

SASNET - Swedish South Asian Studies Network

Lund University

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SWEDISH SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES NETWORK

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After successfully organizing a first explorative workshop in the SASNET South Asia Media Project at Lund University 19–20 October 2015, SASNET again arranged a similar explorative workshop this time in New Delhi, India during 7–9 December 2015. Venue: India Habitat Centre in New Delhi. A large crowd of Indian media researchers, journalists and students attended the three-day conference. SASNET was represented by Anna Lindberg, Lars Eklund and Andreas Mattsson.

The aim of the workshops have been to bring Indian and South Asian media researchers and journalists together to seek new ways of working with future challenges and also to highlight possible projects.

The final point on the workshop schedule consisted of prize award ceremony. Before the workshop, the Centre for Work, Technology and Social Change (WTR) and SASNET had decided to award INR 100,000 to one enterprise or individual from India for their work in social innovation in a digital context (more information). The winning candidate to this #innovationforgood award, as it was called, was the organisation Factly, represented by its founder Rakesh Reddy Dubbudu (photo from the award ceremony). Read Lars Eklund's conference report.



• SASNET visit to Lund University's Indian collaboration partners in biofuel research

After attending the SASNET Media Workshop 7–9 December 2015, SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund also made a visit to the Indian Oil Corporation's Research & Development Centre at Faridabad, outside Delhi. He was invited by the Centre for Advanced Bioenergy Research, involved in a fruitful research collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering at Lund University. The collaboration with Lund focuses on Biomass pre-treatment, Enzymatic Hydrolysis, and Biomass Manufacturing and Process Development.



The idea is to explore the ongoing biofuel energy research of different kinds in Lund and Faridabad, and exchange expertise. Several senior Indian researchers have visited Lund, and vice versa. During the Fall 2015, SASNET also funded a two-months fellowship at Lund University for PhD candidate Shveta Soam. During his visit to the Faridabad R&D Centre, Lars met Dr. D.K. Tuli, Executive Director and Coordinator for the Centre for Advanced Bioenergy Research, in charge of the Swedish collaboration, and the entire staff (photo). Dr Ravi Gupta, Senior Research Manager at the Centre, organised a study tour for Lars, visiting the well-equipped labs and demonstrating the intricate processes used for converting agricultural waste products such as rice straw into biofuel in the form of Ethanol. Read more...

• SASNET 2016 Conference on Modernity in South Asia



SASNET now plans for a conference entitled "Modern Matters: Negotiating the Future in Everyday Life in South Asia" to be held on 20 – 22 September 2016 at Lund University, Sweden. The conference will explore what it means to consider oneself modern or outside the limits of modernity, in an extremely diverse region. It will also examine how the notion of modernity is experienced, contested, and negotiated in South Asia within the broader promise and hope of the 'Asian century'. We particularly seek to examine South Asian modernity in terms of regional, national, and global societies by pursuing the following larger questions: Can we discover regional understandings of modernity in South Asia? If so, how do they differ, and what do they have in common? What are the specific discourses related to global modernity in South Asian societies? How are class, caste,

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ethnicity, religion, and gender related in contemporary South Asian societies? What resistance to modernity can we find in South Asian contexts? What categories are involved, and which arguments are raised? How might violence relate to South Asian modernity? The three keynote speakers will be Faisal Devji, University of Oxford, UK; Dipesh Chakrabarty, University of Chicago, USA; and Sumi Madhok, London School of Economics (LSE), UK. The deadline for panel suggestions is 15 February 2016. Full information about the conference.



Faisal Devji, Dipesh Chakrabarty and Sumi Madhok.

• First 2016 Fika Without Borders lecture on Bhutan



The South Asian Student Association (SASA) in collaboration with SASNET organises its first Fika Without borders lecture of 2016 on Thursday 21 January 2015, 17–19. Venue: Basement floor at Lund University External Relations (ER) building, Stora Algatan 4, Lund. In this Fika Without Borders we explore Bhutan with the help of Winnie Bothe.

During the talk Winnie will explore democratisation in Bhutan. The country is often called the world's youngest democracy, however the notion of democracy raises deeper questions of what a 'democracy' entails.

