022
75 Years of Partition: Rupture and Connectivity
December 2023

Authored by Claudia Chia, Wini Fred Gurung and Amit Ranjan
©2023 Institute of South Asian Studies
All Rights Reserved

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form, for any reason or by any means, whether re-drawn, enlarged, or otherwise altered, without prior permission in writing from the copyright owner except in cases of brief quotations embodied in articles and reviews.

Institute of South Asian Studies
National University of Singapore
29 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
#08-06 (Block B)
Singapore 119620
Tel (65) 6516 4239
Fax (65) 6776 7505
URL www.isas.nus.edu.sg

Consortium of South Asian Think Tanks
903 Tower 'J', Suncity, Gothatar
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel (977) 1 4436843
URL www.cosatt.org

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung
380 Jalan Besar
#11-01 Arc 380
Singapore 209000
Tel (65) 6603 6160
Fax (65) 6227 8343
URL https://www.kas.de/en/web/rspa

75 YEARS OF PARTITION: RUPTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

Institute of South Asian Studies

December 2023 | Singapore

Claudia Chia
Wini Fred Gurung
Amit Ranjan

Special Report Issue No. 27

NUS National University of Singapore | ISAS Institute of South Asian Studies

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
Integration of the New States	6
Ideas of Connectivity and Regulating Mobilities	10
Division of Institutions	12
Cultural, Religious and Sporting Links	16
Conclusion	21
Appendix: About the Authors	22

Executive Summary

In the 75th year since the partition of the Indian subcontinent, it is timely to examine the ruptures that followed the drawing of new national boundaries and their impact on existing linkages and institutions.

South Asia is one of the least integrated regions in the world. While there is a broad consensus over the need for greater economic, infrastructure and people-to-people connections, post-1947 geopolitical realities continue to impact regional connectivity. In the 75th year since the partition of the Indian subcontinent, it is timely to examine the ruptures that followed the drawing of new national boundaries and their impact on existing linkages and institutions. It is equally important to investigate the new modalities, mechanisms, structures and norms that arose from 1947 onwards to regulate, restrict or redefine relations between the new states and govern inter-state relations.

The International Conference on South Asia is an annual flagship event of the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore. The conference in 2022 sought to assess the impact of the partition on connectivity in South Asia. It did so by examining the following: the impact of the partition on institutions like the armed forces, bureaucracy and police; attempts to regulate mobilities (people, rivers and trade); the emergence of new norms and structures of intra-state integration; the shaping of new forms of diplomacy and international relations; and the bourgeoning of new arenas, protocols and initiatives of interaction.

The conference also explored the geopolitics and geo-economics of connectivity in contemporary South Asia. In an attempt to provide an in-depth perspective on these issues, the conference brought together scholars, practitioners and researchers from various disciplines such as anthropology, economics, history, political science, geography and sociology.

The conference was organised into two themes – 'Connectivity in the Wake of Partition' and 'Norms of Integration'. This special report is the culmination of discussions on these themes during the conference.

Introduction

While there is a broad consensus over the need for greater economic, infrastructure and people-to-people connections in South Asia, post-1947 geopolitical realities continue to impact regional connectivity. It has been 75 years since the partition of the Indian subcontinent. It is timely to examine the ruptures that followed the drawing of new national boundaries and their impact on existing linkages and institutions. It is equally important to investigate the new modalities, mechanisms, structures and norms that arose from 1947 onwards to regulate, restrict or redefine relations between the states and govern inter-state relations.

The first chapter of this report examines the integration of new states post the partition. It discusses the complexities and challenges of integrating princely states into newly independent India and Pakistan. Further, it explores how the two countries tried to control and regulate cross-border and refugee movements by instituting a visa and passport regime, and altering the sense of citizenship and legal belonging.

