

Top Themes: South Asia

1. South Asia is a clearly defined realm, being surrounded by rugged mountains to the north and west and mountainous jungle to the east.
2. South Asia is one of the poorest regions of the world with low average incomes, low levels of education, and poor health standards.
3. Bangladesh, one of the poorest countries on earth, is also one of the most prone to natural disasters. In the 20th century 8 out of 10 of the most deadly natural disasters happened in Bangladesh.
4. The region has only 3% of the world's land, but 22% of the population. More than half of the population is engaged in subsistence farming. With limited natural resources or developed economy, the economic prospects are bleak.
5. Population growth rates are high. The region is home to the second most populous country, India, with over 1.3 billion. It will surpass China in 2022. The Ganges river basin has the highest population density of any river basin (600 million)
6. Invaders have left their mark: Muslim invaders converted large numbers setting the stage for the current tensions between the numeric dominant Hindu and a large Muslim minority. British conquerors left tea time tradition and English as the "lingua franca" of the country. (There are 150 significant languages in India)
7. India is the world's largest democracy. Unfortunately its success with democracy has not been matched with liberal economic practices, adding to the lack of opportunity.
8. Much of the region relies on the seasonal arrival of the monsoon wind/weather pattern to bring needed rains in the summer months.
9. At one time, the entire region was under British rule, but when the British left after WWII following 300 years of rule, British India partitioned along religious lines, forming India and Pakistan (at first Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan). The move displaced millions and there have been major tensions since.