

Nordic South Asia Network

Nordic Newsletter 11 - 14 September 2017

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NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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Research Community News

• Uppsala scientists develop nanocellulose filter to remove viruses from water



Scientists at Uppsala University led by Professor Albert Mhramyan at the Ångström Microstructure Laboratory (MSL), Department of Engineering, are working on an important issue, namely to remove viruses from water. In collaboration with virologists at Charles River Laboratories in Köln, Germany, they have developed cellulose nanofiber paper sheets that are able to remove even small sized viruses. This new structured nanocellulose sheets are affordable filters that not only can remove viruses but also can have long life. They are termed as "mille-feuille filter since they have a layered structure resembling French pastry mille-feuille.

Earlier, the researchers have presented filters that can capture large sized viruses such as influenza virus, but compared to tea bag kind of cellulose filters, these French pastry structured filters have pore structures that can filter viruses that are normally resistant to physical and chemical countermeasure processes. According to Mhramyan in an article published by the Bangladesh Textile Today magazine, the goal is to develop filter paper that can remove viruses from water as easily as brewing coffee. [Read the article.](#)

On 19 January 2017, the Swedish Research Council decided to give Professor Mhramyan SEK 3.0 m as a 2016 Swedish Development Research Project grant for a three years (2017-19) Bangladesh related project entitled "Evaluation of Virus Retentive Filter Paper for Water Treatment and Clinical Applications in Real-Life Studies in Bangladesh". [More information about South Asia related 2016 Swedish Development Research Project grants.](#)

• Stockholm University support to India/Nepal Intergenerational perspectives and sustainable inclusive education project



On Tuesday 4 April 2017, Khaleda Gani Dutt at the Institute of International Education, Department of Education, Stockholm University, successfully defended her doctoral dissertation within the field of International and Comparative Education with



a thesis entitled "The Role of Adult Literacy in Transforming the Lives of Women in Rural India: Overcoming Gender Inequalities. Comparative case studies in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan & Howrah District, West Bengal, India". The NSAN

editor Lars Eklund attended the dissertation, and later put Khaleda in touch with Prof. Asoke Bhattacharya at the International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education in New Delhi, India.

This contact led to a joint proposal for a new research project including the two institutions in Stockholm and Delhi, plus a third partner, namely the School of Education at Kathmandu University in Nepal, and in June 2017 the [Forum for Asian Studies at Stockholm University](#) decided to support the project with a planning grant.

The grant aspires to develop a long term strategic partnerships between the Department of Special Education, Stockholm University; the International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education in New Delhi; and the School of Education, Kathmandu University. Professor S.Y. Shah, Director of the International Institute of Adult & Lifelong Education; and Professor Mahesh Nath Parajuli, Dean at the School of Education in Kathmandu will be the key contact

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persons in initiating the collaborative partnership. This collaboration will allow for further research to underpin the need for quality inclusive education to end exclusion both within rural and marginalized communities in India and quality inclusive education in regions affected by natural disasters such as Nepal. The Planning Grant will also facilitate the researchers Dr. **Khaleda Gani Dutt** and Dr. **Liz Adams Lyngbäck** (photos above) towards capacity building and networking within Scandinavia. Sweden will benefit from the networks in a special regard pertaining to the demographic changes in the population of refugees, migrants and members of displaced national communities, trends in globalization which can be expected to continue. In light of the education needs of families in migration especially when disability presents further hardship, the social structures in the Scandinavian countries require new scholarship and awareness to these intersecting issues as they are lived and present challenges to the organization of education.

• Amartya Sen visits Uppsala University to receive the Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science



On 29-30 September 2017, Amartya Sen, Thomas W. Lamont Professor at Harvard University, will be in Uppsala to receive the 23rd Johan Skytte Prize in Political



Science (Skytteanska Priset). The Prize will be awarded at a traditional ceremony accompanied by a Prize winner lecture open to the wide public. The lecture is entitled "*New Dangers for Democracy*". The admission is free of charge but the number of seats is limited. [More information.](#)

Sen is awarded the Prize for his multifaceted achievement that "combines insights into human vulnerability with knowledge about the potential of democratic political power to redress and relieve this deprivation." Sen, who originates from West Bengal, has spent most of his professional career at Universities of Cambridge and Harvard, all while retaining an affiliation with Delhi University in his native India. In 1998, he was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences and he has used the award to start the Pratichi Trust in India and Bangladesh that works to improve women's access to education and health care.