The second chapter looks at the role of infrastructure connectivity and the operations of regional trade mechanisms between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) has failed to make substantial progress on regional economic integration. Tensed India-Pakistan relations continue to stymie cross-border trade, with occasional border skirmishes leading to abrupt border closures. Infrastructure initiatives in the subcontinent have also become a source of rivalry between India and Pakistan. While road, train and air connectivity between India and Bangladesh has grown, there is still ample opportunity for improvement. Moreover, the challenges posed by climate change have impacted the ecologies and livelihoods in the three countries, raising worries about sustainability and development.

Tensed India-Pakistan relations continue to stymie cross-border trade, with occasional border skirmishes leading to abrupt border closures.

The third chapter looks at the division of institutions between these countries. It discusses the military and bureaucracy's role at the time of the partition and in its aftermath. It will also explore how the hasty process of the partition affected trade and financial institutions, including the economic inconvenience caused by the separation of industries and raw material-producing areas between India and Pakistan.

Films that have portrayed people and stories from 'the other side' have also played a vital role in shaping public opinion and attitudes.

Finally, the last chapter looks at the new areas of interaction between India and Pakistan, such as pilgrimage, sports and cinema. As the partition has left some of the important religious sites of communities on the other side of the border, India and Pakistan have devised measures to allow pilgrims to visit their sacred sites. Further, both countries have used cricket to bring people together; however, the competitive game has often heightened nationalist sentiments and earned the moniker "war minus shooting". Films that have portrayed people and stories from 'the other side' have also played a vital role in shaping public opinion and attitudes.

Integration of the New States

In 1947, British India underwent a historic partition, which resulted in the formation of two separate nations – India and Pakistan. This opening chapter of the special report studies the intricate challenges and complexities around integrating the smaller and princely states into these newly formed nations.

The process of integrating the princely states into these newly formed nations presented substantial challenges for both India and Pakistan. The British withdrawal from the princely states was formalised through the 3 June 1947 Plan, also known as the Mountbatten Plan.[1] This plan marked the erstwhile British government's decision to grant full sovereignty to British India and end its control over the princely states. This declaration allowed these states the freedom to join either of the two new nations or remain independent. This was followed by a Standstill Agreement between India, Pakistan and the states, which outlined that they could continue their existing arrangements with British India until they came to a decision.

Despite these arrangements, there were several challenges during the integration process. First, these princely states differed in terms of population, culture and size, among others. Within these states, some of the leaders wanted to join India, others were inclined towards Pakistan, and some even wanted to remain independent. The second challenge was the demarcation of boundaries between the princely states. While some lacked clear borders, others had overlapping claims. Third, some princely states had populations with mixed religions, ethnicities and linguistic backgrounds. The decision-making in this regard would have to be a delicate process as this could lead to tension and unrest within the princely states. Fourth, the integration of some of the states was quite challenging. For

The decision-making in this regard would have to be a delicate process as this could lead to tension and unrest within the princely states.

[1] 'June 3 Plan, 1947: Know all about last plan for independence announced by Lord Mountbatten', *Times Now*, 3 June 2021, https://www.timesnownews.com/mirror-now/in-focus/article/june-3-plan-1947-know-all-about-last-plan-for-independence-announced-by-lord-mountbatten/765433.

example, Hyderabad was a Hindu-majority state ruled by a Muslim leader. Similarly, Junagadh was a predominantly Hindu region ruled by a Muslim Nawab. These dynamics created communal tensions and required careful handling. The most difficult was Jammu and Kashmir. A Muslim-majority state, it was ruled by a Hindu leader, Maharaja Hari Singh. The Maharaja's decision to accede to India did not go well with Pakistan, leading to the Indo-Pakistan War of 1947-48. Tensions are rife even today. Lastly, the allocation and redistribution of resources like infrastructure, revenue and assets was another challenge. They had to be divided fairly while considering economic viability of both countries and that was a complex task.

The partition came at a cost for both countries. India lost a significant land area of 364,737 square miles and a population of 81.5 million, due to the territorial divisions. Pakistan gained territory. Despite these geographical changes, the integration of the princely states allowed India to expand its territory by nearly 500,000 square miles, with a population of 86.5 million (not including Jammu and Kashmir).

