



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



South Asia Centre  
**Annual Report**  
2022/23



Our logo is a leaf from the *Ficus religiosa* (Sacred Fig), a tree found across the countries of South Asia. It symbolises social, cultural, religious, and ecological benevolence, embodying a shared geography. This intrinsic commonality, cutting across political boundaries and identitarian constructions, provokes intriguing curiosity about the ties that bind this complex region. In amplifying this, our logo ties the Centre to LSE's motto: *Rerum cognoscere causas*, 'to know the causes of things'.

The height and breadth of the *Ficus*, along with its dry season deciduous nature, gives it its innate popularity in South Asia — as provider of shade from the scorching sun in the summers, and warm, filtered sunshine in its cold winters. Its density and strength make it a nesting paradise for several kinds of birds, and its leaves provide fodder for two of South Asia's most important pack animals, the camel and the elephant.

The bark, leaves and figs of the *Ficus* have several medicinal attributes, and are used in Ayurvedic, Yunani and other alternative medical knowledge-systems, helping to treat open wounds, inflammations, ulcers, asthma, and digestive and heart ailments.

Its popular names include *arani*, *ashvattha*, *bo*, *bodhi*, *bodhidruma*, *beepul*, *esathu*, *pimpal*, *pipal*, *ragi*, and *shuchidruma*, among many others.

The logo has been designed by Oroon Das.

# INTRODUCTION

Professor Alnoor Bhimani, *Director*



South Asian nations witness no shortage of challenges and disruptions, as well as developmental opportunities and marks of achievement.

Throughout much of 2022/23, the region continued to see civil liberties being challenged, security breakdowns creating social tensions, economic headwinds of crisis proportion in some parts of the region, foreign policy shifts favouring new regimes, religious polarisation, and the fracturing of political alliances in some instances. But it has also seen a moon landing, strengthening of certain cross-country linkages, pockets of resurging commercial activities, the considered implementation of difficult structural economic reforms as well as the growth of supply chain engagements in some quarters.

To a large degree, individuals in South Asia are unable to exert control over key factors that affect them due to reasons of caste, geographical birth location, gender, access to quality education and to health services — all of which ultimately impact a nation's social and economic progress. Social commentators and advocates of change, while divided on the types of broad measures and policy changes to be pursued for bettering the lives of South Asians, see the South Asia Centre as a central forum for analysing and debating issues of relevance to the region. This past year has been no exception.

One highlight of the Centre's activities has been the focus on the 75th independence anniversary of four countries in the region (India, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). We are the only academic Centre in the world that is marking 75 years of Burma/Myanmar's and Sri Lanka's independence with a year-long series of special events and blogs through 2023. The Centre has focused on @75 for each country in several ways from the summer of 2022. We commissioned four special logos to commemorate the occasion, following on from the hugely successful and widely appreciated 'Bangladesh @ 50' events through 2021. We have specially commissioned blogs every month over 12 months (starting from the month of the anniversary of the independence of each nation), covering different topics and disciplines, with contributions from a cross-section of academics, journalists, activists, and commentators.

A major on-site one-day conference was held in collaboration with the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) to mark 75 Years of Pakistan's independence on 5 November 2022. Two panel discussions on 'Decolonising Law for a Modern Pakistan' and 'Can Pakistan become

South Asia's Powerhouse?' reached a wide audience within and outside Pakistan. The event also provided the venue for the launch of the 'LSE South Asia Annual Forum' — a free-flowing conversation with nation-builders followed by a Q&A. The inaugural event was a conversation with philanthropist and educationist Syed Babar Ali.

An inaugural event was organised in January 2023 with a special lecture by Professor Angelene Naw (Judson University, Illinois) who is the only English-language biographer of Burma's founding father Aung San, on 'Aung San and the Independence Movement in Burma'. Also, a day-long on-site conference took place at LSE on 24 June with discussions on the road forward to Democracy in Myanmar, and the role of NGOs/Aid Agencies in Myanmar today.

Another inaugural event was organised in February 2023 featuring a special talk by former President/Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga on "'Ceylon to Sri Lanka": A Journey in Nationhood'. An on-line event with Asim Khwaja (Harvard) on Pakistan's economy was held in February 2023, the first in our collaborative events with US institutions to expand our network of activities (this one with The Lakshmi Mittal & Family South Asia Institute at Harvard). In March 2023, the Centre organised a Roundtable on India's economy with Professors Kaushik Basu (Cornell) and Jayati Ghosh (MIT-Amherst).

Through 2022/23, the Centre has continued its efforts to extend its States of South Asia (SoSA) Digital Maps project. The Sri Lanka digital map was launched in early February 2023 to mark the start of our special events commemorating 75 Years of Sri Lanka's independence. The Digital Map of Nepal was launched at the Embassy of Nepal in June 2023 to mark 100 Years of the Britain–Nepal Treaty. Both maps are first-of-their-kind research

resource anywhere in the world for the two countries — with verified data amalgamated on a digitally friendly website for use by researchers and made available to the end-user free of cost.

During the year we have welcomed several Visiting Fellows at the Centre. Dr Antonio Giustozzi has been a Visiting Fellow since 2022; his work has focused on new forms of *jihadism* and security threats in Af-Pak. He has written a monograph on *Jihadism in Pakistan* which has just been published, and the Centre will initiate its Occasional Papers series with Antonio's Working Paper in Autumn Term 2023/24. Dr Ratan Kumar Roy was Charles Wallace Bangladesh Trust Visiting Fellow over January–April 2023, visiting from BRAC University, Dhaka. Ratan's research project was civic political activism on social media, and he published a blogpost and organised an online event during his stay at the Centre. He will submit a Working Paper after the end of his Fellowship; while in the UK Ratan presented a paper on his ongoing research at Liverpool John Moores University. Dr Barkat Shah Kakar was Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust Visiting Fellow (January–April 2023) from the University of Balochistan, Quetta. The focus of his research project was the colonial and post-colonial construction of Pashtun stereotypes in Pakistan's education system. Barkat will publish a blogpost and submit a Working Paper on his research at LSE in due course.

Dr Aye Mar Win is Charles Wallace Myanmar Trust Visiting Fellow (May–August 2023) from Naypyitaw State Academy. During her stay at the Centre, Aye Mar's research will be on unfair trade practices in Myanmar. She participated in the one-day conference to mark 'Myanmar @ 75' at LSE on 24 June, and will publish a blog on Animal Welfare rights in Myanmar, intending also to write a Working Paper after the end of her Visitorship. Dr Umair Javed is a British

Academy Early Career Visiting Fellow (June–December 2023) from Lahore University of Management Sciences. He is an LSE alumnus (PhD 2018) and will work on converting his doctoral dissertation on local bazaars and the state in urban Pakistan into a monograph.

The 'South Asia @ LSE' blog has continued to publish new ideas in research on the region during the year. The specially commissioned blogposts to mark the 75th anniversaries of the four countries (India, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) have been highly successful, and widely read. Between February and June, we published four special blogs together on the middle Monday of each month! We have seen near 400,000 visitors to the blog over the January–December 2022 period, with 'South Asia @ LSE' being ranked 8th out of 40+ academic blogs at LSE.



The title for this year's Vera Anstey Essay Competition – which has been established especially for LSE students – was: 'What Could Decolonisation mean for Contemporary South Asia?' Shaurya Dev (LSE MSc International Relations) was awarded the first prize of £250 book vouchers from Waterstones, and the chance to publish his winning essay on the Centre's blog. The success of this student-focused activity has been noted by several, and especially by the Phelan US Centre who advised that they have been inspired by our student-focused essay competition and will plan to start one at their Centre as well.

The Centre launched an informal network of all South Asia-focused institutes, centres, units, and groups across the United Kingdom, as an academic platform for networking and pooling resources. No such network exists in the UK currently. The establishment of the 'UK-South Asia Network' – with a specially commissioned logo –

is testament to our leading position in the UK as a South Asia-focused academic unit. The aim of the Network is to create an academic space to make contact and enquire about resources, advertise conference notices, jobs, fellowships, RA positions, announce new books and research. The first event – on South Asian Food Cultures – was hosted by Brunel University on 19 May.

After two academic calendars (2020/22) of mounting one event each Teaching Week with great success and, following a rigorous analysis of its impact alongside other Centre activities, the Centre has adopted a new strategy from October 2022. We have reduced the total number of events mounted per academic year to approximately 65 per cent of its earlier output (16 planned events in 2022/23). The Centre will also have at least one key on-site event per academic year. In Summer 2022, for instance, we hosted the Indian Justice D. Y. Chandrachud; in 2022/23, we hosted the 'Myanmar @ 75' conference, which is the only such conference taking place anywhere in the world.

All in all, the Centre's activities this year have seen diversity of form and content elevating what is of essence to South Asian country issues.

 This Report encompasses the many ways in which the Centre has continued to establish LSE as the hub of South Asia-related activities in the United Kingdom, unravelling South Asia to the world. 

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# YEAR IN REVIEW



16  
Events



1  
Prize  
announcement



67  
Blogposts



366,737  
Blog reader views  
(Jan–Dec 2022)



9,920  
Facebook  
followers



1,167  
Instagram  
followers



10,500  
Twitter  
followers



46,543  
YouTube  
event views



5,101  
YouTube  
subscriptions



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NILANJAN SARKAR, C RAJA MOHAN, SUHASINI HAIDER & VLADIMIR SOTNIKOV AT 'ENERGY & GEOPOLITICS IN SOUTH ASIA' (PART OF OUR 'GEOPOLITICS BEYOND BORDERS' SERIES), 10 MAY 2023.



(LEFT) ZOYA PHAN & STÉPHEN HUARD (RIGHT) ON A PANEL ON 'HUMANITARIAN AID' AT THE 'MYANMAR @ 75' INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, LSE, 24 JUNE 2023.

# INDIA @ 75

This academic year will mark the 75th Independence anniversaries of 4 countries in South Asia, and we will mark all of them. Commemorative events for the 75th anniversary of India's independence began in the last academic year (2021/22), with a specially commissioned logo, special events as well as a series of monthly blogposts, and will continue in 2022/23, till July.

In March 2023, the Centre convened a panel on **'Growth and Economics: How Far can India Rise?'** with LSE alumnus, economist and member of the Centre's Senior Advisory Board Kaushik Basu (Cornell University) and Jayati Ghosh (University of Massachusetts-Amherst) in conversation with Centre Director Alnoor Bhimani. Given India's consistent and strident economic growth over the years on the one hand, and the concentration of wealth in the top 1 per cent of the 1.4 billion people and increasing unemployment in the world's most populous country, the discussion focused on the possibilities and prospects of India's economic boom, and challenges.

*A recording of this event is available on the Centre's website.*

## 'INDIA @ 75' BLOGS

We continued publishing specially commissioned blogposts to mark the 75th anniversary of India's independence, which we had started in August 2022.

Particularly notable were Amogh Dhar Sharma's **'Concertina Wires and the Crocodile: The General Elections of 1984 and the Rise of Political Marketing in India'** (March 2023) and Kaushik Bhaumik's **'India @ 75, Ray @ 101: Some Thoughts on the Nation and the World'** (April 2023), both being read widely. Sharma's post looked at the beginnings of 'political marketing' in India (and includes fascinating photographs from newspaper archives). It

provides a useful if nostalgic backdrop to what has become a huge, almost industrial, exercise for governments nowadays not just in India but worldwide. It blended in an interesting way with Bhaumik's commentary on India's most decorated filmmaker Satyajit Ray (who would have turned 101 this year) and the ideas of nationhood in his movies. Two other popularly noted ones included Faisal Devji's intellectual commentary on the fate of Muslim politics in India (June 2023) and Praveen Chaudhry's post on pollution in the Yamuna River in Delhi (July 2023).


Other blogposts in this series in 2022/23 looked at the government's proposal for the establishment of higher education foreign university campuses in India (Sweety Supriya, May 2023), modernity and the politics of 'personality' in Greater Delhi (Sanjay Srivastava, February 2023), a portrait of early Indian feminist Hansa Mehta (Niraja Gopal Jayal, September 2022) and refugee settlements and the changing profile of Calcutta after 1947 (Urvi Mukhopadhyay, October 2022). Jayal's post drew particular attention given how little information is available for Mehta in the archives, and is a brilliant example of how life stories may be narrativised despite the odds.

