

SASNET - Swedish South Asian Studies Network

Lund University

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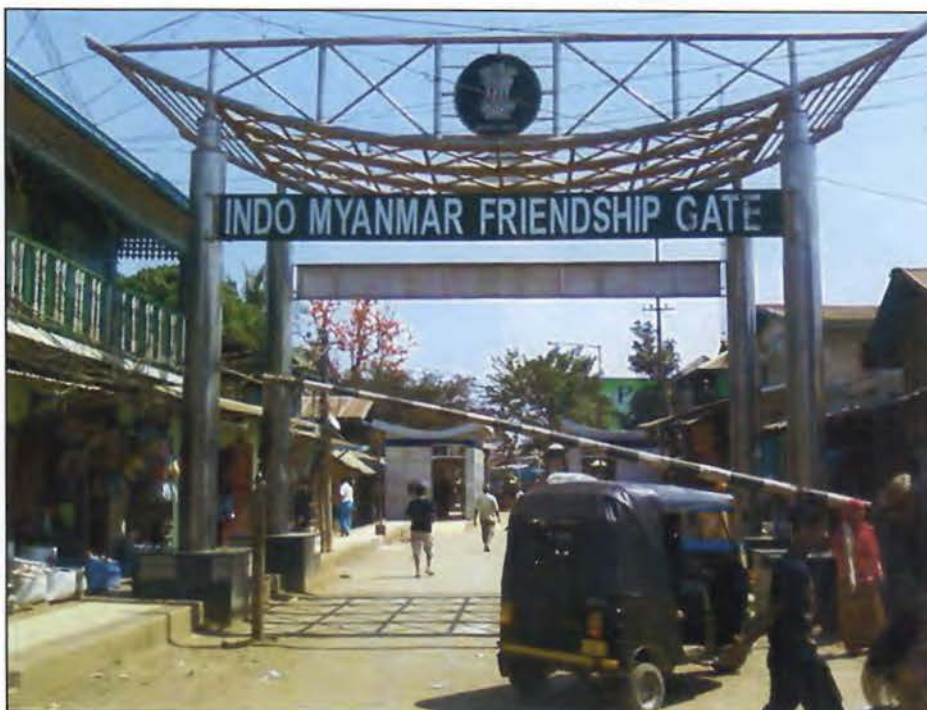
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SWEDISH SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES NETWORK

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SASNET News

• SASNET 2015 Conference on Structural Transformation of South Asia

Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET) at Lund University organises a three-day international conference on the structural transformation of South Asia on 20–22 May 2015. The conference is entitled *“South Asia in Transformation: World of Slums, Global Power Houses or Utopias? Migration, labour, and family*



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changes in a dynamic region". The conference will have nine panels, each one led by eminent researchers. The theme of the panels vary from "Urbanization and Social Sustainability", to "Ethnicity, Religion and Changing Caste Relations", and "Structural Transformation and Social Conflicts". Full papers of accepted abstracts are due on March 15, 2015.

Keynote speakers are Gita Sen from the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, India (and Harvard School of Public Health, Harvard University); Ruth Kattumuri, London School of Economics, UK; Zoya Hasan, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR); Abram de Swaan, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands; and Geoff Wood, University of Bath, Bath, UK.

The purpose of the conference is to explore the social consequences of the transformation of South Asian societies (and by implication, the world). Structural transformations produce new opportunities and risks as job possibilities and wealth are created and redistributed unevenly. This may lead to the marginalization of some groups as well as social conflicts. The aim of this conference is also to map the social impact of South Asia's structural transformation so far, with specific reference to changes in labour migration patterns and in the composition of the care economy of families and households. Each of these aspects is often studied in isolation despite the fact that they are deeply interrelated. [Full information about the conference.](#)

• **SASNET grants for short-term fellowship stays to five young South Asian researchers**



The Swedish South Asian Studies Network is pleased to announce the results of the applications for short-term (1-2 months) PhD or post-doc fellowship stays at Lund University, financed by SASNET, during the academic year 2015–2016. The results were made public on 16

March 2015. The following five researchers were accepted:

- Dr. **Anindita Majumdar**, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi, India, to be hosted by the Dept. of Gender Studies, Lund University
- PhD candidate **Shveta Soam**, Centre for Advanced Bioenergy Research, Faridabad, India, to be hosted by the Division of Environmental and Energy Systems Studies at the Dept. of Technology and Society, Lund University
- Dr. **P. R. Nisha**, Department of History, University of Delhi, India, to be hosted by the Dept. of Human Geography, Lund University
- Dr. **Mashiur Rahman**, Dept. of Sociology, Dhaka University, Bangladesh, to be hosted by the Dept. of Sociology, Lund University
- PhD candidate **Kanika Rakhra**, Center for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi, India, to be hosted by the Dept. of Political Science, Lund University

The positions were open to PhD candidates in their final year, recent PhDs, and post-docs who have been students at universities in South Asia (i.e. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). Applicants should also have a research topic concerning the geographical area of South Asia or be doing a comparative study including South Asia. It was also stated that candidates should arrange their own affiliation with a Lund University department or research center before submitting their applications, since it is the department that provides them with working space and include them in departmental activities. Further, SASNET expects that candidates will present their research projects at a public event during their stay in Sweden.

• **SASA announces field work travel grants for Lund University students**

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 fall semester of 2015. The grants will cover travel expenses for airline tickets to the country of fieldwork for up to a maximum of SEK 8,000 per grant.

Students enrolled at Lund University that are planning to do fieldwork in South Asia are encouraged 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 20 April 2015.**

SASA and SASNET expect to announce a new round of fieldwork grants during the fall 2015. Like our Facebook page "South Asian Students Association at Lund University" and follow our page on the SASNET website at <http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasapage>, to stay updated on new grant announcements. We look forward to receiving your application!

• **Neil Webster and Pamela Price present SASNET external evaluation report**

SASNET was established in 2000-2001 as a national network to promote research and education related to South Asia at all Swedish universities. For ten years it was mainly funded by the Swedish government through Sida, with one third of its budget coming from the hosting Lund University. However, from 2010 SASNET has been solely funded by Lund University, and funding is currently provided till the end of 2015.

