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India's Cricket diplomacy with Afghanistan: Conjecture to Cordial Relations?

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Abstract:

Cricket is one of the major events to attract people from the Indian subcontinent. The emotions of people are deeply attached with this game. India played this game not only on the grounds but, also use this game as a tool of diplomacy with the country of this region. Firstly, India uses this cricket diplomacy with Pakistan latter it can be seen with Afghanistan. As Afghanistan is one of the most important states in the central Asia, and it opens the doors of India for access towards the central Asia. Hence, it is necessary for India to maintain a cordial relationship with Afghanistan. After the re-emergence of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, what will be the future of this cordial relationship with Afghanistan? This article traces the evolution of India's soft power diplomacy with Afghanistan basically the "cricket diplomacy". Cricket has emerged as a tool of the soft power diplomacy in South Asia. It will also explore that how this cricket diplomacy could shape India's foreign policy and behavior. The peaceful existence of Afghanistan is very necessary, not only for India but also for the region for the establishment and maintenance of peace in this region in practical and entire world in general. Also in the context of rivalry with Pakistan; Afghanistan could play measure role for the India. This article begins with the introduction later will discuss the geographical importance of Afghanistan which is followed by the development of Cricket in Afghanistan. Later, the article discusses the India's Cricket diplomacy in Afghanistan. Finally, it will cover the conclusion part.

Introduction:

Afghanistan is one of the important state of the in the South- Asian region. Due to its geographical importance, it was always being targeted by the powerful nation of the contemporary world to fulfill their national interests. In 1979, during the cold war period, USSR invaded in Afghanistan, to stabilize the power of US in the Central and South Asian region. To stop the power of USSR in Afghanistan, the cooperation between Pakistan, US, the Mujahideen, and several majority- Muslim countries, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, gave rise to the Taliban and Al-Qaida, which were two of the offshoots of the Mujahideen. This resulted clash among the people of Afghanistan itself. After the USSR withdrew from Afghanistan in the year 1990, it descended into a turbulent and violent multi- sided civil war. It started regional, ethnic, clan and religious differences within Afghanistan, which had existed over a wide expanse of history, became even more obvious after the Soviet withdrawal than before with warfare taking place between Afghan militias which were attached to various warlords. These militias engaged in battles, changed alliances, and then battled each other again. This pattern was repeated frequently. These ever- changing battles took place in the midst of continually shifting alliances, betrayals, and cloak- and- dagger maneuvers where one or more warlords or militias sought the advantage over their immediate enemies who could later become their allies against other enemies.¹ From that time only, there was instability in the Afghanistan and main rivalries are Afghanistan governments and the Taliban who were supported by the foreign countries. After a long rivalry, there was a Taliban rule in the Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001. In 2001, Hamid Karzai became the president of the interim government of Afghanistan. After that a conflict was also continue between both the stakeholders. After a long gap, in 2021 the Taliban came into power once again and set up a Sharia Rule in the nation.

India always wants to maintain a cordial relationship with the Afghanistan. But in the Taliban 1 rule, Indian Embassy has been closed by the government in 1996 and was reopen in 2001 with the return of the interim government. In 1999, Indian Airlines flight has been hijacked in Kathmandu by the Pakistani terrorists associated with Harkat- Ul Jihad-Al-Islami (HUJI) with the goal of achieving the release of three Pakistani terrorists held in Indian Jails. The plane was landed at Kandahar Air field, which was under the Taliban control. It worsens the relations of Afghanistan and India. Perhaps, after 2001 India has worked to become Afghanistan's most important partner for reconstruction in recognition of the country's strategic importance for India within and beyond the South Asian region. The Afghan government and its international partners welcome India's constructive role. It was also necessary for India to maintain a good relation with Afghanistan. It was easy for India to tackle with the Afghanistan government so it uses huge economic aid and other soft power policies and tools. Cricket Diplomacy is also one of them. But now, with emergence of Taliban once again it was suspicious to maintain a harmonious relation with the Afghanistan.

¹ Fitzgerald, P. & Elizabeth, G. (2009). *Invisible History: Afghanistan's Untold Story*. San Francisco: City Light Books.

