

SASNET - Swedish South Asian Studies Network

Lund University

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SASNET Newsletters

Newsletter 179 – 30 September 2015

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SWEDISH SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES NETWORK

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SASNET News

• Maldives in focus for coming Fika without borders seminar

The South Asian Student Association (SASA) at Lund University organises its fifth 2015 Fika without borders seminar, this time focusing on The Maldives, on Thursday 1 October 2015, 17–19, at the usual venue: the basement floor at Lund University External Relations (ER) building, Stora Algatan 4, Lund. The Maldives seminar consists of two informal talks about the Maldives; one on climate change risks and tourism, and another on journalistic freedom in the country. The event is open for everyone, so join us for inspiring talks, food and meeting new people. See the poster.



The first presentation is given by **Nils Finn Munch-Petersen**, Senior expert at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen, Denmark. He will speak about the Maldives before the advent of tourism, perceptions of climate change, Maldivian Islam and the erosion



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of journalistic freedoms.

The second presentation is given by **Nashfa Hawwa**, Maldivian student in the Master's programme in Environmental Management and Policy at Lund University. She will illustrate how tourism



on the islands is adopted to increasing climate change risks. She will do so based on her own experiences on the island as well as her involvement in the **Tourism Adaptation Project (TAP)**. Tourism is the dominant sector of the Maldivian economy and is linked to many other industries such as agriculture, fisheries and waste management. The talk will engage with the ways in which climate change undermines the resilience and viability of these industries and provides insights into how risks can be minimized by altering day-to-day tourism operations.

The third presentation is given by **Axel Vikström**, a student of journalism at Lund University. His talk will be based on his experiences in the Maldives for a study project on reporting on the democracy crisis in the Maldives, a decline in human rights, decreasing religious tolerance and disappearing journalists. For his project he has received a fieldwork grant from SASA.

In between the talks, coffee, tea and South Asian snacks will be served!

Fika Without Borders South Asia events is a project started by SASA, in collaboration with SASNET, in which SASA organises a fika once a month, each time focusing on one of the eight South Asian countries. The 2015 series started with a Nepal fika on 5th February, an India fika on March 19th, a Pakistan fika on May 7th, and a Sri Lanka seminar on May 28th. Upcoming events are a Bangladesh seminar on October 22nd, and an Afghanistan seminar on November 26th.

• SASNET seminar on Denial of Self-Determination and Human Rights in Kashmir

SASNET organises a seminar on "*Kashmiris caught in India-Pakistan Conflict: Denial of Self-Determination and Human Rights*" on Thursday 8 October 2015, 16.15–18.00. The main speaker is Dr Dibyesh Anand, Associate Professor in International Relations and the Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Westminster in London. See the poster.



Talat Bhat, film maker based in Lund, is the second participant. His documentary film on Kashmir, "*Bring him back*" will be screened (more information about the film). Venue: Seminar room, Centre for Middle Eastern Studies, Finngatan 16, Lund.



Dibyesh Anand and Talat Bhat.

Dibyesh Anand is the author of monographs "*Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination*", "*Tibet: A Victim of Geopolitics*", and "*Hindu Nationalism in India and the Politics of Fear*". His current research is on colonial practices in China and India, with special reference to Tibet and Kashmir. He is an avid

Facebooker and available at www.facebook.com/dibyesh. In his presentation he will focus on the fact that while Kashmir is known primarily as a site of territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, there are conflicting narratives around the dispute.

Abstract: A persistent dehumanisation has been the most conspicuous characteristic of the conflict in the region. Practices of dehumanisation allow the existing nation-states to go against the principles of democracy, human rights and self-determination and enable epistemic, cultural, political and corporeal violence on the Kashmiri body politic. What are the conflicting narratives about Kashmir? Are they permanently irreconcilable? Is the dehumanisation of Kashmiris by India mainly a product of armed insurgency in the Kashmir valley in the 1990s or is it an integral part of Indian rule over Kashmiris? How important is religion as a factor? What forms of dehumanisation and violence have been deployed by the nation-states to control the people? These are some of the questions that will be dealt with during the lecture. The wider context of the geopolitics of the region – including the (post)colonial nature of states such as China, India and Pakistan vis-à-vis occupied and oppressed people of Tibet, East Turkestan/Xinjiang, Kashmir and Balochistan – will be part of the discussion.



• SASNET seminar on sex selected abortions in India

Dr. Sabu George from the Centre for Development Studies, New Delhi is one of India's leading campaigner against female infanticide. He gives a public SASNET lecture at Lund University on Friday 9 October 2015, 13.00–15.00. The seminar, entitled "*Sex selected abortions and infanticide in India*" focuses on sex selected abortions, and is organised in



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collaboration with the Lund based
NGO The Swallows India

Bangladesh. Venue: Dept. of Political Science, room 021, Paradisgatan 5 H (Eden), Lund. Sabu George has worked on girl child issues such as pre-school child nutrition, female infanticide, girl child neglect, and female foeticide (sex selection) for 30 years. Research on child nutrition was largely done during 1985 to 1996. Female infanticide research in Tamil Nadu, as well as in southern Andhra Pradesh and northern Karnataka, was undertaken from 1986 till 1998. On sex selection, he has done research in most parts of India (1994–2015), organised public action (1995–2015), created jurisprudence through litigation (2000–2015), initiated media sensitisation efforts (2000–2014) and persisted in implementation of the PNDT Act with large number of partners around the country since 2001. More information.

• Time for SASNET South Asia Media Project explorative workshop in Lund



SASNET is currently launching its South Asia Media Project. During 2015, the South Asia Media Project focuses on Indian media. Two explorative

workshops will be held, the first one at Lund University, Sweden, on 19–20 October; and the second in New Delhi, India, to be held 7–9 December. The aim is to highlight the future media landscapes in India and Sweden. The workshops will also link Indian and Swedish media researchers and journalists together to seek new ways of working with future challenges and also to highlight possible projects. See the workshop programme.

The purpose of the project is to create a forum for exchange of ideas, perspectives and future outlooks on the South Asian and Swedish media landscape, and to build up a network of Indian and Swedish journalists, as well as media researchers, to discuss and exchange ideas about work methods, trends within the media industry and business models. It is being planned by Andreas Mattsson, lecturer in journalism at the Department of Communication and Media, Lund University, and currently working as project coordinator at SASNET. More information about the background.

The two-day explorative workshop in Lund will bring up questions related to the following topics: • Working Condition of Journalists; • Political Influence on Media; • Online Ethics; • Gender in Media; and • Innovation in Media. Indian media researchers and journalists will present their experiences and outlooks on the future media landscape during panel talks, presentations and seminars.

Confirmed academic speakers include Associate Professor Vibodh Parthasarathi from the Centre for Culture, Media & Governance, Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi; Professor Anjali Monteiro and Professor K P Jayasankar from Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) in Mumbai; and Dr. Devika Jayakumari from Centre for Development Studies (CDS) in Thiruvananthapuram. Four Indian journalists



Parthasarathi, Monteiro, Jayasankar and Devika.

are also scheduled to give presentations. They are Hindol Sengupta, Editor-at-Large for Fortune India; Shweta Punj, Senior Associate Editor for the Business Today magazine; Divya Rajagopal, Financial reporter at Economic Times newspaper; and Priyanka Borpujari, Reporting on human rights and social subjects, based in Guwahati. Students, researchers, journalists and other interested are welcome to participate in the discussions and to mingle with future colleagues at the Lund workshop. Venue: AF Borgen, Sandgatan 2, Lund. More information including link to registration.

The three-day Delhi workshop in December is being planned in collaboration with Lund University Commissioned Education (LUCE), and the Swedish Embassy in Delhi that has committed itself to cooperate with the project. More information will follow soon. Go for the web page of the South Asia Media Project.

• SASNET seminar on Biofuel Development in India

PhD candidate Shveta Soam from the DBT-IOC Advanced Bioenergy Research Centre in Faridabad, India, holds a public SASNET lecture focusing on biofuel development in India on Friday 23 October 2015, 10.30–12.00. Venue: Lecture hall G, Chemical Centre, Sölvegatan 39, entrance B. See poster.