It is now time for SASNET to plan for its future activities after 31 December 2015, and deliver a budget proposal to Lund University. Prior to this, a team of evaluators consisting of two eminent Nordic researchers – Dr. Neil Webster from the Danish Institute of International Studies (DIIS) in Copenhagen; and Professor Emeritus Pamela Price from the Department of Archaeology, Conservation and History at University of Oslo – have carried out an Evaluation of SASNET activities and operation from January 2013 till March 2015. During one month, February-March 2015, they have conducted interviews and thoroughly reviewed the SASNET work reports and other documentation, and on 17th March a final report was submitted to the SASNET board and the Lund University Vice Chancellor. In their report, Neil Webster and Pamela Price give constructive recommendations on how, according to their views, SASNET should work. They argue that SASNET should get a stronger institutional anchoring



Neil Webster and Pamela Price.

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within Lund University while maintaining the national and international work that SASNET has become recognised for; that SASNET should focus its work around a set of short to medium term objectives as a means to facilitate and complete the ongoing transition of SASNET; and that the management and organisation of SASNET should be strengthened so that it can best meet the requirements of the other two objectives. Regarding the SASNET website, the evaluators suggest that its should continue as a core SASNET activity, seeing itself as a national resource, but also more as a part of LUND University's internationalisation.

• **Reorganization of SASNET staff**

Some changes have occurred in mid-March 2015 regarding the staff situation at SASNET. Dr. Olle Frödin who has worked for SASNET on a 50 p c basis since August 2013, has resigned with immediate effect from the assignment of being Deputy Director in charge of research collaboration. An extra SASNET board meeting on 15th March 2015 ratified this decision.

Olle's basic employment at SASNET will also terminate on 31 May 2015, after convening the EASAS workshop in Lund on 18 – 19 May, and the major SASNET conference on Structural Transformation of South Asia to be held on 20 – 22 May. He will then go back to being a full-time Senior Lecturer at the Department of Sociology.

Linda Hiltmann who has been working as a Strategic Coordinator on a 75 p c basis for a year also decided to quit SASNET when her contract ran out in mid-March 2015. Instead Lubna Hawwa has been re-employed as Assistant Communications Officer to work at SASNET along with the Director Anna Lindberg and Deputy Director Lars Eklund. SASNET is thankful for the services that Olle Frödin and Linda Hiltmann have provided.

• **SASNET India Media Project moves forward**



SASNET is currently launching its India Media Project, planned for by Andreas Mattsson, lecturer in journalism at Department of Communication and Media at Lund University in collaboration with Indian

senior journalist Hindol Sengupta. Lars Eklund and Anna Lindberg from SASNET and a project group with journalists are also strongly involved in the project. On 15 March 2015, Andreas and Lars presented the project for Indian Ambassador Banashri Bose Harrison (photo).



The purpose of The India Media Project, that currently takes shape, is to create a forum for exchange of ideas, perspectives and future outlooks on the Indian 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. Several new areas of interest and new collaboration partners have been identified during the past months, among them the Swedish Embassy in Delhi that is committed to cooperate with the project. The full project will be officially launched with workshops held both in Sweden and India during the fall 2015. [More information.](#)

• **India in focus for second SASA/SASNET 2015 Fika without borders seminar**



The South Asian Student Association (SASA) at Lund University organised its second 2015 Fika without borders seminar on Thursday 19 March 2015, 17-19, at the usual venue: the basement floor at Lund University External Relations (ER) building, Stora Algatan 4, Lund. [See poster.](#)

The March event was dedicated to India, and the main presentation was delivered by Aradhna Aggarwal,

new Chair professor in Indian Studies at the Asia Research Centre (ACR) within the Copenhagen Business School (CBS). Her presentation was entitled "From SAFTA to South Asian Economic Union: Prospects and Challenges" and was highly appreciated by the audience.

Before joining CBS, Prof. Aggarwal worked at the Dept. of Business Economics, University of Delhi. Her research interests include industrial growth, entrepreneurship, globalisation, economic reforms, competition, international trade, FDI, technology transfer, technology creation and innovations, export competitiveness, and WTO-related issues. She has several publications in other national and international journals and chapters in edited books. She has singly authored monographs: *The WTO Anti-dumping Agreement and Developing countries*; and *Social and Economic Impact of SEZs in India*, both published by OUP. She has also been the principal author of the "Kerala Perspective Plan 2030".



The programme also included a cultural programme in the form of a rabindrasangheet session by Bubu Munshi Eklund.

Besides delicious home-made Indian food – *aloo dum*, *ghugni chaat* and fried rice was served.

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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. [More information.](#)

• **SASNET research seminar on Governance of Nepal’s Labour Migration**



Uddhab Pyakurel and Catarina Kinnvall.

SASNET held an open research seminar Monday 23 March, 13.15-15.00 with Dr. Uddhab Pd. Pyakurel from School of Arts, Kathmandu University, Nepal, and Professor Catarina



Kinnvall from the Department of Political Science at Lund University. The researchers discussed a paper titled *Governance of Nepal’s Labour Migration* that Dr. Pyakurel is currently working on during his guest research at Copenhagen University. All are welcome and students are encouraged to come and listen as well as asking questions. The seminar was held at the Department of Sociology/room 335, Lund University, Paradisgatan 5 G. [See the poster.](#)

Uddhab Pd. Pyakurel with a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is teaching Political Sociology as Assistant Professor in the School of Arts, Kathmandu University, Nepal. He is also associated with various democracy forums i.e., South Asian Dialogues on Ecological Democracy (SADED), Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (VK), and Network Institute for Global Democratization (NIGD). He often contributes articles to journals and local newspapers on poverty, people’s participation, social inclusion/exclusion, state restructuring, micro-credit, gender, conflict, identity, democracy, election, Indo-Nepal relations and other socio-political issues. In addition, he is the author of a book *Maoist Movement in Nepal: A Sociological Perspective* (New Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 2007), co-author of two books—*Dalit Representation in National Politics of Nepal* (Kathmandu: NNDSWO 2012) and *State of Conflict and Democratic Movement in Nepal* (New Delhi: Vij Books, 2013), and editor of a Monograph titled *Higher Education in Nepal: Inclusive Policy Guidelines* (Lalitpur: School of Arts, Kathmandu University & SNV=Nepal, 2014).