During his stay in Uppsala he will also hold a lecture entitled: "*Democracy and Social Choice*" for the students and staff at the Department of Government; participate in the wreath laying at the tomb of Johan Skytte at Uppsala Cathedral including a flag parade organised by various student unions at Uppsala University.

The Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science was launched in 1994 by Uppsala University. It relates to Johan Skytte, who donated a considerable sum to University in 1622 to found a professorship in Political Science and Eloquence. The Prize is handled by a foundation governed by a board, that includes the patron, Count Nils-Axel Mörnér; current Skytte Professor of Political Science, Li Bennich-Björkman; and the Vice-chancellor of Uppsala University, Eva Åkesson. [Read more.](#)

• Water and Waste in focus at the World Water Week 2017



The 2017 World Water Week in Stockholm was held 27 August - 1 September 2017. World Water Week in Stockholm is the annual focal point for the globe's water issues. It is organized

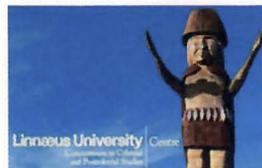


by [Stockholm International Water Institute](#) (SIWI). The theme for the 27th World Water Week was *Water and Waste: Reduce and Reuse*. [The 2017 abstract volume is available online, go for it.](#)

The programme of 2017 World Water Week consisted of 238 sessions and had more than 3,200 participants from 133 countries. Two sessions dealt with the River Ganga, one seminar entitled "*ASIA Focus - Towards a healthy Ganges*" organised by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, the International Water Management Institute, World Wide Fund for Nature, and CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems. The second Ganga seminar was organised by Earthwatch, HSBC, WaterAid, and World Wide Fund for Nature, and was entitled "*The HSBC Water Programme: Transforming lives in the Ganga*".

Another session focusing on Asia was one entitled "*Circular Economy Cities: Transforming China and India's Urban Wastewater*". It was organised by Global Water Partnership China, and the World Resources Institute. [Full information about the 2017 World Water Week.](#)

• Post-doc fellow wanted for Linnaeus University's Huseby in the World project



Linnaeus University Centre: Concurrency in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies, established in 2012, is a leading interdisciplinary research environment at the Linnaeus University (LNU), Sweden. It hosts scholars in history, literature, sociology, film studies, and anthropology whose research enquires into present and past cultural and political encounters—"simultaneities"—of claims to reality, experience and meaning, in the Nordic countries, Asia, Africa and the Americas.

The university now announces a full-time position for a year as post-doc within the field of History, to participate in the research project '*Huseby in the World*' ('Huseby i världen') dealing with the unique collection of historical documents, the Joseph Stephens Archive, that encompasses the material of a European subcontractor - Joseph Stephens (photo) - in railway constructions in 1860s western India. The work is closely connected to the Linnaeus University Centre for Concurrency in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies, but formally the successful candidate will be placed at the Linnaeus University's Department of Cultural Studies that hosts archaeology, library- and information studies, philosophy, geography, cultural geography, history, cultural sociology, and religious studies. Deadline for applications is 15 October 2017.

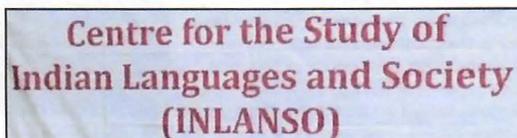
The Huseby in the World project focuses on the post-1857 revolt years, including the cotton boom followed by the collapse of the Bombay stock market. It was simultaneously years of infrastructure development, and for luck-seekers and entrepreneurs. The recently discovered collection is unusually detailed and comprehensive, and opens a window to the lower ranks of life and work of the region, the workforce, the engineers, the railway company, and the social life of the unruly 1860s in colonial west India.



The postdoc fellow will work in a team that includes well-known India specialist Professor Gunnel Cederlöf, and he/she is expected to contribute to the development of the Centre through research and publications, participate in seminars and other activities at the Centre, and collaborate with other scholars and graduate students within the Centre. Qualified for appointment is anyone who holds a PhD, or a degree that is the equivalent to a PhD, and who has completed their degree no more than five years (since 2012) before the application deadline. Applicants must not have previously been employed as a postdoctoral fellow for more than a year in the same or related subject area at the Linnaeus University. [Full information](#).