The Bhutanese constitution codifies all the institution associated with Dahl's notion of polyarchy. Democracy, however, is not simply a reified set of institutions. It is as much about how we imagine these institutions. Drawing legitimacy from European constitutional tradition, the Bhutanese constitution is imagined as a system where the monarch is the guardian of sovereignty. In practice democracy has entered Bhutan, but it mainly engages the interests of the educated elite, whilst the rural citizens are still viewed as too immature to take responsibility for the constitutional rights they are given. In the image of the monarchy, they are engaged in a theatre of displaying respect for their superiors in the state. As such they still fulfil the role as subjects of the King and of those who govern in his name. The Fika without borders South Asia events always are a series of 8 lectures during the year with another South Asian country in focus every lecture. The events draw a mixed crowd of Pakistani, Indian, Bangladeshi, Nepalese and other international Lund University students and researchers, and each time a number of students and researchers from the country in focus are invited to share their knowledge and experience of their country in an informal way.



• SASNET seminar on Social Media and Democratic Participation

Dr. M.S Harikumar from the Department of Communication and Journalism at University of Kerala, India, holds a SASNET lecture at Lund University on Wednesday 3 February 2016, 13.15–15.00. The seminar, organised in collaboration with the Department of Communication and Media at Lund University, is entitled "Social Media and Democratic Participation: An Indian Experience". Venue: Fakultetsklubben at the Centre for Languages and Literature (SOL), Helgonbacken, Lund.

Dr. Harikumar is a media professional turned academician with close to two decades of experience in the Indian newspaper industry. He was earlier chief sub-editor and chief reporter working for the *Mathrubhumi* daily, which is one of the most circulated newspapers in India. His PhD thesis in Mass Communication was a seminal explorative study on the reader-editor gap with a special emphasis on the gate-keeping theories of Mass Communication. [More information.](#)



• More information about SASNET and its activities

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

Research Community News

• Doctoral dissertation on Access to Medical Abortion and Contraceptive Choice in Rajasthan

Mandira Paul from the Division of International Maternal and Child Health (IMCH), Department of Women's and Children's Health, Uppsala University, will defend her doctoral dissertation entitled "Simplifying Reproductive Health in Low-Resource Settings – Access to Medical Abortion and Contraceptive Choice, the Importance of Gendered Structures in Rajasthan" on Monday 11 January 2016, at 13.00. Venue: Gustavianum, Uppsala University. Mandira has been supervised by Associate professor Marie Klingberg-Allvin, Professor Birgitta Essén and Professor Kristina Gemzell-Danielsson.

Her project is focusing on medical abortion and contraceptive use among rural and urban women in the Indian state of Rajasthan, with an aim to simplify medical abortion and make it more acceptable to women as well as to health care providers. Simplifying and demedicalising medical abortion can decrease service costs and make services more affordable to women in low-resource settings. Moreover, combining medical abortion with contraceptive counseling and health promotion may enhance women's motivation to adapt a contraceptive method post-abortion. In addition, making abortion services more acceptable to women may motivate women to seek future reproductive health care services from the public health system, something that is not widely seen today. [Read more about the dissertation project.](#)



• Swedish Sustainability Foundation supports Medicine to cure Arsenic poisoning



The Swedish Sustainability Foundation (SSF) is an organization that supports innovative science-based start-ups that will make a difference for presently marginalized people. It mainly supports projects by young innovative scientists for projects and enterprises that use modern science for sustainable improvement of human life. Many of its projects are related to South Asia.

An important project supported by the Swedish Sustainability Foundation deals with providing a Medicine to Cure Arsenic Poisoning in Bangladesh. SSF has given support to a young scientist, Abdul Kader (photo), who holds a PhD in Molecular Biology from the Department of Microbiology, Tumor and Cell Biology (MTC) at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, for a successful work



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on this, now commercialized through a company, Viola Vitalis.