• **Lars Eklund reports from Dhaka universities, February 2015**

In spite of the volatile political situation in Bangladesh, with an almost continuous hartal issued by the main opposition party the BNP for over a month, and with acts of violence frequently appearing, Lars Eklund visited Dhaka University on Monday 23 February



2015. He was invited to participate in a Seminar on Nordic-Bangladeshi collaboration in higher education, with several of the participants connected to Lund University, but also met the Sociology first year students (photo). Afterwards Lars also visited three other universities in the city – Daffodil, Eastern and National universities. [Read his report from Dhaka.](#)

• **Lars Eklund report from Swedish Embassy in Bangladesh**

On behalf of SASNET, Lars Eklund visited the Swedish Embassy in Dhaka,



Bangladesh, on 22 February 2015, and had a fruitful meeting with Ambassador Johan Frisell and the rest of his staff. There was a genuine interest from the Embassy to learn from SASNET experiences, and for SASNET an equally strong desire to connect closer to the Embassy and learn about the ongoing Swedish strategy for international development cooperation with Bangladesh for the period 2014–2020, with the following four targets: • Human Rights; • Economic Growth; • Environment and Climate Change; and • Health.

While in Dhaka, Lars also had a chance to meet a few Swedish researchers, e.g. Ashok Nath, at the time being a visiting senior research fellow at Bangladesh Institute of Peace and Security Studies (BIPSS), and Roshni Kapoor, former Lund University masters student in Public Health at the Division of Social Medicine and Public Health in Malmö, now working for UN Women Bangladesh Country Office in Dhaka. [Read Lars' report from Swedish Embassy in Dhaka.](#)



• IIT Kharagpur hydrologist seeks to expand Swedish collaboration

On Sunday 1 March 2015, Dr. Abhjit Mukherjee from the Department of Geology and Geophysics at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur visited SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund at his Kolkata office. He came with a specific mission from Professor Siddhartha Mukhopadhyay, Dean of International Affairs at IIT Kharagpur, to discuss possibilities of finding Swedish partners for new collaboration ventures, as well as strengthening the already existing and successful Indo-Swedish collaboration project on Arsenic in Groundwater led by Prof. Prosun Bhattacharya at the Department of Land and Water Resources Engineering, KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. This project recently got a boost with a signing of an MoU between KTH, IIT Kharagpur and the West Bengal government ([more information](#)).



Dr. Mukherjee is a hydrologist and a groundwater specialist who did his PhD on groundwater in West Bengal at an American university. He joined IIT Kharagpur in 2010, and he is also connected to the institute's School of Environment. He has been involved in the Arsenic project mentioned above for 12 years, but he is also involved in other types of research related to groundwater, for example a project measuring the amount of ground water leaking out to the oceans. Abhjit Mukherjee may soon become a visiting research fellow at KTH in Stockholm, while Prosun Bhattacharya will get a similar position at IIT Kharagpur.

Before leaving, Dr. Mukherjee invited Lars to come for a visit to IIT, an institute with high reputation and with several Swedish connections.

• SASNET lecture on changing food traditions among Bengali middle-classes



Dr. Manpreet K. Janeja, Assistant Professor at the Department of Cross-Cultural Studies and Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen will give a SASNET lecture entitled "*Anxious Hearths and Risky Meals – Re-imagining Domesticity in a South Asian Worlding City*" on Wednesday 8 April 2015, 13.15–15.00. The lecture will be held at the Department of

Sociology, Lund University, Paradisgatan 5 G, Seminar room 335, third floor.

This lecture focuses on re-imagining domesticity in contemporary urban formations through the aesthetics of food in a 'worlding' city. Taking the meal as the fulcrum of much activity in Bengali Hindu daily life in Kolkata in the Indian state of West Bengal, it traces the vicissitudes of what emerges as constantly negotiable but contested normal home food. It examines the relatively new phenomenon of cooks from cooking bureaus working in households in the upper echelons of the Bengali middle-classes, and highlights how food mediates the strategic and ambivalent negotiations they all engage in. In the process, it renders visible the dynamics of (dis)trust, risk, and uncertainty in which these contextual culinary engagements are entangled. In doing so, it illuminates the manner in which food-ways in a state of flux are reconfiguring forms of domesticity and belonging in a South Asian city caught in the throes of redefining itself. Manpreet K. Janeja is a social anthropologist, straddling the anthropology of trust, food and eating, cities, migration, law, and religion. She grew up in a Punjabi household in Kolkata, where lunch was mostly *maachh ar bhaat* (fish and rice), and stopping by at the *mishtir doka* (sweets shop) was a part of daily life. These experiences are described in her book *Transactions in Taste: the Collaborative Lives of Everyday Bengali Food* (Routledge 2010; 2013). Janeja has also been joint co-editor of *Imagining Bangladesh: Contested Narratives* (SAMAJ-EASAS 2014), and her next book-length project is provisionally titled *The Aesthetics of School Meals: Distrust, Risk and Uncertainty*. She has held fellowships such as the Eugénie Strong Research Fellowship in Social Anthropology at Girton College, University of Cambridge, and has been a Visiting Scholar at the Centre for South Asia (CSA), Stanford University.



• SASNET open lecture with Thomas Blom Hansen

Professor Thomas Blom Hansen, the Director of Stanford's Center for South Asia University, will give a SASNET lecture entitled "*Vernacular Urbanism: Capital, Community and crime in Middle India*" on Monday 27 April 2015, at 13.15–15.00. Venue: Lecture Hall Eden at the Department of Political Science.

Professor Thomas Blom Hansen is the Reliance-Dhirubhai Ambani Professor in South Asian Studies and Professor in Anthropology. He is also the Director of Stanford's Center for South Asia where he is charged with building a substantial new program. He has many and broad interests spanning South Asia and Southern Africa, several cities and multiple theoretical and disciplinary interests from political theory and continental philosophy to psychoanalysis, comparative religion and contemporary urbanism. Much of Professor Hansen's fieldwork was done during the tumultuous and tense years in the beginning of the 1990s when conflicts between Hindu militants and Muslims defined national agendas and produced frequent violent clashes in the streets. Out of this work came two books: *The Saffron Wave. Democracy and Hindu Nationalism in Modern India* (Princeton



1999) which explores the larger phenomenon of Hindu nationalism in the light of the dynamics of India's democratic experience, and *Wages of Violence: Naming and Identity in Postcolonial Bombay* (Princeton 2001) which explores the historical processes and contemporary conflicts that led to the rise of violent socioreligious conflict and the renaming of the city in 1995. During the last decade, Professor Hansen has pursued a detailed study of religious revival, racial conflict and transformation of domestic and intimate life from the 1950's to the present in a formerly Indian township in Durban, South Africa. This round of work has now resulted in a book entitled *Melancholia of Freedom: Anxiety, Race and Everyday Life in a South African Township* (Princeton University Press, 2012). In addition to these ethnographic engagements, Professor Hansen has pursued a number of theoretical interests in the anthropology of the state, sovereignty, violence and urban life. This has resulted in a range of co-edited volumes, and special issues of journals such as *Critique of Anthropology* and *African Studies*. He is currently working on a collection of theoretical and ethnographic essays provisionally entitled *Public Passions and Modern Convictions*. [Read more.](#)

