

ROUNDTABLE

The Paradox of Two Gateways: Border Trade and Connectivity under Political Uncertainty along the India–Myanmar–Thailand Corridor

Coordinator

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Roundtable Description

This roundtable builds upon ongoing discussions concerning regional connectivity initiatives such as the India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway (TLH), with particular focus on the two critical border gateways of Moreh and Mae Sot. These towns function as strategic nodes within the envisioned corridor linking South and Southeast Asia, yet their operational realities continue to be shaped by political uncertainty and shifting security dynamics within Myanmar. As such, they provide a compelling lens through which to examine the gap between infrastructural ambition and grounded implementation.

The session adopts the framing of Myanmar as a strategic equilibrium space whose internal developments directly influence regional balance, economic circulation, and the viability of cross-border infrastructure. Corridor-based initiatives often project linear progress toward integration; however, in practice, connectivity unfolds unevenly and contingently. Mae Sot demonstrates relatively consolidated infrastructure and institutional integration into ASEAN-oriented supply chains, operating as a stable commercial hub within Thailand's border governance framework. In contrast, Moreh reflects both significant strategic potential and structural fragility, where infrastructural development intersects with intermittent disruption, administrative constraints, and adaptive local governance arrangements.

By placing strategic corridor visions in dialogue with comparative border realities, the roundtable will explore how asymmetries between these two gateways illuminate broader patterns of uneven regional integration. It will consider the interplay between formal infrastructure projects and informal trade networks, as well as the ways in which border communities absorb volatility while sustaining economic exchange. Rather than advancing prescriptive solutions, the discussion aims to critically engage with the paradox of integration under conditions of uncertainty, highlighting both the resilience and the limitations of corridor-based connectivity in contemporary Myanmar studies and wider South–Southeast Asian regional analysis.

Keyword: Border trade, Connectivity, Border governance, Moreh, Mae Sot