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Opinion \rightarrow Why do we call ourselves South Asian?

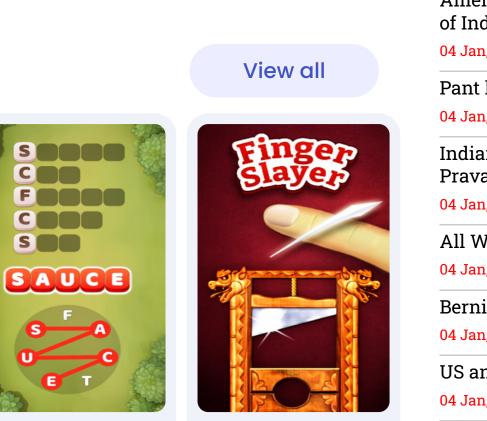
Why do we call ourselves South Asian? Adopting the label "South Asian" has practical benefits, particularly for

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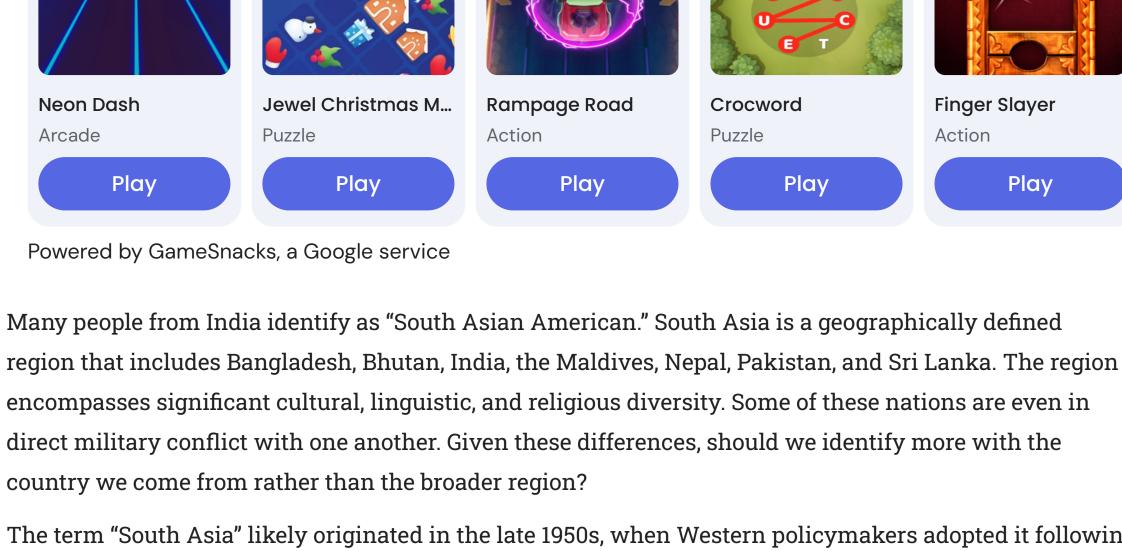
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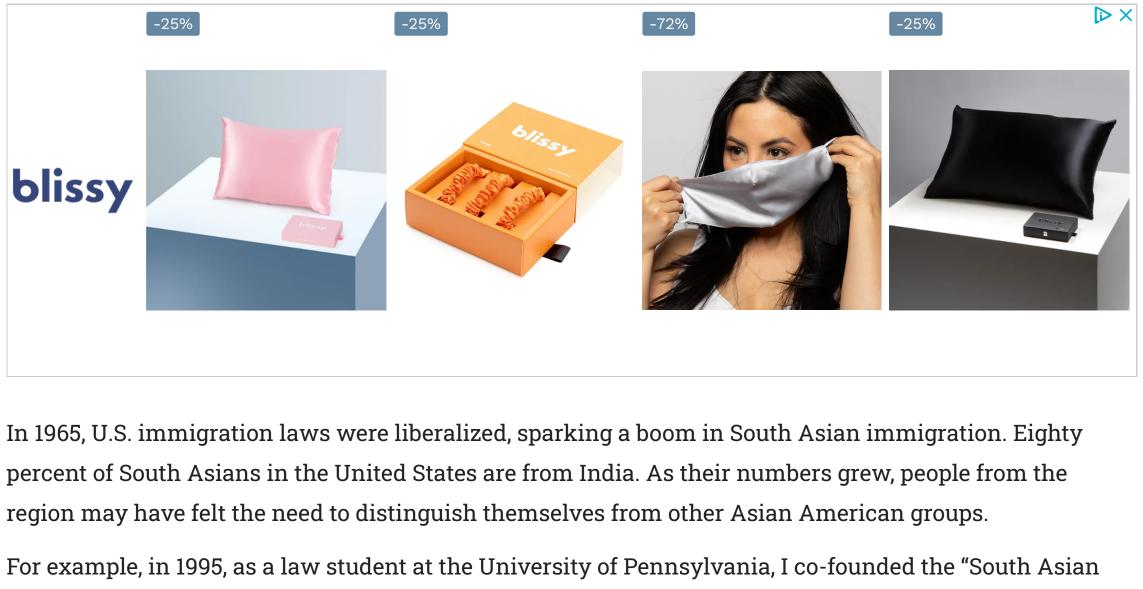
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direct military conflict with one another. Given these differences, should we identify more with the country we come from rather than the broader region? The term "South Asia" likely originated in the late 1950s, when Western policymakers adopted it following the emergence of independent states after British colonial rule. However, the term gained traction in the United States much later, as immigrants from South Asia began arriving in greater numbers.



