

# Nordic South Asia Network

## Nordic Newsletter 12 - 16 October 2017

Submitted by [admin](#) on Sun, 2017-10-15 22:47

### NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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### Research Community News

#### • Nordic South Asia scholars meet in Oslo in June 2018

In late June 2017, the recently established network entitled "South Asia Across the Nordic Region" (SANR) held its first annual meeting in Copenhagen. SANR was established to present cutting edge research undertaken by Nordic scholars, and to facilitate greater collaboration across Nordic research institutions and universities. The need for such a meeting forum has been acutely felt by scholars, especially young scholars in need of mentorship and support in the early career stage. The annual meeting is therefore seen as an important step towards building up future frameworks of cooperation.

Next year, in 2018, the annual meeting of SANR will take place in Oslo on 5 and 6 June. As was the case in Copenhagen, the financial model remains simple: travel and accommodation costs are borne by scholars' home institutions, and the host provides local hospitality. Suggestions for events/panels/plenaries/other activities are invited. As in Copenhagen, the Norwegian organisers, led by Associate Professor Kenneth Bo Nielsen - who is also the Coordinator for the Norwegian Network for Asian Studies, promise to set aside ample time for mingling, exchanging research ideas, and exploring potential avenues of collaboration. A web page and a Facebook event page will be set up soon.

#### • Four Nordic universities ranked among top 100 according to THE World University Ranking 2018



According to the [Times Higher Education \(THE\) World University Rankings 2018](#) four Nordic universities appear among the top 100 in the world. Three of them are Swedish - Karolinska Institutet as No. 34 (down by 6 positions compared to last year), Uppsala University ranked as No. 86 (up by 5), and Lund University ranked as No. 93 (up by 3). The remaining Nordic university is Helsinki on position 90 (up by 1).



The majority of universities in the top of the list are American or British, with Oxford and Cambridge universities in top positions. The ranking list was published in mid-September 2017. The THE rankings employ 13 separate performance indicators, making them the only global university rankings to examine all the core missions of the modern global university - research, teaching, knowledge transfer and international activity. Slightly below the top 100 comes the universities of Aarhus and Copenhagen on shared position No. 109, Stockholm University as No. 134, and Oslo on position No. 146.



In South Asia, Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore (*photo*) continues to be ranked highest, among the positions between 251 and 300. Only one more South Asian university - Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay - is ranked among the top 400, in a position between 351 and 400. Four Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) - in Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur and Roorkee have positions between 500 and 600. The strongest non-Indian South Asian university to qualify to the THE ranking is the Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, Pakistan on position 401-500. [See the full THE ranking 2016-17.](#)

Compare this information with another ranking service, [QS World University Rankings 2018](#), said to be among the most trusted university rankings available, with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Stanford and Harvard remaining in top positions. According to this ranking, University of



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Copenhagen is the premier Nordic university, ranked as No. 73, down by 5 positions compared to previous year), and two Swedish universities are among the top 100. Lund University, on position No. 78 (down by 5) and KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm on position 98 (down by 1). Slightly below the top 100 we find the universities of Helsinki, Uppsala and Aarhus. Regarding South Asia QS, IIT Delhi is on top, at position No. 172 (*photo of IIT Delhi students*), followed by IIT Bombay on No. 179 and Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bangalore on position 190, one position ahead of Stockholm University. [Go for the QS World University Rankings 2018.](#)



• **Amartya Sen visited 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, visited Uppsala to receive the 23rd Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science (Skytteanska Priset). The Prize was awarded at a traditional ceremony accompanied by a Prize winner lecture open to the wide public. The lecture was entitled "New Dangers for Democracy". [More information.](#)

Sen was 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 Pratchi Trust in India and Bangladesh that works to improve women's access to education and health care.

During his stay in Uppsala he also held a lecture entitled: "Democracy and Social Choice" for the students and staff at the Department of Government; and participated 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.

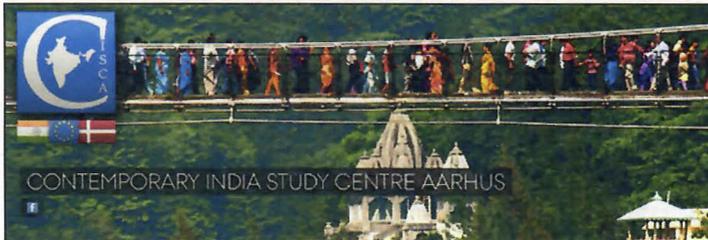
The Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science was launched in 1994 by Uppsala University. It relates to Johan Skytte, who donated a considerable sum to University in 1622 to found a professorship in Political Science and Eloquence. The Prize is handled by a foundation governed by a board, that includes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



Amartya Sen at Uppsala University, with Prof. Ashok Swain and Prof. Ranjula Bali Swain.