• Performing arts thrive at Rabindra Bharati University in Kolkata

While in Kolkata, Lars Eklund visited Rabindra Bharati University, founded in 1962 to mark the birth centenary of Rabindranath Tagore, and with the specific task to work for the advancement of learning and culture particularly in the branches of music, dance and drama. There he met the Vice Chancellor Professor Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury both at the university's original Jorasanko campus in central Kolkata, and at its main BT Road campus in north Kolkata. The university has three faculties, the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Performing Arts and the Faculty of Visual Arts, and 29 departments on both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. 120 foreign exchange students are registered at the university, most of them coming to Kolkata



through MoUs with universities in primarily Italy, China, Japan, Canada, and Germany. They discussed possibilities to establish collaboration with Swedish universities, and especially the home university of SASNET, Lund University. Besides the obvious choice to focus on the key areas within performing arts – instrumental music, sculpture, and painting – other disciplines taught at Rabindra Bharati University with a profile that easily could involve international collaboration are Political Science, Philosophy, Literature, and History. [Read more...](#)

Reports from Viswa Bharati University in Shantiniketan, and from Jadavpur University and IACS in Kolkata to be posted soon...

• University of Manipur in search of international collaboration partners

In early March 2015, SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund visited the Indian state of Manipur, one of the landlocked northeastern Indian states, till recently restricted area for foreigners. He met researchers most interested to establish collaboration with Swedish partners. The general impression was that Manipur University is starving from a lack of international collaboration, and there is now a genuine desire to increase contacts with universities in Europe, and not the least with Sweden. The university was actually founded as a research centre connected to Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in 1972, but was converted into a state university in 1980, and finally declared to be a central university, funded by the Indian government, in 2005. It has altogether 30 departments plus a number of research centres, and with seven affiliated colleges in Manipur state. [Read Lars' report from University of Manipur.](#)



• More information about SASNET and its activities

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

Research Community News

• Karina Standal new NoFSA-net mailing list manager


From March 2015, NoFSA-NET – the Nordic Forum for South Asia – has got a new chairperson, Karina Standal, stipendiate at Centre for Development and the Environment (SUM), University of Oslo. She takes over after Kenneth Bo Nielsen, who has held the position for five years.

[More information about Karina Standal.](#)

NoFSA's goal is to inform members about current events of potential interest to people who deal with South Asia in some capacity (e.g. students, volunteer organizations, journalists, etc.) in the Nordic region. NoFSA-NET works in close collaboration with SASNET. It also has a facebook group where most of the activities are taking place today. Karina is assisted by a board with representatives from Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland. The ambition is to encourage South Asianists from all the Nordic countries to contribute more actively to the networking activities. The NoFSA board now comprises Karina Standal from SUM, Oslo; Uwe Skoda, Aarhus University, Denmark; Lars Eklund, SASNET/Lund University, Sweden; and Sirpa Tenhunen, University of Helsinki, Finland. [More information about NoFSA.](#)



• Sasikumar Punnekkat new Director for Birla Institute of Technology & Science in Goa

Dr Sasikumar Punnekkat, who has been the professor of Dependable Software Engineering at the [School](#) 

of Innovation, Design & Engineering at Mälardalen University, Sweden since 2007 has been appointed as the Director of the prestigious Birla Institute of Technology & Science in Goa, India. Earlier, he had acquired valuable research and development experience as a scientist at the Indian Space Research Organization (1984-2004). He takes charge from K E Raman who had over 37 years of experience at BITS Pilani in various capacities. [Read more.](#)



• **PhD positions available for Ethnographic project on Infrastructure Development in South Asia**

The South Asia Institute at School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, invites applications for two doctoral studentships tenable at SOAS for 3 years (full time) starting in September 2015. The project is entitled "*Roads and the Politics of Thought: Ethnographic Approaches to Infrastructure Development in South Asia*", and offers an exciting opportunity for two outstanding graduates to join a major anthropological research



project funded by the European Research Council (ERC) – as part of the conventional track PhD in Anthropology at SOAS. The project is focused on contemporary road-building projects as infrastructure in South Asia. The overarching aim of the project is to explore the relationship between infrastructure investment and global sustainability through research on the politics and dynamics of particular road-building schemes. The project is coordinated by Dr Edward Simpson, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, who has received almost €2 million from ERC for his five-year research project on ethnographic approaches to infrastructure development in South Asia. Dr Simpson, who is the Principal Investigator, will work with a team which includes Dr Laura Jeffery and Dr Kanchana N. Ruwanpura at the University of Edinburgh, an award-winning collective of contemporary artists, CAMP, who are based in Mumbai, India and at least three post-doctoral positions at SOAS. The research will be rooted in case studies of particular road projects in Pakistan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. These sites have been selected to bring to the fore how nation-building, neo-liberalism, ambition, environmental vulnerability and modernity feature in contemporary road-building.

[More information about the project.](#)

New roads are being constructed at unprecedented rates in certain parts of the world. The proposed research will ask: Why? To what end? Who benefits? What ideas lie in the foundations of this new infrastructure? Roads are presented as solutions to poverty, 'development' and economic growth. Are they? In what ways? What else might roads do? As cheap oil dwindles and questions of climate change remain, why are so many international institutions cultivating new roads? The project will provide the first ethnographic account of the culture of road builders, their knowledge practices, interrelations and motivations. The research will be rooted in case studies of particular road projects in Pakistan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka. These sites have been selected to bring to the fore how nation-building, neo-liberalism, ambition, environmental vulnerability and modernity feature in contemporary road-building. Applicants are required to hold a BA and/or MA degree in Anthropology, with a merit or equivalent in the Masters Degree and a MA dissertation grade of 65% or higher. Only new applicants may apply: those already enrolled on a research degree programme at SOAS are not eligible. The studentship is for a duration of 3 years and will cover course fees at the UK/EU rate and a student stipend. The studentship is open to applicants paying fees at the UK/EU rate only (Applicants from non-EU countries may apply for this project but will be required to meet the additional costs of overseas fees from other sources).