As we write this Report, we feel satisfied that our commemorative events to mark India's special Independence anniversary have been greatly appreciated, and the blogposts especially commended for the breadth of topics covered, both historical and contemporary, and the attention they drew to less known, or long forgotten, topics of relevance and discussion.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ALNOOR BHIMANI, KAUSHIK BASU & JAYATI GHOSH AT 'GROWTH & ECONOMICS: HOW FAR CAN INDIA RISE?' (PART OF OUR 'INDIA @ 75' SERIES), 9 MARCH 2023.

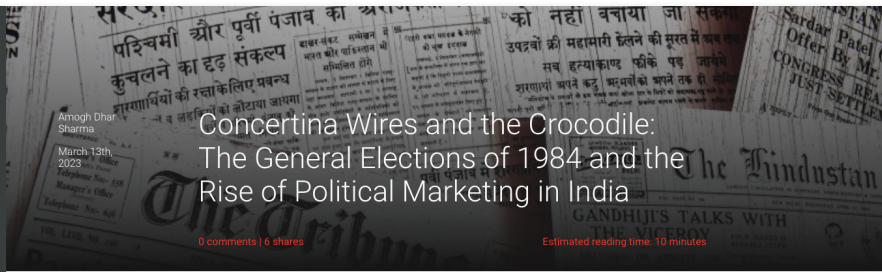



Amogh Dhar Sharma  
March 13th, 2023


## Concertina Wires and the Crocodile: The General Elections of 1984 and the Rise of Political Marketing in India

0 comments | 6 shares

Estimated reading time: 10 minutes







The General Elections of 1984 – following the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in October – was a seismic event in Indian politics. Amogh Dhar Sharma examines the use of advertising and new technology, which played a novel and vital role in the elections that followed and brought her son Rajiv to the forefront, the first time political ‘marketing’ was consciously used by political parties so extensively as part of their electoral campaign.

BLOGPOST COMMEMORATING 'INDIA @ 75' BY AMOGH DHAR SHARMA (13 MARCH 2023), 'SOUTH ASIA @ LSE'.

# PAKISTAN @ 75

August 1947 marked the birth of Pakistan in South Asia.

Commemorative events to mark its 75th anniversary began in the last academic year (2021/22), with a specially commissioned logo, special events and a series of monthly blogposts.

In November 2022, the Centre organised a special, on-site event to mark 75 years of Pakistan at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) – much like we had organised a two-day event to mark the 70th anniversary in 2017 at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi.

The one-day **'Pakistan @ 75' conference**, in collaboration with Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), had two panel discussions, followed by the launch of the LSE South Asia Centre's Annual Forum. The purpose was not only to mark Pakistan's 75th anniversary of independence but to use the occasion to discuss important issues confronting the nation.

Panel 1 on **'Decolonising Law for a Modern Pakistan'** discussed the important and vexed question of what post-colonial nation-states like Pakistan, saddled as they are with outdated British laws which continue to form the majority of its legal corpus, can do to 'de-colonise' them (or not) to make the laws more suitable for a modern Islamic nation-state whose judges take oath on the secular values of its Constitution. Panelists included Amber Darr (Manchester), Sara Malkani (High Court of Pakistan), Maura McGowan (Supreme Court of England and Wales) and Salman Akram Raja (Supreme Court of Pakistan). Qazi Faez Isa (Supreme Court of Pakistan) was the Discussant, chaired by LSE alumnus Raza Rahman (Lexium—Attorneys at Law).

Panel 2, titled **'Can Pakistan become Asia's Next Powerhouse?'**, looked at an elephant in the room: what, if anything, was stopping Pakistan from becoming an economic superpower when it had received huge infrastructural investment from China (leading to the Belt-Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)) and loans from the International Monetary Fund. Panelists Ali Cheema (CERP, Lahore), Mariam Chughtai (National Curriculum of Pakistan), Abdul Razak Dawood (Founder of Descon), Senator Sania Nishtar and M Amjad Saqib (Founder/Chairman of Akhuwat Foundation) discussed in detail Pakistan's many social, infrastructural and human resource challenges; the panel was chaired by Director Alnoor Bhimani.

The **LSE South Asia Centre Annual Forum** – for which we have a specially commissioned logo – will have a different format to those of our other events. The Forum will mostly be a conversation with a thought leader, changemaker and nation-builder. For our inaugural Forum, we were lucky to have the renowned Pakistani educationist-philanthropist **Syed Babar Ali OBE**, in conversation with Centre Director Alnoor Bhimani. The discussion covered several aspects of Ali's life-story but focused particularly on his determined work to build the newly-formed Pakistan through his businesses and, alongside various other successes, founding LUMS – by far the best academic institution in Pakistan. One thought stands out: the importance of trusting the people you hire, and giving them the independence and freedom to do their work properly!

A special dinner, hosted by LSE alumnus Raza Rahman at The Punjab Club in Lahore rounded off a hugely successful conference day celebrating this special occasion.

Another event that drew a lot of interest was a rare (for us at the Centre) one-on-one conversation in February 2023 between eminent Pakistani economist Asim Khwaja (Harvard

University) and Centre Director Alnoor Bhimani titled **'Sound Economics can Enrich Pakistan'**. This event was in collaboration with The Lakshmi Mittal & Family South Asia Institute at Harvard, and was part of the Centre's initiative to build networks across the pond.

*Recordings of these events are available on the Centre's website.*



SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED LOGO OF 'LSE SOUTH ASIA ANNUAL FORUM', LAUNCHED AT 'PAKISTAN @ 75' CONFERENCE, LUMS, LAHORE, 5 NOVEMBER 2022. THE LOGO HAS BEEN DESIGNED BY OROON DAS.



SYED BABAR ALI IN CONVERSATION WITH ALNOOR BHIMANI, LAUNCH OF 'LSE SOUTH ASIA CENTRE ANNUAL FORUM' AT 'PAKISTAN @ 75' CONFERENCE, LUMS, LAHORE, 5 NOVEMBER 2022.

## 'PAKISTAN @ 75' BLOGS

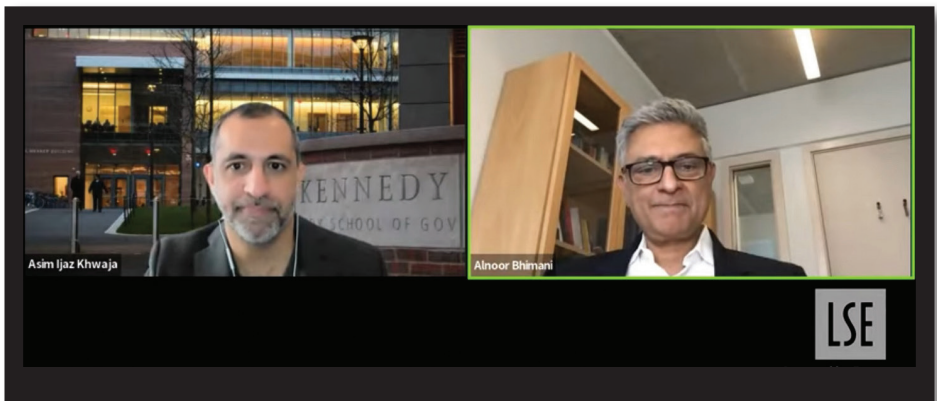
The Centre continued to publish specially commissioned blogposts to mark the 75th anniversary of Pakistan. We were delighted to be able to publish a series that has been widely read, and greatly appreciated by our nearly half-a-million readers. The topics we covered were varied, often drawing attention to little known stories about the country: veteran publisher Aameena Saiyyid's post on **'75 Years of Publishing in Pakistan'** (January 2023) and Timothy Cooper's **'Film, Market Demand and the Moral Alibi in Pakistan'** (June 2023) were particularly noted, along with Amber Darr's **'No Law but God's Law: Islam and the Pakistani Legal System'** (March 2023) and incoming Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa's **'The Idea of Pakistan'** (May 2023).

Other blogposts in 2022/23 looked at climate justice (Abdur Rehman Cheema, February 2023), the legendary India-Pakistan rivalry (and friendship) on the cricket field (Ali Khan, July

2023), and a particularly impressive overview of 75 years of Pakistan's political journey (Tahir Kamran, April 2023).

## CHARLES WALLACE PAKISTAN TRUST VISITING FELLOW

The Charles Wallace Visiting Fellowship scheme had been interrupted because of the pandemic and related restrictions on travel. But in January 2023 we were delighted to welcome **Dr Barkat Shah Kakar** from the University of Balochistan in Quetta for 3 months. Barkat, whose interests are in Pashtun traditions and cultures, has published extensively in Pashto, Urdu and English. During his Fellowship at the Centre, he worked on his project on images and stereotypes of Pashtuns in Pakistani state narratives and educational materials, published a blog on **'Reimagining the Pashtun's Cultural Identity in Pakistan'** (later, in July 2023), and will submit a Working Paper to be published by the Centre in due course.



(LEFT) ASIM KHWAJA & (RIGHT) ALNOOR BHIMANI AT 'SOUND ECONOMICS CAN ENRICH PAKISTAN', 2 FEBRUARY 2023.

# MYANMAR @ 75



THE 'MYANMAR @ 75' LOGO IS COPYRIGHTED BY THE LSE SOUTH ASIA CENTRE, AND MAY NOT BE USED BY ANYONE FOR ANY PURPOSE. IT SHOWS THE NATIONAL FLOWER OF MYANMAR, THE PADAUK (*PTEROCARPUS MACROCARPUS*), FRAMED IN A DESIGN ADAPTED FROM BURMESE IKAT TEXTILE WEAVES. THE LOGO HAS BEEN DESIGNED BY OROON DAS.

Our Centre is the only Higher Education institution in the world to mark the 75th anniversary of Burma/Myanmar's independence – with a specially-commissioned logo, regular events, an international conference and 12 monthly blogposts – starting in January 2023. In doing so, our Centre has highlighted several lesser-known aspects of Myanmar, from laws protecting animals to punk rock in Yangon, alongside discussing politics, economy, society, and the way ahead.

Our year-long commemorative events started on 26 January 2023 with a special lecture on '**Aung San and Independent Burma**' by Angelene Naw (Judson University, Illinois), the only academic to have written a biography of Burma's Founding Father Aung San in English.. Naw's online lecture – which was attended by several people at Judson, and hundreds more online in the US, UK, Myanmar, and across the world – traced the complex history

of Burma's struggle for independence, Aung San's emergence as the leading figure in this, and significantly, his contacts with and visit to other countries in the subcontinent (especially pre-Partition India). Michael Charney (SOAS), an expert on the history of Burma/Myanmar, was Discussant. Naw's lecture was published in our 'Myanmar @ 75' series on the Centre's blog on 10 April 2023.

Earlier, in November 2022, we kicked off our 'Fact & Fiction' series of book discussions with **'Narrating Democracy: Peoples & Futures of Myanmar'**, focused on *Narrating Democracy in Myanmar: The Struggle between Activists, Democratic Leaders and Aid Workers* (2021) by Tamas Wells (Melbourne). Richard Roewer (Oxford), Ashley South (Chiang Mai) and Minn Tent Bo (Independent Researcher/Analyst, London) were panelists, with Gerard McCarthy (LSE Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre) as Discussant. The event looked at the dynamics of how various groups worked differently towards the democratic agenda in Myanmar, and their struggles; also, how the future looks now, after the military coup of 2021. This event was in collaboration with the LSE Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre.

As mentioned above, the Centre was the only HE institution in the world to host an **international conference** to mark **Myanmar @ 75** on 25 June 2023 at LSE. Given the current situation in Myanmar where a nascent quasi-democratic political system was dismissed in a military coup in February 2021 and prospects for return to any democracy are feeble at the moment, our conference looked at both the present and the future. Two panel discussions – **'Looking Ahead'** and **'Humanitarian Aid'** – discussed the prospects of a democratic future in Myanmar, as well as the current humanitarian crises given widespread ground-level fighting between Ethnic Armed Organisations (EAOs) and the *junta*.

Tent Bo (Independent Researcher/Analyst, London), Michael Charney (SOAS), Thet Ko Ko (National Unity Government (NUG) Spokesperson) and Theingi Lynn (Writer & Media Scholar) discussed possible paths towards democracy in Myanmar, if and when

such a time may come in the future. LSE Doctorand Dominique Dillabough-Lefebvre moderated the discussion. The panel discussion on Humanitarian Aid saw Nyan San Lwin (Independent Commentator), Zoya Phan (Burma Campaign UK), Kota Watanabe (SOAS), and Kyaw Win Tun (Leicester) discuss the challenges to humanitarian aid activities in Myanmar, moderated by Stéphen Huard (EHESP, Paris). A Keynote Address (online) by James Scott (Yale) on 'Federalism Crafted from Below in Burma's War on the Junta' had to be cancelled at the last moment for personal reasons.