India, which has a huge cultural heritage, also used its soft power tools to get its intended outcomes. With the passing of time the nature of the using power also got changed. From the realist perspectives (believes in the use of the military) to the “idea of the soft power (the power of attraction)”. The globalization era and the information age have also brought change in the nature of power. This shift in power lies in is the power of attractions, which produces positive or favorable image of the state worldwide and eliminate the inferiority of the sense. This power often referred as soft power as explained by Joseph Nye.² Nye elaborated that the sources of the soft power are culture including languages, cuisines, and traditional values, Political values, the national policies, diplomacy, economic aid and assistance, science and technologies and many more are new well accepted tools. These elements of soft power have significant and effective role in trust building among the states of the world. From the overthrow of the Taliban regime from 2001, India has concentrated towards Afghanistan. India has pursued its soft power approach through re-establishing its historical and cultural links with Afghanistan. If we compare between India and Pakistan then definitely Pakistan has historical, cultural, ethnic, linguistic and trading links from very beginning that naturally ties Afghanistan with Pakistan. However, Pakistan believes mainly in the use of military or hard power and completely neglects the use of any form of soft power. Whereas; India relies on the use of soft power and also getting benefitted. Pakistan attempts to make Afghanistan as a ‘client state’ through the Hakkani and Taliban networks.³ Taliban terrorist organizations also become a cause of filtration and India has to act accordingly to establish cordial relations between these states and dismantle filtrations and networks both at the same point of time. After the coming back of Taliban again in Afghanistan, it was a hard task for India to use its Soft Power towards Afghanistan. As India and Afghan have cultural ties. But soft power needed a platform where talk could be happen without any coercive force with an open minded. But after the execution of Sharia law the freedom of individual has been curtailed.

Importance of Afghanistan:

Afghanistan is the gateway of the central Asia and known as the ‘heart of this region’. Afghanistan is always historically known as the playground of the ‘great game’. Afghanistan has got a geo-strategic importance and is known for full of natural abundance, due to which the contemporary world players always play their power-game in this region that’s why it became the epicenter of the conflict between the great power of the contemporary world. Firstly, Great Britain and the USSR try to establish their hegemony in Afghanistan. Later in cold war phase, it became a center of the ideologically differences between the USA and the USSR. Due to historical evidences and contemporary conflicts, Afghanistan was known as the graveyard of the empires as it became the graveyard of the civilizations due to decades of conflicts fought to preserve geopolitical interests of

² Nye, S. Joseph. (2004). *Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

³ Yar, Irfan. (June 2017). India’s influential soft power in Afghanistan: Giving the edge over Pakistan. *Raisina debates*.

the great power.⁴ To make a control over the Afghanistan, which could be say as strategic competition is an old phenomenon, it is inherited in its geo-strategic position that it is situated at the intersection of the world's three ancient civilization- Indian, European and Chinese. Afghanistan is a completely landlocked state and is a heart of South Central Asia, lying along important trade routes connecting Southern and Eastern Asia to Europe and Middle East. It is bounded by Pakistan in the east and south, Iran in the west and Central Asian states of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the north. It has also a short border with China.

South Asian sub-continent is full of conflict and compromise as India and Pakistan hostile relations. Pakistan has its own interests in keeping the region unstable. Pakistan has always a dual standard view on Afghanistan. On the one hand, it has blamed for helping the international forces on the other side it patronizing the terrorists groups. China is considered as major player having different situations. China is at the forefront of this region, and trying to bring into line the interests of these regional players with its own interests in this region. America and Russia has always tried to control over the region to prove their hegemony in South Asian region. China, Pakistan, Iran and Russia commonly wants to keep the international forces out of the Afghanistan to gain their strategic influence. US is trying to counter the growing imprints of China- Russia nexus. India is also one of the important player of this region and it would like a stable regime which is sensitive to Indian interests. In 1979, the Soviet Union installed government in Afghanistan had been backed by Indian Government and also got supports to every successive government before the takeover by the Taliban. India like the US, has a lot of stake in this region and will not be comfortable with the kind of political solutions the Chinese want, not with the kind of eminence the Chinese policy gives to Pakistan. India want that China find the solution to the Afghan problem without taking much support from Pakistan. Overall, India is placed more comfortably than the US in this region to balance the growing imprints of the Chinese, as India holds the similar advantages with some of these countries. And also India's growing economic and bilateral ties give it advantage over the US. But, India and US has both want to attain peace in this region so both the states together can achieve more than what the US has been able to achieve till now. In this antagonistic situation every player in Asia and the world has their own priority to deal with Afghanistan.