Shveta, basically a botanist and environmentalist, is currently a guest researcher at the Division of Environmental and Energy Systems Studies, Lund University, funded by a SASNET South Asian short-term fellowship (more information). Her presentation is entitled "Life Cycle Assessment of Biofuels in India and its Impact on Indian Biofuel Programme", and takes its starting point in the decision by the Government of India in 2009 to mandate a 10 p.c. ethanol blending target across 20 states and four union territories, and its proposal to replace fossil based gasoline and diesel by using 20 p.c. biofuels by 2017.



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Abstract: India's biofuel programme relies mainly on the ethanol from molasses. Therefore, quantification of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the energy consumed during the process of ethanol production is desirable to help policy makers to take meaningful decisions. Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) is one such tool to assess environmental aspects associated with a product, process or service. LCA concludes that fuel ethanol produced from sugarcane molasses in India reduces GHG emissions between 60-75 p.c. and gives a higher Net energy ratio of 3.4 – 4.5 when compared to gasoline. With increasing demand of ethanol blending in gasoline, concern is rising to produce ethanol from lignocellulosic waste and rice straw is one such biomass that is available surplus in the fields. Usually farmers burn rice straw in the field to make their fields ready for succeeding crop. But, if utilized for Bioenergy production it can give a significant reduction in GHG emissions. We compared four different scenarios of rice straw utilization practices in India i.e. used as: 1. fertilizer, 2. animal fodder 3. electricity and 4. biogas. Efficient utilization of rice straw could reduce the burden on environment by avoiding burning. Electricity production from rice straw is the preferable practice to reduce GHG emissions followed by biogas production, animal fodder and use as fertilizer. More information about Shveta Soam and her Lund University connection.

• SASA announces travel grants for spring semester 2016

The South Asian Students Association (SASA) at Lund University, in collaboration with SASNET, announces four travel grants for students that are planning for fieldwork in South Asia during the spring semester of 2016. The grants will cover travel expenses for airline tickets for applicants to do fieldwork in a South Asian country for up to a maximum of 8000,- SEK. A maximum of 4 grants will be given out. Applications will be ranked based on the quality of the project proposal, relevance of the research, grades of the applicant and the experiences as listed in the Curriculum vitae. Students enrolled at Lund University which are planning to do fieldwork in South Asia are eligible to apply. In order to do so, fill in the application form, enclose your CV and an up-to-date copy of your LADOK results, and e-mail these to SASNET Deputy Director Lars Eklund at lars.eklund@sasnet.lu.se **no later than October 10, 2015 at noon.** SASA and SASNET expect to announce a new round of fieldwork grants for those doing fieldwork during the spring for the fall semester 2016. Like our [Facebook page](#) or follow the SASNET website, to stay updated on new grant announcements and activities. We look forward to receiving your application!



• SASNET board discussed strategy plan for the future organisation

The SASNET board had a regular meeting on 3 September 2015, discussing several important issues. Besides formalities and reports on activities carried out so far during 2015 and planned ones for the rest of this year and also 2016, the board discussed proposals to set up Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) between SASNET/Lund University and CREST (Centre for Research and Education for Transformation) in Kozhikode, India; and also with University of Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram. Both suggestions were approved, and the same applied to the project plan for SASNET South Asia Media project including two workshops during the fall 2015 – in Lund and New Delhi. Furthermore, the board was happy to hear about the successful activities that the student organisation SASA runs including fika without borders seminars and distribution of field work travel grants.

The most important point on the agenda dealt with the strategy plan that the SASNET staff had prepared on the future of the organisation. SASNET is part of the Lund University's Specialised Centres Unit (USV), an interdisciplinary faculty-like organisation outside the regular faculties of Social Science, Humanities, Law, Medicine etc. Some organisational changes are however to be expected after 2016, and SASNET has to plan for different scenarios, whether we should amalgamate with some other Asia related activities at Lund University or head for some other solution. The board appreciated the good work done with the strategy plan but due to the uncertainties prevalent did not take any decision on what direction should be prioritised.

The three-year mandate for the board is over by 31 December 2015, but again due to the uncertainties regarding what will happen with SASNET, the Lund University management has decided to give SASNET a one year extension with the same funding as this year, and also allow the present board members, if they wish so, to continue for another year. At the meeting, the members were asked about this offer, and of the six members all except one were positive to stay on in the board. Only Fredrik Tufvesson announced that he desires to be replaced. [Information about SASNET's board.](#)

Finally, it should be noted that no student representatives were present at the meeting, the reason being that the Social Science Students Union did not select candidates in time for our meeting. Their decisions upon representatives for the academic year 2015/16 will come only on 22 September. [Read the verified board meeting Minutes](#)

• Report from SASNET networking tour to Stockholm and Örebro

During four days in late September 2015, SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund made a networking tour to Stockholm and Örebro.

His main mission was to meet the participants attending the Young Connectors of the Future (YCF) programme arranged by the Swedish Institute (SI) for the third year in a row. 29 dynamic young individuals from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan – 8 from



India, 9 from Pakistan and six each from Bangladesh and Afghanistan, had been selected for the programme. Lars was partly involved in the planning.

Besides, Lars was invited to meet the Rector for the University College of Music Education in Stockholm (SMI) and its collaborating partners from Bangladesh representing the Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy (BSA) and the Classical Music Academy of Dhaka (CMA), at the time visiting Stockholm to discuss their ongoing Linnaeus Palme programme.

Finally, Lars attended one day of a 3-day international conference entitled "Virtual Learning Sites as Linguaging Spaces" (ViLS-2), hosted by the School of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (HumEs) at Örebro University, mainly in order to meet the convener, Professor Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta, and three Indian professors – Biswajit Das from Jamia Milia in Delhi, Panchanan Mohanty from Hyderabad University and Mathew Martin from AAJNIHH and Mumbai University – participating in the conference.

Read Lars report from the networking tour.



• Andreas Johansson discusses area studies with MESAAS representatives

SASNET research coordinator Andreas Johansson is currently on a short official visit to New York city, USA. His mission is to meet representatives of the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies (MESAAS) at Columbia University, and discuss the possibilities of successfully merging different fields of area studies into one centre, something MESAAS has been able to do. During his stay, till Sunday 4 October 2015, Andreas will also have separate meetings with representatives from the Department of Religious Studies at Columbia University, and finally have a meeting at the City University of New York Graduate Center (CUNY), presenting SASNET.



• SASNET shares office space with Centre for Middle Eastern Studies



Since December 2013, the SASNET office is located at Paradisgatan 5 G in central Lund, in premises belonging to the Dept. of Sociology. However, with more people working at SASNET it has become necessary to provide some more office space. This will now come true with the help of another Lund University unit that SASNET is collaborating with on a frequent basis, namely the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (CME).

It is currently expanding into a building named

Norlind, located at Biskopsgatan 5 (within three minutes walking distance from the other SASNET office). SASNET will sub-rent two rooms in this building (*photo*) that previously has housed the Dept. of Musicology. SASNET director Anna Lindberg will preliminary move her office to the refurbished Norlind building in early October, along with Andreas Johansson, whereas Lars Eklund will stay on in the Paradisgatan office with Jacco Visser.



The move is also a symbol of intensified friendly collaboration between SASNET and CME. A series of joint seminars is currently being planned for the spring semester 2016, concerning links between the Middle East and the South Asian subcontinent.

• Malmö symposium on Cardiometabolic Disease Risk for people from South Asia

The Genetic and Molecular Epidemiology Unit at the Department of Clinical Sciences (CRC), Lund University, organised a mini-Symposium on "Cardiometabolic Disease Risk for people from the Middle-East and South Asia" on 3 September 2015 in Malmö. The symposium was sponsored in part by SASNET. It aimed to offer a comprehensive update on the cardiometabolic risk in South Asians and immigrants from the Middle East. Four distinguished national and international faculty, including Professor K.M. Venkat Narayan from Emory University Atlanta, Georgia, USA, gave lectures that gave good insight in the field. Jacco Visser attended the symposium for SASNET. Read his report from the symposium.