*Recordings of some of these events are available on the Centre's website.*

## **'MYANMAR @ 75' BLOGS**

Starting in January 2023, 'South Asia @ LSE' has been publishing a specially commissioned blogpost to mark the 75th anniversary of Burma/Myanmar's independence every month. We have paid particular attention to look at both the past and present, through a variety of topics that consider different issues relevant, and of interest, to those who engage with the country.

Angelene Naw's lecture on **Aung San and the Independence of Burma** (mentioned above) was published as a special blogpost in April this year, building on the enormous appreciation of the original lecture in January; in other months, a blog on the radical **Kyi-bwa-ye/Ludu** magazine/tabloid (by Bo Bo, in February) and on **The Burma Baptist Chronicle** of 1963 (by Alexandra Kaloyanides, in August) focusing on Christian missionary activity drew enormous interest from readers for the very different perspectives it brought to politics and religion in Myanmar over the last century! Martin Smith's

'**A Land Lost in Conflict**' (in March) mourned the slow and definite descent of this beautiful country to military rule and civilian repression.

LSE Doctorand Dominique Dillabough-Lefebvre wrote an especially interesting post on the **Defence Service Museum** (May) in Nay Pyi Taw, and the *junta*'s politics of remembering and forgetting the nation's past – with rare photographs of displays inside the museum.

Alongside these were other 'forward-looking' blogs that discussed what a future Myanmar, with some semblance of democracy, may look like: Michael Charney's '**planetary**' reading for Myanmar (January), and Htet Min Lwin & Matthew Walton's '**rethinking**' of independence at a time of revolution (June) introduced new ways of thinking about the past and the future of Myanmar. More blogs, planned for next year, will discuss much else, from punk rock to Buddhist majoritarian nationalism.

## CHARLES WALLACE BURMA/ MYANMAR TRUST VISITING FELLOW

We were delighted to welcome our first Fellow under the auspices of the Charles Wallace Burma Trust this year. **Aye Mar Win** (Professor of Law at Nay Pyi Taw State Academy) has been at the Centre since May, and will remain till September. Her doctoral research is on the legal protection of animals in Myanmar; during her Visitorship, Aye Mar attended the 'Myanmar @ 75' conference and other events, and will conduct research on illegal and unfair import trade commodities and their impact on citizens, examining regulatory loopholes and exploring legal provisions to counter these practices. A blogpost and Working Paper are forthcoming in 2023/24.



ANGELENE NAW DELIVERING A SPECIAL LECTURE ON 'AUNG SAN & INDEPENDENT BURMA', INAUGURATING OUR 'MYANMAR @ 75' SERIES OF EVENTS, 26 JANUARY 2023.

# SRI LANKA @ 75



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The fourth country to mark its 75th independence anniversary (on 4 February 2023) was Sri Lanka. As with India, Myanmar and Pakistan, the Centre had a full menu of special activities to mark this landmark date for a country that has been passing through some very difficult times, politically and economically.

For the inaugural lecture, the Centre invited former President and Prime Minister Chandrika Kumaratunga, and asked her to speak on **'Ceylon to Sri Lanka: A Journey in Nationhood'**. Kumaratunga, and both her parents (who are former Presidents), were an important part of this journey, deeply tainted as it is by the ethnic tensions between the majority Sinhala and minority Tamils that have long fractured its society. Kumaratunga's tenure also oversaw the decades-long civil war, which cost the lives of hundreds of civilians. She spoke at length about Sri Lanka's troubled journey to nationhood, and

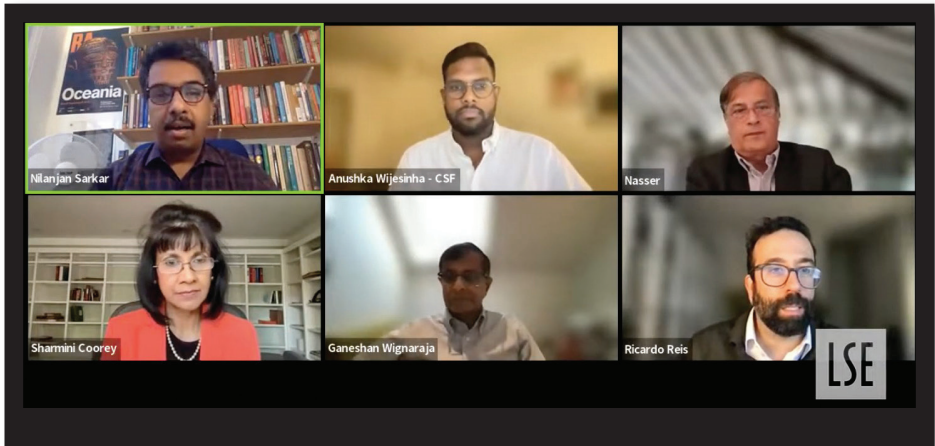
also took questions from Discussant Rajesh Venugopal on allegations of her alleged role (via her political decisions/actions) in the civil war.

Earlier, in October 2022, following the *aragalaya* (lit., 'struggle') in July in Colombo, the Centre convened a fascinating panel discussion titled **'Looking Ahead in Sri Lanka'** to consider the future prospects of Sri Lanka following its near-complete economic collapse. Sharmini Coorey (Sri Lanka Presidential Advisory Group), Ricardo Reis (LSE), Ganeshan Wignaraja (Overseas Development Institute, London/Gateway House,





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: RAJESH VENUGOPAL, CHANDRIKA KUMARATUNGA & ALNOOR BHIMANI AT 'CEYLON TO SRI LANKA: A JOURNEY IN NATIONHOOD', SPECIAL LECTURE TO INAUGURATE OUR 'SRI LANKA @ 75' SERIES OF EVENTS, 16 FEBRUARY 2023.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NILANJAN SARKAR, ANUSHKA WIJESINHA, NASSER MUNJEE, RICARDO REIS, GANESHAN WIGNARAJA & SHARMINI COOREY AT 'LOOKING AHEAD IN SRI LANKA', 11 OCTOBER 2022.

Mumbai) and Anushka Wijesinha (Centre for Smart Future, Colombo) discussed the possibilities available to the government to negotiate with the International Monetary Fund, and carve a viable path forward. The event was moderated by LSE alumnus and Chair of the Centre's Senior Advisory Board Nasser Munjee, and chaired by Deputy Director Nilanjan Sarkar.

*Recordings of these events are available on the Centre's website.*

## 'SRI LANKA @ 75' BLOGS

Jubilee celebrations of Sri Lanka have been overshadowed by its current political crises and economic collapse. As we go to press with this Report, six specially commissioned blogs on 'Sri Lanka @ 75' have been published (with six more to come in 2023/24) — and several of our posts despair at Sri Lanka's current economic and political condition.

Jayadeva Uyangoda's **'75 Years of Independence: Sri Lanka in the Jubilee Year'** (February 2023) is amongst the most read posts in this series till now, along with Thiruni Kelegama's **'Development Gone Wrong: Sri Lanka at 75'** (April 2023) and Sharika Thiranagama's deeply personal **'My Sri Lanka @ 75'** (June 2023). Each post lays out the trajectory of where, what and how the country went wrong in their view, what lessons may be learnt from its histories, and what hopes lie in the future. Whether it is political, economic or ethnic, all have left fissures and wounds in the fabric of the country, most often with dramatic impact on its people. Readers will, in the least, be touched by the intensity of feeling each of these posts carries, for a country they deeply love.

The ongoing economic crisis — also commented on by long-time Sri Lanka observer Mick Moore (**'The IMF, Humiliation, and Sri Lanka's Independence'**; May 2023) — and an interesting political commentary by Luke Heslop (**'Independence: Sri Lanka at 75'**), provide two complementary perspectives on the country, taking a different look at the country's current crises. Graham Shaw's **'Sri Lanka: The "Back Door" for Indian Nationalists'** (July 2023) is a particularly unusual post, where he discusses how Sri Lanka unwittingly became a back-door for Indian nationalists to enter India (under colonial rule) when direct entry into their own country was not possible for various reasons.



LSE

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Mick Moore  
May 15th, 2023

## The IMF, Humiliation, and Sri Lanka's Independence

0 comments | 6 shares

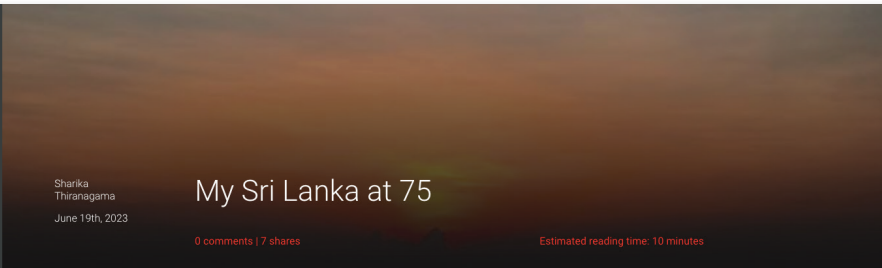
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*In its 75th year of independence, Sri Lanka has been in the news for its economic crises. As the nation re-engages with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and its strict terms and conditions, Mick Moore writes about how Sri Lanka – once a prosperous economy whose citizens benefited from welfare measures – could carve an alternative economic and developmental path ahead that is more beneficial, and less humiliating, for the nation.*

BLOGPOST COMMEMORATING 'SRI LANKA @ 75' BY MICK MOORE (15 MAY 2023), 'SOUTH ASIA @ LSE'.



LSE

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Sharika Thiranagama  
June 19th, 2023

## My Sri Lanka at 75

0 comments | 7 shares

Estimated reading time: 10 minutes

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*The Anti-Terrorism Act (2023) in Sri Lanka has expanded the powers of the state to arrest its citizens, already draconian and opaque under the earlier Prevention of Terrorism Act (1979). In this personal post, Sharika Thiranagama talks about how these Acts of Parliament have left deep scars in communities, who live with the wounds of the living and the dead, and her hopes for Sri Lanka as it marks 75 years of independence.*

BLOGPOST COMMEMORATING 'SRI LANKA @ 75' BY SHARIKA THIRANAGAMA (19 JUNE 2023), 'SOUTH ASIA @ LSE'.

# NEPAL

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This year also marked the centenary of the singular and important Nepal–Britain Treaty of Friendship of 1923, the first of its kind in South Asia at the time. The Centre was honoured to host a special event to mark this anniversary at the Embassy of Nepal in London, the only Higher Education institution in the United Kingdom to participate in this celebration.

The Centre was especially delighted to be able to be part of this event – Nepal is unique in the South Asian regional landscape as being one of only 2 countries to never have been colonised by the British. Quite the contrary, the Nepal–Britain Treaty of 1923 draws attention to the importance Britain gave to the country at a time when it was in complete control of most of the countries surrounding it. Unfortunately, though, little attention has been paid by academics and institutions to this important moment in the history of Nepal, and of South Asia.

We were therefore particularly delighted to organise a special event in collaboration with the Embassy of Nepal in London on 14 June to mark this occasion. **H.E. Mr Gyan Chandra Acharya** (Hon'ble Ambassador of Nepal to the United Kingdom) welcomed everyone to the Embassy, followed by Centre Director **Alnoor Bhimani** who introduced the event and Speaker. **Surya P. Subedi**, KC (Leeds) presented a brilliant overview and analysis of the Treaty in his lecture titled '**Nepal–Britain Treaty of Friendship of 1923: An International Legal Perspective**', also published as a blog on 'South Asia @ LSE' later in August.

**David Gellner** (Oxford) and **Katie Oven** (Northumbria) spoke about their research and interest in Nepal over their careers and decades, giving members of the audience a glimpse into their long years of association with Nepal.

The Centre launched the **Nepal Big Data Digital Map** (part of its **States of South Asia** (SoSA) Digital Maps Project) to mark the centenary of the Treaty of Friendship on the same day. It was the perfect occasion to launch this one-of-its-kind free research resource which we hope will encourage more research on Nepal. Like other maps in this project, the Nepal map collates big data from official sources and presents it in graphic and Excel form for researchers across the world to access free of charge for their own research and analysis.