Cricket in Afghanistan:

Afghanistan is a land of conflict which started in late seventies; however contemporary situation is still going on. Despite this, Afghanistan has developed tremendous progress in its cricket world, which is something reconnecting between people of Afghanistan. In the 1980, numerous, Afghanis people took shelter in the refugee camps in Pakistan, due to the soviet intervention in 1979. In these refugee camps, these Afghanis learn how to play cricket and this is the way how the game cricket become a national acceptance in Afghanistan.

⁴<https://www.usiofindia.org/publication/usi-journal//the-new-geopolitical-realities-in-Afghanistan-India's-constructive-role-as-US-Partner>.

Later, Afghanistan also starts a formal structure of national cricket team from 2000 onwards, when the situation in Afghanistan became normalized and Afghani refugee in Pakistan started to return their home from the refugee camps. There were lots of the hurdles in the way of Afghanistan cricket, basically the funding and the infrastructure. Andy Moles, the head coach of Afghanistan cricket team once said that, “it is hard to explain, what it is like to people who haven’t been there. Latter added, our lives have been very different that of the other cricketers of the world cup. They have been through a lot to get here”.⁵ India grasps this opportunity and makes a pathway to show the India’s impact and its presence in the Afghanistan. India’s contribution to the development of cricket in Afghanistan had been boon for both the nations. Due to the unavailability of infrastructure in Afghanistan, the Afghan team was quite-eager and great full to India.

The term conflict is attached with the Afghanistan from the 1980, so lots of progress and efforts have to be made by the Afghanistan cricket team. Afghanistan at the international level began its cricket journey from 2008, by entering in the world cricket league division. There is a three format of cricket at the international level and each format of the cricket requires a different set of skills and tactical approaches and can be consider highly distinct from each other. To learn these skills; different type of coaching, grounds and other machinery are needed. Afghanistan needs lots of funds, coaching, skills, motivations because most of the players of the Afghanistan cricket team grew up in a refugee camps. Team captain Md. Nabi, grew up in a Pakistani refugee camp, later he received the scholarship in Britain cricket league. Nawroz khan Mangal, who was also the child of refugee camps, said that “we know the people will be watching us and we play for them. We want to give them something to be proud of and to represent the name of Afghanistan”.⁶ Taj Malook the father of Afghanistan cricket team describes the journey, we are living in Kach Kara camp...was running an Afghan team playing alongside with my three brothers, and we were crazy fans of cricket following every international match. I was thinking that if we started to play cricket, we will have also the national team representing to our own country.

The Taliban organization, which has always a rivalry with the Afghanistan government, also supports the Afghanistan cricket team which shows a rare form of unity for a deeply divided Afghanistan. When Afghanistan has match with Pakistan in an ODI in 2012, the finance minister of Pakistan, Dr. Omar Zakhilwal very aptly said that “nothing has brought us together like this”.⁷ The unity of Afghanistan seen in its cricket when, Afghanistan team had been qualified in its world cup qualifying match then heterogeneous society of Afghanistan also enjoyed the celebration. The whole population including the Afghans- Pashtuns, hazaras, Uzbeks and Taziks (who always have a conflict with each other groups) were all out on the streets and enjoy the celebrations. Through this sense, cricket looks as a unifying, healing force and its cricketer as heroes-

⁵ <https://www.the-citizen.in/index.php/en/newsdetail/index/5/6/178/India-Gives-A-Boost-To-Afghan-Cricket>.

⁶ Wyeth, Grant. (June 2018). Afganistan and India’s Cricket Diplomacy. *The Diplomats*.

⁷ <https://www.the-citizen.in/index.php/en/newsdetail/x/5/6/178/India-Gives-A-Boost-To-Afghan-Cricket>.

gladiators from an impoverished nation bringing glory to all the Afghans.⁸ It shows the popularity of the cricket in Afghanistan, that the only UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador in Afghanistan is a former cricketer captain of the team Raees Ahmadzai.