• **Successful CISCA programme at Aarhus University changes name**

The [Contemporary India Study Centre Aarhus \(CISCA\)](#) now changes name into "India and South Asia at Aarhus University", and is supposed to be an open platform for all India and South Asia related activities at Aarhus University and beyond. It



builds on the network established by CISCA and its partners and follows its broad ideas of critically engaging with the subcontinent, disseminating and advancing knowledge on contemporary India and South Asia with its historical, political and socio-cultural diversity and enhancing and strengthening existing collaborations while at the same time building new ones.

CISCA was a product of the India-EU Study Centres Programme (IESCP), that was set up by the European Commission in 2008 as an integral part of the India-EU Joint Action Plan adopted in 2005. A number of Centres for European Studies in India were launched, and similarly a number of Centres for Indian Studies in Europe were established, one of them being CISCA, coordinated by Aarhus University and Dr. Uwe Skoda, and run in partnership with Allahabad University, Sambalpur University, and Sri Venkateshwara College in India, later more partner universities added.

It was inaugurated in February 2010. The aim of the programme was to promote a better understanding of the EU in India and vice versa through academic and other forms of collaboration, and its chief objective both to strengthen existing study centres and establish new ones focusing on EU studies in India as well as on contemporary Indian studies in Europe. CISCA has been very successful in implementing its goals.

• **Nepal and Bhutan in focus at sixth CIMCEB consortium meeting in Lund**



In 2015, Lund University was awarded a grant from the European Union Erasmus+ Programme, to fund a collaborative project entitled CIMCEB, an acronym for "Curricula Development of Interdisciplinary Master Courses in Energy Efficient Building Design in Nepal and Bhutan". The project is run by a consortium with six partner universities - three in Europe, two in Nepal (Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University) and finally the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) or more precisely its College for Science and Technology in Phuntsholing.

The project held its sixth consortium meeting in Lund on 11-13 October 2017. The NSAN editor Lars Eklund participated in the first session of the meeting and mingled with the Nepalese and Bhutanese representatives, and informed about his recent visit to the RUB College of Education in Samtse, as well as previous visits to RUB and Tribhuvan University in Kathmandu.

Through the CIMCEB project, the partner universities from Nepal and Bhutan will develop a new Master programme in the area of energy efficiency in buildings as well as support existing Master programmes with development of

laboratory facilities and establishment of new courses in order to encourage the possibilities to decrease the energy use in buildings and minimize the environmental impact. [Read Lars Eklund's report from the consortium meeting.](#)

● **Karachi University celebration of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's 200th birth anniversary**

On Tuesday 17 October 2017, the Department of Urdu at Karachi University will celebrate the 200th birth anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan (1817-1898). Professor Heinz Werner Wessler from the Institute for Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University will participate in the event, and hold a lecture entitled *"Reinterpretation, Reform, and the Reconciliatory: Sayyid Ahmad Khan's Initiative in Interreligious Studies"*. In his presentation, Prof. Wessler focuses on Syed's role as the torchbearer of new formations that enable Islam to cope with the religious, philosophical, economic and social challenges of 19th century colonial modernity, laying out the ground for Muslim nationalism in South Asia. His thoughts on Islamic modernism in terms of islah (reform) and reinterpretation (ijtihad) can be seen as the most important



Three South Asian representatives at the CIMCEB consortium meeting in Lund: Cheku Dorji from Royal University of Bhutan; Sanjaya Upreti from Tribuvan University; and Hari Prasad from Kathmandu University.