The process of uniting diverse regions with unique political and cultural identities into a coherent national fabric demanded careful navigation.

The integration of these princely states was a multifaceted undertaking that presented various intricate challenges. The process of uniting diverse regions with unique political and cultural identities into a coherent national fabric demanded careful navigation. Moreover, the partition led to one of the largest mass migrations in human history, displacing millions of people and giving rise to a significant refugee crisis. This prompted both India and Pakistan to establish a regulatory framework for cross-border movements through visa and passport regulations. Consequently, this new framework had profound implications for citizenship and legal belonging among those affected by the partition.

The refugee crisis and its subsequent economic and political implications further complicated the integration process. Overall, the integration of the princely states not only reshaped the territorial contours of India and Pakistan but also had far-reaching implications for citizenship, identity and legal belonging in the post-partition era.

Citizenship Amendment Act

There were also challenges with Indian citizenship in the postcolonial decades of the 1950s and 1960s. It has been argued that Indian citizenship had to consider both the territorial location and mobility of its people across new nation-states and overseas. While the partition created ambiguities around belonging, Indian leaders mistakenly thought that it would be a simple matter of resolving the status of those living outside India. This difficulty in identifying true citizens continues to impact contemporary debates around the Citizen Amendment Act (CAA), amended in December 2019.[2] The CAA provided a fast-track path towards Indian citizenship for religious minorities from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan, and arrived in India before the end of December 2014. This law does not confer the same eligibility for Muslims from these countries. Protests across India ensued over this new citizenship law; observers have described it to be "the first legal articulation that India is [a] homeland for Hindus", inviting many criticisms domestically and abroad, and worrying many that the country is tilting towards becoming a Hindu-nationalist.[3] The law is also perceived to be discriminatory towards Muslims.[4]

While the partition created ambiguities around belonging, Indian leaders mistakenly thought that it would be a simple matter of resolving the status of those living outside India.

Northeast India

The northeast region was originally composed of several small princely states and tribal regions that were later integrated into India. This integration has been a complex process involving political negotiations and, sometimes, violent conflicts. The integration of northeast India into the larger Indian nation has been a slow and arduous process. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) is a controversial law that confers the Indian armed forces the power "to fire upon or otherwise use force, even to the causing of death" upon

---

2 See Amitabh Kundu, 'Challenges and Concerns in Implementing the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 in India', Berkeley Forum, Berkeley Centre, 9 March 2020, https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/responses/challenges-and-concerns-in-implementing-the-citizenship-amendment-act-2019-in-india.

3 Joanna Slater, 'Why protests are erupting over India's new citizenship law', *Washington Post*, 19 December 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/why-indias-citizenship-law-is-so-contentious/2019/12/17/35d75996-2042-11ea-b034-de7dc2b5199b_story.html.

4 'CAA Is Discriminatory and Arbitrary Because It Excludes Tamil, Muslim Refugees: DMK', *The Wire*, 30 November 2022, https://thewire.in/law/caa-discriminatory-arbitrary-muslim-tamil-refugees-dmk-affidavit.

The AFSPA has been enacted in some parts of Northeast India since the 1990s.

those suspected of contravening the law, waging an armed conflict, or even "posing an imminent threat". The AFSPA has been enacted in some parts of Northeast India since the 1990s. In 2022, the Narendra Modi administration withdrew the AFSPA from some parts of Assam, Manipur and Nagaland, indicating that there has been an "improved security situation" in these parts.[5]

The complexity of nation-making in South Asia highlights the political oxymoron of attempting to create a unified nation out of diverse and often conflicting regions. In conclusion, the partition of South Asia and the subsequent integration of princely states have had a profound impact on the region's political and social landscape. While India has gained significant territory and population through the integration process, it has also faced ongoing challenges in fully integrating all regions into the larger nation.