Scholarship applications must be received before Friday 24 April 2015. It is however recommended to apply for the research degree two weeks before the scholarship deadline (that is by Friday 10 April 2015). [More information about the doctoral studentships.](#)

• **Stockholm seminar on Nepal politics 10 years after civil war ended**

The Forum for Asian Studies at Stockholm University organized an open seminar entitled "*Nepal today: viewed from within and from outside*" on Wednesday 25 March 2015, 14.00–15.30. The speaker was Dr Katak Malla from the Faculty of Law, Stockholm University. Venue: F 479 (4th floor, F-building, Stockholm University, Frescati). SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund attended the highly interesting and well-informed seminar, and had a meeting afterwards with the Forum for Asian Studies contact persons Henrik Berglund and Eva Hanson from the Dept. of Political Science. (*Katak Malla with Henrik and Eva on photo*).



Nepal is described by some as a "hotbed of communist revolution; a paradigm of failed democracy; a case study in bungled Western intervention; and an environmental catastrophe." In this talk Dr. Katak Malla argues that the current situation is based on a power balance (some may say terror balance) between the main political forces of Nepal, i.e. the Army, the Congress, the Marxists-Leninists and the Maoists. From a political science perspective, it may be difficult to theorize the current trends and events of Nepali politics. Nearly a decade after the end of the Maoist insurgency and transformation of the monarchical system into a republic, Nepal's political leadership class is still engaged in drafting a new constitution. But who are the political elites in current Nepal? And who are the winners and losers in the post-conflict negotiations between the Maoists and non-Maoists, and between 'liberal democracy' and 'people's democracy'? [More 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

• **Linnaeus Palme collaboration grants to 30 South Asia related programmes**

In early March 2015, the Swedish International Programme Office for Education and Training decided upon the fifteenth round of Linnaeus Palme Exchange Programme grants, for the period 1 July 2015 – 30 June 2016. A total amount of SEK 41.5 Million was distributed to 212 projects at Swedish universities. The grants are funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Out of 212 projects given grants, 3 are with

Bangladesh, 22 with India, 2 with Nepal, and 3 with Sri Lanka.

Among new projects could be mentioned three India projects from Linnaeus University in Växjö/Kalmar; with the Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship Development, Pune; the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Lucknow; and Sankara Nethralaya Medical Research Foundation, Chennai. Lund University has two new India projects, with University of Kerala; and Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. Mälardalens Högskola has three new India projects, two with Bharati Vidyapeeth Deemed University in Pune; and one with Birla Institute of Technology and Science in Pilani. Go for [SASNET's list of the South Asia related collaboration projects](#).

• Uppsala University announces position as Lecturer in Indology

Uppsala University announces a position as Lecturer in Indology at the [Department of Linguistics and Philology](#) on a 50% basis. The work includes teaching in Hindi, life and institutions, and Sanskrit or other Indic languages in the undergraduate Indology programme. Duties also include distance teaching. Course responsibility and course administration are part of teaching. This position requires an academic degree in Indology or the equivalent knowledge. An ability to communicate in speech and writing in English is a requisite. A general eligibility requirement is for applicants to possess the personal characteristics needed to carry out the duties of the position well, such as a good ability to cooperate with others within and outside of the Department. The position is for two years. Deadline for applications is 27 April 2015. [More information](#).



• 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

• Stockholm seminar on Ambedkar's Neo-Buddhism in India

Siddharth Singh, Head of the Department for Pali and Buddhist Studies at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi, India, and currently ICCR Chair Professor at Uppsala University, held a public lecture entitled "*Ambedkar's Neo-Buddhism in India: Perspectives and Prospects*" at Stockholm University on Tuesday 3 March 2015, 16.00-18.00. It was being organised by the Higher Seminar in History of Religion. Venue: Hall E379, Stockholm University Frescati.

Neo-Buddhism or Navayana is a new form of Buddhism developed by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, a charismatic leader of the Indian untouchables. By proclaiming that "I am born a Hindu, but I swear I will not die a Hindu" in the year 1935, and by embracing Buddhism with his 500,000 followers in the year 1956, Ambedkar changed Indian society and politics. This presentation was focused on some aspects of Neo-Buddhism, the interface between Engaged Buddhism and Neo-Buddhism and the present status of the Neo-Buddhists in India. [Full information](#).

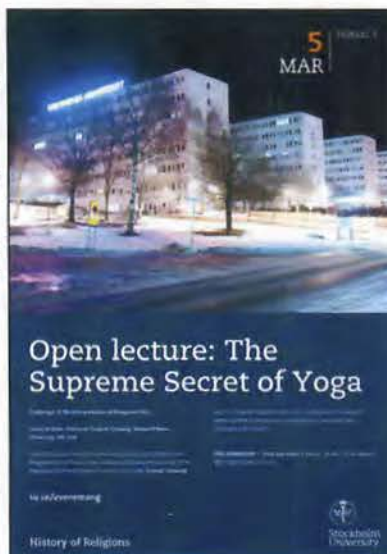


• Stockholm seminar on The Supreme Secret of Yoga



Professor Graham Schweig from Harvard University held a guest lecture at Stockholm University on Thursday 5 March 2015, at 15.30. He spoke about "*The Supreme Secret of Yoga: Challenges in the Interpretation of Bhagavad Gita*." It was being organised by the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies. Venue: Hörsal 5 (B5), Södra husen, plan 3, Frescati, Stockholm.

One of the most cherished texts coming from sacred India is the Bhagavad Gita. Since the first English translation in 1785, dozens of translations in English have been published, and as many interpretations have been offered for understanding its complex philosophy. How can we understand the ancient content of the Bhagavad Gita in our present times? In this talk, Graham Schweig explained how he discovered the text's embedded hermeneutic within a few key verses when producing his own published translation of the work. Graham M. Schweig earned his doctorate in comparative religion from Harvard University. His scholarly specialization is the history of Bhakti, the philosophy and history of Yoga, and love mysticisms. He is currently Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies and Asian Studies faculty at Christopher Newport University, Virginia. Schweig has lectured widely in the US and in Europe, and has been a regularly invited lecturer at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. He has published over 100 articles, reviews, book chapters, and several books. Schweig is also a senior editor of the international peer reviewed *Journal of Vaishnava Studies*. [Full information](#)



• Copenhagen seminar on Policy Making in India

The Asia Research Centre at Copenhagen Business School (CBS) organises a seminar with Professor Shubhashis Gangopadhyay, Director of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Shiv Nadar University in India, on Friday 17 April 2015, 14.00-15.30. He will talk about "*Policy Making in India*", focusing on the fact that for the first time in three decades, one party has gone past the half-way mark in India's 2014 Parliamentary elections (281 seats out of 542) and the coalition it heads has 336 seats. Its largest opposition group, the UPA, has only 59 seats. The 2014 election was held against a backdrop of various corruption scams and a general feeling of a lack of leadership in the outgoing government. The current government came up with the slogan of 'better days ahead' should they win. However, in the Rajya Sabha (or Upper House), the NDA is well short of a majority and since all bills must be passed by both houses, this may be a problem for the ruling coalition. Against



this backdrop, it is interesting to look at how the major policy thrusts of the government match with the aspirations of the people, what needs to be done and the ability of the current ruling coalition to implement them.