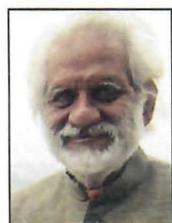
breakthrough in his concern about the introduction of Western forms of education among Muslims. However, the binary of tradition and modernity tends to overlook the multicultural setup that Sayyid Ahmad Khan hails from. He was very much aware of Christian and Hindu concepts of God and the world, as well as of social practices outside of

his own fold. Particularly interesting in this context are his comments on the Bible. His *Mohomedan Commentary on the Holy Bible* (1862; second volume 1865) was published in two columns each page, English and Urdu, clearly marking the purpose of this publication, i.e. to enhance some form of interreligious dialogue. Indian historian Mushirul Hasan has, in his book *"A Moral Reckoning: Muslim Intellectuals in Nineteenth-century Delhi"* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005), pointed out the reconciliatory effort in Syed's approach to non-Muslim religions surrounding him in Delhi, particularly Christianity, but implicitly also forms of Hindu belief and practices.

This conciliatory approach has to be seen in the context of the brutalities committed by both the Indian rebels and the victorious East India Company forces in the Revolt of 1857/58, which still were fresh in public memory in Delhi and all over North India at that time. In a time of growing alienation on religious lines it is time for the religious to return to open-minded, non-repulsive and unbiased readings of the scriptures of other religions in the spirit of Syed Ahmad Khan. [More information about Syed Ahmad Khan.](#)



● **Dipak Malik reviews important book on Afghanistan politics**



**Farewell To Kabul: From Afghanistan to a more dangerous world** by Christina Lamb (William Collins, an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers, London, 2015). Professor Dipak Malik in Varanasi reviews the book in the *Mainstream* journal, published in New Delhi in its 7 October 2017 issue. His initiated article is entitled *A Must Read for those Meticulously following Afghan Events*.

This important book draws a graphic picture of the American as well as Western alliance's military presence of NATO partners pointing out the sheer blinkered view of Washington, London and an over-active and anxious Pakistan to install its proxy regime of the Taliban

over Afghanistan. Being a war correspondent, Christina Lamb's book contains the ground-level reporting about the myriad world of lies, deception, double-talk, corruption at the very door-step of the former Mujahidin fighters who grew into formidable warlords while waging their mercenary war empowered by the strategic planners in Pentagon along with the security advisor to President Carter, Zbigniew Brzezinski, who aimed at splitting the Muslim majority inhabited Soviet Central Asia and destroying the fragile secular regime in Afghanistan via jihad redesigned by the Pentagon and CIA outfits as the lethal instrument of dismantling a very shaky and yet in flux regime professing to bring both socialism and modernisation, a task almost impossible in a well-embedded medieval society. [Read the full \*Mainstream\* review.](#)



● **Aalborg researchers want to improve Bangladeshi ready made garments sector**

Aalborg University, Denmark, is involved in an important research project entitled *"Improving the Productivity and Occupational Health and Safety in the Ready Made Garments (RMG) Sector of Bangladesh"*. The overall development objective for the project is to contribute to improving the competitiveness through increasing productivity of the RMG industry in Bangladesh while simultaneously improving Occupational Health and Safety and workers' conditions. At Aalborg University, the project is led by Prof. Peter Hasle and Associate Professor Jan Vang at the Department of Business and Management, Center for Industrial Production, whereas the key Bangladeshi partner institution is the Department of Mechanical and Production Engineering at Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology (AUST) in Dhaka, led by Prof. Shaymal Kanti Biswas.



Peter Hasle and Jan Vang

RMG is the biggest export earning industry in Bangladesh, responsible for the highest job growth and thereby one of the most important economic pillars. Jobs have been created especially for women contributing significantly to gender equality in Bangladesh.

However, the Bangladeshi RMG industry is primarily conducting 'Cut and Sew' and 'Original Equipment Manufacturing, and the Bangladeshi RMG firms are currently in a low level equilibrium trap; they are not prepared to move towards Original Brand Name Manufacturing and Original Design Manufacturing. But they do have the opportunity to move away from so-called 'predatory' practices towards a leaner cost-competitive production. To achieve such goals the industry needs to develop the capabilities



to deliver high quality sustainable products through the use of modern production management methodologies. If not, garment production may gradually move to other countries, who have received Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP) status for the EU market. Bangladesh's major problem is that despite salaries which are among the lowest in Asia, the production incurs significant additional costs due to a low productivity and long lead time. Along with above circumstances, an improvement in sustainable Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) practices is especially urgent after several serious accidents culminating with the Rana Plaza accident April 24, 2013, which killed more than a thousand workers. Since then, an international accord to improve OHS practices has been signed by international buyers including Danish firms. The focus on improving the OHS interventions helps to reduce the number of workers exposed to dangerous work thereby reducing the number of workers affected by accidents. The project aims at directly and indirectly improving OHS practices and productivity among Bangladeshi suppliers followed by enhance the buyer supplier relations as well as the competitiveness of the RMG firms in the global market. [Full information.](#)