5 Ananya Bhardwaj, 'Modi govt reduces areas under AFSPA in Nagaland, Manipur & Assam, 3 months after Mon incident', *The Print*, 31 March 2022, https://theprint.in/india/governance/modi-govt-reduces-areas-under-afspa-in-nagaland-manipur-assam-3-months-after-mon-incident/896653/.

Ideas of Connectivity and Regulating Mobilities

This chapter delves into the disruptions that railways and cross-border travel underwent post partition. It looks at how after independence, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh established their border regulations and their resulting effects on cross-border travel and visa regulations for individuals. Additionally, this chapter looks at the issues arising from cross-border social media connections and the challenges associated with the use of new digital platforms.

Using Social Media to Foster Cross-border Understanding

The Indo-Pakistan border is one of the world's most heavily militarised and fortified borders. There is very limited cross-border mobility, and the success of government initiatives for travel, pilgrimage and others is dependent on the state of bilateral relations. While physical barriers such as fences, checkpoints and surveillance equipment are the most visible, there are also invisible borders comprising cultural, linguistic and ideological barriers that affect people's ability to communicate with one another. In this context, social media connectivity has played a crucial role in fostering friendships and connectivity between people on either side of the border.

While physical barriers such as fences, checkpoints and surveillance equipment are the most visible, there are also invisible borders comprising cultural, linguistic and ideological barriers that affect people's ability to communicate with one another.

Online ethnography and textual analysis have revealed the various layers of visible and invisible borders and controls, and their impact on the citizens' cross-border mobility. Social media groups play an important role in promoting friendship and connectivity between people on either side of the border. While there are tensions and political debates, social media connectivity has the potential to alter stereotypes, perceptions and attitudes about the 'other'. Social media groups often dedicate themselves to specific topics such as historically significant places, food and restaurants, infrastructure developments, achievements in sports and education, and nationalistic pride over

resource developments. Reunions of friends and families have been regularly posted and shared, garnering many likes.

The discussions in these groups have a nationalistic label and, at times, lead to contentious debates about the treatment of religious minorities on both sides.

While these groups have enabled people to connect, they also represent a space for partition stories that emphasise the highly localised nature of oral histories regarding the partition. The discussions in these groups have a nationalistic label and, at times, lead to contentious debates about the treatment of religious minorities on both sides. There are concerns over state-led propaganda being spread on such platforms as well.[6] However, despite the tensions and political debates, social media connectivity has helped, in some way, to transcend the geopolitically charged closed borders between India and Pakistan.

In conclusion, social media connectivity has the potential to alter stereotypes, perceptions and attitudes about the 'other'. While tensions and political debates exist, connectivity powered by social media platforms has helped transcend the geopolitically charged closed borders between India and Pakistan. It also introduced another way that the citizens of both countries could connect without much government intervention and oversight. Moving forward, it would be worthwhile for researchers to further explore innovative ways to use digital media to promote cross-border friendships and understanding.

6 See Hammad Sarfraz, 'How India Unleashed Targeted Social Media Campaigns against Pakistan', *Tribune*, 26 December 2021, https://tribune.com.pk/story/2335695/how-india-unleashed-targeted-social-media-campaigns-against-pakistan; and 'Pakistan engaging in hostile propaganda against India to divert attention from its domestic failures: MEA report', *The Hindu*, 13 March 2023, https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/pakistan-engaging-in-hostile-propaganda-against-india-to-divert-attention-from-its-domestic-failures-mea-report/article66614486.ece.

Division of Institutions

This chapter highlights how the separation of industries and raw material-producing areas between India and Pakistan during the partition created economic difficulties for the two newly independent dominions. This will be discussed using examples of the jute industry, the new trade regime and restrictions and shared water resources. It also talks about how the partition in 1947 brought disruptions to the Indian Army and bureaucracy.

