



CUTS International Global Affairs

South Asia in a Perpetual Conundrum *Navigating Challenges in a Shifting Landscape*

Tuesday, 1st July, 2025

1730-1900 PM IST

South Asia is one of the world's most complex landscapes, having historical ties, civilisational connections, and differential security and economic heft. While economies and demographics of neighbouring countries are such that it is a *sine qua non* for them to swim together, it is far from reality.

Why is it so? The answer lies in its history. As in the past, while geo-contours are changing with varying degrees, South Asia remains and will remain a major theatre of great power games.

This is because intensification of such games in two major political, economic and security hotspots of the world and both are in the immediate and extended neighbourhoods of South Asia. Central Asia and the Indo-Pacific region – continuous quest for bigger footprints leading to greater power rivalries.

Now, in this world of amoebic great power games, it is tautological to argue that what Afghanistan and Pakistan used to be and are for Central Asia, Bangladesh and Myanmar are for the Indo-Pacific region. However, the irony is while great and emerging powers are jostling for what's in it for me, are we thinking enough about what's its future?

At the same time, it's now almost a given that, while bilateral cooperation initiatives are and will be there, South Asian countries are unlikely to play swim together. Given this reality, rather than having lame duck bodies pretending for South Asian cooperation, should we not spend political and other capitals on bodies such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)? While challenges are there too, it is more promising than what we have witnessed for decades in the name of cooperation with and among neighbours.

Therefore, the Objectives of this Webinar are to:

- Find answers to why and who should be willing to tango with whom
- Assess the role of great and emerging powers in shaping South Asia's future, particularly given its position and role in Central Asia and the Indo-Pacific

Agenda

1730 – 1745	Introduction and Moderator's Note
1745 – 1845	Opening Remarks and Interactions
1845 – 1900	Q&A and Closing Remarks