Unlike most of our other events which are online only, this event was on-site, held at the Embassy of Nepal in London.



(LEFT) ALNOOR BHIMANI, SURYA P SUBEDI, KATIE OVEN, DAVID GELLNER & H. E. GYAN CHANDRA ACHARYA & (RIGHT) SURYA P SUBEDI DELIVERING HIS LECTURE AT 'NEPAL-UK: 100 YEARS ON', 14 JUNE 2023.



AUDIENCE LISTENING TO KATIE OVEN SPEAKING ABOUT HER RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT WITH NEPAL AT 'NEPAL-UK: 100 YEARS ON', LONDON, 14 JUNE 2023.

# SOUTH ASIA



THE 'UK-SOUTH ASIA NETWORK' LOGO IS SPECIALLY COMMISSIONED TO REPRESENT THE NETWORK, LED BY THE LSE SOUTH ASIA CENTRE. IT USES A LINE-AND-DOT PATTERN TO REPRESENT INDIVIDUAL AFFILIATING INSTITUTIONS AND THE WEB-WORK TO WHICH THEY BELONG, WITH WAVES REPRESENTING WATER, WHICH CONNECTS ALL THE NATIONS OF THE REGION TOGETHER. THE LOGO, DESIGNED BY OROON DAS, IS COPYRIGHTED.

**In 2021/22, amidst the lockdown, the Centre decided to launch a UK-South Asia 'Network', comprising all other UK Higher Education-affiliated South Asia Institutes/Centres/Groups, which was formalised in 2022/23.**

It seems to us that while all the South Asia-focused units in UK Higher Education institutions are unique, there is also a lot of synergy in our activities and interests, and all of us would benefit from being part of a network that would harness our interests and energies, provide a platform to publicise our events, and perhaps even nudge us towards doing some collaborative events with one another. Affiliating institutions would also be able to do special events as part of the Network.

But the Network is also meant to serve another purpose: be a platform in the UK for all South Asia-interested people, academic and otherwise, for information – from publicising CfPs and event notices to new publications, jobs, internships, RA-

ships and the like. No such platform exists in the UK at the moment, and we hope to fulfil at least some of these ambitions through this Network.

The South Asia Research Group at Brunel University curated the first event for the Network on 19 May 2023. The day-long online conference on **'Food and Identity in South Asia since Independence'** was convened by Devanshi Chanchani, Peggy Froerer, Luke Heslop and James Staples, with papers from scholars working on a wide range of topics, from cuisine to street food, and much more.

*A recording of the conference is available on the Centre's website.*

Although 2022/23 was marked in particular by our commemorative events to mark the 75th independence anniversary of Sri Lanka and Myanmar, and the continuing commemoration of India's and Pakistan's 75th anniversary as well, the Centre of course convened events on other countries of South Asia, as well as on the region in general. Afghanistan and Bangladesh remained on the Centre's radar as usual, as Afghanistan entered its second year under Taliban rule, and Bangladesh inched towards a national election in 2024.

## SOUTH ASIA

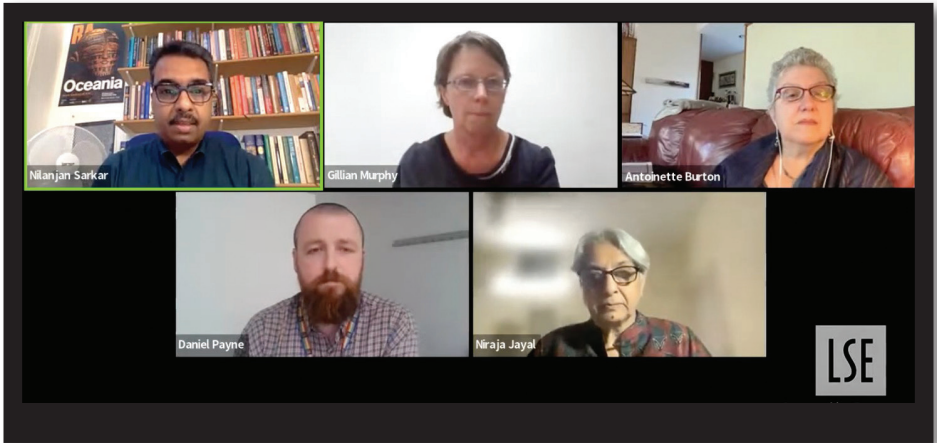
The Centre has been working consistently with LSE Library, exploring its archives for materials relating to South Asia. After a hugely successful event on Dr B R Ambedkar in June 2021 which launched the Library's online exhibition – 'Educate. Agitate. Organise. Ambedkar at LSE', the most-visited exhibition ever curated by LSE Library – the Centre convened a panel discussion on **'Traces of History: Fragmentary Archives and Narratives in South Asia'** in November 2022. The purpose of this event was to highlight lesser-known, or fragmentary, archival materials in LSE Library that may be of interest to researchers. Gillian Murphy and Daniel Payne (both Curators at LSE Library) spoke about Pakistani women's magazines and LSE alumnus Vithal Kadam respectively, and Niraja Gopal Jayal (LSE) spoke about Indian feminist Hansa Mehta. Antoinette Burton (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) spoke about the importance and use of fragmentary archives in the writing of history in South Asia. The event was chaired by Deputy Director Nilanjan Sarkar, himself a historian.

*A recording of this event is available on the Centre's website.*

## AFGHANISTAN

A discussion on **'The Future of Jihadism in Afghanistan'** in October seemed to be both timely and relevant to discuss what is happening in the country at the moment, as the world's attention gradually moves towards other matters, leaving the country to its fate. Visiting Fellow at the Centre Antonio Giustozzi – whose research interests are in Afghanistan and Pakistan – curated an event with Barak Mendelsohn (Haverford), Ashley Jackson (King's College London) and Ali Mohammad Ali (Independent Researcher) to discuss the future path of the country under the Taliban, as multiple *jihadi* splinter groups continued to assert themselves in pockets of the country. The Speakers – each with research interest and knowledge of the country – discussed this curious situation for the Taliban who were now in the position of government, and had to constantly address the challenges posed to their authority, some from former allies, in their war against the democratic and civilian government in the country.

*A recording of this event is available on the Centre's website.*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NILANJAN SARKAR, GILLIAN MURPHY, ANTOINETTE BURTON, NIRAJA GOPAL JAYAL & DANIEL PAYNE AT 'TRACES OF HISTORY: FRAGMENTARY ARCHIVES & NARRATIVES IN SOUTH ASIA', 10 NOVEMBER 2022.



(LEFT) ALNOOR BHIMANI & (RIGHT) KAUSHIK BASU AT 'CONTEMPORARY THOUGHTS ON BANGABANDHU SHEIKH MUJIB'S HISTORIC 7 MARCH SPEECH', LONDON, 7 MARCH 2023.



A second, related event titled **'Afghanistan: Taliban, Government & the Way Forward'**, scheduled for June 2023 (in collaboration with RUSI) with the prominent Afghan commentator Obaidullah Baheer (American University of Afghanistan) and moderated by Martyn Bayly (LSE), had to be cancelled at the last moment. It was meant to take a grassroots look at the actual governance of Afghanistan under the Taliban, and how the world may begin to engage with them for the wider welfare and benefit of its peoples. We hope to re-convene this event at a later date.

## BANGLADESH

The Centre was honoured to participate in the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh's special event to mark the **historic 7 March 1971 speech** of Founding Father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, when he called for complete freedom of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) from West Pakistan. Kaushik Basu (Cornell University; member of the Centre's Senior Advisory Board) who was Visiting Faculty at LSE at the time, and Centre Director Alnoor Bhimani spoke at this event with H.E. Saida Muna Tasneem (Hon'ble High Commissioner of Bangladesh to the United Kingdom) in their recently named 'Bangabandhu Lounge' at the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in London.

## CHARLES WALLACE BANGLADESH TRUST VISITING FELLOW

Now that pandemic-related restrictions on travel have been lifted, we were able to rekindle our Visiting Fellowships. In January 2023, under the auspices of The Charles Wallace Bangladesh Trust, we were delighted to welcome **Dr Ratan Kumar Roy** (Assistant Professor at BRAC University, Dhaka). Whilst at the Centre, Ratan worked on digitalisation, online activism and civic politics in Bangladesh, participated in an online panel discussion on **'Civic Politics & Online Activism in the New Age'** (with panelists Fatima Gaw (Northwestern University), Deana Rohlinger (Florida State University), Amogh Dhar Sharma (Oxford) and David Lewis (LSE) in March 2023), and published a blog titled **"Smart Bangladesh": What about "Smart Politics" and "Smart Thinking"?** (also in March 2023). His Working Paper, drawing upon research done during his Fellowship at LSE, will be published next year.

## TOUGH TALK

This has been one of the most successful series of events at the Centre, and we are often asked about the next topic of discussion! As its title suggests, this series picks difficult topics of interest and curates academic discussions on them, often with panelists with very different perspectives.

This year, we began our calendar of events with a 'Tough Talk' that is of enormous relevance to both South Asia, as well as to the wider world – **'Should Colonial Objects in Museums be Returned?'**.

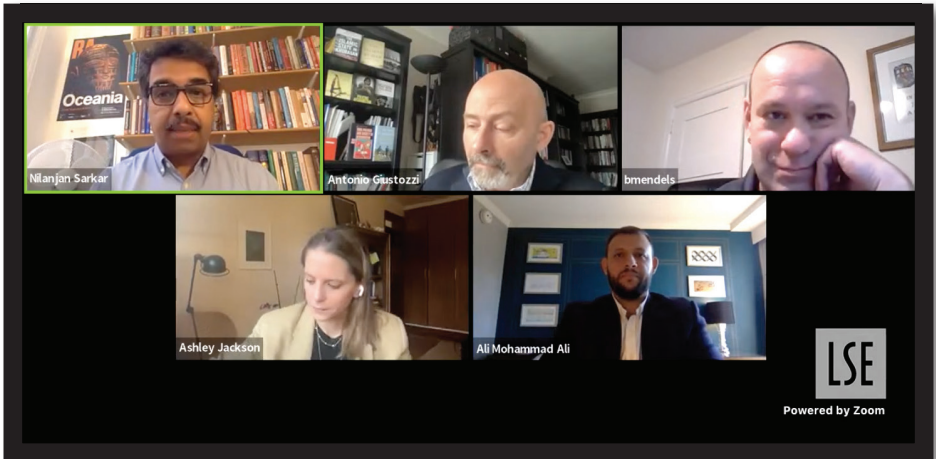
There have been heated debates on this theme for decades here in the United Kingdom, focused particularly (but not only) on the 'Elgin Marbles'/ Parthenon Sculptures in The British Museum, which Greece has long asked to be returned to them. Oxford archaeologist–anthropologist Dan Hicks' hugely successful *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (2020; rev. edn 2022) widened this debate, arguing that the intrinsic violence of colonialism meant that all such objects ought to be returned from museum collections to their countries of origin. This, of course, is easier said than done, not just because international museums are unlikely to agree to such a blanket policy but also because of legal hurdles and contemporary realities where sometimes the originating 'nation' no longer exists (for example, the Benin Bronzes do not belong to the modern nation of Benin – which is geographically different from the former Kingdom of Benin from where the (not-made-of-bronze) objects were taken, which is now part of southern Nigeria).

We invited Dan Hicks to present his arguments, along with Dolly Kikon (Melbourne) who has been involved in the return of ancestral remains of Nagas to her community, currently at the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Kavita Singh (JNU, Delhi) spoke of the criminal activity of selling stolen antiquities to museums abroad, and the processes of return – a more recent (post-Independence) phenomenon in India. But British-Nigerian writer & journalist Adewala Maja-Pearce argued – especially in the context of the Benin Bronzes– against the idea of returning colonial museum objects, underlining (a) the global and international exposure and appreciation that such objects receive in museums; and (b) the near-definite fate of the objects once they are returned, where they will likely disappear from public sight through bureaucratic hurdles, and risk being damaged and lost for ever.