There were several economic implications of the partitioned history of the subcontinent, specifically the interruption of connectivity in the South Asian region amidst its most challenging economic situation in several decades. Presently, three South Asian economies, namely, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, are facing significant economic distress and have sought international support to address their macroeconomic and external economic sector difficulties. India, which accounts for four-fifths of the region's geography, economy and population, is not currently facing a significant economic crisis. However, New Delhi cannot remain immune to the mounting economic pressures from these neighbouring countries undergoing deep economic fractures.

There were several economic implications of the partitioned history of the subcontinent, specifically the interruption of connectivity in the South Asian region amidst its most challenging economic situation in several decades.

Two aspects require assessment in this context. Firstly, there is a need to examine how the region can utilise its potential to combat the current crisis. Secondly, in that context, it is crucial to evaluate the significance of connectivity. While the notion that the South Asian region is the least integrated region in the world may be partially contestable based on the metrics used to assess connectivity, it is widely accepted that the region can perform better.

Trade in South Asia has long been recognised as a vital component in achieving economic development and regional integration. There has been a growing focus on connectivity and infrastructure projects to enhance regional trade. That being said, the success of these projects relies heavily on the social buy-in from the domestic population and

the capacity of the state bureaucracy to translate these projects into operational cooperation.

Cross-border trade in South Asia has the potential to drive economic growth and prosperity in the region. The combined gross domestic product (GDP) of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh accounts for a staggering 96 per cent of the South Asian region's GDP in 2021.[7] However, despite the enormous size of their economies and strategic locations, these three countries have not fully capitalised on their potential due to limited cross-border trade.

Cross-border Trade Limitations

Even though India and Bangladesh share positive trade relations, there is still a lot of untapped potential, due to limitations in infrastructure. Additionally, it is essential to synchronise the different trade agreements and plans between the two countries.

Such overtures do not only have the potential to enhance trade but also strengthen India's position in the region.

It is important for New Delhi to focus on regional infrastructure development, build trans-regional frameworks and establish wider coalitions of like-minded regional partners. These, in turn, will allow the neighbouring states to engage India and deepen interdependence with it. Such overtures do not only have the potential to enhance trade but also strengthen India's position in the region.

The importance of a capacitated, autonomous bureaucracy in states cannot be overstated. Sri Lanka's economic demise is a prime example of how an erosion of the bureaucracy over the last 20 years has impacted the success of connectivity projects. To translate these projects into operational cooperation, the state bureaucracy must be equipped to handle the challenges of implementing such projects.

Bottom-up regionalism is also crucial in promoting connectivity and infrastructure projects in South Asia. Civil society actors must work

[7] 'South Asia', The World Bank, 3 October 2023, https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/overview.

with the state to promote regional connectivity programmes, ensuring that they meet the needs of the local population. The involvement of civil society actors in the planning and implementation of these projects ensures that they are designed to meet the needs of the people.

In addition, the importance of regional institutions and cooperative systems that transcend bilateralism cannot be overlooked. It is essential to create a network of institutions and systems that promote regional integration, particularly given the asymmetries between large and small states. This will ensure that all states have equal opportunities to participate in trade and benefit from regional integration.

The stagnant India-Pakistan trade relations result from the inability to divorce politics from economics. There is a need to disengage from these issues and create multiple tracks for trade and engagements.

Moreover, there are currently no external forces and incentives pushing the South Asian region towards regionalism. While technology can be harnessed successfully to integrate the region further, political will needs to be present to push agendas through. The lack of direct trade between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh has been particularly alarming since the 2019 trade ban. Even before this, trade levels between them were not fully exploited to their potential. To unlock the full potential of the region, it is crucial to integrate these three countries into the bigger picture.

To unlock the full potential of the region, it is crucial to integrate these three countries into the bigger picture.

South Asia has been the least integrated and most protected region in the world, making it challenging to discuss tariffs politically. Instead, the focus should be on improving connectivity through other means. For example, India-Bangladesh relationship provides a glimpse of the early possibility of trade connectivity. Bangladesh is currently India's fourth-largest market, and the electricity trade has been the foundation of their trade relationship since 2013. Additionally, the two countries are exploring a Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Agreement, which goes beyond traditional free trade agreements and covers areas such as health, tourism and investments.