• **January 2018 premiere for INLANSO's new Kolkata/Khulna programme**

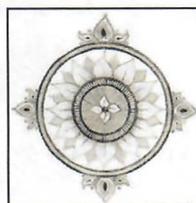
The Varanasi-based Centre for the Study of Indian Languages and Society (INLANSO) now launches an exciting new programme for studying Bengali language and society. It is entitled "*West Bengal (India) and Bangladesh in the Node of South Asia, East Asia and South East Asia: Politics, Society and Culture*" and will be held 8 January - 27 April 2018 in Kolkata, West Bengal, India, and in Khulna, Bangladesh. Deadline for applications is 15 October 2017.



To be eligible to participate requires a minimum of 2 years of academic university studies of South Asia related area studies including the study of Hindi/Urdu or/and Bengali. Master students with specialisation towards South Asia are preferred. After the course the student should be able to account for the historical circumstances that made the region attractive for colonial interests, the role the Bengali language played in the creation of Bangladesh as well as account for the factors important in analysing the categories of caste, class and religion contra contemporary political practice and culture in West Bengal and Bangladesh. More details to be given by Dr Miriya Malik, Academic Director, INLANSO. [Full information](#).

• **SASNET relaunches academic journal Chakra**

Between 2004 and 2005 Lund University published the Swedish academic journal *Chakra: tidskrift för indiska religioner*. The journal published peer-reviewed articles and book reviews on religions on the Indian subcontinent. The founding editors of Chakra were Associate Professor Kristina Myrvold - now at Linnaeus University, Växjö - and Dr. Katarina Plank - now at Karlstad University. The four issues of the journal are now republished on the website of Lund University's Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET). This republication marks the first step in creating a Nordic journal of South Asian Studies. The first issue of the new journal will be published by SASNET in 2018. It will still bear the name Chakra but broaden the scope to all aspects of South Asian studies. The journal will be published once a year and authors may submit manuscripts in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish or English. The journal will be peer-reviewed (double blind peer-review), following the guidelines set up by Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata (NSD). [More information](#).



• **Irfan Habib condemns the attacks on independent thought in India**

Renowned Indian historian Irfan Habib, Professor emeritus at the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), was recently interviewed by the news web site The Wire on a range of issues - from the current political situation in India to contentious issues in history. Habib has been at the forefront of an intellectual resistance towards the Sangh parivar, and the attempts to communalise history. In the interview, Habib also condemns the attacks on independent thinkers and thoughts which may portend an all-round attack on reason, free speech and scientific temper in society.



Professor Habib headed the Indian Council of Historical Research for many years and is a recipient of the Padma Bhushan, among many other awards. Out of the many significant books he has written, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India 1556-1707* has, for the last five decades, served as the most important text for history students to understand the decentralised nature of Mughal India. [Read more...](#)

The Wire is published by the Foundation for Independent Journalism (FIJ), a non-profit Indian company. It was founded in 2015 by editors Siddharth Varadarajan, Sidharth Bhatia, and MK Venu. The Wire's coverage principally focuses on the topics of politics, foreign policy, political economy, science and development.

• **Search material from SYDASIEN magazine 1977-2007**

The non-commercial magazine SYDASIEN was published from 1977 till 2010, and carried an amazing amount of valuable material by Swedish and Scandinavian South Asia experts, academics, journalists and others. The entire SYDASIEN production from 1977 till 2007 is now being indexed and published on the NSAN web site by Lars Eklund, who was the SYDASIEN Editor-in-chief for 25 years, from 1982 till 2007. The extensive index includes pdf-files for all the magazine issues during 31 years. The pdf-scanning was made by Thomas Bibin.



(Photos of the first issue No 1/1977, and Lars' final issue No 4/2007)

[Go for the index with links to pdf-files](#)

• **SYDASIEN 2008-2010 also available on the Net**

The magazine SYDASIEN continued to be published for another three years, 2008-2010, after Lars Eklund and Katarina Sandström Blyme took farewell of the magazine. A new editorial board led by John Senewiratne in Norrköping took over. Their published issues has been indexed by Thomas Bibin, and is also posted along with pdf-files. [Go for the index](#).

