

Five Things on a Friday – South Asian Heritage Month

18 July to 19 August marks the celebration of South Asian Heritage month in the UK.

What is South Asian Heritage Month



South Asian Heritage Month is an annual celebration dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the cultural heritage, history, and contributions of South Asian communities and people in the UK.

The month aims to promote understanding and celebration of the diverse cultures and traditions that originate from the South Asian countries; India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives.

Free to Be Me

Free to Be Me

South Asian cultural influence permeates all aspects of life and contributes to the country's richness. South Asian Heritage Month strives to improve how people engage with South Asian cultures and identities, education, awareness, and participation and recognise the contributions of the people to our society

This year's theme is 'Free to Be Me' and encourages us to celebrate by focusing on themes that resonate with the community and embody the spirit of freedom to be

oneself. The South Asian Heritage Trust sets out some themes of Identity, Community, Gender, Faith, Family, Life Choices and Positive Impacts to explore as part of this year's themes. To learn more about these themes and ways you can get involved, check out the [Trust's website](#).

Impact of the Dates

Dates during SAHM

South Asian Heritage Month begins on 18th July, the date that the Indian Independence Act 1947 gained royal assent from King George VI, and ends on the 17th August, the date that the Radcliffe Line was published in 1947, which finally set out where the border between India, West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) would be. The start and end dates show just how much of an influence Britain has had on South Asia as a whole over the last few centuries.

We designate special focus days to celebrate each of the eight South Asian countries individually.

These focus dates are designed to shine a spotlight on some of the lesser-represented heritages within the South Asian community.

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH FOCUS DAYS 2024

20TH JULY BHUTAN	21ST JULY INDIA
27TH JULY MALDIVES	28TH JULY SRI LANKA
29TH AUG AFGHANISTAN	30TH AUG BANGLADESH
10TH AUG NEPAL	11TH AUG PAKISTAN

SOUTH ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH FOCUS FRIDAYS
BRINGING INTERSECTIONS INTO FOCUS FOR SAHM 2024

19TH JULY LGBTQ+ PRIDE	2ND AUG DIS/ABILITY
26TH JULY MULTI HERITAGE	9ND AUG CROSS-GEN UNDERSTANDING

This year, we have introduced Focus Fridays to celebrate intersectionality within the South Asian communities.

The dates from mid-July to mid-August coincide with the South Asian month of Saravan/Sawan, which is the main monsoon month when the region's habitat undergoes renewal.

Unlike most commemoration months, South Asian Heritage Month takes place across two Western calendar months (July and August). The reason for this is that it respects the traditions of the South Asian solar calendar and very nearly coincides with the South Asian month of [Saravan/Sawan](#), which is the main monsoon month when the region's habitat undergoes renewal.

Several significant dates also take place between 18 July – 17 August which are:

- 18 July: the [Indian Independence Act of 1947](#) gained royal assent
 - 26 July: [Maldives Independence Day](#)
 - 8 August: [Bhutan Independence Day](#)
 - 14 August: [Pakistani Independence Day](#)
 - 15 August: [Indian Independence Day](#)
- 17 August: [Partition Commemoration Day](#); the date that the [Radcliffe Line](#) was published in 1947, setting out where the border between India, West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) would be.

These dates highlight the extensive influence of Britain on the region over the last few centuries.

Did you know?



- One of our offices in LUU is named after **Noor-un-Nisa Inayat Khan**, a British-Indian spy and a member of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II. She is celebrated for her bravery and significant contributions to the Allied war effort. She was posthumously awarded the George Cross for her service, the highest civilian decoration for gallantry in the United Kingdom for her conspicuous courage. To learn more about the life of Noor, check out [this article on the South Asian Heritage Trust website](#). You can also find out more about the [military contributions of South Asians here](#).
- **Malala Yousafzai** became the youngest winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. As an advocate for the rights of Women to receive an education she was a survivor of a terrorist attack at 14 in 2012 in her hometown in Pakistan. She continued her work, support and advocacy following this attack in 2021 she graduated from Oxford University and continues to fight for girls' rights around the world. [Malala's story can be found here on the Malala Trust website](#).
- **Sunil Chhetri** is the captain for the Indian national team and the Indian Super League team Bengaluru. He was the third-highest international goal scorer among active players before his retirement earlier this year and is also India's all-time top goal scorer and most-capped player. [Check out Sunil's autobiography here](#).
- **Aftab Ali** was an early 20th-century Pakistani Bengali social reformer, politician and entrepreneur. His work is recognised to have helped thousands of British Asian lascars to migrate, settle and find employment in Britain. [Learn more about Aftab's life and influence here](#).

Events for South Asian Heritage Month



Are you looking for events to celebrate over the next month? Check out this directory of events across the country on the South Asian Heritage Trust's website. From [Mandala Painting](#) to [Webinars and Roundtable discussions](#), there is something for everyone.

Check the list out [here](#).

[Health, Safety & Wellbeing Resources](#) | [Employee Assistance Program](#)