Based on research made in the USA, with the main purpose of developing a cure against Parkinson's disease, the drug has been developed that cures arsenic poisoning by chelating the arsenic and by improving the immune system. The SSF is supporting Viola Vitalis by reaching out for assistance to outside donors. The government of Bangladesh has approved the drug and now Viola Vitalis is working towards financing mass production in order to meet a planned order from the authorities of Bangladesh. SSF now also supports the setting up of Mobile Clinics for Treatment of Arsenic Poisoning in Bangladesh. SSF also supports a project on small-scale renewable polygeneration in Bangladesh for electric power generation and arsenic free water; and a project to bottle ORS to battle dehydration. The foundation particularly supports projects relating to purifying water, nutritious food, sustainable energy and modern medicine. Its purpose is to support innovative science-based projects in the area of environmental ecology and health. In addition, the foundation seeks to ensure that science is not shelved in academia but comes to practical use while also spread advances in science outside the countries it is developed in. It does so by supporting innovative start-up

companies and assistance in implementing sustainable solutions and finance innovative projects. [More information about the Foundation and support to South Asia related research.](#)

• Linnaeus University faculty on India tour

During the period 23–27 November 2015, Linnaeus University – located in Växjö and Kalmar – organized a university-wide faculty trip to New Delhi, India. The purpose of the trip was to raise awareness and motivate interest for academic and research collaboration in India, as well as to offer a possibility for staff members to explore and learn more about the academic culture in higher education and research in India. There were 14 staff members in various positions and academic fields joining the trip, including the Vice-Rector responsible for internationalisation, a Pro-Dean, and professors/researchers and lecturers as well as administrative staff representing various subject areas including business, engineering, science, media and communication, history, religion and languages. [Read more...](#)



• Education About Asia invites articles on Sports, Culture, and Asia



Education About Asia (EAA) is the peer-reviewed teaching journal of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS). The articles in the journal are intended to provide educators and academics in the humanities and social sciences with basic understanding of Asia-related content. For the fall 2016 the journal is developing a special section entitled *Sports, Culture, and Asia* for which authors are invited to submit manuscripts on the historical and contemporary roles and influence of sports on Asian culture. Articles should be useful for instructors and/or students in undergraduate survey courses such as World History, Economics, and Cultural Anthropology. The deadline for manuscripts is 31 March 2016. [More information.](#)



• Teaching Fellowship in Asian History announced at Edinburgh University

The School of History, Classics and Archeology at Edinburgh University in Scotland invites applications for a teaching fellowship in Asian History. The position is a full-time, fixed term appointment, tenable from 1 January 2016 for 18 months only, and arises from the award of an Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) grant to Professor Crispin Bates. Edinburgh has a thriving research and teaching culture in the history of South Asia, China, and Japan, and a newly established research group in Global and Transnational History. The successful candidate will be a vital member of a vibrant and collegial group of academics working in this important field. The closing date for applications is Tuesday 5th January 2016. [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

• Nordic Centre in India offers three summer programmes 2015

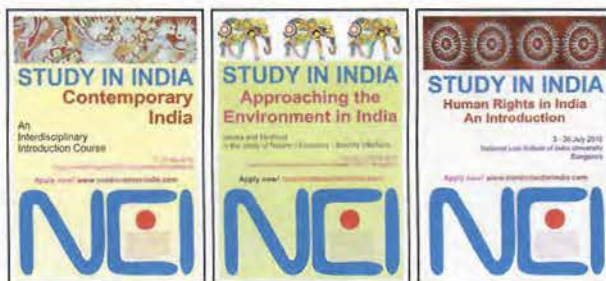
Just like last year, the Nordic Centre in India university consortium organises three short term (four weeks) summer courses for Nordic students in India during the summer 2016, one based at Hyderabad and the other two at Bangalore. All three courses are available in the 7.5 ECTS variant and the 10 ECTS variant. The course structure remains the same with the exception of additional coursework for students opting for the 10 ECTS variant. The last date for receipt of applications is 31 March 2016. Please contact the international office of your home university (if a member of the NCI consortium) for more information about the application process or write to the Programme Manager, Ms. Christabel Royan for more information. The courses are

Contemporary India. An Interdisciplinary Introduction Course, at the University of Hyderabad during the period 3 – 30 July 2016.

– Approaching the Environment in India. Issues and Methods in the Study of the Nature-Economy-Society Interface at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) in Bangalore during the period 26 June – 23 July 2016.

– Human Rights in India: An Introduction at the National Law School of India University in Bangalore during the period 3 – 30 July 2016.