• Andreas Mattsson lectures on Swedish journalism in New Delhi

During the month of September 2015, Andreas Mattsson, lecturer in journalism at the Dept. of Communication and Media, Lund University (and since August 2015 also working for SASNET on a 50 % basis as project leader, coordinating the SASNET South Asia Media Project) is based in New Delhi, India.



He has gone there for Hindi language training on a scholarship he has received, independent of his university position.



Still, Andreas – who is a well-experienced journalist with a background as a reporter and online editor at Sydsvenskan newspaper and as a deputy news editor at Gotlands Tidningar, has been invited to hold a seminar at Jamia Millia University, and its Centre for Culture, Media & Governance on Wednesday 16 September, at 11.30. He spoke about “Challenges to Journalism amidst Digital Transitions. Cross-National Perspectives”. The presentation (on photo) included an introduction to the Swedish media landscape. More information about the seminar.

While in Delhi, Andreas is also involved in planning for the SASNET Media Workshop that will be held 7–9 December 2015 with support from the Embassy of Sweden. More information on the Sweden-South Asia Media Project web page.

• Lund Seminar on Rape Culture and Sexism in Globalizing India

SASA, the South Asian Students Association, in collaboration with SASNET, organizes an informal seminar on “Rape culture and sexism in globalizing India” with Dr. Radhika Krishnan on the 5th of November 2015 at 17.00 at the External Relations Desk at Lund University, Stora Algatan 4, Lund. Dr. Krishnan is currently guest researcher at Linnaeus University in Växjö/Kalmar where she is connected to the Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies. The lecture takes its starting point in the horrific and gruesome gang-rape of a 23 year-old woman in Delhi in December 2012, which was followed by massive protests in different parts of India. She has a PhD from the Centre for Studies in Science Policy at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi. Her doctoral research attempted to explore the trade unionist Shankar Guha Niyogi’s varied reflections and interventions under the broad rubrics of environment, development and technology. An electrical engineer by training, Radhika has worked with the Delhi-based Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) for several years. Her research has essentially looked at the interactions between technological regimes, communities and local ecologies. Her research interests also include the new social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, which articulated the complex response of peasants, labourers and adivasis (India’s indigenous people) to the ‘development’ project presented to them. Full abstract.



• More information about SASNET and its activities

See SASNET’s page, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnet-news>

Research Community News

• Call for proposals on Joint Indo-Swedish Research Projects



The Indo-Swedish Joint Research Programme has announced a call for Joint research projects to support new or existing Indo-Swedish collaborative groups. The research programme was initiated by the Indian and Swedish governments to support research of the highest scientific quality in the areas of medicine and health and the natural and engineering sciences. This call is open for collaborative projects in two specific areas: e-Science for Life

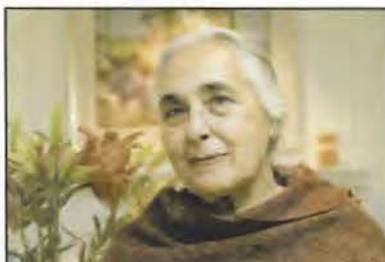


science and antimicrobial resistance in a ‘One health’ perspective. eScience for Life science is a concept that builds on the use of computers, software and human expertise to enable scientific discovery based on computation and exploration of data. The One Health concept is a worldwide strategy for expanding interdisciplinary collaborations and communications in all aspects of health care and research related to humans, animals and the environment.

The grant application must include collaboration between individual researchers and/or research groups in Sweden and India. Project grants are awarded for a period of 2 years starting from January 2016, maximum for Swedish parts of the grant are 350,000 SEK a year, for the Indian side 3,500,000 INR for the total duration of two years. The deadline for the application is November 3rd 2015. The Swedish and Indian project leader will receive funding from their respective national funding agencies and will separately administer the funds. The programme is financed by The Swedish Research Council, Vinnova (the Swedish Innovation Agency), the Swedish Research Council Formas and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in India on the principle of reciprocity, parity and activity matching funding. For more information and the official announcement see the Vetenskapsrådet website. For the full call see the pdf-document.

• Frontline publishes interview with distinguished Indian historian Romila Thapar

In the September 18, 2015, issue of Indian magazine Frontline an exclusive interview with eminent historian Romila Thapar, Professor Emeritus at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi. The extremely interesting article spanning over 20 pages is entitled *Linking the past and present* is actually the outcome of a learned conversation between Thapar and Ranabir Chakravarti, Professor of Ancient History at the Centre for Historical Studies at JNU. It deals with historical methods and the need to understand the past in order to make sense of the



present, and how the study of ancient India has changed due to a shift from Indological studies to Social Science. Romila Thapar is a distinguished Indian historian whose principal area of study has been ancient India since she obtained her PhD at SOAS in London in 1958. She is the author of numerous books, including the popular classic *A History of India*. The interview covers a broad range of topics including Hinduism and Hindutva, loss of liberal values in contemporary India, as well as sections on secularism, non-violence, growing intolerance, and different readings of Ashoka's heritage. The interview is available in full-text on Frontline's website. [Go for it.](#)

• Ambitious Lund conference on Sustainable Development and Gender Justice

The Swedish NGO The Swallows India Bangladesh, based in Lund, organised *Glocal Development Talks!* – a conference on sustainable development, gender justice and local perspectives on 20–24 September 2015. In an effort to influence the decisions made under the umbrella of different development goals, the organisation aimed to provide a platform for voices from the Global South, whose inequality the goals are meant to address. The effect of global politics on local voices came from partner organisations in India and Bangladesh who shared their views informed by their experiences.



Participants included Naila Kabeer, Professor at the Gender Institute at the London School for Economics, Khushi Kabir, leader of the civil society organisation Nijera Kori in Bangladesh and Sukanta Sen, civil society leader with more than twenty years experience of action research and program facilitation on natural resources management. Founder of Bangladesh Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge (BARCIK) and many others. Jacco Visser represented SASNET at the conference. [Read his conference report.](#)

• Sweden-raised researcher working on environmental change in Bangladesh's coastal region

Camelia Dewan, born and raised in Sweden but for the past decade living in the UK, is currently a PhD candidate at the University of London, involved in an intercollegiate research project between SOAS Social Anthropology and Birkbeck's History department. Her research focuses on the environmental change in Bangladesh's coastal areas. In her PhD project she is mainly looking at the livelihoods of poor female-headed households against the backdrop of environmental change and migration. The Bangladeshi coastal zone is one of the most hydromorphologically active regions of the world; its delta constantly shapes and reshapes the landscape by creating and destroying lands through sedimentation and erosion. These processes, together with ever-increasing population and economic pressures have led to changes in boundaries of human settlement and progressive encroachment into mangrove forests and wetlands, which have been increasingly converted to agricultural land.



Camelia has previously worked as an M&E intern at Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency Sida; as a Programme Officer at the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI) and as Research Manager/Consultant at the International Water Management Institute working on community-based water management in Bangladesh's coastal zone. Later, she obtained her MA in International Relations at the University of Edinburgh (with an exchange year at UPenn, Philadelphia) and an MSc Development Studies at London School of Economics (LSE).

• Chittagong researchers plan for collaboration with Lund University

On Friday 4 September 2015, a three-member academic delegation from Chittagong, Bangladesh, visited SASNET's office in Lund, and met deputy director Lars Eklund. Professors Monir Uddin and Topashi Ghosh Roy from the Department of Chemistry, University of Chittagong; and Prof. Saroj Kanti Singh, retired Professor from from



From left to right: Prof. Saroj Kanti Singh, Prof. Topashi Ghosh Roy, Lars Eklund, Prof. Monir Uddin, Prof. Ebbe Nordlander, and PhD candidate Ahibur Rahaman (at the Dept. of Chemical Physics).

Chittagong University (but now Vice Chancellor at BGC Trust University Bangladesh, based in Chittagong), came to Lund University in order to meet with Prof. Ebbe Nordlander at the Dept. of Chemical Physics, and discuss plans for new collaborative research projects. Nordlander is already involved in qualified research collaboration with institutions in India and Bangladesh, and he recently was given a one-month stipend from SASNET to plan for a new South Asia related research project ([more information](#)).