• Nancy Hatch Dupree passed away after life-long service for Afghanistan culture

The internationally recognized expert on the history, art, and archaeology of Afghanistan, Nancy Hatch Dupree passed away peacefully on 10 September 2017 in the Amiri Hospital, Kabul, having dedicated the last 55 years of her life to documenting and preserving Afghanistan's cultural heritage. Ms. Dupree arrived in Kabul in 1962. For the next 15 years, she and her late husband, Louis Dupree, a renowned archaeologist and scholar of Afghanistan's culture and history, traveled throughout Afghanistan, conducting archaeological excavations. Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Duprees moved with Afghan refugees to Peshawar, Pakistan where they continued their work. Aside from the books, articles, photographs and recordings she leaves behind, Ms. Dupree's lasting legacy to the country she loved and called home is the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University, which she founded in 2006 and where she was Director from 2006-2011. ACKU grew out of the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development's (ACBAR) Resource and Information Center, which Ms. Dupree founded and directed with Louis Dupree in Peshawar, Pakistan in 1989. Some years later in 1996, Ms. Dupree created the ACBAR Box Library Extension (ABLE), a system of mobile libraries serving the Afghan community in Peshawar. [More information about her eminent work.](#)



The NSAN editor Lars Eklund met Nancy Dupree in Kabul in December 2003, [read his report from that meeting.](#)

• 32 selected participants to 2017 Young Connectors of the Future (YCF) programme 2017

Out of the more than 1,000 applicant for the Swedish Institute-run Young Connectors of the Future (YCF) programme 2017, 32 persons were selected, 9 from Pakistan, 5 from Afghanistan and 6 each from Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka. The four-week programme is divided into two modules, first part is three weeks in Stockholm 28 August - 15 September 2017, and a second part consists of a week in February 2018 at another location.

Young Connectors of the Future (YCF) is an intercultural leadership programme for young leaders in South Asia. YCF offers personal and professional development to leaders who work for positive social change in the field of democracy, human rights, sustainability and equality. The programme provides the tools necessary to accomplish greater social impact. YCF builds and strengthens individual leadership through group-centric methods such as collaboration, feedback and reflection. Participants will learn in group from merited facilitators and from each other, through workshops, practical exercises and hands-on performance. [More information.](#)



• Old SASNET web site hijacked by porno site

The Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) was launched in January 2001 by Professor Staffan Lindberg and Lars Eklund at Lund University. Lars was responsible for building up the web site that within few years received national and international recognition and became a resource containing a gold mine of information about South Asia related research in Sweden and worldwide. However, Lund University shamefully closed the web site down in April 2016, claiming that it did not follow the graphic profile of Lund University, and also because it contained information about interesting research at all Swedish universities whereas the management demanded that focus should be entirely on local Lund research. [More information.](#)

It was therefore replaced by the [current SASNET web site](#), and the old site was put on an external web hotel as a dead document. Lars Eklund was also denied a request to take over the material and that is why he decided to take early retirement in December 2016, and launch NSAN instead.

Officially, the old site is still supposed to be available to the public, with a web address [sasnetold.eu](#). But if you try to reach it, you will find that the site after being totally unavailable for months now has been hijacked by a porno site. Shame, shame...



• Lars Eklund commemorates 70 years of the Partition of India

In connection with the 70 year commemoration of the Partition of India on 15 August 1947, your Nordic South Asia Network editor Lars Eklund wrote an article in Swedish language for the Internet based magazine SYDASIEN. Lars writes about the development India has gone through from 1947 till today, based on his experiences as being the editor of the printed version of SYDASIEN during 25 years (1982-2007), and being the deputy director for the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) 2001-2016. [Read Lars article.](#)



• More information about South Asia related research at Swedish and Nordic universities

See our page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/research-community-news>

Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

• Oslo seminar on Financial Risk and Capitalising on Poverty in India

Forms of Ethics, Shapes of Finance (FESA) is a research project funded by the Norwegian Research Council since 2015, connected to the Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo, but also involving State University of New York Binghamton, USA, and Stockholm University, Sweden, besides cooperating with researchers based at the University of Oslo, the University College of Oslo and Akershus, and the University of Toronto, Canada. The FESA project aims to explore how ethical forms shape finance to create new iterations of the economy, and how financial forms entail ethical concerns. South Asia is to some extent in focus for FESA. On Tuesday 19 September 2017, 14.15-16.00, Assistant Professor Sohini Kar from the Department of International Development at the London School of Economics (LSE) will hold a FESA seminar entitled "*Systemic Enfolded: Financial Risk and Capitalising on Poverty in India*".