India's Cricket diplomacy:

Diplomacy meant for the promotion of national interest by a peaceful means, like- negotiations, mediations and others. Culture spread over the world through diplomatic process with help of either specific government or non-government agencies. Diplomacy is a strategy for the promotion of national interests worldwide by peaceful means. It is the art or practice of conducting international relation as negotiating alliances, treaties and agreements. The overall purpose of diplomacy is to bring social, economic and security benefits to both countries. India has done lots of development works in Afghanistan. It has invest a huge economic aids to Afghanistan. Also, it has used its cultural diplomacy to make a close interaction with the people of Afghanistan. But Cricket diplomacy is something different from other diplomacies. It not only attract people but also provide them a sense of unity and also entertain them by the game cricket. Indian cricket like the India has transformed in the last twenty years. With the appearance of mass- media coverage, global television networks and multinational sponsors, cricket has become big business and India has become the economic driving force in the game of cricket.

Cricket is one of the tool of soft power, which is run by the government agencies and has a huge potential to attract the huge population of the world. Cricket is the most fabulous game of the Indian sub-continent. Cricket has become the brand for India. India is a superpower state of the world's cricket. As cricket is the one game in which whole of the India get united irrespective of their diversities. Sachin Tendulkar is known as the god of the Indian cricket. For India, cricket is something more than the game which connects hearts of the people. Cricket diplomacy is deployed by one state on other. With the help of the Social Constructivism we could better understood this cricket diplomacy. As constructivists focuses that actions, interactions and perceptions shape the reality; so the states have to make efforts to get the intended results. This cricket diplomacy is also pursued by states to achieve their foreign goals. States apply its helpful perception on other states without enforcing on it. Through these engagements, the cultural tools and images of helpful perception of one state also get transferred to the world. Through this diplomacy, relationship of states get strengthened and both states get benefitted. India also use this cricket diplomacy to maintain a good relationship. As a superpower of this game, Indian government had grasped this opportunity to play diplomacy with other nation by helping them in the terms of funds, grounds, technical support, and players for coaching and many more. As many countries are engaging themselves in this gentleman's games and they needs supports to play this game. Cricket is the most fabulous game of Indian sub- continent. Cricket has become the brand building for India. India is a champion of the world's cricket. As cricket is the one game in which whole

⁸ Chaudhury Roy, Dipanjan. (June 2019). Afghan Cricket gets a taste of India. *The Economic Times*.

of the India gets united irrespective of their diversity. For cricket lovers, cricket is something more than game which connects hearts of the people worldwide. As a champion of this game, Indian government had took this opportunity to play this Cricket Diplomacy with other nation by assisting them in the terms of funds, grounds, technical support, and player for coaching and many more. As number of countries are engaging themselves in this gentleman's games then they needs supports to organize and perform well in this game.

India before trying its cricket diplomacy on Afghanistan has experienced it on Pakistan to make a cordial relationship. Before Afghanistan, Pakistan was the main epicenter of the Indian Cricket diplomacy. In 2005, the head of the two states of respective nation the than Prime Minister of India Dr. Man Mohan Singh and General Parvez Mussharaf together were witness of a one day match held between India and Pakistan. It was a unique type of informal meeting between the two heads of the state. In 2011, also the than Indian Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh invited prime minister and president of Pakistan for the semi- final match of India- Pakistan which was going to be held at Mohali. Pakistan accepts the invitation and decided that Prime Minister Yusuf Raja Gillani will visit to India and also make a formal discussion with his counterpart. While accepting the Indian PM invitation, the Pakistani government in a good will gesture has decided to release a 52 year old citizen, Gopal Das who had been in a Pakistani jail for 2 years. The Mint (New Delhi) 28th edit, 'Diplomacy on a spin' is a bit more skeptical, and while lauds Dr. Singh initiative and PM Gilani's gracious acceptance, it is a bit more cautious...India-Pakistan matches haven't been as effective, because larger political games have been played with less sportsmanship".⁹ Perhaps, it does not give demanded results due to the intentions of the governments.