The objective of the Lund visit was to explore possibilities to develop a project focusing on enriching teaching-learning methods and facilities in the Dept. of Chemistry at University of Chittagong. This

initiative is supported by the Government of Bangladesh through its Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP).

• **Chicago student runs blog on street harassment and sexual assault in India**

Erin Epperson, PhD student from the South Asian Languages and Civilizations Department at University of Chicago, USA, runs the blog, *Traveling while Female*. It consists of posts that reflect on personal experiences by the author during her travels and research visits in India – while it also links up to contemporary debates on street harassment and violence against women in India. Launched in 2012, the website engages in discussions on a variety of topics ranging from the controversial documentary *India's Daughter* to tips for travellers on how to deal with harassment and Indian responses to rape scandals. In addition, the pages provide links to books and resources on violence and rape prevention as well as links to violence prevention centers and organizations. This way the blog is relevant for both women travelling to India while it also provides insight more generally on the experiences of harassment among foreign women travelling in the country. [Go for the blog.](#)



• **Swedish Institute fosters future leaders from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan**



29 dynamic young individuals from

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan – 8 from India, 9 from Pakistan and six each from Bangladesh and Afghanistan – spent three weeks in Stockholm during September 2015, being selected participants for the Young Connectors of the Future (YCF) programme which is being arranged by the Swedish Institute (SI) for the third year in a row (*group photo from previous year*).



It is an intercultural leadership programme that aims to lay a foundation for dialogue and knowledge sharing among young leaders from South Asia. The aim is to train young leaders, promising professionals, social workers and entrepreneurs aged between 22 and 32 from South Asia, and to provide the participants with new skills, broadened networks and innovative tools to strengthen their work to drive social change in their respective contexts. The participants represent different sectors of society and are visionaries in positions to make a difference. The YCF programme also offers a unique opportunity for young leaders in the region to gather and share ideas and perspectives on common challenges. During and after YCF, participants will be part of an active network that aims to boost creativity and to support their personal and professional development, while also laying the platform for a more connected future. The participants are actively working for democracy and human rights within the spheres of society, culture, politics, entrepreneurship and media. Applications for the 2016 programme will be open at the beginning of 2016. SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund has been involved in the planning of this year's programme, and took part in some of the activities. [Read his report.](#)

• **Heinz Werner Wessler receives the 2015 World Hindi Award**

On 12 September 2015, Professor Heinz Werner Wessler from the Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, received the 2015 World Hindi Award during the 10th World Hindi Conference in Bhopal, India. The award was handed over by Rajnath Singh, Minister of Home Affairs, Government of India (*photo*). The conference, inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj, focused on Hindi as a



language, particularly its status in India as official language and its worldwide status and function. Although the organization of the conference received critique in advance since the focus of this year's event was more on language and less on literature than during earlier editions, the event had wide media coverage in India and attracted a large audience. The next World Hindi Award will take place in Mauritius in 2018. [More information about the 2015 World Hindi Conference.](#)

• **LUCSUS hosts Lund University Development Research Day 2015**

Lund University Development Research Day 2015 will be held on Wednesday 14 October. The title for the one-day conference is *"From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals"*. The Development Research Day is an annual event intended to bring together those interested in

development issues from a wide variety of disciplines. This year it was hosted by Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS). Venue: LUCSUS, Josephson House, Biskopsgatan 5, Lund. In the morning, LU researchers and students will present their research in parallel sessions and in the afternoon two internationally renowned researchers – Prof. Joyeeta Gupta from University of Amsterdam, Netherlands; and Dr. Vandana Desai, University of London, UK – will hold key note speeches on development and the new Sustainable Development Goals set by UN in 2015. The Hydén Award for Best Thesis on Democratisation and Development in the Third World will be distributed in the afternoon, and the day ends with a panel discussion on “From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals” with Gupta and Desai. Full information.



Vandana Desai and Joyeeta Gupta.

• **Time to propose papers for 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies in Warsaw**

The European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS) now invites papers for the 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS), to be held in Warsaw, Poland, 27 – 30 July 2016. The conference is hosted by the Faculty of Oriental Studies at University of Warsaw. The chief convener is Prof. Danuta Stasik. A total number of 49 panels have been accepted, including interesting panels on *Mediating South Asian religious traditions; Politicizing Hunger: Famine, Food security and Political Legitimacy in South Asia (19th & 20th century); Print journalism in modern South Asia; Security challenges in contemporary India-Pakistan relations; and Policing the city – how public order and security are conceptualised and delivered in contemporary South Asia* (see the full list).



The call for papers is now open and will close on 30th November 2015. All proposals must be made via the online form, not by email. There is a 'propose a paper' link beneath the long abstract of each panel page. **Please also note that EASAS requires paper presenters at ECSAS to be members of EASAS through 2015 and 2016, or 2016 & 2017.** Non-members cannot attend the conference. Full information on the conference website. Proposals will be marked as pending until the end of the call for papers (30/11/2015). Convenors will then be asked to make their decisions over the papers proposed to their panel by the 10th of December and to communicate those to the proposers, marking them up within the login environment (Cocoa). Papers which are neither accepted nor rejected, but marked for 'transfer', will then be considered by the Scientific Committee to see where else they might fit in the conference programme. 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 Zurich, Switzerland, in July 2014. SASNET was represented at this conference by Lars Eklund and Hawwa Lubna. Read their reports.

• **University of British Columbia announces Lecturer position in Sanskrit**

The Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada, is accepting applications for one 12-month lecturer position in Sanskrit language and literary culture, commencing 1 July 2016. The department has strong research clusters on South Asia including language programs in Hindi, Punjabi and Sanskrit. Within the discipline the department main strengths lie in philosophy, religion, history, literature and language. The lecturer will teach Sanskrit language courses at all levels as well as undergraduate courses on South Asian culture religion, literature or film, depending on the applicants expertise. Applicants are expected to have expertise in Sanskrit, a Master's degree in a relevant field, and experience in teaching Sanskrit, preferably the applicant also has additional training in another language and literary tradition of the 'Sanskrit Cosmopolis'. The deadline for applications is 15 November 2015. Full information.



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

See SASNET's page, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/research-community-news>

Educational News

• **Joint PhD course by LUCSUS in Lund and TISS in Mumbai**

The Right Livelihood College (RLC) invites students to apply for the PhD course “*Critical Urban Theory: Citizenship, Marginalities, Livelihood*



Struggles and Innovations in Practice”, that is jointly organized by Lund University Centre for Sustainability Studies (LUCSUS) and Tata Institute of Social Sciences (hosted by Centre for Livelihoods and Social Innovation, CLSI). The course is designed for MPhil/PhD students working on urban and livelihoods issues from different critical perspectives. The focus will be on linking critical urban theory with innovative practices, for example grass-roots initiatives and slum improvement projects in the city of Mumbai, India, developed and led by Medha Patkar, a Laureate of the Right Livelihood Award, to address current complex socio economic and environmental issues in the urban space. The course

content will be covered in two modules, Module I in Mumbai (4-8 January 2016) and Module II in Lund (4-8 April 2016), at Campuses of the Right Livelihood College (RLC) at LUCSUS, Lund University and CLSI, TISS. You can register to the course by sending an email to maryam.nastar@lucsus.lu.se no later than 30 September 2015. More information.

• **Pravara offers Social Health and Development course for international students**

The Centre for Social Medicine at the Pravara Institute of Medical Sciences Deemed University (PIMS) in Loni, Maharashtra, India, continues to offer certificate courses on Social Health and Development (CSM). The courses are intended for pre-medical, medical, pre-nursing students, among others, and are offered as a course for four weeks, which is extendable for up to 12 weeks. The programme is specifically designed for international students interested in a conceptual understanding and practical learning in various aspects of social health, rural and community development and health for underprivileged. The programme consists of lectures, field visits to rural health centres, HIV/AIDS & tuberculosis patient treatment centers, community health projects as well as multi-specialty teaching at the hospital.



Every year, 20–30 international students from the developed countries come to Pravara. They are given hands-on experience at community as well as tertiary level teaching hospital along with academic credits for a very reasonable cost (around US \$ 30 per day). The costs include training/academics, food, accommodation and internal travel. The Pravara Institute can accommodate 10 students in each batch, decided upon first-come-first serve basis and starting dates are in July, October, January and April every year. Full information about the programmes.