#### ● Excellent South Asia Monitor independent web journal

South Asia Monitor is an independent web journal and online resource dealing with strategic, political, security, cultural and economic issues



related to South Asia and the whole Indo-Pacific region. It offers in-depth knowledge, reliable information and documentation on the entire region, the eight SAARC nations - Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Maldives, Bhutan and Afghanistan - plus Burma/Myanmar, and the site features exclusive commentaries, insightful analyses, interviews and reviews contributed by strategic experts, diplomats, journalists, analysts, researchers and students from not only this region but all over the world.

The South Asian Monitor was initiated by the [Society for Policy Studies \(SPS\)](#), a New Delhi-based think tank dedicated to creating awareness of national and international issues of relevance to India and finding solutions to them through dialogue and discussion. Its web portal is published in English as a common language and in Bengali, native language for a major group of people in this region (Bangladesh-West Bengal, Tripura and Assam). South Asian monitor plays a role where opinions regarding various events can be freely expressed. Conflicting opinions and views will co-exist together so that viewers know the truth from every angle. [Go for this excellent news service.](#)

#### ● Swati Shukla revisited Lund after two years

Dr. Swati Shukla, working as a senior researcher at the prestigious National Center for Biological Sciences (NCBS) in Bangalore, India and its Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms, visited the NSAN editor Lars Eklund and his wife Bubu on Tuesday 19 September 2017 while spending a short time in Lund. Swati spent four years at Lund University 2010-2014, working as a postdoc at the Division of Infection Medicine (BMC), but then returned to India and settled in Bangalore. Since a year back, she is a member of a research team working on stem cells technology focused on treatment of liver diseases. The work is carried out within the framework of a private company, Pandorum Technologies Pvt. Ltd. that is connected to NCBS.



The reason for her coming to Europe was actually to visit Germany, and a reunion meeting at the Helmholtz Centre for Infectious Diseases in Braunschweig, where Swati spent four years as a PhD candidate before defending her thesis and joining Lund University.

#### ● 2017 Right Livelihood Award to Colin Gonsalves



The Laureates of the 2017 Right Livelihood Award, widely referred to as the 'Alternative Nobel Prize', were announced on 26 September 2017 in Stockholm, Sweden. The award is shared by four laureates, all known for doing courageous work for human rights, public health and good governance, and tackling some of the world's most pressing challenges at their very core. South Asia is represented by one of the laureates, Colin Gonsalves, Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court of India and the



founder of the Human Rights Law Network (HRLN), an Indian national network of public interest lawyers.

Hos most significant victories in the courtroom include the 2001 "Right to Food" case, which saw India's Supreme Court issue far reaching orders enforcing a free midday meal for all schoolchildren and subsidised grain for over 400 million Indians living below the poverty line. In 2016 and 2017, Gonsalves obtained landmark judgements from the Supreme Court that ended the longstanding immunity of the Indian Armed Forces from criminal prosecution. This is already having a significant impact in reducing the number of extrajudicial executions occurring in India's Northeast. [Full information about Colin Gonsalves and the Right Livelihood Award 2017.](#)

#### ● Kashmiri activists win Norway's Rafto Prize for human rights

Two Indian activists from the heavily militarised region of Kashmir won Norway's Rafto Prize for human rights for their long-term struggle against violence in the disputed territory, the jury announced on 28 September 2017. The prize of



17,750 euros will formally be presented to Parveena Ahanger and Imroz Parvez on November 5th in the western Norwegian town of Bergen. Named after the late Norwegian human rights activist Thorolf Rafto, four past winners of the prize (Aung San Suu Kyi, Jose Ramos-Horta, Kim Dae-Jung and Shirin Ebadi)

went on to win to Nobel Peace Prize.

Ahanger, nicknamed "The Iron Lady of Kashmir", founded and leads the Association of Parents of Missing Persons after her 17-year-old son was kidnapped by security forces in 1990. She hasn't heard anything from or of him since. Her co-laureate, lawyer Parvez, founded the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) which promotes human rights and non-violence. It has documented the authorities' use of torture in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. [More information.](#)



Parveena Ahanger and Imroz Parvez.