Venue: Historical Museum, Frederiksgate 2, Oslo. In her presentation, Dr. Kar will examine how financial risk comes to shape not just lending practices, but also how the poor are drawn into new circulations of capital. She draws upon ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Kolkata, India. [More information.](#)

• Oslo seminar on The Biopolitics of Hindu Nationalism



Professor Banu Subramaniam from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA, holds an open seminar at University of Oslo's Forum for Science Studies (Vitenskapsteori) on Wednesday 20 September 2017, 14.15-15.30. She will speak about "*Making Postcolonial Bodies: The Biopolitics of Hindu Nationalism*". The seminar is part of the Fall 2017 Science Studies



Colloquium Series. Venue: Georg Sverdrups hus - Undervisningsrom 1, Blindern, Oslo. Subramaniam is a professor of women, gender and sexuality studies currently exploring how science and religion come together in contemporary Hindu nationalism to create a very particular and powerful biopolitical imaginary. Religious nationalists have selectively, and strategically, used rhetoric from both science and Hinduism, modernity and orthodoxy, western and eastern thought to build a powerful but potentially dangerous vision of a Hindu nation. With aspirations for a global and modern Hinduism, scientific and religious practices in contemporary India are inextricably interconnected and result in fluid processes and practices of both institutions. The case of India reminds us about both the transnational stakes of science as well as the local instantiations that challenge enlightenment narratives of reason and unreason. Ultimately to understand contemporary technoscience in India, we need new epistemological and methodological tools, and story making practices to make visible the many phantasmogoric natural and cultural worlds within. [More information.](#)

• Stockholm University seminar on Language Documentation in northern Pakistan

On Thursday 21 September 2017, at 15.00, the Department of Linguistics at Stockholm University organises a higher seminar in Linguistics entitled "*Language Documentation and Revitalization in Northern Pakistan*". The speakers are Fakhruddin Akhonzada, Naseem Haider and Muhammad Zaman Sagar from the [Forum for Language Initiatives \(FLI\)](#) in Peshawar, an institute involved in collaboration with Stockholm University. The seminar is chaired by Dr. Henrik Liljegren. Venue: C307, Södra huset, Frescati, Stockholm.



FLI was founded in Peshawar in 2003 to provide the 25-30 local language communities in the mountainous north of Pakistan with support in their own efforts to maintain and promote the use of their mother tongues. In this presentation the three speakers will give plenty of examples of activities carried in the language communities (such as research, orthography development, literature production, the setting up pilot literacy projects, the establishment of community schools, awareness-raising efforts, media campaigns, etc.), and show how these have contributed to maintaining and increasing the level of vitality in some of these Pakistani language communities. [More information about the seminar.](#)



Henrik Liljegren, who defended a doctoral dissertation focusing on Palula, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in northern Pakistan in 2008, has himself been connected to the Frontier Language Institute for many years, and actually took part in the establishment of the institute in 2003. He is currently involved in a collaborative research project entitled *Language Contact and Relatedness in the Hindukush region*, funded by the Swedish Research Council). The goal of the project is to produce a linguistic profile of the languages spoken in the Hindukush region, an area comprising the mountainous north-eastern Afghanistan, northern Pakistan and the northern-most part of the disputed Kashmir territory. Among 69 languages in Pakistan, 26 are spoken in NWFP and 12 are being used in district Chitral alone.

Apart from this project, Henrik Liljegren cooperates closely with Anjuman-e-taraqqi-e-Palula (the Society for the Promotion of Palula) to help produce a small body of Palula literature and work on a Palula dictionary.

• Aarhus thesis seminar on Super Mario cartoons in Goan culture



PhD candidate Prakruti Ramesh at the School of Culture and Society - India and South Asia Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark, introduced and discussed her forthcoming PhD thesis entitled "*Super 'Mario' and Goa - Notes on a Palimpsestic Public Culture*" at a

Thesis Seminar on Friday 25 August 2017.

