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South Asia is home to approximately a quarter of the world's population as well as the world's largest populations of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs. The region is marked by hundreds of years of colonial rule, with the British as the dominant force from the mid-18th century on. British rule would cast a pall far beyond the end of the colonial era, with Britain's partitioning of the subcontinent along sectarian lines into the Republic of India and Pakistan (East and West). The new boundaries sparked mass displacement and decades of conflict, in some cases leading to the birth of new nations, such as the secession of East Pakistan (modern day Bangladesh), while others stoked disputes that still smolder on today, such as the Kashmir conflict.

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