• **Leif Stenberg Director of the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations**



Since 1 April 2017, Professor Leif Stenberg is working as Director of the London-based [Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations](#) in the Aga Khan University, an institute established in 2002 with an aim to

strengthen research and teaching about the heritage of Muslim societies including those of South Asia, with specific attention to the challenges these societies face in contemporary settings.

Leif Stenberg received his PhD in Islamic Studies from Lund University in 1996 with the publication of a thesis entitled "*The Islamization of Science: Four Muslim Positions Developing an Islamic Modernity*". He was supervised by Professor Jan Hjärpe. In his thesis, he analysed the contemporary debate on the Islamization of science by focusing on a number of individuals belonging to a Muslim intellectual elite - including the British-Pakistani author Ziauddin Sardar. The thesis presents his and others perspectives on the Islamization of science and points at central elements and patterns in their respective positions. [Download the PhD thesis.](#)

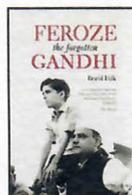
After spending a year as an Assistant Professor at Uppsala University, and being a visiting scholar at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University, USA, and the Institut Français d'Études Arabes de Damas (IFEAD) in Damascus, Syria, he returned to Lund University to teach Islamology. In 2007, he was appointed as the Director of the new and soon to become lively and expanding Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at Lund University, a position he held till he joined Aga Khan University in early 2017. His research interests, besides Islam and modern science, include contemporary interpretations of Islam in Sufism, interpretations of Islam among Muslims in Europe, and developments within political Islam. He has frequently visited Pakistan and Bangladesh, and while working as Professor in Islamology at Lund University he launched in 2004 a collaboration with the University of Dhaka, and as part of that he visited Dhaka and gave lectures about "Islam and knowledge", "Muslims in Scandinavia", and "Sufism in Damascus", at several University of Dhaka research centres and departments, including the Center for Advanced Study in Social Sciences; the Center for the Advanced Study in Humanities; and the Department of World Religions.



• **Swedish journalist brings to light Feroze - the forgotten Gandhi**



*Feroze - The Forgotten Gandhi* by Swedish journalist Bertil Falk. Roli Books, New Delhi 2016. Feroze Gandhi is often remembered as Indira Gandhi's husband and Jawaharlal Nehru's son-in-law. But who was Feroze Gandhi? A Congress worker, a young freedom fighter, a parliamentarian, or just another Gandhi? Diving into the history of the Nehru-Gandhi family, the Swedish journalist Bertil Falk brings together his 40-year-old research in this biography of Feroze Gandhi. Including first-hand interviews of people close to Feroze and personal experiences of the author with some rare photographs, this volume brings to



light his significant, yet unrecognized, role as a parliamentarian, in cases such as the Mundhra case, Life Insurance and Freedom of Press Bill. It also busts some myths about Feroze's controversial birth, his personal life, his importance as a politician, and his relationship with the Nehrus. With interesting details about Feroze as a young boy in Allahabad, to his years as a freedom fighter, journalist, Congressman and a politician, this volume examines the chronology of events that shaped the life of Feroze. [More information.](#)

• **Anindita Datta visited Lund University with SASNET funding**

Associate Professor Anindita Datta from the Dept. of Geography, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, India, again visited Lund University in early October 2017 to plan for a new research project together with Professor Helle Rydström at the Centre for Gender studies. The project is entitled "*Cross-cultural and Cross-disciplinary Collaborations: Gender, Space, and Precariousness in Asia*" and has received initial financial support by the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) for the planning process. Anindita Datta has previously spent time at Lund University as an Erasmus Mundus scholarship holder. Her research interests are in the area of feminist geography, conceptual traditions in geography and social geography of India. She is particularly interested in visibilising indigenous feminisms, re orienting gender studies to Asian contexts, examining the praxis of everyday life over everyday spaces and in issues of gendered and epistemic violence. [More information.](#)



While being in Lund, Anindita made a cordial visit to the NSAN editor Lars Eklund and his wife Bubu Munshi Eklund.

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

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

**Educational News**

• **Swedish Institute 2017 Study Scholarships for South Asian master students**

In April 2017, the Swedish Institute decided upon its Study Scholarships which are annually awarded to students from selected countries for full-time master's level studies in Sweden for the academic year 2017-18, starting in the autumn



semester 2017. This year, 40 candidates from Bangladesh were selected for scholarships, three from India, two each from Afghanistan and Nepal, and one each from Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

- See the list of scholarships to Afghani and Bangladeshi candidates and info to which department and university they were admitted.