Professor Gangopadhyay is currently the Research Director of India Development Foundation and the Director of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Shiv Nadar University. He has formerly served as advisor to the Finance Minister in the Government of India. He holds a PhD in Economics from Cornell University and has published widely on development economics. Please sign up for the lecture at arc.int@cbs.dk. Venue: CBS, Kilen, room Ks54, Kilevej 14, Frederiksberg, Copenhagen. [More information](#).

• SASNET support to Copenhagen workshop on Contested Narratives

An International Workshop entitled "*Contested Narratives*" will be held in Copenhagen 23–24 April 2015. The workshop is accompanied by a PhD course on the same theme, and is organised by the Dept. of Cross-Cultural & Regional Studies (ToRS) and Centre of Global South-Asian Studies at University of Copenhagen, but is partly funded by SASNET. The convener is Dr Manpreet K Janeja. The two keynote speakers are Professor Willem van Schendel, University of Amsterdam; and Dr Lotte Hoek, University of Edinburgh.

The workshop focuses on varying frames or forms of narratives – whether of historical trajectories of the emergence of modern nation-states and their boundaries and borderlands, configurations of memory and cultural heritage, politics of identity and not-belonging, or modes of (un-)development and migration. Such narratives and frames are constantly woven, contested, ruptured, and re-imagined. For example continuing contestations, debates, and re-interpretations of Bangladesh's Liberation War in 1971 and the International Crimes Tribunal (set up to investigate alleged War criminals) reveal the fraught histories, representations, and perceptions of Bengali and Bangladeshi nationalism and identity, generated from within Bangladesh and from Bangladeshi diaspora groups in London, Dubai or Lisbon in dialogue with various local, national, and transnational formations. [Go to the conference website](#). Venue: Room 27.0.17 (Building 27-Ground Floor-Room 17), KUA 1, Faculty of Humanities, University of Copenhagen, Njalsgade 136, Copenhagen. For all those who wish to attend the keynote lectures and round-table discussion (Day 1), and research talks (Day 2), please register by emailing the workshop co-ordinator [Jacco Visser](#). For further information, please contact the workshop convener [Manpreet K Janeja](#).

[Full information about the workshop and PhD course](#).



Willem van Schendel and Lotte Hoek

• Aarhus University workshop on Cultural Elites in Contemporary India

The Contemporary India Study Centre Aarhus (CISCA) at Aarhus University, Denmark, organises a workshop on "*Cultural Elites in Contemporary India: Constructions and Deconstructions*" on 5 – 6 May 2015. The conveners are Jyotirmaya Tripathy, Sudarsan Padmanabhan, and Uwe Skoda.

Contemporary India is a site of many new era elite identities in the arenas of technology and media, neo-religious movements, indigenous and subaltern groups, new social movements, films and sports to name a few. In the intellectual and cultural spheres, a new community is emerging as avant-garde or thought leaders, wielding immense clout as well as celebrity capital. This new pattern is replacing the old binary of elite and mass leading to a new idea of political community and citizenship. Similarly lower caste leaders have created an aura around themselves as champions of justice, though often compromise their subversive politics by allowing themselves to be coopted by the mainstream political parties. Activists and intellectuals too exercise immense influence in terms of their capability in building public opinions on the people they represent by offering new visions of politics and development.

This workshop attempts to broaden the critical discourse on the social processes through which elites are constructed and create frameworks through which such performativity can be deconstructed. The social, political and economic understanding of elites would be interwoven through the fabric of culture, which we hope would encourage a more nuanced and mediated theorizing not limited to the typical tropes. Deadline for submitting abstracts 15 April 2015. [More information](#).



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



Paul Olav 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. Deadline for submitting abstracts is 31 March 2015.

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.

• **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

• **BASAS 2015 conference focuses on The Securitisation of South Asia**



The British Association for South Asian Studies (BASAS) holds its 29th Annual Conference at University of Portsmouth, 8–10 April 2015. Themed *'The Securitisation of South Asia'*, the conference aims to address the ways in which concepts of security and insecurity have and are playing themselves out in different South Asian contexts at macro, meso, and micro scales. We invite proposals for panels as well as independent papers that address the conference theme—whether at global, personal, local, regional, state and inter-state levels—within South Asia and across its diaspora. Panels and papers might be focused around issues of hard security as well as everyday security/insecurity. Topics of interest may include military intervention (the history of and current manifestations), the impact of the so-called global war on terror which could be explored through a diaspora lens or examination of foreign policy and state level responses; as well as issues relating to human security; gender-based violence, water and food security, migration, urbanisation to name but a few possible options. As always the organisers welcome bold, innovative and interdisciplinary approaches. The deadline for the submission of panel proposals/papers was 28 February 2015. You must be a BASAS member in order to register for the conference. [More information.](#)

• **Montreal conference on Currencies of Commerce in the Greater Indian Ocean World**

An International Conference on *"Currencies of Commerce in the Greater Indian Ocean World"* will be held at the Indian Ocean World Centre (IOWC), McGill University, Montreal, Canada,



on 23–24 April 2015. It is being organised by Dr. Steven Serels from Harvard University, USA. Until the second half of the twentieth century, there were a number of widely-used, competing currencies circulating throughout the greater Indian Ocean world (IOW), including in the western IOW, for example, the Indian rupee, the Maria Theresa thaler, the British pound, the French franc, the East African shilling, the Italian lira, the Turkish lira, the Egyptian pound, the Ethiopian dollar and the Iranian rial. In addition, there were a number of commodity currencies, including salt bars, cloth squares, grain, beads and shells, as well as paper money, promissory notes, bills of exchange and other drafts. Both buyers and sellers had flexibility in terms of determining the currencies used in market transactions. This conference seeks to interrogate the social, political and economic implications of this multi-currency economic system. Papers are welcome on any region of the greater IOW, which is taken to include Eastern Africa, the Red Sea, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, South Asia, East Asia, and the western Pacific Ocean. [More information.](#)