*A recording of this event is available on the Centre's website.*



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NILANJAN SARKAR, KAVITA SINGH, DAN HICKS, DOLLY KIKON & ADEWALA MAJA-PEARCE AT 'SHOULD COLONIAL OBJECTS IN MUSEUMS BE RETURNED?' (PART OF OUR 'TOUGH TALK' SERIES), 27 SEPTEMBER 2022.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NILANJAN SARKAR, ANTONIO GIUSTOZZI, BARAK MENDELSON, ALI MOHAMMED ALI & ASHLEY JACKSON AT 'THE FUTURE OF JIHADISM IN AFGHANISTAN', 6 OCTOBER 2022.

# FACT AND FICTION

The Centre's curated book discussion series has been one of its most successful academic events. The series brings together the author/ editor of a book with interested panelists to discuss it from various perspectives, along with wider questions and issues it touches upon.

In Michaelmas Term (November), as opposition to the *junta* in Myanmar continued to spread, we discussed ***Narrating Democracy in Myanmar: The Struggle between Activists, Democratic Leaders and Aid Workers*** (2021) by Tamas Wells (Melbourne). Gerard McCarthy (Visiting Fellow, LSE Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre) was Discussant for the event, where panelists Richard Roewer (Oxford), Ashley South (Chiang Mai) and Minn Tent Bo (Independent Analyst & Researcher) discussed the principal focus of the book – the contested meanings of democracy in Myanmar among different groups fighting for the same cause, and its impact on the nature and prospects of democracy in the country. The event was expectedly animated, with brilliant questions from a loyal audience who remained online despite a delay in starting the event due to a technical glitch. The event was in collaboration with the LSE Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre.

In Lent Term (March), the Centre was delighted to host a unique book event on ***New Mediums, Better Messages: How Innovations in Translation, Engagement, and Advocacy are Changing International Development*** (2022), co-edited by David Lewis (LSE). The book is not specifically on South Asia, nor on any particular subject or theme; instead, it is a methodological intervention on how the archives can be expanded to study the social sciences better, and in a more nuanced manner. We invited Vinod Pavarala (Hyderabad, India; expert on radio), Sarah Saddler (CUNY;

expert on theatre) and Krishnendu Ray (NYU-Steinhardt; writes on food cultures) to discuss the volume's argument for a more nuanced approach to, and integration of, what is 'source material' in the study of social sciences.

*Recordings of these events are available on the Centre's website.*

In Summer Term (June), we hosted another interesting book discussion, on ***50 Years of Bangladesh: Advances in Public Health*** (2023), co-authored by Ahmed Mushtaque Raza Chowdhury (LSE alumnus and Member of the Centre's Senior Advisory Board) in collaboration with the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in London. H.E. Saida Muna Tasneem, Hon'ble High Commissioner, spoke on the occasion as did David Lewis (LSE), who were co-Chairs of the event. Nikita Arora and Dina Balabanova (both at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and Mushtaq Khan (SOAS) were panelists; each spoke about the challenges, and progress, in the public health sector in Bangladesh. There are lessons for the world to learn from Bangladesh's advances in the public health sector, even as much remains to be done in Bangladesh. Unlike most of our other events which are online only, this event was on-site, held at the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in London.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NILANJAN SARKAR, VINOD PAVARALA, SARAH SADDLER, DAVID LEWIS & KRISHNENDU RAY AT 'EXPANDING THE ARCHIVE: SOURCES & THE SOCIAL SCIENCES' (PART OF OUR 'FACT & FICTION' SERIES), 16 MARCH 2023.



LEFT TO RIGHT: NIKITA ARORA, DINA BALABANOVA, DAVID LEWIS, H. E. SAIDA MUNA TASNEEM, AHMED MUSHTAQUE RAZA CHOWDHURY, MUSHTAQ KHAN & NILANJAN SARKAR AT 'ADVANCES IN PUBLIC HEALTH IN EMERGING BANGLADESH' (PART OF OUR 'FACT & FICTION' SERIES), 8 JUNE 2023.

# VERA ANSTEY STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION

“ ‘She was very good at games and very good in the social life of the School. What she saw in that fool Anstey I never could make out! She could buy and sell him & live by the profit in two seconds. Someone who came back — I can’t remember the name — told me that she was running the whole economic department there in Bombay which I quite believe. ”

**Lilian Knowles**, *Professor of Economic History to Director Professor William Beveridge, recommending Vera's hire at LSE in 1921.*

This student essay competition was established in honour of Vera Anstey (1889–1967), alumnus and Reader in Economics. Vera had a lifelong interest in and association with South Asia, having lived in Bombay for several years, and upon her retirement from LSE in 1954, published *Introduction to Economics for Students in India and Pakistan* (1964).

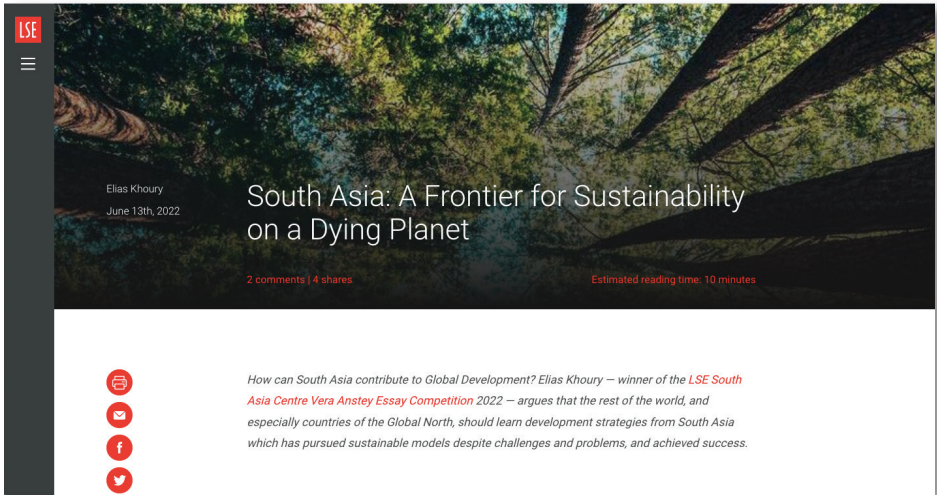
The competition is open to all registered, full-time LSE Masters students in any course/department (they do not need to be studying South Asia-related courses/modules to enter the competition), including MRes, One-year Executive Masters & Joint Masters students.

**Shaurya Dev** (MSc in International Relations) won the first prize (£250 Book Vouchers from Waterstones) for his winning essay titled **‘What could Decolonisation Mean for Contemporary South Asia?’** suggesting that decolonisation needed to happen at 3 levels: in the mindset of the individual, the workings of the state, and the global order and farther away from the past, and new nation-states now determine global fortunes.

The essay was published on the Centre’s ‘South Asia @ LSE’ blog on 24 July 2023.



SHAURYA DEV (MSc INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, 2022–23), WINNER OF THE VERA ANSTEY STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION.



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Elias Khoury  
June 13th, 2022

## South Asia: A Frontier for Sustainability on a Dying Planet

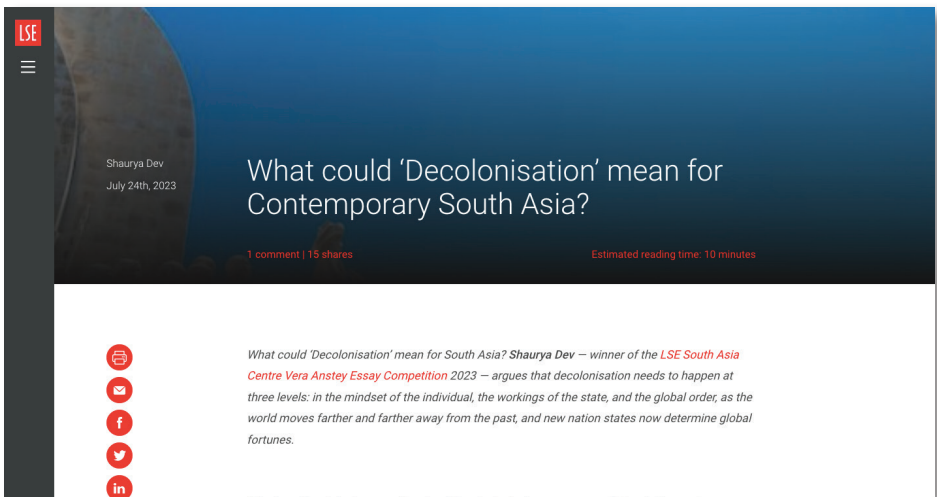
2 comments | 4 shares

Estimated reading time: 10 minutes

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*How can South Asia contribute to Global Development? Elias Khoury – winner of the LSE South Asia Centre Vera Anstey Essay Competition 2022 – argues that the rest of the world, and especially countries of the Global North, should learn development strategies from South Asia which has pursued sustainable models despite challenges and problems, and achieved success.*

WINNING VERA ANSTEY STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION BLOGPOST BY ELIAS KHOURY (MSc IN PUBLIC POLICY & ADMINISTRATION, 2021–22), 13 JUNE 2022, 'SOUTH ASIA @ LSE'.



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Shaurya Dev  
July 24th, 2023

## What could 'Decolonisation' mean for Contemporary South Asia?

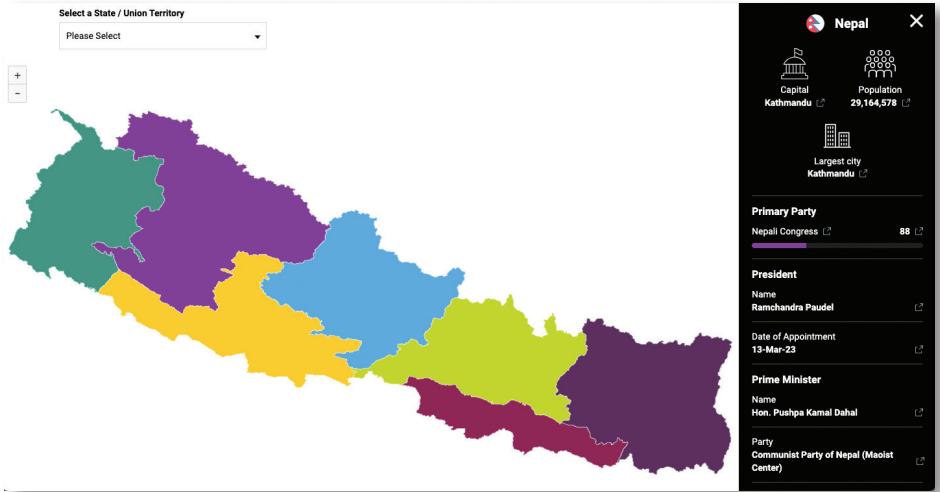
1 comment | 15 shares

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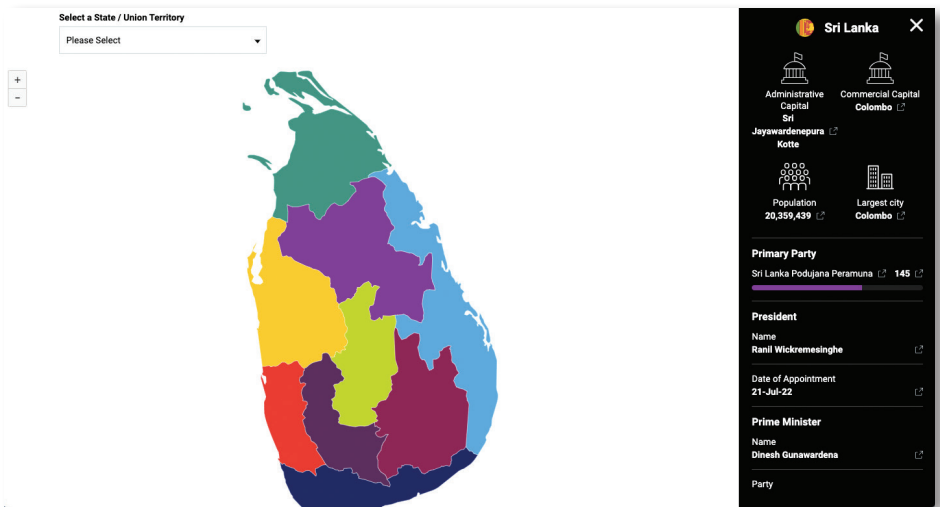
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*What could 'Decolonisation' mean for South Asia? Shaurya Dev – winner of the LSE South Asia Centre Vera Anstey Essay Competition 2023 – argues that decolonisation needs to happen at three levels: in the mindset of the individual, the workings of the state, and the global order, as the world moves farther and farther away from the past, and new nation states now determine global fortunes.*

WINNING VERA ANSTEY STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION BLOGPOST BY SHAURYA DEV (MSc INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, 2022–23), 24 JULY 2023, 'SOUTH ASIA @ LSE'.