Pravara has a long-standing relation to Sweden, Sida was involved till 2010, supporting collaboration with Linköping University and other Swedish universities. Lund University was coordinating an Erasmus Mundus Action 2 programme with Pravara as a partner, and Karolinska Institutet signed a MoU in 2010. Anna Lindberg and Lars Eklund visited the university in 2007, read their report.

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

See SASNET's page, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/education-news>

Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

• **Oslo University seminar on famous yogin from Ladakh**



TibHim, Research Seminar in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies at University of Oslo, organized a guest lecture on Thursday 17 September 2015 about yogin Ngawang Tshering at the department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages. The presentation, entitled *Ashes and bcud len: Ngawang Tshering's activities in seventeenth-century Zangskar* was given by Prof. Dr. Petra Maurer,



who works at the Central and East Asian Studies Commission of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities in Munich, Germany. Ngawang Tshering is one of the most famous yogins from Ladakh and is best well known for an outstanding biography in which he describes details about his daily life. He was 17 years old when he entered a Hemis monastery where he studied the Dharma, was active as a temple care-taker and performed rituals against diseases. The military conflict with the mon pa and the Mongols in 1682 marked a turning point on his lifewhich resulted in him moving to a cave and adopt the appearance of an Indian ascetic. . More information.

• **Stockholm seminar on the Digital Divide in Sri Lankan Tea Estate Areas**

The Forum for Asian Studies at Stockholm University held an open seminar entitled *"How to bridge the Digital Divide in Sri Lankan Tea Estate Areas"* on Friday 25 September 2015. The participants were Professor K.P. Hewagamage (*photo*) from the School of Computing at University of Colombo, and four researchers from the Department of Computer and Systems Sciences, Stockholm University, namely Sirkku Männikkö, Thomas Westin, Ranil Peiris, and Peter Mozelius.



Sri Lanka's recent development has been fast but heterogeneous. While the former gap between its capital and European cities like Stockholm has decreased, the internal digital divide is increasing, i.e. "the gulf between those who have access to computers and Internet, and those who do not" within the country has widened. The tea estate areas in the central highlands, where people of Tamil origin live and work in the tea industry, have been neglected when it comes to infrastructure and education. This presentation was about a Swedish - Sri Lankan project with the aim to bridge the internal digital divide and to promote education in tea estate areas. More information about the seminar.

• **Copenhagen conference on FDI for Sustainable Economic Development in South Asia**



Copenhagen Business School (CBS) invites to an International Conference entitled *"Leveraging Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for Sustainable Economic Development in South Asia: Evidence, Challenges and Prospects"* to be held 2–3 October 2015. The

conference, organised by the Asia Research Centre at CBS, is soliciting high quality research papers on multi-faceted aspects of FDI from the perspective of South Asian countries. Abstracts leading to original unpublished full papers based on any of the following four sub themes of the conference in the South Asian context are welcome:

- FDI inflows and outflows: determinants, challenges and prospects;
- FDI and productive capacity;
- FDI and social development; and
- Environmental impacts.

Selected papers will be published in an edited volume and/or a special issue of an indexed journal which will be negotiated based on the quality of papers. The conference convener is Professor Aradhna Aggarwal. [More information.](#)

• Anand Sharma lectures on significance of India-EU Partnership

On Tuesday 6 October 2015, 10.30–12.00, the Centre of Global South Asian Studies at the Department of Cross-Cultural and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, and the Asian Dynamics Initiative (ADI) invite to a public lecture on *"India-EU Partnership. Its Significance in the 21st C World"*, by Anand Sharma, former Union Cabinet Minister in charge of Commerce and Industry and Textiles in the Government of India. In June 2014, he was elected as the Deputy Leader of the Indian National Congress party in Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Parliament. Ambassador Niraj Srivastava, Embassy of India to Denmark will be present on this occasion. Venue: University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Humanities, Room 27.1.47



• Oslo PhD course on Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in China and India

Oslo Academy of Global Governance, and SUM Research School, Centre for Development and the Environment, University of Oslo, invite applicants for a PhD course entitled *'Governing the Asian Giants: Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development in China and India'* to be held 21 – 23 October 2015. Venue: SUM, University of Oslo, Sognsveien 68, Oslo. The course will enable doctoral students to better understand key concepts, debates and perspectives. Lecturers include Dan Banik, Professor of Political Science at SUM; Erik Jensen, Professor of the Practice of Law, Stanford Law School, USA; Amit Prakash, Professor and Chairperson, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India; and Robert Wade, Professor of Political Economy and Development, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK. [More information.](#)

• Oslo seminar on violence against Christians in Pakistan

Paul Rollier, Assistant Professor in South Asian Studies at the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, gives a lecture on 2 November 2015, 14.15- 16.00, at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, University of Oslo.

The presentation, entitled *Of Blasphemy and Arson:*

Violence against Christians in Contemporary Pakistan is part of the Morgenstjerne lecture series and will focus on the arson attack of Joseph Colony, a Christian enclave in Lahore in 2013. It will provide a detailed account of the events that led a mob of factory workers to destroy the neighborhood on the allegation that a resident had blasphemed against Islam.

In doing so, the lecture will illustrate that the recent surge in violence against Pakistan's Christian communities cannot be reduced to Islamic activists. Rather the lecture will point out how blasphemy laws shape social relations between Christian minorities and the rest of the population. More broadly the lecture thus seeks to provide insight in the specificity of anti-Christian violence in Pakistan and on its relationship to communalism and sectarianism in the region. [More information.](#)



• Oslo symposium in commemoration of Paul Olav Bodding's Santali research



Paul Olaf Bodding was a Norwegian missionary, linguist and folklorist who served in India for 44 years (1889–1933), and operated mainly from the town Dumka in the Santal Parganas District. Bodding created the first alphabet and

wrote the first grammar for the Santali-speaking native people in eastern India. In 1914 he also completed the translation of the Bible into the Santali language. He was a celebrated scientist, and he is still well known among the Santals living in the states of Jharkhand, Bihar and Assam as well as in Bangladesh. The two universities of Oslo and Tromsø will now commemorate Paul Olav Bodding and his work by organising a three-day symposium together with the National Library of Norway. The symposium is entitled *"Belief, Scholarship and Cultural Heritage: Paul Olav Bodding and the Making of a Scandinavian-Santal Legacy"* and will be held in Oslo on 3–5 November 2015. Venue:

The restored historic Professor Residence, in Karl Johansgt. 47, near to the Museum of Cultural History in Oslo.



The vision and early initiative to this event came out of the Scandinavian-Santal Heritage Initiative headed by Professor Tone Bleie at the Department of Sociology, Political Science and Community Planning at University of Tromsø.

The organizers hope to provide some supporting grants for participants from South Asia. Support to panel participants from European destinations can be considered on need basis. For submission and/or further information please contact Professor Tone Bleie in Tromsø, or Professor Øivind Fuglerud, Head of Department of Ethnography, Numismatics and Classical Archaeology at Museum of Cultural History, University of Oslo. Full information on the symposium Web page.

• 7th SASNET-Fermented Foods international seminar in Gangtok

The Swedish South Asian Network on Fermented Foods (SASNET-FF) organises its seventh international seminar on Fermented Foods Health Status and Social Wellbeing on 20–21 November 2015. The seminar will be hosted by the Department of Microbiology at the School of Life Sciences, Sikkim University in Gangtok, India. The theme for the 2015 seminar will be "*Ethnic Fermented Foods and Beverages: Microbiology and Health Benefits*".

SASNET-Fermented Foods was established in November 2003 and is now officially registered as a scientific society in India. It was launched in 2003 by Professor Baboo Nair, Division of Applied Nutrition and Food Chemistry, Lund University, and has helped to strengthen relation among academicians, researchers and food industry professionals. The network is coordinated by Professor J. B. Prajapati, Head of Department of Dairy Microbiology, SMC College of Dairy Science at Anand Agricultural University. It is basically an association of researchers, professionals, academicians, food industry personnel and all those who are interested in research, development and promotion of fermented foods especially for public health and social well-being. At the present the network has more than 200 members and growing to gather like minded people. The main objectives of the network are to develop a forum for scientists for exchanging information in the field of food fermentation; to promote collaborative research programmes among scientists of Europe and Asian countries and to collaborate with food industries in product development and marketing of fermented foods. More information about the Gangtok seminar.