An impressive group of discussants was present: Radhika Chopra from University of Delhi; Ronie Parciack from University of Tel Aviv, Gauri Pathak from Aarhus University; and Jyotirmaya Tripathi from Indiana Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras in Chennai. In her presentation, Prakruti focused on the preponderance, since the early 2000s, of the cartoons created by Mario Miranda in Goa's evolving visual and material culture. With attention to the ways in which Goa, a state in coastal west India famous for its tourism, has been marked apart historically and discursively from British and later Independent India, she argues that the use of Mario's work functions increasingly as a visual shorthand or compression for a "remembering" of Goa's "difference" from the nation. This remembering, articulated through the comic polyvalence of the cartoon form, recalls the ambivalence of certain other public culture interventions during Portuguese colonial rule, and may be viewed as part of the ongoing creation of a palimpsestic public culture. The first three (draft) chapters of the PhD thesis were briefly presented and then discussed.

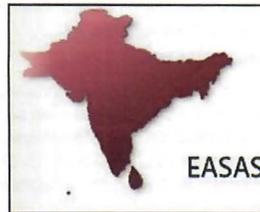


• Information about South Asia related lectures and seminars

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/lectures-in-scandinavia>

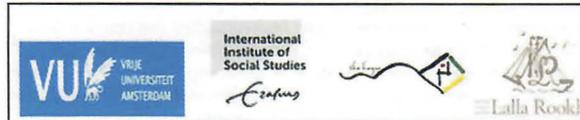
• 11th EASAS PhD workshop in South Asian Studies to be held in Naples

L'Orientale University of Naples will host the 11th European PhD workshop in South Asian Studies, to be held in Procida, Naples, Italy, from 22 to 24 September 2017. The EASAS doctoral workshops take place annually and aim at giving PhD students the opportunity to discuss their thesis with fellow PhD students and senior scholars who work on South Asia. The doctoral students who wish to attend the workshop must be in their 2nd or 3rd year. The Scuola di Procida, Centro di Alta Formazione dell'Università degli studi di Napoli and EASAS will provide accommodation and board at Procida, the smallest island in the Bay of Naples measuring 4 km² and thus walkable in its entirety. Hydrofoils take about 40 minutes from Naples (Molo Beverollo), ferries take one hour from Naples (Porta di Massa). At the workshop, the PhD researchers are to share rooms with another participant, as is usually the case at EASAS PhD workshops. Applicants must be members of EASAS at the time of submission of the application for funding. [Full information.](#)



• Challenging Perspectives on the Indian Diaspora theme for The Hague conference

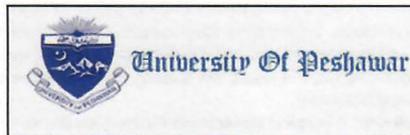
On 5-7 October 2017, an international conference on Diaspora Studies and Policies will be held at The Hague, The Netherlands. The conference, with the theme "Challenging Perspectives on the Indian Diaspora", is organised by



the [Foundation of the Lalla Rookh Academic Chair](#), in conjunction with VU University of Amsterdam, the [International Institute of Social Studies](#) of the Erasmus University Rotterdam in The Hague, and the Municipality of The Hague. Academic and policy papers from disciplinary, multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary approaches that will emphasize new areas and linkages with India are invited, including topics like the role of Bollywood films, homemaking and integrating practices, identity making, issues concerning citizenship and legal arrangements, and the politics and economics of diaspora. The conference will pay attention to exploring topics from new disciplinary areas, such as anthropology, economics, law, politics, sociology, geography, art and media, and history. Keynote speakers include Professor Brij Lal, Australian National University, Canberra; Professor. N. Jayaram, former Dean Tata Institute for Social Sciences, Mumbai; Professor Shakuntala Rao, State University New York; Professor Vineeta Sinha, National University Singapore; and Professor Peter van de Veer, Director of the Max Plack Institute, Göttingen. [Full information.](#)

• Peshawar conference on State and Society in South Asia

The 26th International Pakistan History Conference will be held at University of Peshawar on 9-11 October 2017. The theme for the conference, jointly organised by the the Pakistan Historical Society; the Dept. of History at University of Peshawar; and the Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, is "State and Society in South Asia: Historical Perspective".