• **Delhi conference on Gender, Conflict and Security: Perspectives from South Asia**

The Department of International Relations, Faculty of Social Sciences at the South Asian University (SAU) in Delhi, in collaboration with UN Women, invites paper proposals for a regional conference entitled *"Gender, Conflict and Security: Perspectives from South Asia"*



to be held in New Delhi on 23–24 April 2015. Deadline for submission of abstracts is Monday 2 March 2015. While the conference would be anchored to the core terrains of International Politics and Peace Studies, it would attempt to strike conversations across disciplines, particularly drawing on contributions from anthropology, sociology, political science and economics. It would engage with three broad themes: How does gender intersects with conflict and security discourse in South Asia? How would perspectives emanating from South Asia enrich the Women, Peace and Security discourse at the global level? How would this push to re-imagine the women, conflict and security discourse from a South Asian perspective? [More information about the conference.](#)

SAU is an international university established by the eight member nations of South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) viz. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It started its operations from the academic year 2010. The university now offers post-graduate and doctoral programmes in various disciplines that include Development Economics, Computer Science, Biotechnology, Mathematics, Sociology, International Relations and Law. It will ultimately have 11 post-graduate faculties and a faculty of undergraduate studies. SAU attracts students from all member nations and its degrees are recognised by all the eight SAARC countries. The University is currently functioning from Akbar Bhawan Campus in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi before it eventually moves in to its 100 acre campus in Maidan Garhi, South Delhi where the construction is starting very soon.

• **SOAS South Asia Institute graduate workshop on South Asia Cityscapes**



SOAS South Asia Institute arranges its Second Annual Graduate



Workshop with the theme *"South Asia Cityscapes: Social, economic and cultural transformations"* on

8 June 2015, 09.00–18.00. This one-day workshop intends to bring together research students working on South Asian cities and aspects of urban life in South Asia to address a broad range of questions about how everyday engagements, material conditions, new and evolving imaginaries, cultural production, and the social space of cities are being negotiated within urban and urbanizing South Asia. Venue: Meet 116, Russell Square Main Building, SOAS, University of London. A Call for Papers has been published, deadline for submissions is 27 February.



Urbanising processes are taking place across the South Asian region, the home of more than a fifth of humanity. South Asian cityscapes are consequently playing a significant role in shaping social, economic and cultural formations. Arjun Appadurai's notion of 'five scales' (or flows) conceptualises the rapid processes by which ideas, information, people, finances, and technologies are constantly shifting, evolving and emerging within the global context. South Asia's 'global cities', such as Mumbai, Karachi, and Dhaka, as Sassen has highlighted, are showing new modes of operation no longer tightly bound to national and regulatory systems. However, as Hansen points out, cities in South Asia have simultaneously not produced the individualised modernities expected of industrial cities but rather urban spaces in which ethnicity, religion, and other aspects of 'traditional' life are shaping contemporary urban sociality and the uses of public space.

PhD students working in the humanities and social sciences whose work is at a sufficiently advanced stage for them to share it with their peers, and postdocs who were awarded their doctorate no more than one year before the date of the workshop, are invited to send titles and 250-word abstracts. Contributions may be either a draft thesis chapter or a paper written specially for the workshop. Selected contributors will be invited to come to SOAS to present their work in an engaging and supportive forum. A contribution towards costs of travel and accommodation will be provided for students selected to present papers who are registered at British and European universities and who are travelling from outside London. Students from further afield are also welcome to submit abstracts but we cannot undertake to cover their costs. PhD students wishing to attend only and not to present to the workshop are also welcome to register. [More Information](#)

● **Peshawar conference on Dynamics of Change in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Region**

The Department of Political Science at University of Peshawar, Pakistan, and the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF), Islamabad, organise a Fourth Annual International Conference on 12–14 June 2015. The theme for the conference is *"The Dynamics of Change in the Pakistan-Afghanistan Region: Politics on Borderland"*. Venue: Bara Gall Summer Campus, University of Peshawar, Deadline for submitting abstracts is 30 March 2015.



Over the past couple of centuries the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland has gained increased level of international attention. Much of this attention, in both policy and scholarship, was drawn to the borderland's geo-strategic significance and how it proved to be a defining part of the so-called Great Wars. This led to a unique albeit at times narrow understanding of the borderland often resulting in either diminutive or exaggerated narratives. Thus in the last three conferences, which we organized, we noticed how the dominant narratives, discourses, and theories of the Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland are quite wanting in critically addressing the challenge of making the borderland legible. Given the hitherto marginality of the local voices and traditions, the conference will put light on what are the ways and sources of knowledge that can help to make their lives more legible, meaningful, and inclusive? What makes Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland a borderland? In what ways do the recent scholarship on borderlands contribute to problematizing as well as understanding the various dynamics of Pakistan-Afghanistan borderland? What are the political and economic challenges to the state building in both Pakistan and Afghanistan, especially in the backdrop of recent developments in the region? [More information.](#)

● **Colombo conference on Socio-Economic Equity in South Asia**

An International Conference on *"Promoting Socio-Economic Equity in South Asia: Challenges and Prospects"* (ICPSE) will be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 15–16 July 2015. It is being organised by the National Science Foundation (NSF), in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). The conference aims to bring together multidisciplinary researchers to present their findings and views to help develop and strengthen research and decision making on the range of issues linked to the socio-economic equity of the South Asia. The proposed South Asian Dialogue seeks to bring together key social scientists in South Asia and other countries who work on various aspects of social inequality in the South Asian region with a view to advancing the understanding of the subject, identifying gaps in research and developing an agenda for research, preferably to be undertaken through international as well as interdisciplinary collaboration. Abstracts should be submitted before 30 April 2015. [Full information.](#)



● **2015 Tamil Summer School in Puducherry**

The Puducherry (Pondicherry) Institute of Linguistics and Culture holds its



regular Tamil Summer School from 27 July - 5 September 2015. The summer school offers an intensive education in spoken Tamil language at basic and intermediate levels, and it combines classroom lessons with field visits so that the participants can practice at most their language skills in the course of studies. Registration is open from 1 March – 30 May 2015. However, applications will be accepted after the last date under special circumstances/request.