FIRST-EVER BIG DATA DIGITAL MAP OF NEPAL (PART OF THE 'STATES OF SOUTH ASIA' SERIES) LAUNCHED AT THE EMBASSY OF NEPAL, LONDON, TO COINCIDE WITH THE CENTENARY OF THE NEPAL – BRITAIN TREATY, 14 JUNE 2023.



FIRST-EVER BIG DATA DIGITAL MAP OF SRI LANKA (PART OF THE 'STATES OF SOUTH ASIA' SERIES) LAUNCHED TO COINCIDE WITH OUR SERIES OF 'SRI LANKA @ 75' EVENTS, 16 FEBRUARY 2023.



# RESEARCH RESOURCES

The Centre utilised funds from its Higher Education and Impact Fund (HEIF) in 2021/22 to launch the world's first Digital Data Maps of Bangladesh and Pakistan, and begin working on similar maps for Nepal and Sri Lanka, as part of its ongoing 'States of South Asia' Digital Map Project.

## STATES OF SOUTH ASIA

The States of South Asia (SoSA) project was launched in Lent 2019 (with seed funding from LSE's Knowledge Exchange & Impact (KEI) funds with a pilot of the Digital Map of India. The purpose of the maps is simple: to collate political, economic, social, and demographic meta data from open and verified government and other sources, and provide them in graphic & textual form free of cost to end-users across the world.

Following on the success of the India Digital Map in 2019 (which has since been updated regularly), and the similar first-of-its-kind maps for Bangladesh and Pakistan, we launched two further first-in-the-world Big Data Digital Maps for **Nepal** and **Sri Lanka** in 2022/23. Both maps are now fully functional, with verified, up-to-date data and downloadable Excels for use by researchers free of charge.

**All 5 Digital Maps that comprise the 'States of South Asia' (SoSA) project also include select publications by LSE academic experts and Research Scholars relating to the country.**

Work to collate data for these maps was started in Michaelmas 2022, and the Centre's Student Research Assistant Mustafa Yar Hiraj (LSE LLM 2023) worked on both maps.

The launch of both maps overlapped with important commemorative events for the two countries: the **75th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence**, and the **centenary of the Nepal–Britain Treaty of Friendship of 1923**, and formed part of a series of activities at the Centre to mark these important dates. The latter event was especially significant because the significance of Nepal is often drowned in the din of greater academic interest in other countries in South Asia, under-marking Nepal's distinction of being one of only 2 countries in the region never to have been colonised by the British (see pp. 18–19 for more details).

## OCCASIONAL PAPERS

The Centre is in the process of initiating its 'Occasional Papers' series, drawing on the research conducted by Visiting Fellows to the Centre (see pp. 33–35). The first in the series, currently under preparation, will be Dr Antonio Giustozzi's work on the CIA's 'Khost Protection Force' in Afghanistan, which we hope to publish in October 2023.

This, and successive Occasional Papers in this series, are distinguished in that they are based on research done by our Visiting Fellows. They add to the list of several Working Papers already available on the Centre's website, which drew upon the Centre's focused panel discussions, and collaborative events with other organisations like the UNDP (especially in Sri Lanka) in earlier years.

Our carefully curated research resources serve the twin purpose of publicising LSE research, engagement & outreach, and establishing LSE as the hub of interdisciplinary, South Asia-focused conversations, the go-to place

for researchers, academics, the media and lay people for information on the region. The cumulative impact of our activities over the last several years has put us at the forefront of academic conversations about the region.

**Collectively, our Research Resources (blogposts, Digital Maps, Occasional Papers, and publicity of LSE Library archives) – all made available free of cost to end-users via our website – underline our commitment to impacting public awareness through informed knowledge, and make the Centre part of their lifelong learning process.**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: NILANJAN SARKAR, RATAN KUMAR ROY, DAVID LEWIS, FATIMA GAW, AMOGH DHAR SHARMA & DEANA ROHLINGER AT 'CIVIC POLITICS & ONLINE ACTIVISM IN THE NEW AGE', 31 MARCH 2023.

## VISITING FELLOWS

This year we were delighted to welcome several Visiting Fellows to the Centre, the first time since we closed for the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Visiting Fellows are selected on the basis of the relevance of their research to LSE, and how their Visitorship may benefit from being here. Whilst at the Centre, all Visitors participate in the Centre's and LSE's events, and are required to write a Working Paper based on their research during their time here.

**Dr Antonio Giustozzi**, an LSE alumnus (PhD 1997), is an independent researcher and analyst with a special interest in conflicts, war, security and strategic issues in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the region. As Visiting Fellow at the Centre in 2022–23, Antonio will be working on jihadism in the subcontinent, and on the transition from jihadism to government in Afghanistan. He is the author of several books and edited volumes, most recently, *The Islamic State in Khorasan: Afghanistan, Pakistan and the New Central Asian Jihad* (2018, 2022), and *The Taliban at War: 2001-2021* (2019, 2022). Antonio has participated in several events at the Centre, including an online Roundtable on 'The Future of Jihadism in Afghanistan'; he has also published two posts (on the Centre's 'South Asia @ LSE' blog) based on his research at the Centre: 'Taliban and the Future of the State in Afghanistan' (December 2022) and 'The Islamic State and the Taliban's Counter-terrorism' (June 2023), and a Working Paper is forthcoming later in 2023.

The Charles Wallace Pakistan Trust Visiting Fellow from January–April 2023 was **Dr Barkat Shah Kakar** (Associate Professor at the University of Balochistan, Quetta, Pakistan). Barkat has worked and published extensively (in Pashto, Urdu and English) on Pashtun traditions and cultures, alongside writing on wider issues like peace, gender justice and human rights in Balochistan. During his Fellowship at the Centre, Barkat conducted research on images and stereotypes of Pashtuns — who constitute 50 per cent of the population in Afghanistan and 15 per cent in Pakistan — in state narratives and educational materials in post-Independence Pakistan. His post 'Reimagining the Pashtun's Cultural Identity in Pakistan' was published on the Centre's 'South Asia @ LSE' blog in July 2023, and his Working Paper is forthcoming in 2024.

**Dr Ratan Kumar Roy** (Assistant Professor at BRAC University, Dhaka, Bangladesh) came as Visiting Fellow from January–April 2023 under the auspices of the Charles Wallace Bangladesh Trust. Trained in anthropology and sociology, Ratan was a TV journalist before embarking on his doctoral research at the South Asian University in New Delhi, India. Whilst at the Centre, Ratan worked on digitalisation, online activism and civic politics in Bangladesh, and participated in an online panel discussion on ‘Civic Politics & Online Activism in the New Age’ in March 2023. He is the author of *Television in Bangladesh: News and Audiences* (2020) and, more recently, co-editor (with Biswajit Das) of *Korean Wave in South Asia: Transcultural Flow, Fandom and Identity* (2022). Some related thoughts from his research at the Centre were published as a post on ‘South Asia @ LSE’, the Centre’s blog, in March 2023 as “Smart Bangladesh”: What about “Smart Politics” and “Smart Thinking”?, and his Working Paper is forthcoming in 2024.

**Aye Mar Win** (Professor of Law at Nay Pyi Taw State Academy, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar) is Charles Wallace Burma (Myanmar) Trust Visiting Fellow at the Centre from May–September 2023 under the auspices of the Charles Wallace Burma (Myanmar) Trust. Aye Mar’s doctoral research is on the legal protection of animals in Myanmar; during her Visitorship, she will do research on illegal and unfair import trade commodities and their impact on citizens, examining legal loopholes and exploring legal provisions to counter these practices. A blogpost and Working Paper are forthcoming in 2023/24.

An LSE alumnus (PhD 2018), **Dr Umair Javed** (Assistant Professor of Politics and Sociology at Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan) is British Academy Visiting Fellow from June–December 2023. Umair’s research interests are in political economy, socio-economic informality and urban public life in South Asia. While at the Centre, he will be completing his book manuscript on the politics and practices of accumulation, and labour relations in Pakistan’s informal economy, focusing specifically on wholesale bazaars. Umair will be Discussant at an online event, and publish a post on the Centre’s ‘South Asia @ LSE’ blog later in 2023, and a Working Paper is forthcoming in 2024/25.



UMAIR JAVED, BRITISH ACADEMY VISITING FELLOW (JUNE–DECEMBER 2023).



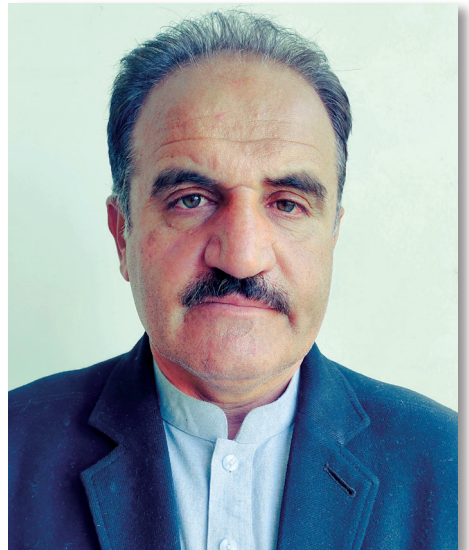
ANTONIO GIUSTOZZI, VISITING FELLOW (2022–24).



RATAN KUMAR ROY, CHARLES WALLACE BANGLADESH TRUST VISITING FELLOW (JANUARY–APRIL 2023).



AYE MAR WIN, CHARLES WALLACE BURMA/MYANMAR TRUST VISITING FELLOW (JUNE–SEPTEMBER 2023).



BARKAT SHAH KAKAR, CHARLES WALLACE PAKISTAN TRUST VISITING FELLOW (JANUARY–APRIL 2023).

# WORKING WITH STUDENTS

Over the years, the Centre has regularly advised individual students, as well as Student Union members, on their interests and activities. This year has been no different, and we were pleased to work (once again!) with the LSESU Pakistan Development Society for their annual flagship 'Future of Pakistan' conference.

## STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANT

It has been a privilege for us at the Centre to be able to provide employment to at least one LSE student in recent years. In 2022/23, the Centre's Research Assistant was **Mustafa Yar Hiraj** (LSE LLM 2022/23) who, along with assisting the Centre in its academic activities, also accessed, verified and collated all data for the two new Digital Maps (Nepal and Sri Lanka) which were launched as part of the Centre's 'States of South Asia' (SoSA) project.

Working at the Centre provides students with useful training in basic research activities (searching for, accessing, verifying and collating data) but also instils in them the importance of academic rigour, importance of presentation skills, and techniques of making data-led information accessible to end-users. All these activities, overseen by Deputy Director Dr Nilanjan Sarkar, are aimed at equipping our students with training and skills that we hope will be useful for them in their professional life and career later on.

## LSESU 'FUTURE OF PAKISTAN' CONFERENCE 2023

Each year the LSESU Pakistan Development Society organises their flagship '**Future of Pakistan**' conference – always a treat for all Pakistan-interested people in the United Kingdom because of the outstanding profile of all its Speakers – and the 2023 edition on 4 March did not disappoint. Once again, Deputy Director Nilanjan Sarkar, who has advised generations of Presidents of LSESU Pakistan Development Society, was at hand and also acted as Academic Chair for the conference. The day-long conference, preceded by a formal dinner at Lincoln's Inn, included 2 panel discussions and a Conversation – each including a Q&A with the audience.

The first panel focused on an ongoing concern in Pakistan: titled '**Civil-Military Relations: Coexistence or Confrontation**', the discussion between Lt Gen. Haroon Aslam (Retd.) and Dr Michael Kugelman (Wilson Center), moderated by Dr Farzana Shaikh (Chatham House) discussed the complex and tense relations between Pakistan's powerful military establishment and its civilian political stakeholders, and if/how Pakistan's progress towards a freely functional electoral democracy may become possible in the years ahead.

The second panel focused on Pakistan's economy, which has been very fragile especially in the last year, causing concern to its leaders. The discussion between entrepreneur Ali Fareed Khwaja and former Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan **Dr Reza Baqir** explored the various challenges confronting Pakistan's economy, the role that institutions like the State Bank could play to stabilise and buoy the economy, and what challenges lay ahead.