But the case of Afghanistan was entirely different, because government of Afghanistan is also eager for the process of growth and development in their state and they really need a good reliable partners which can help them. For India also, it is necessary to make a cordial relationship with Afghanistan in perspective of Economic, Security and strategic reasons. Lots of activities took place between the India and Afghanistan in the context of cultural, educational, economic and other people to people contact. India and Afghanistan relations are historical in nature. Since 2001, India has been engaged herself in capacity building developments programs for the Afghan. The Kabul Regime also believes that the India's involvement is really significant for the Afghanistan's long term viability.¹⁰ Indian government contributed in social and economic development and political stability in Afghanistan as it is necessary for the security in this region. Hence, the Indian government signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Afghanistan when President Hamid Karzai visited India in 2011. This treaty was a robust background of cooperation in the areas of Political and security cooperation; trade and economic cooperation; capacity development and education; social, cultural and civil society; and people to people relations. India has provided \$2 billion to Afghanistan and spent around \$1

⁹ Maini., S.Trivedish. (March 2011). cricket Diplomacy on a strong Wicket. *ORF*.

¹⁰ Kaura, Vinay. (2018). India and China are converging on Afghanistan. *BESA center perspective*.

billion to make it the fifth largest bilateral donor after the US, UK, Japan & Germany. It became largest nontraditional donor.¹¹

Now India has started to play Cricket diplomacy with the Afghanistan to make its effective impact in the Afghani's land and the result was Indo-Afghanistan friendship series was held in Bangalore in 2018. This test series shows the capability of the Afghans cricket team, which was highly competitive and prestigious series for Afghans. India also shows the great hospitability and welcomed the Afghanistan team. This series strengthened India- Afghanistan relationship and paved the way for Afghan cricket future. It was considered as the milestone for the Afghan cricket team, which lack its own proper training facility and ground that are basic for any International cricket team. Indian government has grasped this opportunity, and announced the Greater Noida stadium and the Dehradun cricket stadium both as the home ground for the Afghanistan cricket team. Indian government has also provided technical training facilities along with funding to build two stadiums in Afghanistan. The Indian government provides the assistance of 1 million Dollars for the construction of Cricket stadium in Kandahar and the same was inaugurated by the Indian Ambassador in Afghanistan. Earlier CEO of Afghanistan cricket board Shafiq Stanikzai said that "I am grateful to BCCI for offering us a home base in India. This is a historic day for the Afghanistan cricket and this will strengthen the relationship between these two countries. We are trying for this for a last few years and finally have succeeded". This cricket had played an important role in the nation building of Afghanistan. Afghanistan may also boost their economy as India has done through this game of cricket. So, this cricket may be considered as playing a major role in strengthening the Afghanistan economy.

Afghan's cricket emerge through Pakistan but Pakistan always focus on terrorists links to make their relation with Afghanistan while India through this type of cricket diplomacy take over the position of Pakistan, which was the immediate neighbor of the Afghanistan. Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), is also providing technical and logistical supports to Afghan Cricket Team. BCCI is also considering a plan to host 10 coaches from Afghanistan in its Ranji Trophy Season. Amul also play an important role to deepen the India's friendly relationship with Afghanistan. The Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation (GCMMF), which markets dairy products under the Amul brand, sponsored the Afghans cricket team. Before sponsoring to Afghanistan, Amul has sponsored with New Zealand and Netherland.¹² Amul exports its products worth around Rs.200 crore annually to Afghanistan, where India has invested heavily in the development sectors. The jerseys of Afghanistan cricket team use the logo of Amul (Prime & Narendra, 2020). BCCI somewhat the boss of the world cricket and is the richest board also pledged to assist junior teams from

¹¹ D'souza, M. Shanthai. (2017). India's role in Afghanistan in Economical Stabilization. *FES*.

¹² Chaudhury Roy, Dipanjan. (June 2019). Afghan Cricket gets a taste of India. *The Economic Times*.

Afghanistan to play cricket in India. It reflects India's support for the war-torn nation's bid to nurture the sports as it struggles to find its international footing and achieve some semblance of normalcy.¹³

This game of cricket does not only provide happiness and enjoyment but also create a sense of nationality among the people cheering their national cricket team become one indicator. It is the reason that in very short span of time, Afghanistan cricket team has showed their potential in the cricket world. The best team of the world cricket can't go with their bench strength to play with Afghanistan. The Afghanistan cricket team possessed world best spinner and all-rounder. This all have been possible because of two reasons, *firstly*, the spirit and the fearlessness of the Afghani players towards to game. Coach Andy Moles, stated before the world cup game against Australia that the players are not scared of anyone but have respects. Afghanistan had played the ICC World T20 (2010), in the West Indies and in one match Afghanistan has to face with South African team basically, the bowler Dale steyn (one of the fastest & the best bowler of the world), before the match the opening batsman of Afghanistan team, Karim Sadiq told that we have no issues in facing Dale Steyn. It shows the fearlessness of the Afghanistan cricket team. *Second* is the spirit of India to help Afghanistan in their game. These efforts keep away all the hurdles which came in the way of the Afghanistan cricket team.