- See the list of scholarships to Indian, Nepalese, Pakistani and Sri Lankan candidates and info to which department and university they were admitted.

The scholarships are aimed at developing global leaders and is funded by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and offers a unique opportunity for future leaders to develop professionally and academically and to experience Swedish society and culture. The scholarship covers both living costs and tuition fees. Students from the South Asian countries mentioned above, plus Bhutan and the Maldives can apply. Applicants must have at least two years' work experience and must display outstanding academic qualifications and leadership experience while also showing ambition to make a difference by working with issues which contribute to a just and sustainable development in their country.

Next call for the Swedish Institute Scholarship Programmes will be at the end of 2017 for master's studies starting in the autumn semester 2018.

More information will follow on <https://eng.si.se/scholarship/the-swedish-institute-study-scholarships/>



#### • Other educational news connected to South Asian studies all over the World

See <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/education-news>

### Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

#### • Lund seminar on Jewish identity and literature in contemporary India

Heinz Werner Wessler, Professor of Indology at the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, holds a guest lecture at Lund University on Monday 30 October 2017, 13.15-15.00. He is hosted by the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies (CTR) and will speak about "Jewish identity and literature in contemporary India". Venue: LUX building, room B417, Helgonavägen 3, Lund.

Abstract: State and secular society in India proudly refer to the Jewish mosaic stone in India's religious texture as a integral part of its "unity in diversity" approach to the religious and cultural traditions of India. However, emigration to Israel and assimilation has decimated the traditional Jewish communities considerably and even threatens the very existence of Indian Jewry at the core, efforts to revive and transform Jewish identity notwithstanding, as for example the documentary film "Next year in Bombay" illustrates. The majority of India's political leaders before and after independence were critical of Zionism, which they say as a product of communalism as well as of European colonialism. In recent decades however, the Indo-Israeli as well as the Indo-Jewish relationships are blossoming on several levels. While Judaism and Hinduism are trying to come to terms with each other, deepen interreligious dialogue and reassure Hindu-Jewish and India-Israeli alliance in the fight against terrorism, Narendra Modi visited Israel recently as the first Indian Prime Minister, about 25 years after the establishment of diplomatic ties.

The focus of the lecture will be three Indo-Jewish authors, two in English and one in Hindi: Nissim Ezechiel, Esther David and Sheila Rohekar. While Ezechiel and Rohekar have more or less always stayed in India, David is a returnee after many years in Israel and France, christening her return to her mother country as her personal Aliya – the Jewish return to the land of origin, mostly used for the emigration to Israel



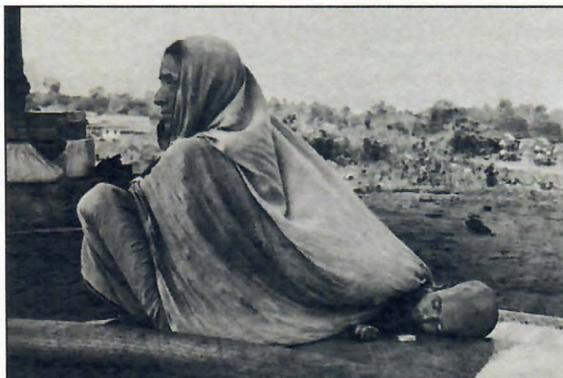
#### • Aarhus seminar on Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971



Associate Professor Nayanika Mookherjee from the Dept. of Anthropology, Durham University, UK, holds a seminar (academic hour) at University of Aarhus, Denmark, on

Wednesday 15 November 2017, 13.15-15.00. She will lecture about "The Spectral Wound. Sexual Violence, Public Memories and the Bangladesh War of 1971". Her presentation is based on a book with the same title recently published by Duke University Press (with a foreword by Prof. Veena Das), and being among the top two books shortlisted for the BBC's Thinking Allowed and Best Ethnography Award. Venue: Moesgaard Lecture Hall (4206-139), Campus Moesgaard, Aarhus.