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Law Students Association" because we felt a stronger connection with each other than with individuals from the Asian American Law Students Association who were primarily from East Asia. **Generational Differences in Identity**

Today, generational differences play a significant role in how people from the region identify. First-

years there and feel a deep connection to their national heritage.

generation immigrants often tie their identities to their countries of origin, as they spent their formative

Second-generation immigrants, however, tend to identify as "South Asian American." Having grown up in the United States, they may feel less tied to a specific South Asian country and more connected to an American identity that reflects their experiences in the United States.

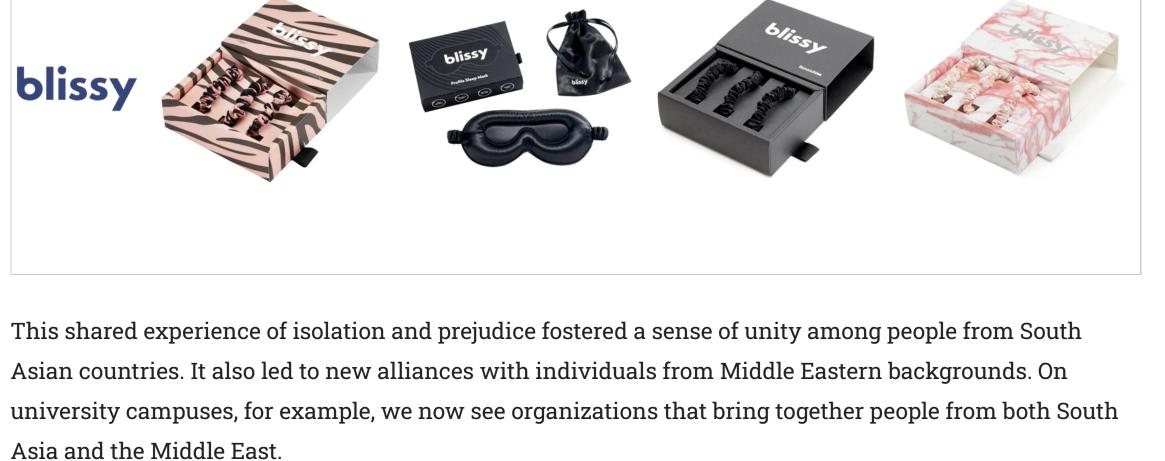
Even so, second-generation immigrants may not feel entirely "American" either. Many of us, as brown

people, have experienced subtle—and sometimes overt—forms of discrimination. After 9/11, brown

-20%

-25%

individuals of all South Asian backgrounds were targeted and looked upon with suspicion.