The conference closed with a fascinating conversation between **Mrs Justice Ayesha Malik** of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and Barrister Dr Amber Darr, who is currently Lecturer at the University of Manchester but was earlier Advocate in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The Conversation (and the Q&A) was especially revealing of how women jurists have worked hard to make their way in what is otherwise a male-dominated professional space.



ALI FAREED KHWAJA & REZA BAQIR AT THE 'FUTURE OF PAKISTAN' CONFERENCE 2023, ORGANISED BY THE LSE SU PAKISTAN DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY, LSE, 4 MARCH 2023.



AMBER DARR & AYESHA MALIK AT THE 'FUTURE OF PAKISTAN' CONFERENCE 2023, ORGANISED BY THE LSE SU PAKISTAN DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY, LSE, 4 MARCH 2023.

LSE



☰

Dominique Dillabough-Lefebvre  
May 15th, 2023

## The Nation Forgetting: Rehabilitating Memory in the Defence Service Museum in Myanmar

0 comments | 3 shares

Estimated reading time: 10 minutes

*All nation-states have nationalist master-narratives; selective historical memory is crucial to establishing the story. In this post, Dominique Dillabough-Lefebvre takes a tour of the Defence Service Museum in Nay Pyi Taw, and describes its displays – which tell the Burmese military junta's official story of the nation through forgetting, remembering and rehabilitating memory.*

BLOGPOST COMMEMORATING 'MYANMAR @ 75' BY LSE DOCTORAND DOMINIQUE DILLABOUGH-LEFEBVRE (15 MAY 2023), 'SOUTH ASIA @ LSE'.

LSE

☰

Shishir Bhatta  
May 8th, 2023

## LGBTQ+ Movement in Nepal: Where Are We Now?

0 comments | 16 shares

Estimated reading time: 10 minutes



*Nepal has long been heralded as the beacon of inclusive and egalitarian laws and judgements, especially with regards to gender and sexual minorities, and the rights of its LGBTQ+ community. But as Shishir Bhatta takes stock here, despite several path-breaking legal provisions and interventions, long-standing societal prejudices alongside political and bureaucratic unwillingness mean that the reality on the ground is starkly different, and there is still a long way to go before Nepal becomes a truly inclusive and egalitarian society for all its peoples.*

BLOGPOST BY SHISHIR BHATTA (8 MAY 2023), 'SOUTH ASIA @ LSE'.



# MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Our tagline – ‘Unravelling South Asia to the World’ – appears across all our social media platforms and e-communications. This has been spectacularly successful: it distinguishes our Centre across the United Kingdom (no other such Centre has a tagline) and has focused and consolidated the conscious intention of all our activities in the minds of our audiences.

The success of a clear marketing and publicity strategy is evident, most easily, in the growing numbers of our followers across all social media platforms (see p. 4). All our events being online only has also helped us to curate events with panelists anywhere in the world, reach a truly global audience, and has established the Centre and LSE as a leading voice on issues concerning South Asia. The Centre now receives enquiries from British media outlets and television channels regularly, seeking experts on various subjects relating to South Asia.

Another very important reason for the success of the Centre has been our genuine and visible commitment to cover all countries of South Asia, rather than focus on a few. While this has been a hugely challenging task, our efforts have been recognised both within LSE – from our academic colleagues and students – as well as outside. As the Centre's list of events (pp. 44–48) show, we have covered not just individual countries in the region in our regular Events calendar but have also curated a series of unique events that look at the region of South Asia in comparative perspective.

## ‘SOUTH ASIA @ LSE’

**The new publication strategy of the Centre's blog, which we started in 2020/21 – fewer blogs but with particular attention to cast a wider net in terms of themes, issues and academics – has been very rewarding. Not only has our readership increased considerably, but the quality of blogs being received is very high, and readers find themselves reading on topics and countries they would otherwise not search for, only because they subscribe to our blog. ‘South Asia @ LSE’ remains the Centre's flagship platform to make the latest research ideas on South Asia available globally.**

We continued with publishing our monthly ‘**India @ 75**’ and ‘**Pakistan @ 75**’ blogposts in the new academic year, with the final ones scheduled for July 2023. The commemorative blogs – always published with their signature logos marking the anniversary – has made them unique, and memorable for the readers. Starting in January 2023 (for Myanmar) and February 2023 (for Sri Lanka), we have published monthly posts marking ‘**Myanmar @ 75**’ and ‘**Sri Lanka @ 75**’ – which will both continue for 12 months each, spilling into 2024 (for Sri Lanka).

An interesting outcome of the decision to publish commemorative blogs for each country meant that between February–July 2023, the middle Monday of each month would see 4 specially commissioned blogposts published on the same day, one after another in alphabetical order of name of the country! Ensuring that the special posts were always on time was a herculean task, but the appreciation from readers from across the world has been both reassuring and satisfying.

Besides the specially commissioned blogposts, we have continued to publish other posts (on different countries in the region) each week, covering a range of subjects and topics, both contemporary and otherwise, and always at the cutting edge of knowledge.

We were especially delighted to carry a blogpost on Buddhist rituals in Bhutan during the pandemic (10 October 2022) and LSE Professor David Lewis' post on his new LSE-AFSEE funded project on entrepreneurship advice in Bangladesh & Sri Lanka (20 February 2023).

Other (select) blogposts that drew particular attention to important issues and interest from readers included one on the reasons behind the paucity of women medical leaders in India (3 April 2023); on the challenges to implementing Nepal's progressive LGBTQ+-friendly laws (8 May 2023); the slow but steady rise of Japanese financial investment in Bangladesh, posing a direct challenge to China's and India's hitherto undisputed dominance as investment collaborators in the country (22 May 2023); sustaining healthcare delivery in Afghanistan (24 October 2022); and extreme weather data in Myanmar (30 August 2023).

**The Centre published a total of 67 blogs in 2022/23. As in 2021/22, this year too our blog was ranked 8th (our of 40+ academic blogs at LSE), with nearly 400,000 readers annually.**

*See back cover for details to access the 'South Asia @ LSE' blog.*

**LSE**

☰

Kaushik Bhaumik  
April 10th, 2023

## India @ 75, Ray @ 101: Some Thoughts on the Nation and the World

0 comments | 2 shares

Estimated reading time: 10 minutes

*One of India's greatest filmmakers, Satyajit Ray, would have turned 101 as India marks her 75th independence anniversary. Recognised with an Oscar Lifetime Achievement Award in 1992, Ray blazed the trail in cinema in multiple and complex ways. Kaushik Bhaumik reflects on some worldly complexities by the master storyteller and film-maker, and locates them in a wider context of film cultures in India at the time.*

# SENIOR ADVISORY BOARD

**Nasser M MUNJEE** (Chair, Advisory Board) (LSE BSc Econ 1974; MSc Econ 1975) is Chairman of Development Credit Bank, and Tata Motor Finance Ltd, both in India. Nasser is also on the Board of several public companies, and is involved with many others as Chairman, Member of the Board or Trustee including ABB Ltd, HDFC Ltd, Britannia Industries, Jaguar Land Rover plc, and the City of London.

**Kaushik BASU** (LSE PhD Economics 1976) is Professor of Economics and C. Marks Professor of International Studies at Cornell University. Basu has served as the Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist of the World Bank, and as Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India (2009–12). He has taught at the Delhi School of Economics and has been visiting professor at various universities across the world.

**Craig J CALHOUN** is University Professor of Social Sciences at Arizona State University. Prior to this, he was President of the Berggruen Institute in Los Angeles (2016–19); Director & President of LSE (2012–16) where he remains Centennial Professor. He has also been President of the Social Science Research Council in New York (1999–2012), and University Professor at NYU (2004–12).

**A Mushtaque R CHOWDHURY** (LSE MSc Demography 1979) was until recently Vice Chairperson of BRAC, Dhaka where he started his career more than 40 years ago. He was the founding Director of BRAC's Research & Evaluation Division, and was previously its Executive Director, alongside serving in several international organisations.

**M Ali JAMEEL** (LSE BSc Accounting & Finance 1991) is CEO, TPL Trakkers Pvt Ltd in Karachi. He has previously served as Chief Executive of Jahangir Siddiqui Executive Bank (1999–2001). Ali has also held several advisory posts in the IT and telecom sectors in Pakistan, and serves as Director, Executive Director and Non-Executive Director of several companies. He is an Associate Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales.

**Lata KRISHNAN** (LSE BSc Economics 1981) is Founding Partner and Chief Financial Officer for Shah Capital Partners, USA. Krishnan co-founded SMART Modular Technologies (WWH) Inc. in 1989, and has also held corporate accounting and finance positions at Montgomery Securities, Arthur Andersen & Company LLP, and Hill Vellacott & Company in London, England. She has also held Director and Advisor posts on several Boards in the Finance and Accounts sectors.

**Ratan N TATA** is a businessman, philanthropist, investor and Chairman Emeritus of Tata Sons (holding company of the Tata Group), the Mumbai-based global business conglomerate. He has been awarded the Padma Bhushan (2000) and Padma Vibhushan (2008) by the Government of India, and The Honorary Knight Cross of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (2014) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II for his lifelong services to business and community.

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# FACULTY ADVISORY GROUP

The Faculty Advisory Group are current academic faculty at LSE; some are alumni as well. They serve as everyday Advisors to the Centre, meet annually, and advise on important issues concerning the Centre. They have also been actively involved in several of the Centre's events.

**Mahvish AHMAD** (Assistant Professor in Sociology) teaches Human Rights and Politics at LSE. Prior to this, she has been Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Western Cape, and earlier was a journalist covering military and insurgent violence in the Pakistan-Afghanistan region. Mahvish has a PhD in Sociology from the University of Cambridge, has co-founded the bilingual English-Urdu magazine *Tanqeed*, and co-convenes 'Archives of the Disappeared', a research initiative investigating the archiving and documentation of communities destroyed in acts of mass violence. She is currently completing a book manuscript on state violence in Pakistan's Balochistan province.

**Chris ALDEN** (Co-Director, LSE IDEAS; Professor of International Relations) has published, most recently, *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches* (2017; co-authored), and *New Directions in Africa-China Studies* (2019; co-edited). He has held Visiting Fellowships at the universities of Cambridge, Tokyo and Pretoria, and at the Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, the École normale supérieure (Cachan), and Centre d'études et de recherches internationales, both in Paris. LSE IDEAS is LSE's foreign policy think tank which has been voted the best university-affiliated think tank in the world by the 'Global Go to Think Tank Index' in 2019.

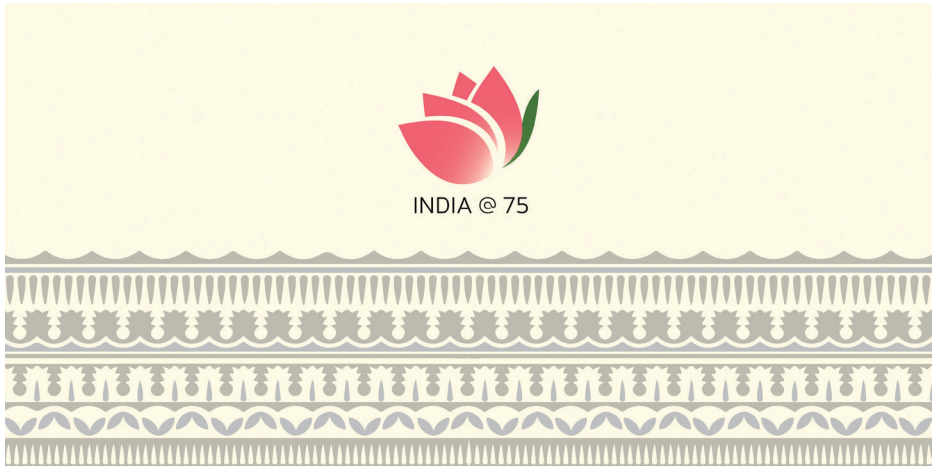
**Christopher COKER** (Co-Director, LSE IDEAS) was Professor of International Relations at LSE till 2019, and has a particular interest in military, defense and strategic studies, terrorism, and the US security policy. His most recent monograph is *The Rise of the Civilizational State* (2019), and his forthcoming monograph is titled 'Why War'? LSE IDEAS is LSE's foreign policy think tank which has been voted the best university-affiliated think tank in the world by the 'Global Go to Think Tank Index' in 2019.