Historically South Asia consists of the present day states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The region has more than 2,000 ethnic entities with populations ranging from hundreds of millions to a few thousand. The blend of these various groups has produced composite cultures with some common traditions and beliefs. Despite the tendency towards assimilation, the traditions of some ethnic groups in South Asia have persisted throughout history, sometimes giving rise to strong local traditions such as the distinctive South Indian and Bengali cultures. The conference aims to generate an academic debate on different aspects of State and Society in South Asian context from earlier times to the recent past. The debate would look into the various phases of the development and growth of Society and State in the past, their role in present, and impact on the future. [Full information.](#)

• 46th Madison conference focuses on improving the quality of work performance



The 46th Annual Madison Conference on South Asia will be held 26 - 29 October 2017. The conference, that is sponsored by the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, attracts over 800 scholars and

specialists on South Asia, who travel from countries all over the world and much of the United States. It is a great venue for intellectual, professional, and social exchange. In 2016, the NSAN editor [Lars Eklund attended the Madison conference.](#) The 2017 conference will specially focus on the advances made in the field of ways to improve the quality of the work performance. Some of the major highlights of this conference will be panel interaction, speaker session, papers and abstracts. The 2017 Joseph W. Elder Keynote Lecture will be delivered by Professor Ayesha Jalal, Mary Richardson Professor of History at Tufts University; and a plenary session address will be given by Urvashi Butalia and Nandini Sundar. The conference features nearly 100 academic panels and roundtables, as well as association meetings and special events ranging from performances to film screenings. Venue: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton St., Madison, Wisconsin, USA. [More information.](#)



• Time to propose papers for the 2018 ECSAS conference in Paris



The 25th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS) is scheduled for 24-27 July 2018 in Paris, France. It will be held at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences

Sociales, (54 and 105, Blvd. Raspail). It is organized by the Centre d'Études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (CNRS-EHESS). The call for papers is now open and will close on 30 November 2017. Paper presenters at the 24th ECSAS must be members of EASAS through 2017 & 2018 or 2018 & 2019. Non-members cannot attend the conference. [More information at the conference web page.](#)



ECSAS requires all accepted panels to be open to paper proposals through the website: proposed panels should not be 'closed' to further papers ab initio. Young researchers are advised to contact panel convenors to be considered for

inclusion in their panel; young researchers are also encouraged to propose panels themselves. No panel may run for more than 4 sessions of 90 minutes.

The ECSAS has met regularly since 1968, and has provided an important opportunity to discuss current research and scholarship on topics relating to South Asia within the humanities and social sciences. The 2004 conference was organised by SASNET in Lund, [see the 2004 conference page](#).

The most recent ECSAS conference was held in Warsaw, Poland, in July 2016. Lars Eklund attended the conference, at that time representing SASNET, Lund University (but also as a member of the EASAS board - re-elected for the position as treasurer). [Go for his Warsaw report](#).

- **Other conferences connected to South Asian studies all over the World**

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/conferences/conferences>

South Asia related culture in Scandinavia

- **Arundhati Roy and Bangladeshi literary representatives at 2017 Göteborg Book Fair**



Whereas many well-known Swedish writers and publishers have decided not to participate in the 2017 Göteborg Bok Fair (Bok och Biblioteksmässan) due to the organisers having accepted an extremist



Arundhati Roy and Shamsuzzaman Khan.

right-wing newspaper having a stall at the fair ([more information](#)), South Asia will be represented by Indian writer Arundhati Roy, and four prominent Bangladeshi literary stalwarts, namely Shamsuzzaman Khan (Bangla Academy Director); Muhammad Samad (National Poetry Council of Bangladesh President); Tarik Sujat (poet, publisher and graphic artist); and Anisur Rahman.

Seminars with them will be held on Thursday 28 September, one with Arundhati Roy entitled *"Returning to Literary Fiction"*, about her recent book, *"The Ministry of Utmost Happiness"*, a novel just like her 1997 novel *"The God of Small Things"*. After that, she left literary fiction behind and made a name for herself as an activist and social commentator. In a number of books and articles, Arundhati Roy has fought for women's rights and against dam projects and environmental degradation, among other things. But now exactly twenty years later a new novel suddenly emerges. Why did she choose to return to literature? John Freeman, American author will be the moderator.