The Benefits of a Unified Identity Adopting the label "South Asian" has practical benefits, particularly for professional and political advocacy. By uniting under a shared identity, South Asians can amplify their collective voice in the fight for equality and justice.

These coalitions remind us that more unites us than divides us. Coming together as South Asians also

At the same time, it can be useful to organize into country-specific groups, particularly for cultural or

keeps alive the hope of peace and harmony within the region.

community-focused purposes. Cultural organizations often serve as a way for individuals to preserve and celebrate their unique heritage. Choosing an Identity

While umbrella terms like "South Asian" offer opportunities for unity, they don't necessarily dictate how

individuals should identify. Whether you choose to call yourself "South Asian American" or "Indian

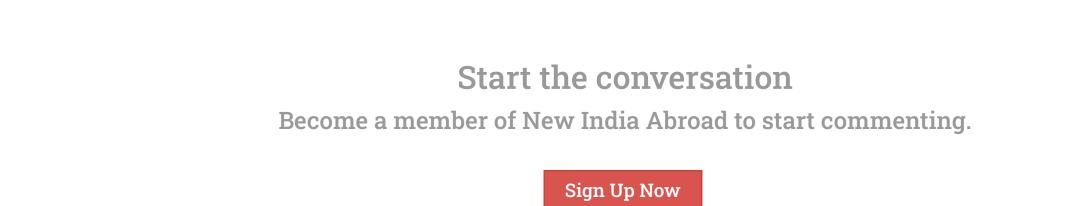
American," the decision should reflect what feels authentic to you. Unfortunately, some people adopt the term "South Asian American" reflexively, without considering what

with these labels, we can embrace identities that are both meaningful to us and reflective of our diverse experiences.

best represents their identity. Ultimately, how we identify is a personal choice. By thoughtfully engaging