**Swati DHINGRA** (Associate Professor of Economics) is an expert in international economics, trade policy, industrial organisation, and Brexit; she is also an Associate at the Centre for Economic Performance at LSE. Swati was awarded her PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and has been Fellow at Princeton University prior to joining LSE. Swati's research interests are in international economics, globalisation, industrial policy, firms in international trade, impact of trade agreements, and industrial development in India.

**David LEWIS** (Professor of Anthropology and Development) focuses on Bangladesh's politics and society, particularly on how the country has been impacted by four decades of international development policies. He has worked extensively on the roles of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society actors in South Asia — mainly in Bangladesh but also in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. More recently, David has published on the Rohingya humanitarian refugee crisis in Cox's Bazaar in Bangladesh.

**Romola SANYAL** (Assistant Professor of Urban Geography) is interested in architecture, urban geopolitics, urban theory, housing and citizenship rights. She has written on the politics of space in refugee settlements in the global South with a particular focus on Lebanon and India, and is interested in the relationship between forced migration and urbanisation.

**Naufel VILCASSIM** (Professor of Marketing) is an expert on the use of economic theory and econometric techniques to analyse substantive marketing problems. His research has focused on problems in the areas of the marketing mix, competitive interactions and market structure. Naufel is also involved in a research project in India on evaluating the efficacy of mobile video training of health care workers assisting patients of Tuberculosis in completing their treatment of drugs.



THE 'INDIA @ 75' LOGO IS COPYRIGHTED BY THE LSE SOUTH ASIA CENTRE, AND MAY NOT BE USED BY ANYONE FOR ANY PURPOSE. IT SHOWS THE NATIONAL FLOWER OF INDIA, THE LOTUS (*NELUMBO NUCIFERA* [GAERTN.]) WITH A GRAPHIC BORDER OF SACRAL ARCHITECTURAL MOTIFS. THE LOGO HAS BEEN DESIGNED BY OROON DAS.



THE 'PAKISTAN @ 75' LOGO IS COPYRIGHTED BY THE LSE SOUTH ASIA CENTRE, AND MAY NOT BE USED BY ANYONE FOR ANY PURPOSE. IT SHOWS THE NATIONAL FLOWER OF PAKISTAN, THE JASMINE (*JASMINUM OFFICINALE*), FRAMED IN A GRAPHIC ARCHITECTURAL FILIGREE DESIGN. THE LOGO HAS BEEN DESIGNED BY OROON DAS.

# EVENTS

**27 September 2022**

## **TOUGH TALK**

*Should Colonial Objects in Museums be Returned?*

*Speakers:* Dan Hicks (University of Oxford), Dolly Kikon (University of Melbourne), Adewala Maja-Pearce (writer, journalist and literary critic), Kavita Singh (Jawaharlal Nehru University)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

**6 October 2022**

## **Roundtable**

*The Future of Jihadism in Afghanistan*

*Speakers:* Barak Mendelsohn (Haverford College), Ashley Jackson (Kings College London), Ali Mohammad Ali (consultant and researcher)

*Discussant:* Antonio Giustozzi (LSE)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

**11 October 2022**

## **Roundtable**

*Looking Ahead in Sri Lanka*

*Speakers:* Sharmini Coorey (Member of Sri Lanka's Presidential Advisory Group on Multilateral Engagement & Debt Sustainability), Ricardo Reis (LSE), Ganeshan Wignaraja (Gateway House, Mumbai & ODI Global, London), Anushka Wijesinha (economist)

*Discussant:* Nasser Munjee (Chairman, Tata Motor Finance Ltd)

*Chair:* Dr Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

**5 November 2022**

## **PAKISTAN @ 75**

*Panel 1: Decolonising Law for a Modern Pakistan*

*Speakers:* Amber Darr (University of Manchester), Sara Malkani (Advocate, High Courts of Pakistan), Maura McGowan (Judge, Supreme Court of England & Wales), Salman Akram Raja (Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan)

*Discussant:* Qazi Faez Isa (Justice, Supreme Court of Pakistan)

*Moderator:* Sheikh Raza Rahman (Founding Partner, Lexium – Attorneys at Law, Lahore)

*Chair:* Alnoor Bhimani (LSE)

*Panel 2: Can Pakistan become South Asia's Powerhouse?*

*Speakers:* Ali Cheema (Founding Member, CERP), Mariam Chughtai (Director, National Curriculum Council of Pakistan), Abdul Razak Dawood (industrialist & founder of Descon), Sania Nishtar (Senator), Muhammad Amjad Saqib (Founder & Chairman, Akhuwat Foundation)

*Chair:* Alnoor Bhimani (LSE)

## **LSE SOUTH ASIA CENTRE ANNUAL FORUM**

*A Conversation on Nation-Building*

Syed Babar Ali OBE, Pakistani businessman and philanthropist, in conversation with Alnoor Bhimani (Director, LSE South Asia Centre)

*This event was in collaboration with Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).*

**10 November 2022**

## **Panel Discussion**

*Traces of History: Fragmentary Archives & Narratives in South Asia*

*Speakers:* Antoinette Burton (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Niraja Gopal Jayal (Kings College London & LSE), Gillian Murphy (Curator, LSE Library), Daniel Payne (Curator, LSE Library)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

*This event is in collaboration with LSE Library.*

**23 November 2022****FACT & FICTION**

*Narrating Democracy: Peoples & Futures of Myanmar*

*Speakers:* Richard Roewer (Chairman, Initiative Austausch e.V.), Ashley South (Chiang Mai University), Minn Tent Bo (Independent Researcher/Analyst), Tamas Wells (University of Melbourne)

*Discussant:* Gerard McCarthy (LSE Southeast Asia Centre)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

*This event was in collaboration with the LSE Saw Swee Hock Southeast Asia Centre.*

**26 January 2023****MYANMAR @ 75**

*Aung San & Independent Burma*

*Speaker:* Angelene Naw (Judson University)

*Discussant:* Michael W. Charney (SOAS)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

**2 February 2023****PAKISTAN @ 75**

*Sound Economics can Enrich Pakistan*

*Speaker:* Asim Khwaja (Harvard University)

*Chair:* Alnoor Bhimani (LSE)

*This event was in collaboration with The Lakshmi Mittal & Family South Asia Institute, Harvard University.*

**16 February 2023****SRI LANKA @ 75**

*Ceylon to Sri Lanka: A Journey in Nationhood*

*Speaker:* Chandrika Bandaranaike (former President & Prime Minister of Sri Lanka)

*Discussant:* Rajesh Venugopal (LSE)

*Chair:* Alnoor Bhimani (LSE)

**9 March 2023****INDIA @ 75**

*Growth & Economics: How Far can India Rise?*

*Speakers:* Kaushik Basu (Cornell University), Jayati Ghosh (University of Massachusetts Amherst)

*Discussant/Chair:* Alnoor Bhimani (LSE)

**16 March 2023****FACT & FICTION**

*Expanding the Archive: Sources & the Social Sciences*

*Speakers:* David Lewis (LSE), Vinod Pavarala (University of Hyderabad), Sarah Saddler (Baruch College, CUNY)

*Discussant:* Krishnendu Ray (NYU-Steinhardt)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

**31 March 2023****Panel Discussion**

*Civic Politics & Online Activism in the New Age*

*Speakers:* Fatima Gaw (Northwestern University), Deana Rohlinger (Florida State University), Ratan Kumar Roy (LSE), Amogh Dhar Sharma (University of Oxford)

*Discussant:* David Lewis (LSE)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

**10 May 2023****GEOPOLITICS BEYOND BORDERS**

*Energy & Geopolitics in South Asia*

*Speakers:* C Raja Mohan (Asia Society Policy Institute), Vladimir Sotnikov (Higher School of Economics, National Research University, Moscow)

*Discussant:* Suhasini Haidar (Diplomatic Affairs Editor, *The Hindu*)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

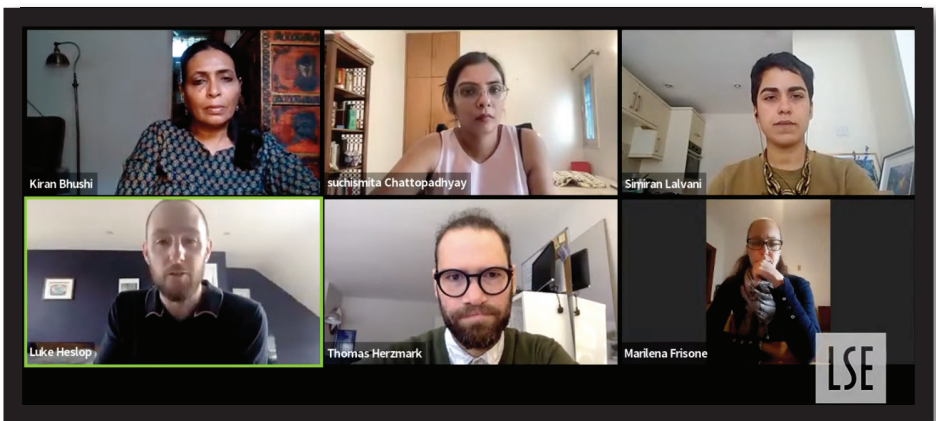




DAVID GELLNER SPEAKING ABOUT HIS RESEARCH & ENGAGEMENT WITH NEPAL AT 'NEPAL-UK: 100 YEARS ON', LONDON, 14 JUNE 2023.



(LEFT) H.E. SAIDA MUNA TASNEEM & (RIGHT) LSE ALUMNUS MUSHTAQUE CHOWDHURY AT 'ADVANCES IN PUBLIC HEALTH IN EMERGING BANGLADESH', LONDON, 8 JUNE 2023.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: KIRAN BHUSHI, SUCHISMITA CHATTOPADHYAY, SIMIRAN LALVANI, MARILENA FRISONE, THOMAS HERZMARK & LUKE HESLOP AT 'FOOD & IDENTITY IN SOUTH ASIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE', THE INAUGURAL EVENT OF THE UK-SOUTH ASIA NETWORK, 19 MAY 2023.

**8 June 2023**

**FACT & FICTION**

*Advances in Public Health in Emerging Bangladesh*

*Panelists:* Nikita Arora (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine), Dina Balabanova (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine), Mushtaq Khan (SOAS), Mushtaque Chowdhury (expert on public health in Bangladesh)

*Chairs:* H.E. Saida Muna Tasneem (Hon'ble High Commissioner of Bangladesh), David Lewis (LSE)

*This event was in collaboration with the High Commission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the United Kingdom.*

**14 June 2023**

**CENTENARY OF NEPAL-BRITAIN TREATY**

*Nepal-UK: 100 Years On*

*Speakers:* David Gellner (University of Oxford), Surya P. Subedi (University of Leeds), Katie Owen (Northumbria University)

*Co-Chairs:* H.E. Gyan Chandra Acharya (Hon'ble Ambassador of Nepal to the United Kingdom), Alnoor Bhimani (LSE)

*This event was in collaboration with the Embassy of Nepal in the United Kingdom.*

**24 June 2023**

**MYANMAR @ 75**

*Panel 1: Looking Ahead*

*Speakers:* Minn Tent Bo (Independent Researcher/Analyst), Michael Charney (SOAS), Thet Ko Ko (NUG Spokesperson), Theingi Lynn (Writer & Media Scholar)

*Moderator:* Dominique Dillabough-Lefebvre (LSE)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

*Panel 2: Humanitarian Aid*

*Speakers:* Nyan San Lwin (Independent Commentator), Zoya Phan (Burma Campaign UK), Kota Watanabe (SOAS), Kyaw Win Tun (Leicester)

*Moderator:* Stéphen Huard (EHESS, Paris)

*Chair:* Nilanjan Sarkar (LSE)

An online lecture by James C Scott (Yale) on 'Federalism Crafted from Below in Burma's War on the Junta' was cancelled at the last moment.

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# THE TEAM



**Alnoor Bhimani**

Director




**Nilanjan Sarkar**

Deputy Director



**Mustafa Yar Hiraj**

Research Assistant  
(LSE LLM, 2023)

A large, stylized red graphic element at the bottom of the page, resembling a leaf or a flame, with a white diagonal line running through it.

The LSE logo consists of the letters 'LSE' in a white, bold, sans-serif font, centered within a red square.

THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



**SOUTH ASIA  
CENTRE**

Research at LSE ■

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