Following the 1971 Bangladesh War, the Bangladesh government publicly designated the thousands of women raped by the then West Pakistani (later Pakistani) military and their local East Pakistani (later Bangladeshi) collaborators as birangonas, ("brave women"). The book demonstrates that while this celebration of birangonas as heroes keeps them in the public memories, they exist in the public consciousness as what I call a spectral wound. Dominant representations of birangonas as dehumanized victims with disheveled hair, and rejected by their communities create this wound, the effects of which flatten the diversity of their experiences through which birangonas have lived with this violence of wartime rape. [Read more...](#)



#### • Information about South Asia related lectures and seminars

See <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/lectures-in-scandinavia>

### Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

#### • 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](#).



● **Seventh Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya**

The Social Science Baha in Kathmandu, Nepal organises the Seventh Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya on 25-27 July 2018. It is held in collaboration with the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies; the Britain-Nepal Academic Council; the Centre for Himalayan Studies (CNRS) at Tribhuvan University; and the Japanese Nepal Academic Network. Proposals are invited for stand-alone papers or three-paper panels. The papers can deal with any aspect of life in Nepal and the Himalaya from the social sciences perspective and from this year onwards, the arts and humanities. Papers can also be comparative so long as Nepal or the Himalaya, broadly defined, is also included. Deadline for submitting abstracts and panels is 15 January 2018. [Full information](#).



The Social Science Baha is a meeting place for social scientists in Kathmandu and Nepal, located in the residential area of Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur. It builds on voluntary efforts. The word 'Baha' comes from the Newari term for 'Bihar', the traditional monastic centre of learning of Kathmandu Valley.

● **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'Etudes 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.

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

See <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/conferences/conferences>

xxx

**Business and Politics**

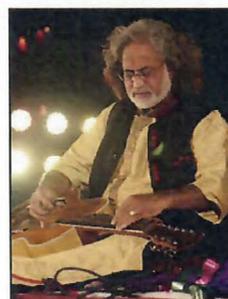
● **Information about South Asia related business and politics in Sweden**

See <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/news-sources/swedish-politics-and-business-related-south-asia>

**South Asia related culture in Scandinavia**

● **Vishwa Mohan Bhatt performed at Stockholm Sangeet Festival**

The 2017 Stockholm Sangeet Festival was held 7-9 October. The programme for this year's three day festival included a performance by the legendary Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, winner of the Grammy award and creator of the mohanveena. Other artists included the santoor maestro Shree Satish Vyas with his group; the amazing khyal vocalist Ashwini Gore Deshpande and kathak dancer Hanna Mannila from Finland. On 8th October, the main concert day, much of the programme was held at the Grand Stage at Musikaliska Akademin, Nybrokajen 11, but the Young Sangeet Festival, workshops and the popular Open Stage were held at Stallet at Stallgatan 7. Swedish Bharatanatyam dancer Usha Balasundaram had produced an Indian dance story with live music for children and families, entitled *The story of Savitri & Satyavan*, with Marina Granlund being story teller, and with music by KG Westman (sitar) and Hugo Widén (tabla). Other Swedish participants included eminent Kathak dancer Veronica Tjerner, surbahar player Stian Grimstad and santoor player Moa Danielsson. [Full information](#).



● **Alternative South Asia Film Festival in Paris**



The 2017 South Asia Film Festival (FFAST) as held 3-10 October at the Etoile Lilas theatre in Paris, France. This was a unique occasion to get a glimpse of current alternative and popular cinema made in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh. At

its first edition in February 2013, the FFAST set out to present the parallel, independent and innovative cinema produced in South Asia, a region of the world that is still too often confined

to clichés kitchs and sweetened Bollywood productions. More than four years later, for its fifth edition, the Festival returned with an extended team, year-round events, and always the same mission. Four selections were presented during the 2017 festival week, including a selection devoted to Tamil cinema, a cinemasala bracket that will focus on the different representations of food in the South Asian cinema (with a selection of contemporary and patrimonial films), and a selection of short films made by young filmmakers. Throughout the week, more than twenty films from Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were presented. [Full information \(in French only\) at the FFAST webpage.](#)

(Photo from *Lipstick under my burkha* by director Alankrita Shrivastava.)



• **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](mailto: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.

Nordic South Asia Network (NSAN)

Address: 23 A, Sardar Sankar Road,

Kolkata - 700 029, India

Phone: +91 90 51173899

Webmaster: [Lars Eklund](mailto:Lars Eklund)

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# Nordic South Asia Network

## Nordic Newsletter 11 - 14 September 2017

Submitted by [admin](#) on Thu, 2017-09-14 14:06

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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 Mihranyan 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 Mihranyan 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 Mihranyan 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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