The Tamil Summer School was initiated in 1998 by the Department of Social Sciences, French Institute, Puducherry to offer training to language researchers in Humanities and Social sciences. PILC has been organising this course since 2004. [Read an article from The Hindu about the Tamil Summer School 2008, \(with a photo by T. Singaravelou\).](#) The medium of teaching is English as well as Tamil. The TSS focuses on Spoken Tamil rather than on the classical and written forms being taught in European Universities. The level of spoken Tamil course is INTERMEDIATE. [More information \(as pdf-file\).](#)

• **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, that is 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. It is a great venue for intellectual, professional, and social exchange. Panels, roundtables, and individual papers on all topics pertaining to South Asian studies are welcome. 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.

In addition to the more than 100 panels, the conference chair and committee invites distinguished speakers and renowned performers and artists to present during the Joseph W. Elder Keynote Lecture, the plenary address, and other designated special events. This year features an expanded program to include Thursday pre-conferences with the registration fee.

Last year, the plenary speakers were P. Sainath of the People's Archive of Rural India (PARI) and award-winning writer, photographer and filmmaker Jason Motlagh. This year's keynote speaker will be announced in the coming months leading up to the conference. Venue: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton St., Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Deadline for submitting papers is 1 April 2015. [More information.](#)



• **4th International Congress of Bengal Studies to be held in Tokyo**

The 4th International Congress of Bengal Studies will be held in Tokyo, Japan, on 12–13 December 2015. It is organised by Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Deadline for submitting abstracts is 30 April 2015. Papers on all the areas of Bengal Studies are invited, including, but not limited to, Literature and Criticism, Comparative Literature, Linguistics, Folklore, Cultural Studies, Media Studies, History, Economics, Geography, Political Science, Development Studies, Ecology, Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy, Fine Arts, Archaeology, Museology are invited. Papers should be written either in English or Bengali. [More information.](#)



• **Call for panels to 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies in Warsaw**



The European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS) now invites panel proposals for the 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS), to be



held in Warsaw, Poland, 27 – 30 July 2016. The call for panels is now open and will close on 15 May 2015. Please note that the conference website and panel proposal form will be ready by the end of March 2015.

EASAS appreciates a well-balanced composition of convenors and panellists within a panel (by gender, with an international mix of participants, and senior and junior scholars) but the main criterion will be the high academic quality of your panel. One convenor per panel must be based in a European institution. The conference organizers will also seek to ensure that the wide range of disciplines usually represented at the conference finds adequate coverage, both separately and in interdisciplinary panels. Panel convenors and paper presenters at the 24th ECSAS must be members of EASAS through 2015 & 2016 or 2016 & 2017. Non-members cannot attend the conference. [More information.](#)

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.](#)

• **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

• **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

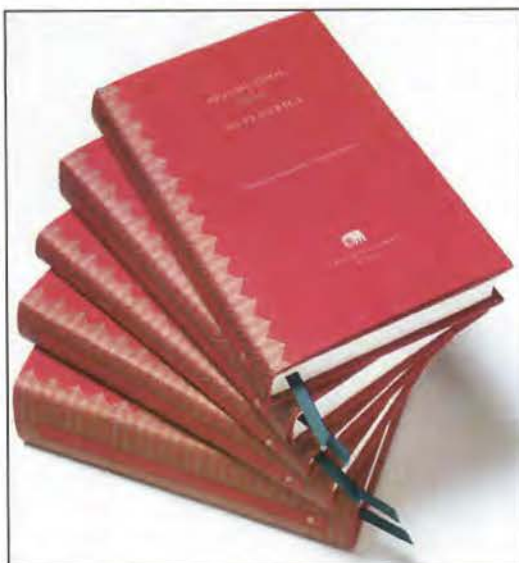
• Harvard computer student launched Murty Classical Library of India

The Murty Classical Library of India is a brand new initiative that aims to make available the great literary works of India from the past two millennia. Many classic Indic texts have never reached a global audience, while others are becoming increasingly inaccessible even to Indian readers. The creation of a classical library of India is intended to reintroduce these works to a new generation of readers.

The man behind the initiative, Rohan Murty, was a doctoral student of computer science at Harvard University. Attending a philosophy course, Murty got some insight into the rich literature of South Asia. He asked himself why all this amazing literature was not easily available, and since he had quite a lot of money, he decided to invest them into books publication in collaboration with Harvard.

The plan is to publish 500 commented volumes, providing modern English translations of classical works, many for the first time, across a vast array of Indian languages, including Bangla, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Pali, Panjabi, Persian, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. The text in the appropriate regional script will appear alongside the translation. An introduction, explanatory commentary, and textual notes will accompany each work with the aim of making these volumes the most authoritative and accessible available. [More information about the Murty Classical Library of India.](#)

The first five volumes were published in January 2015. Swedish researcher Henrik Chetan Aspengren published an article about the Murty initiative in Svenska Dagbladet on 15 February 2015. [Read the article entitled "Ingenjörens fråga av indiska klassiker nytt liv"](#).



• Gigantic Yoga mat in Kungsträdgården part of 2015 Sambandh festival

The 2015 Indian festival in Stockholm scheduled for the end of May, will include a gigantic yoga mat in the centrally located Kungsträdgården. The initiative comes from Indian ambassador to Sweden Banashri Bose Harrison who wants to carry forward prime minister Narendra Modi's plans to popularise the ancient Indian form globally. The yoga flash mob will take place on Saturday 23 May, entitled the Namaste India day. All Indians living in Sweden are invited to join in either as volunteers through any of the different Indian associations that will set up tents in Kungsträdgården, or as visitors who will help mark this day as the day when India comes to Sweden in full force.

In addition to yoga we will also show the wonderful diversity of Indian cuisine. At the festival, food from the different regions of India like Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, Andhra/Telangana, UP/Nawabi, Mughlai etc will be showcased. The embassy is inviting various state/regional associations in Sweden to come and display their regional cuisine. Ten market stands are available that will be given for free to associations on first-come, first-serve basis. Indian restaurateurs and commercial food caterers are also welcome and would be offered professional tents at a subsidized rate. In addition, travel and tourism operators will be allowed to set up stalls and sell their India destination packages. They would be offered professional tents at a subsidized rate. As for arts, crafts, dance & culture, some of the local dance associations will be given the possibility to come and perform during the day. The Swedish national dance academy and circus school will also come to perform.

For more information regarding the event, or if you wish to participate as an organiser/association/vendor/sponsor, kindly contact the [Indian Embassy in Stockholm](#).

Telephone: +468107008, Facebook: www.facebook.com/IndianEmbassyStockholm



• 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

• Swedish departments where research on South Asia is going on

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 advices from the The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office about safety aspects on travelling to the countries of South Asia.