Reciprocal transactions and trade could break the ice between the two countries and pave the way for a more open and integrated South Asia.

The lack of India-Pakistan trade is a considerable setback that needs to be addressed urgently. Reciprocal transactions and trade could break the ice between the two countries and pave the way for a more open and integrated South Asia. Furthermore, the western side of the region, namely, Pakistan and Afghanistan, must be integrated into the rest of the region to fully exploit the subcontinent's vast potential. The integration of Afghanistan into the South Asian regional economy might be difficult as Kabul inches closer to China, along with Pakistan. India remains the only country in the region to openly reject the China-led Belt and Road Initiative and does not participate in the project. Recent news of Afghanistan entering into the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor bore a bad omen to India which desires to dilute Chinese influence in the region. Further, the lack of an integrated economic vision for South Asia, coupled with the rifts and disagreements within the countries, continues to impede the growth and effectiveness of SAARC.

In conclusion, the success of trade in South Asia is heavily dependent on connectivity and infrastructure projects that enhance regional integration. However, achieving this requires social buy-in, a capacitated bureaucracy, bottom-up regionalism, and the creation of regional institutions and cooperative systems. These are all essential components of a successful trade strategy in South Asia, and they must be given the attention they deserve. Barring Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, which are still in economic recovery mode, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh should work together to build stronger trade relationships and integrate their economies to create a more prosperous South Asian region.

Cultural, Religious and Sporting Links

This chapter looks at the new areas of interaction (pilgrimage, sports and cinema) between India and Pakistan and how 'soft power' employed in these interactions helps to ease bilateral tensions and cultivate people-to-people contact and understanding. The example of the Kartapur Corridor, cricket diplomacy and cinema will be discussed.

A Case of Pilgrimage: The Kartarpur Corridor

The Kartarpur Corridor, inaugurated in November 2019, connects the Sikh shrines of Dera Baba Nanak Sahib in India and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan. The Sikh community initially welcomed the corridor as a historic move towards fostering religious harmony between the two countries. The corridor serves as an example of how the partition has impacted religious networks, specifically the Sikh community, and how such networks have evolved in contemporary times. However, recent news reports highlighted that bureaucratic obstacles have hindered its success. The mandatory requirement of passports and imposition of a fee for travellers have undermined its attraction. Moreover, concerns for security and health have resulted in fewer travellers, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era.

The corridor serves as an example of how the partition has impacted religious networks, specifically the Sikh community, and how such networks have evolved in contemporary times.

There was a complex interplay between religions and how the partition of the subcontinent has impacted their interactions. The anecdote described a visit to a gurdwara (Sikh place of worship) where there were Muslims seated outside who remembered Guru Nanak with great respect, despite the presence of Islamic symbols inside the shrine. One of the companions questioned the changes made to the holy site while another pointed out that the Muslims still remember Nanak as they were present before the partition and that it was still worthwhile despite the changes. The violence inflicted during the partition has shaped the views of the Muslims in other villages towards the Sikhs and Hindus, resulting in lost stories of

Nanak. This example underscores the deep impact of the partition on religious networks and how they are still being felt in contemporary times.

These examples highlight the need for initiatives to promote religious tourism and pilgrimage between India and Pakistan. Such initiatives could foster greater understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures and religious beliefs and promote dialogue and collaboration towards greater peace and harmony. However, these efforts require the need to address bureaucratic obstacles, security concerns and the impact of the partition on religious networks. Despite these challenges, promoting pilgrimage and religious tourism could serve as a powerful tool to promote peace and reconciliation between the two countries.

Cricket Diplomacy

Sports were a bridge for both India and Pakistan post-partition, detailing different experiences in the sport and how individual players brought together diasporic audiences throughout the years.