In the regime of Taliban 2.0, most of the nations have curtailed all the relations with Afghanistan. So, the different economic aid has been also stopped. In fact, the Afghanistan Cricket Board has also scarcity of money for the smoothly running of the game cricket. Now, it has been matter of big issue that how the Indian agencies will resolve out these issues. In the Taliban rule the Afghanistan Cricket Board Executive Director Hamid Shinwari has been replaced by Naseebullah Haqqani. And Haqqani has been on FBI's radar for various attacks on Kabul during the presence of US- backed governments and Haqqani Networks, since 2012, and has been dubbed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US governments. So, this needed a special diplomacy to deal with these persons who are in position. One thing has been remember that Taliban also loves Cricket and it is the one game which has united the whole Afghanistan.

Conclusion:

Cricket became a religion in South Asian nation. It became an emerging sense of togetherness of people irrespective of their different culture, ethnic group, religion or cast even within the nation. It became a sense of national unity inside every state. As we see in India. In Afghanistan, first time cricket united the whole nation after the commencement of conflict in the Afghanistan. Besides economic assistance, there is a need of some other types of diplomacy which connect the hearts and minds of people from the both countries and cricket diplomacy has the capability to connect the people of both sides. India's Cricket Diplomacy conveys two messages: firstly, the state should take initiative of this type game diplomacy with the other states if, there is no

¹³ Wyeth, Grant. (June 2018). Afghanistan and India's Cricket Diplomacy. *The Diplomats*.

good relation between them. Secondly, these games may generate a feeling of unification in the third world states in which a heterogeneous society is found and is bifurcated.

Now after the returning of the Taliban the positive impact of this cricket diplomacy is in suspicion. As the many big players has left their nation the danger of their life in Taliban regime. So, now it is a big deal for the Indian government and the BCCI that how they will solve out with these problems? It is right that the game cricket has brought the feelings of oneness in the Afghani peoples. Since the beginning Taliban also supported this cricket. But without the establishment of rule of law in Afghanistan, it is impossible to build a healthier environment to play a game. The Taliban rule over the Afghanistan did not get internationally recognition accept by the some nation. Most of the nation has curtailed their relations with the Afghanistan. So, the Indian agencies must take it in a positive way and through the cricket diplomacy tries to create a platform where the talk could be possible between both nations.

Afghanistan plays a crucial role for India, Pakistan and China. For years ahead Afghanistan became a hot cake between these three states. If the war begins in this region then the state which has cordial relation with Afghanistan will be benefitted most as it is the gateway of the central Asia. So, these three states always try to tackle Afghanistan in their own ways. China has strengthening its ties with almost central Asian countries and is enhancing its trade and commercial ties with Afghanistan.¹⁴ In recent years, it has provided a huge amount of funds for the development of infrastructure in Afghanistan. China also created a dignified space in this region. Pakistan is still using its traditional way to accumulate power. By using non-state actors and terrorists organizations tries to make influence in Afghanistan. These organizations are also not going to benefit either Afghanistan or Pakistan. These terrorist organizations became hurdles in the process of development for both countries. India also assisted Afghanistan with capitals, infrastructure developments (parliament of the Afghanistan) and many more things. But this cricket diplomacy is entirely different from economic initiatives and aid. It is not only transforming the relationships between India and Afghanistan but also creating space for the people to people contact in Afghanistan. India became a pre-eminent cricket superpower and often criticized for her dominant role in cricket world. However in the case of Afghanistan it has changed its role and reverted to its original role as a reliable friend. It has also shown her historically co-operative nature. It became a tool of image building and branding through this cricket diplomacy paved a way to establish cordial relation with Afghanistan. By this cricket diplomacy, India may have one step ahead compare to Pakistan and China in Central Asia. But after the returning of the Taliban how does this cricket diplomacy be an effective tool between both the nations?

¹⁴ Dalrimple, William. (2020). Deadly Triangle Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. *The Brookings Essay*.

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