• Information about South Asia related lectures and seminars

See SASNET's page, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/lectures-in-scandinavia>

Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

• MUSA announces 2nd Muslim South Asia Graduate Conference



The Muslim South Asia Research Forum (MUSA) in collaboration with the Royal Asiatic Society, organizes its annual graduate conference on 9 and 10 October 2015 in London. The conference aims to connect early career scholars and academics researching Muslim societies in South Asia and their diaspora communities across disciplines and time periods. The programme includes a lecture



by Professor Michel Boivin from the Centre for South Asian Studies at the School for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (CNRS-EHESS) in Paris. He will give a presentation entitled *New Muslim Elite and the Vernacular: An Anthropological Perspective on Colonial Sindh* exploring the social fabric at work as well as the dialectics of the vernacular and the global in the context of Sindh. In addition to Prof. Boivin panelists for the conference include graduate students and early career academics from South Asia, Australia, Europe, the US, and the UK. Full information about the conference.

• International Student Conference on Asia-Africa Studies to be held in Bandung

An International Student Conference on Asia-Africa Studies (ISCAAS) will be held in Bandung, Indonesia, 16–18



October 2015. The grand theme for this first undergraduate conference for universities in Asia and Africa is "*Eradicating Poverty Through Equal Development*". It is organised by the Student Organization of Economics and Development Studies, Padjadjaran University. The aim of this event is to facilitate discussion and encourage participants to deliver ideas and propose solution in responding to the issues in economic development. Eradicating poverty is one of the most important challenges faced by developing countries in their attempts to achieve sustainable development. The milestones on eradicating poverty have not yet been met in many of Africa and South Asia. More than a billion people worldwide still live in extreme poverty, and many more experience hunger and are vulnerable to environmental or price shocks. Without eradicating poverty, it will be difficult to sustain development. Given this condition, International Student Conference on Asia-Africa Studies (ISCAAS) invites all undergraduate students from Asia and Africa universities to express their ideas in this conference. Full information.

• 44th Annual University of Wisconsin–Madison Conference on South Asia

The 44th Annual



Madison Conference on South Asia is held 22–25 October 2015.



The conference,

sponsored by the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, attracted over 700 scholars and specialists on South Asia last year, coming from countries all over the world and much of the United States. This year the Joseph W. Elder keynote lecture at the conference will be given by Wendy Doniger, Mircea Eliade Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions at Chicago University and will examine sex and politics in ancient India.

In addition a plenary address will be held by Thrity Umrigar and Shyam Selvadurai about the role of trust in writing processes. Every year the conference is a great venue for intellectual, professional, and social exchange. Panels, roundtables, and individual papers on a wide range of topics pertaining to South Asian studies are presented. Students, professionals, and anyone interested in research on the region are welcome to participate in the four-day event featuring research panels and roundtables, lectures and addresses, film screenings, booksellers, association receptions, and other special presentations. This year features an expanded programme to include Thursday preconferences with the registration fee. Venue: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton St., Madison, Wisconsin, USA. More information.



• Tenth Annual Himalayan Policy Research Conference at Madison

The Nepal Study Center is pleased to announce the Tenth Annual Himalayan Policy Research Conference. It will be held on 22 October 2015 in Madison, Wisconsin, at the pre-conference venue of the University of Wisconsin's 44th Annual Conference on South Asia (22–24 October). Papers are invited encompassing socio-economic growth (macro or sectoral), violent conflict and political processes, institutional development, governance and administrative reform, poverty and income distribution, education and health, regional development, gender and ethnicity, trade and remittances, aid and foreign direct investment, resource and environmental management, climate change, bio-diversity, sustainable community development, public-private partnership in technology and investment, child labor, and many other issues. More information.



• Guadeloupe conference on Indian Languages in Diaspora.

An International conference on "Indian Languages in Diaspora. Strategies of Retention and Modes of Transmission" will be held 29 – 31 October 2015 in the French overseas département of



Guadeloupe in the Caribbean. Venue: Mémorial ACTe, Pointe-à-Pitre. The conference committee is chaired by Appasamy Murugaiyan from EPHE-UMR 7528 Mondes iraniens et indiens in Paris.

For more than three decades, the Indian diaspora has been the subject of many discussions and studies among researchers interested in the historical and economic aspects as well as the anthropological, social and political dimensions of migration. However, the presence of Indian languages and their role within these diaspora populations have so far attracted very limited interest than expected. Of all the elements of identity (re)construction, language retention and transmission is the most problematic. Retention and transmission of the diasporic Indian languages may be mapped along a continuum ranging from disappearance or extreme marginalization to recovery, preservation and promotion through socio-cultural organizations or, in the ideal situation, by the State. The conference focuses on the languages of origin (LO) of the Indian diaspora societies, immigrated during the historical period of indenture that is from 1834 to 1920, known as the historical or old diaspora. They are settled in the following countries and areas: Malaysia, Singapore, Myanmar, Mauritius, Reunion, Seychelles, South Africa, Fiji, Guyana, Suriname, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Trinidad and Tobago. They belong to the two main linguistic groups of the sub-continent: The Indo-Aryan group: Hindi (Awadhi & Bhojpuri), Urdu, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi, Punjabi and Konkani; and the Dravidian group: Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam.

The objective of the Conference is to provide a forum for discussion and interaction among researchers and educators on theoretical language retention and transmission issues in diasporic contexts, enhanced by relevant country-based case studies. Being hosted in Guadeloupe, the conference will pay particular attention to the Indian diaspora people settled in the French overseas departments (DOM): La Réunion, Guadeloupe and Martinique. It is important to highlight that most of them are of South Indian origin and claim Tamil as their language and culture. More information.

• SAAG 2015 meeting focuses on Leadership and Authority in South Asia

The UK South Asian Anthropologists' Group (SAAG) will hold its 2015 meeting at Cambridge. The theme for the meeting, convened by Anastasia Piliavsky and Nick Evans at Girton College, is "Leadership and authority in South Asia". It will be held 11–12 December 2015, and focus on the recent wave of elections in South Asia that has left new kinds of leaders and leadership in its wake. Nepal's transition to democracy; the sweeping election of Narendra Modi (photo), an outsider to India's political elite, as the country's Prime Minister; mass political protests in Pakistan; and the burgeoning population of South Asia's criminal politicians all raise



pressing questions of leadership, authority and legitimation. Who has authority over whom and why? How do leaders lead and why do followers follow, or not follow? What potencies, entitlements, and responsibilities do authority figures have? What ideas and values legitimise persons and institutions?

The SAAG meetings are a welcoming and intellectually rigorous way for early-career social anthropologists to present their work and have it discussed by more seasoned colleagues. The papers are circulated in advance and get plenty of discussion time in the meetings. The organisers encourage the submission of papers dealing with all aspects of leadership and authority in South Asia and the global South Asian diaspora.

• Bhopal conference on South Asian Vernacular Architecture

The School of Planning and Architecture Bhopal in collaboration with the Indian Trust for Rural Heritage and Development (ITRHD) and the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya Museum organizes a conference, demonstration and exhibition to examine the challenges that vernacular architecture faces today, and to evolve strategies for its continuity and adaptation for the future in the South Asian region. The conference titled *South Asian Vernacular Architecture; Challenges to its continuity and Strategies for its future*, will be held from **11th till 13th December 2015**



and will engage in ways in which the South Asian geographic region shares a common cultural landscape which is articulated in its vernacular architecture. Vernacular architecture is representative of local cultural identities and despite the rejection of it in many states of South Asia due to perceptions of backwardness and informality, vernacular architecture continues to be the most popular way of building in villages and informal slum areas in cities. Against this background the conference is organized around four themes; (1) documentation and conservation of vernacular architecture, (2) adaptation and innovation in techniques of construction for the future of vernacular architecture, (3) policy, legislation and regulations changes need for the continuity of vernacular architecture and (4) the need for human resource development for the continuity of vernacular architecture for the future. Full information,

• Third South Asian Society of Criminology and Victimology international conference

The South Asian Society of Criminology and Victimology (SASCV) organizes its third international conference 28–29 January 2016 in Goa, India. The main theme for the conference is violence and victimization: new challenges for traditional and modern societies. The conference will take place against the backdrop of violence by terror groups and how state sponsored violence and abuse of power are becoming prominent to cover up corruptive unethical practices. There conference seeks to focus on violence and victimization and its challenges for traditional and modern societies. To this end it invites papers from academicians, students and other stakeholders around the main theme as well



as the following subthemes: interpersonal and self-directed violence, collective and targeted violence, workplace violence, state-sponsored violence and abuse of power and online violence. There are two slots of abstract submission: Either before 15th October 2015 – with results of selection or rejection decided before 1st November; or before 15th November 2015 – with results of selection or rejection decided before 1st December. Full information.