The Swedish translation of the new book will be released in connection with the book fair. It is published by Brombergs förlag and is entitled *"Den Yttersta Lyckans Ministerium"*.

The Bangladeshi literary quartet will take part in a seminar entitled *"What is Happening in Contemporary Literature in Bangladesh?"*. It will be a kind of follow-up to events at the 2013 Book Fair with five Bangladeshi writers ([more information](#)). They will promote modern Bangladeshi literature, a hundred years after Rabindranath Tagore, the main architect of modern Bengali literature, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. The seminar - organised by Litteraturcentrum Uppsala, Bangla Academy, and the National Poetry Council of Bangladesh - will be held as a dialogue with Swedish writer Lars Häger.

[Go for the full programme of 2017 Göteborg Book Fair](#).

- **Olivier Culmann's India photo collection on show in Landskrona**



In connection with the 2017 Photo Festival in Landskrona, Sweden, French photographer Olivier Culmann's Indian photo series is exhibited at Landskrona konsthall 8-17 September. [More information](#).



Over 20 years of travelling to and living in India, Culmann has spotted certain looks in the streets time and time again -

bureaucrats in sweater vests, throwback 70s stylings. Then he began reproducing their appearances - on himself. He calls the endeavour a "cultural inversion".

Culmann has chosen to produce a photo series about ordinary life in India - called *The Others* - without snapping a single local. He bought or borrowed similar clothing to the men he impersonated, dyed his hair black, grew it out for some shots, shaved it off for others, grew a moustache. The only changes he made in post-production were the colour of his skin and eyes, for the sake of realism.

His images are not made to be controversial: they are not social critique, but a commentary on the power of illusions. He decided on his own one-man casting simply for ease: "I'm always available, always there when I need me," he jokes. Though he insists that "the idea isn't to make a joke or make fun... you can show humour and tenderness in tandem".

The work itself happened in several stages, inspired by photographic customs common to Indian portraiture. First, Culmann visited the neighbourhood studios that still dot every

other street and are widely used for identity photos, or for middle-class portraits - family photos, wedding shots, momentous occasions. Culmann shot the studio backdrops when they were empty, then took portraits of himself separately, testing up to 100 poses per character. The characters were then Photoshopped against the backdrops. Culmann then decided to push the project even further. Some studios also rework torn or faded old images of dead family members - not to their original state, but into enhanced versions (magicked into colour, given dramatic backgrounds). So Culmann purposefully ripped up his original black-and-white portraits and sent the morsels to assorted studios to do their thing. "Some of them are not very good: some go as far as cartoon," he says, pointing to the resulting wonky eyes and added chest-hair. The final stage of *The Others* was to ask a local artist to paint the photographs. [Read more in a December 2015 article from The Guardian](#).

- **Read Lars Eklund's travel reports from Europe, Asia and the Middle East**

Yours truly NSAN editor Lars Eklund travelled a lot in Europe, Asia and the Middle East during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, always writing extensive travel reports. Lars is currently posting these reports (in Swedish language) on the Internet, and is followed by a group on Facebook. Along with the letters and other documents, the reports are illustrated by his own photos from the journeys he made first as an overland traveller to India and beyond in the 1970s, as a journalist travelling in the 1980s and later as a Kolkata family member and university employee. The reports cover a lot of different destinations, the variation covers all the way from the Faeroe Islands, Mongolia, Syria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Indonesia, UK, China to DDR, Nepal and Afghanistan (*photo from Maimana in northern Afghanistan 1975*). If interested to subscribe for the travel reports, [contact Lars Eklund](#) directly. [Go for a list of travel reports available.](#)



• **Information about South Asia related culture in Sweden/ Scandinavia**

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/cultural-events>

Best regards

Lars Eklund

Subscribe to the newsletter by sending an email to sydasien@sydasien.se!

Nordic South Asia Network (NSAN) newsletters are produced by Lars Eklund.

Till 31 December 2016 he worked as deputy director for the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), based at Lund University.

After retiring from SASNET, Lars is working part-time as Executive Director, Communications, for the Centre for the Study of Indian Languages and Society (INLANSO) in Varanasi, India.

Besides, he runs the NSAN web site and produces monthly newsletters as a follow-up venture to the old SASNET Newsletter service that was closed down in April 2016.

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