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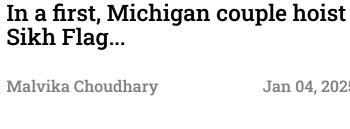
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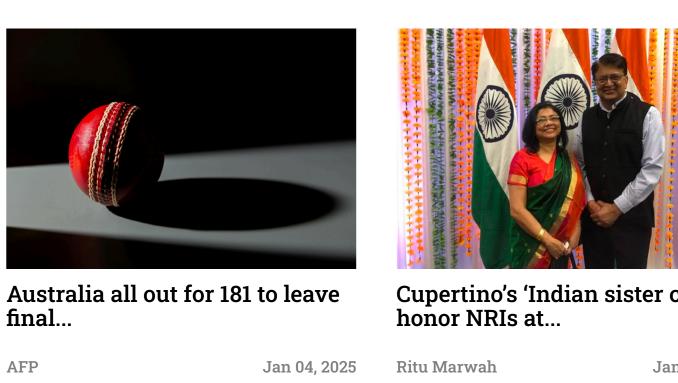
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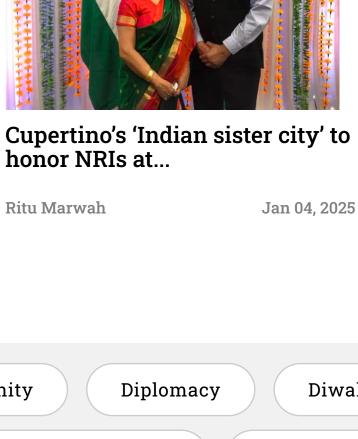
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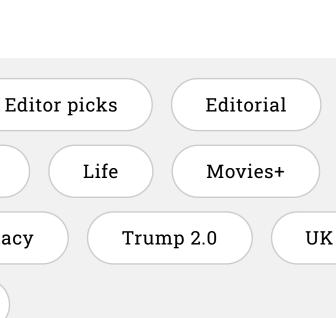
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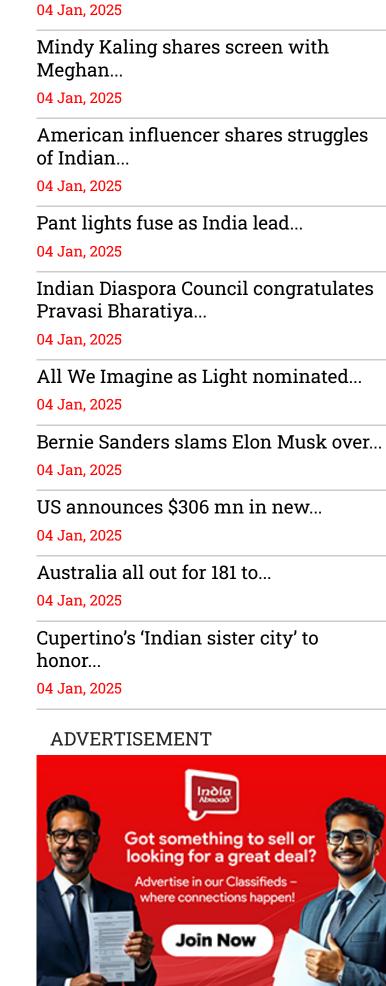
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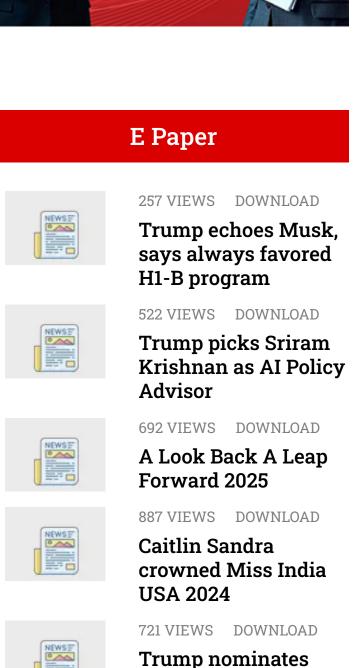
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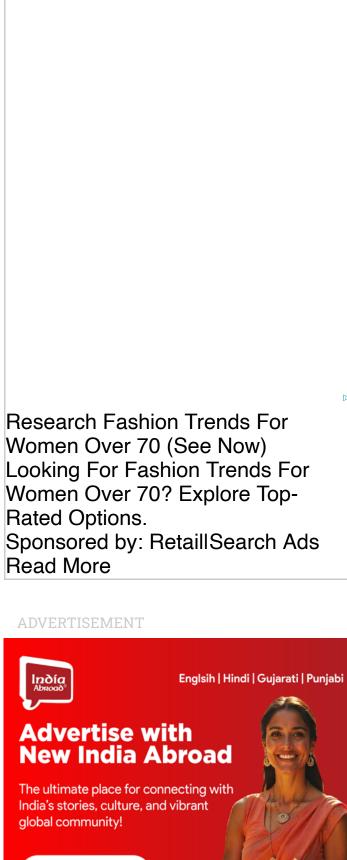


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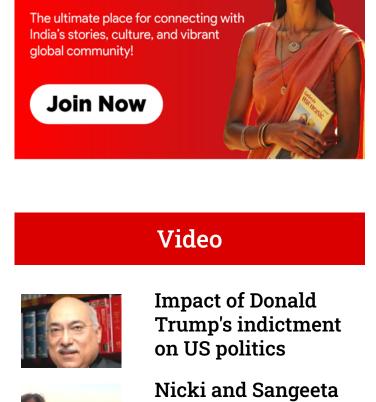
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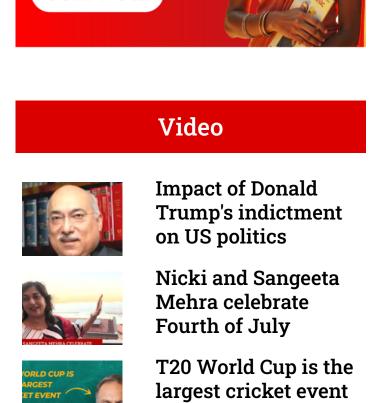
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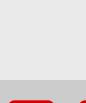
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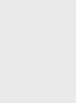
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