• Shimla conference on Intimacy and Belonging in Contemporary India



The Indian Institute of Advanced Study (IIAS), in Shimla, India, organizes an international conference titled *Intimacy and Belonging in Contemporary India* on April 4-6 2016. The conference will focus on emerging forms of intimacies in contemporary India and will attempt to address the politics behind the changing



natures of belonging. It will do so by examining what causes intimacy and what restricts one's identity of belonging, particularly the transformation in modes of intimacy resulting from transnational ties, migration, alternative socio-economic doctrines and new communication technologies will be in focus. There is an open call for papers along the following lines of enquiries: Emerging Trends of Intimacies, New Temporal and Spatial Practices, Democratization of Intimate Relations as Emancipatory Belongings and State, Law and the Performativity/Representation of Addictive/Contested /Censored/Queer Intimacies in India. Full information.

• 30th BASAS Annual Conference to be held in Cambridge

The British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS) will hold its 30th annual conference on 6–8 April 2016 at Fitzwilliam College, University of Cambridge, UK. No specific theme has been set for the conference this year, panels and independent papers from all humanities, arts, and social science disciplines, covering research on South Asia and its diaspora are welcomed. The deadline for abstracts for both panels and papers is 31



October 2015. In addition, the conference organizers intend to offer a limited number of bursaries to outstanding delegates based at academic institutions in South Asia, covering travel expenses and

accommodation and visa costs. Registration for the conference will be open via the Centre for South Asian Studies at Cambridge website from 12 January 2016 onwards, the deadline for registration is set for 29 February 2016. Finally BASAS organizes a paper prize competition for graduate students consisting of an award of £250 for the best student paper and a possible consideration for publication in one of BASAS' associated journals, Contemporary South Asia or South Asian Studies. More information about the conference and call for papers.

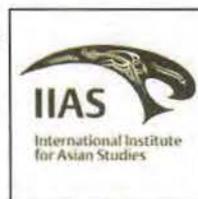
● **Kolkata conference on Sociology of Religion in a Pluralistic Society**

The Centre for Study of Religion and Society at Jadavpur University in Kolkata is organizing a three-day international conference titled *Sociology of Religion in A Pluralistic Society* from 7 April 2016 to 9 April 2016 in collaboration with Lancaster University, England. The conference organizers invite thirty-minute papers on sociology of religion, particularly, but not restricted to, issues of ethnicities, languages, nationalities, gender, psychology, law medicine, technology, and culture. The conference convener is Dr. Ruby Sain. Those interested should send their resume with an abstract before 31 December 2015. More information.



● **IIAS Call for Abstracts for workshop on Indian medicine**

On the 23rd and 24th June 2016 the IIAS, International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, The Netherlands, organizes a workshop titled *Indian medicine: Between state and village*. The workshop takes the sensibilities of Indian medicine as its point of departure, focusing on themes such as Indian medicines as tangible and intangible heritage, Indian medicines as health security for the poor and Indian medicines as identity markers. Particularly contributions from medical anthropology and science and technology studies are encouraged to send in an abstract, although other theoretical orientations are also welcomed. Abstracts of not more than 300 words should be submitted with a short CV before 1 October 2015. The IIAS provides hotel accommodation for three nights to all selected participants while travel expenses are not covered. For more information about the workshop see the IIAS website. For the submission of your abstract and application form click here.



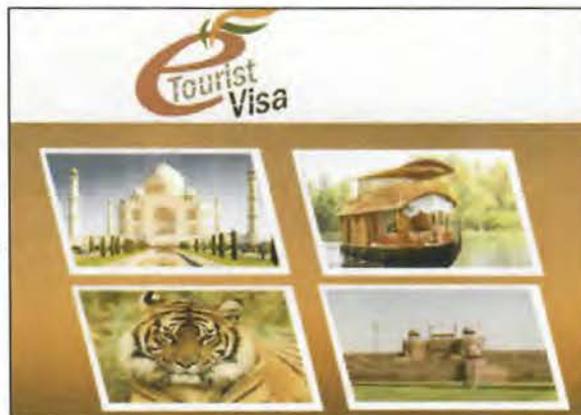
● **Other conferences connected to South Asian studies all over the World**

See SASNET's page, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/conferences/conferences>

Business and Politics

● **Swedish citizens can now apply for Indian e-tourist visas**

From 15 August 2015, also Swedish citizens are eligible to apply for Indian e-tourist visas. The scheme applies to international travellers whose sole objective of visiting India is recreation, sight seeing, casual visit to meet friends or relatives, short duration medical treatment or casual business visit. Citizens from many other countries have been using this e-visa option since some years back. The scheme is however not available to diplomatic/official passport holders, nor to any individual with Pakistani origin. The validity of the visa is 30 days, and can be used for entry through



the airports of 16 Indian cities – Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bangalore, Chennai, Cochin, Delhi, Gaia, Goa, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Trichy, Thiruvananthapuram and Varanasi. You may apply for an e-visa maximum twice a year. Full information.

● **New ambassador appointed to Sri Lankan embassy in Stockholm**

On 3 September 2015, Renuka Damayanthie Rajapakse was appointed new Sri Lankan envoy to the embassy of Sweden. She had a first inaugural meeting with Carl XVI Gustaf, the King of Sweden, at the Royal Palace in Stockholm the same day. Following the official ceremony the ambassador had a one-to-one meeting with the king discussing the long relations between Sweden and Sri Lanka going back to 18 November 1949 when diplomatic ties were established. Also the ties in development assistance and the large number of Swedish companies investing in Sri Lanka were discussed. Rajapakse is a graduate from the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka and joined the country's Foreign Service in 1994. She has served in several Sri Lanka Missions abroad and was the Director-General of the SAARC Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka before. More information about the inaugural meeting.



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

See SASNET's page, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/news-sources/swedish-politics-and-business-related-south-asia>

South Asia related culture in Scandinavia

• Ustad Shujaat Hussain Khan to perform at Stockholm Sangeet Conference 2015



On the 4th and 5th of October 2015 the Stockholm Sangeet Conference, Sweden's biggest festival for Indian classical music and dance, will be held at Musikaliska Akademien, Nybrokajen 11 in Stockholm. The annual conference, which has been organized since 2007, each year presents a number of the finest international and Swedish-based artists within today's classical Indian music and dance scene. This year the conference includes performances by Ustad Shujaat Hussain Khan (*photo*), one of the greatest north Indian classical musicians of his generation, Dr. Soma Ghosh an acclaimed Mumbai-based vocalist and Revanta Sarabhai, a traditional bharatanatyam, martial arts and performance arts specialist, among others. In addition, the conference will include workshops, lectures and discussions on Indian dance and music. [Full information.](#)

• Baul singers and Tagore choir performed at Lund Cultural Night 2015

Lund Cultural Night – was held for the 36th year on Saturday 19 September 2015. Among cultural activities of all kinds, a couple were connected to South Asia. The organisation *Lund Bauls*, led by S.M. Shahriar Shakil, Research Assistant at the Faculty of Engineering, Lund University, and himself an excellent interpreter of traditional Baul music, organised an event entitled "A Tribute to Damien Rice & Lalon Shai". Lund Bauls is a folk and fusion based musical group emerged in Lund during past few years, mostly influenced by folk music from Bangla, British and also from around the world. It was held at Restaurang Spice and Curry at Vårfrugatan 8A (Botulfsplatsen), and was formed as a tribute to two of the most influential folk musicians, Damine Rice & Lalon Shai.