Cricket diplomacy refers to the use of sports, particularly cricket, as a tool to promote goodwill and diplomacy between nations. It has been used as a means to reduce tensions and foster communications between countries with strained relations, particularly in South Asia, where cricket is a popular sport. Sports were a bridge for both India and Pakistan post-partition, detailing different experiences in the sport and how individual players brought together diasporic audiences throughout the years.

India and Pakistan had their first contact in a cricket test match in 1952 which was five years after the partition, in comparison to England and Germany which did not play football with each other until nine years after World War II. Following this, there are a few examples of harmony between India and Pakistan's cricket teams. One of these was the telegram between Muhammad Hanif and Mansur Ali Khan where they spoke about finding unity on the cricket ground through a common objective and hope that both countries find an amicable solution to the hostility. After a long break from 1990 to 2003, due to the insurgencies in Kashmir and riots in India, cricket matches began again in 2003. From 2003 to 2008, bilateral relations improved and

showed what real enduring peace might look like. Though bilateral relations fluctuated after this period and invoked deeper mutual hostility, there were some mitigating measures within the population: over 20,000 visas were issued for two matches in Lahore and the ban on Indian films in Pakistan was lifted.

One of the most notable instances of cricket diplomacy occurred in 1955 when the Indian cricket team toured Pakistan for a series of matches. This was the first time the two countries had played against each other since the partition in 1947. The tour was seen as a significant step towards normalising relations between the two countries. The cricket matches themselves were highly competitive but they also served as an opportunity for the players and officials from both sides to interact and build relationships. Overall, the tour was seen as a success and it helped to pave the way for future sporting and diplomatic exchanges between India and Pakistan.

Beyond the cricket matches, the tour also had a significant impact on the people of both countries. In particular, Indian citizens were granted free access to Lahore during the matches, which allowed them to visit their former homes in Pakistan. This helped to build goodwill between the two countries and laid the foundation for future exchanges between civil society groups.

This helped to build goodwill between the two countries and laid the foundation for future exchanges between civil society groups.

The success of the 1955 tour led to several more instances of cricket diplomacy between India and Pakistan over the next few decades. For example, in 1978, the two countries played a series of matches in India, which was seen as a significant step towards improving bilateral ties. In the 2011 Cricket World Cup, then-Prime Minister Manmohan Singh greeted his Pakistani counterpart, Yousuf Raza Gilani, and both watched the match together; this was a significant signal of improving ties post-2008 Mumbai attacks.

While cricket diplomacy has been successful in promoting goodwill between India and Pakistan on several occasions, it has not been a panacea for resolving the deep-seated political and diplomatic issues that have kept the two countries at odds. Both could still deny visas

to each other for cricket matches. Nonetheless, it has provided a useful and viable diplomatic tool for reducing tensions and building relationships between the people of the two countries.

Cinema

Cinema has also played a significant role in bringing India, Pakistan and Bangladesh closer together. Despite the political and diplomatic tensions between these countries since the partition, cinema has served as a powerful tool for building cultural ties and promoting mutual understanding.

One of the most notable aspects of cinema in the region is its soft power. As often quoted by scholars and analysts, soft power refers to the ability of a country to influence others through cultural and social means rather than through military or economic power. Cinema is a prime example of soft power as it allows countries to share their cultural values and traditions with a wider, typically foreign audience.

This exchange of cinema has allowed people to experience each other's cultures and traditions and subsequently has helped in building a sense of shared identity.

Despite the bans on each other's films in India and Pakistan, movies continue to be exchanged between the two countries through informal channels. This exchange of cinema has allowed people to experience each other's cultures and traditions and subsequently has helped in building a sense of shared identity.

In contemporary times, there have been instances where India and Pakistan have come together in films to discuss the partition. For example, the recent Marvel series, *Ms. Marvel,* includes a scene where the protagonist listens to her mother discussing identity and the impact of partition.[8] This scene is a powerful reminder of the shared history and culture between India and Pakistan.