Lalon Shai and Rabindranath Tagore.

Later, at 22.00, the *Lund Tagore Choir* performed for a large audience with a new programme in Allhelgonakyrkan. This was be their third Cultural Night concert in this location. This year, eminent saxophone player Ed Epstein was a guest artist. The choir was formed in 2012 and is led by Bubu Munshi Eklund, and its concept is unique – a choir with a majority of Swedish people singing the songs by Indian/Bengali Nobel Laureate poet and composer Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) in the original Bengali language. Listen to a solo song by Bubu – Dhay Jena Mor Sakal Bhalobasa, with accompanying saxophone.

• Excerpt from Tagore's dance drama Chitrangada in Lund

Danish Bharata Natyam dancer **Annette Karpen** and Swedish Rabindrasangheet singer **Bubu Munshi Eklund** performed with a shortened version of Rabindranath Tagore's dance drama *Chitrangada* at Bibliotek Väster at Örnvägen 66 in Lund on Thursday 17 September 2015. They were accompanied by Copenhagen musician **Johan Vedel** from Dansk Musikforening. See some photos from the performance.



Annette Karpen, Bubu Munshi Eklund and Johan Vedel.



Tagore wrote the script and composed the music already in 1892. It is a story of the strong woman Chitrangada who is capable of ruling her country – Manipur – and herself choosing her husband. It is an adaptation of a story in the Hindu epic Mahabharata about Chitrangada, who is the daughter and only child of the king of Manipur. Being the heir to the throne, she dresses like a man and is the protector of the land. Her people look to her to keep them safe. One day, she meets Arjuna and, seeing him in action as he hunts in the forest, she falls in love. Arjuna is impressed by her fighting abilities

but all along believes her to be a man. Chitrangada believes he could never love her the way she is. She receives a boon from Kamadeva, Hindu god of love, and transforms herself into a beautiful feminine woman.

When she meets Arjuna again, he can't help but fall in love with her. Though she believes that she has everything she wants in life, deep down she wishes that he could love her for her true self. When marauders come into her kingdom to take over the villages, Arjuna learns from the people of the kingdom that their princess is the greatest warrior around and they wonder why she isn't there to help protect them now. Arjuna is impressed by the story of this woman who seems to be his equal when it comes to fighting and longs to meet her. Chitrangada appears and saves her kingdom before revealing her true self to Arjuna. No longer in love with her just for her beauty, Arjuna marries Chitrangada. They have a son named Babruvahana.

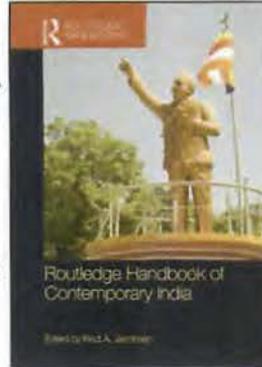
• Information about South Asia related culture in Sweden/ Scandinavia

See SASNET's page, <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/cultural-events>

New and updated items on SASNET web site

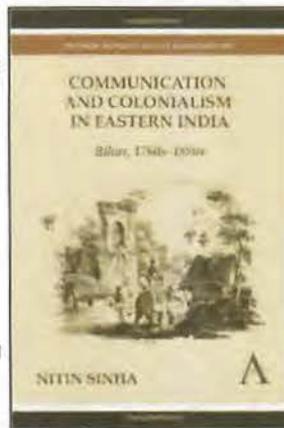
• Routledge publishes Handbook of Contemporary India

Routledge Handbook of Contemporary India, edited by **Knut A. Jacobsen**, Professor in History of Religions at Bergen University, Norway. Routledge 2015. The book consists of chapters by the foremost scholars dealing with India's current cultural and social transformation, particularly concentrating on the ways in which India emerged after the economic reforms and the new economic policies introduced in the 1980s and 1990s and its development in the early twenty-first century. The handbook is divided in five parts, including chapters on India's foundation, to sections on society, class, caste and gender as well as chapters on religion and society and cultural change. This all against the backdrop of India as one of the most diverse and pluralistic nations in the world in terms of languages, cultures, religions and social identities. Indians have for centuries exchanged ideas with other cultures globally and some traditions have been transformed in those transnational and transcultural encounters and become successful innovations with extraordinary global popularity. India is an emerging global power in terms of economy but in spite of the country's economic growth over the previous decades some of the most serious problems of Indian society such as poverty, repression of women, inequality do not seem to go away. The work provides and extensive introductory account on this broad set of issues. For more information about the book and to order a copy see the [Routledge website](#).



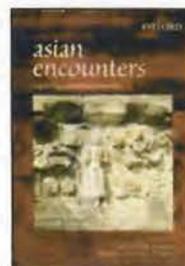
• Important work on Communication and Colonialism in Eastern India

Communication and Colonialism in Eastern India: Bihar 1760s-1880s, published in 2012, is part of a series on Modern South Asian History by the Anthem publishing house that explores the multiple themes and methodological standpoints within South Asian History. The volume, written by **Nitin Sinha**, research fellow at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (Centre for Modern Oriental Studies) in Berlin, Germany, focuses on the Indian state of Bihar between 1760s and 1880s and reveals the contradictory nature of the colonial state's policies and discourses on communication. The book particularly examines the relationship between trade, transport and mobility in India, illustrating the ways in which knowledge about roads and routes was collected through travels, tours, and surveys which allowed the state to regulate 'undesirable' forms of mobility. However the book reveals that the history of colonial communication is not just a story of displacement but also one of realignment. This way the book provides a nuanced account and important work for scholars of colonial South Asia and particularly for those interested in Communication and Colonialism. Full information about the book.



• Oxford University Press publishes book on inter-Asian encounters

Asian Encounters: Exploring Connected Histories, published by Oxford University press in 2014, is edited by **Upinder Singh** and **Parul Pandya Dhar** and examines centuries-old interactions between different regions of Asia. It covers a range of topics, including the migration of people and trade and the exchange of religious, literary, and aesthetic ideas and forms. It does so by taking connections between India and other parts of Asia, particularly China and Southeast Asia, as a point of departure. This way the book provides insights in the study of cultural identities and symbolic representation and interpretational forms in a cross-cultural and global perspective, particularly by looking at problems related to processes where cultural identities and representations interact and are exchanged. The essays in the volume range from issues of war and diplomacy and trade to the circulation of carpets and the exchange of cultural ideas and forms. In doing so the book contributes to understandings of inter-Asian cultural encounters and opens up new ways of looking in the context of Asian dialogue, making the book interesting for both students and scholars of South Asian history. Full information about the book.



• Swedish departments where research on South Asia is going on

This month there were two new departments added to SASNET's list:

- ✦ Department of Humanities, Mid-Sweden University, Sundsvall/Härnösand/Östersund
- ✦ Division of Environmental and Energy Systems Studies, Department of Technology and Society at Lund Institute of Technology (LTH), Lund University

Constantly added to the list of research environments at Swedish universities, presented by SASNET. The full list now includes more than 300 departments, with detailed descriptions of the South Asia related research and education taking place! See the full list of departments here: <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/institutions/research-environments>

- **Useful travelling information**

Look at our [Travel Advice](#) page. Updated travel advises from the The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office about safety aspects on travelling to the countries of South Asia.

Best regards

Lars Eklund

Deputy Director

SASNET/Swedish South Asian Studies Network

SASNET is a national network for research, education, and information about South Asia and is based at Lund University. Its aim is to promote a dynamic networking process in which Swedish researchers cooperate with their counterparts in South Asia and around the globe.

The SASNET network is open to all branches of the natural and social sciences. Priority is given to interdisciplinary cooperation across faculties, and more particularly to institutions in the Nordic countries and South Asia. SASNET believes that South Asian studies will be most fruitfully pursued as a cooperative endeavour among researchers in different institutions who have a solid base in their mother disciplines.

The network is financed by Lund University.

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