While religion may be a sensitive topic, cinema has been able to transcend such barriers by focusing on relatable components such

[8] Mark Donaldson, 'Ms. Marvel True Story: What Is The Partition & Why It's So Important', *Screen Rant*, 29 June 2022, https://screenrant.com/ms-marvel-partition-india-history-true-story/.

as language, culture and traditions. This has allowed people in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh to connect on a deeper level and build bridges of understanding.

Meanwhile, state-led bans and censorship of foreign media and films can happen again, due to the wavering tensions between the two states. Notably, Pakistan lifted the ban on Indian films in media in 2008 but later enforced it again in late 2016 temporarily. In 2019, the screening of Indian films in Pakistani cinemas was banned again as the two countries escalated tensions over the disputed Kashmir region.

Meanwhile, state-led bans and censorship of foreign media and films can happen again, due to the wavering tensions between the two states.

In conclusion, cinema has significantly brought India, Pakistan and Bangladesh closer together. Its soft power has allowed these countries to share their cultural values and traditions, despite political and diplomatic tensions. As long as cinema continues to thrive, it will serve as a powerful tool for promoting mutual understanding and building cultural bridges between these countries.

Conclusion

There is still a lot of scope for cooperation in terms of more economic integration, prioritising people-to-people connectivity, conflict resolutions and strengthening security cooperation.

Despite the various challenges faced by the three countries post the partition and independence, it is commendable how they have worked on fostering cooperation for integrating the South Asian region. There is still a lot of scope for cooperation in terms of more economic integration, prioritising people-to-people connectivity, conflict resolutions and strengthening security cooperation.

Geopolitical realities may put up challenges in terms of cooperation between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. However, their shared history, culture and aspirations also provide opportunities for unity. The three countries can work together to increase their engagement in diplomacy, wherein the channels are open and active. Trade and economic engagement is another area that the countries can work on by promoting economic integration and reducing trade barriers. Organisations like SAARC can prove to be beneficial if Pakistan and India agree to work together, keeping aside their differences.

People-to-people contact is a big opportunity for engagement through cultural exchanges, tourism and educational programmes between the countries. The countries could also develop mechanisms for crisis management to avoid the escalation of tensions.

It is important to keep a long-term vision for cooperation between the three countries to ensure growth and benefit for the entire South Asian region.

Appendix
About the Authors

Ms Claudia Chia is an independent researcher. Formerly, she was a Research Analyst at the Institute of South Asian Studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS). She earned her Master of Arts (by Research) in South Asian Studies from NUS. Her dissertation on *United Nations' Mediation Efforts on Kashmir* received the Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's prize for the best thesis on South Asian Studies.

Ms Chia worked as a graduate teaching assistant under the Graduate Teaching Fellowship at NUS. During her two years of teaching, she was a two-time recipient of the Graduate Students' Teaching Award. She has also worked as a research assistant and provided research support and analysis on India-ASEAN relations, India-Singapore bilateral relations, diplomatic history in South Asia and entrepreneurship education in India.

Ms Wini Fred Gurung is a former research analyst at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore. Prior to joining ISAS, she interned with the Observer Research Foundation where she focused on the India-China relationship. She was also associated with the Temi Tea estate, Government of Sikkim, to train the trade union on capacity building and negotiation skills.

Ms Gurung graduated with a Master's degree in International Relations from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. She holds a Bachelor's degree (with Honours) in Political Science from Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi.

Dr Amit Ranjan is a Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore. His research interests include water disputes, South Asian politics (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh), India's regional policy and India's internal security. His papers, review essays and book reviews have been widely published in journals, including *Asian Affairs, India Quarterly, South Asia Research,* and *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*. He has also contributed commentaries, opinion editorials and reviews in newspapers and websites.

Prior to joining ISAS, Dr Amit worked as a Research Fellow at the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi. He completed his doctoral studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He obtained his Master's degree from Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi.

INSTITUTE OF SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES
National University of Singapore
29 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
#08-06 (Block B)
Singapore 119620

Tel (65) 6516 4239
Fax (65) 6776 7505
URL www.isas.nus.edu.sg