[Read more about the courses...](#)



• Nordic Centre in India offers semester programmes in Puducherry, Hyderabad and Bangalore



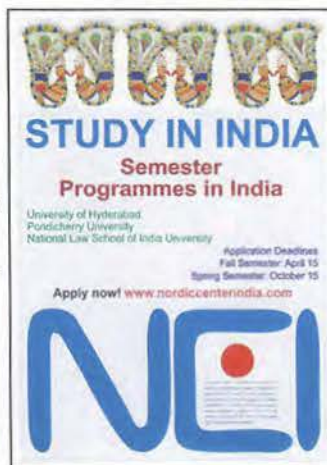
From 2016, the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) university consortium offers three semester programmes at Indian universities. Besides Pondicherry University in Puducherry and University of Hyderabad in Telangana state, NCI now also offers seats at National

Law School of India in Bangalore, Karnataka.

Students from the 20 member universities and research institutes in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden will have the possibility to spend a full semester in Puducherry, Hyderabad or Bangalore to study freely chosen courses (equal to 30 ECTS) at the university.

Since many years the NCI and the Study in India Program at University of Hyderabad are running successful semester programmes in Hyderabad, whereas the collaboration with Pondicherry University was started in 2013. Established in 1985, Pondicherry University is a Central University with 34 Departments, 10 Centres and 2 Chairs under the umbrella of totally 15 schools. The university also has two campuses in Karaikal (150 km south of Puducherry) and Port Blair (Andaman and Nicobar Islands). As an affiliating University it also has 5 Medical colleges, 16 Engineering Colleges, 30 Colleges of Education and 19 Arts and Science Colleges. The Study in India Program at the university was established in 2000 and has hosted several programs for international students throughout the years. The collaboration with National Law School of India was launched last year.

Application deadlines are 15 April every year for the fall semester, and 15 October for the spring semester. [Full information about the NCI semester courses.](#)



• 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

• Historical time and space in focus for 2016 Asian Dynamics Initiative Conference

The Asian Dynamics Initiative at University of Copenhagen announces its 8th annual International ADI conference to be held 20-22 June 2016. The theme for the 2016 ADI conference will be *Asia across historical time and space in a global context*. It will take place over three days and feature distinguished keynote speakers as well as

interdisciplinary panels. Confirmed keynote speakers include Kenneth Pomeranz, University of Chicago and Tansen Sen, City University New York (CUNY) and NYU Shanghai Campus. Some of the panels are convened by scholars working on South Asia. Dan Hirsland, Rune Bennike and Luisa Steur organises a panel on *Ethnographies of Capitalist Transformation across Asia*, and Ravinder Kaur convenes a panel entitled *Life of the Image*. Finally, there is a panel with a direct South Asia focus, on *Civil Society in South Asia – a comparative approach* examining change in civil society over the years and changes in actors and structures in civil society in South Asia. The deadline for submitting paper proposals is 1 March 2016. [More information.](#)



• 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

• New Delhi conference on sociology of elites in contemporary India

An International conference on the sociology of elites in contemporary India will be held in New Delhi,

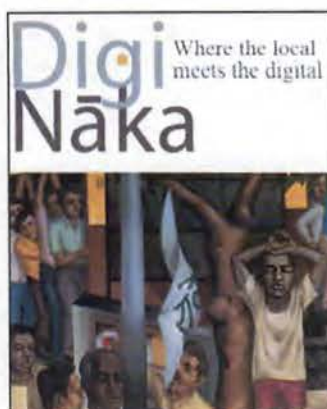


India, 4–5 January 2016. It is being organised by Centre de Sciences Humaines de New Delhi (CSH), New Delhi, and Ashoka University, New Delhi. This conference intends to bring together scholars conducting researches that could help develop a better understanding of the various privileged

sections of the Indian society. As their actions, their choices, their ways of thinking, etc. have a major impact on the rest of society, it is indeed decisive to get a better sociological understanding of the lifestyles and the trajectories of the individuals who compose this group. Keynote speakers include Sébastien Chauvin, Amsterdam University, and Michèle Lamont, Harvard University, Cambridge, USA. [More information.](#)

• **TISS seminar on the digital and growing access to the Internet in India**

The School of Media and Cultural Studies at Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) in Mumbai, India, organises an International seminar entitled "DIGINAKA – Where the Local Meets the Digital" on 7–9 January 2016. Naka is a Marathi word meaning crossroads or junction. The seminar will focus on the advent of the digital and growing access to the Internet in India. Along with the availability of cheap devices such as mobile phones this has brought about an explosion of user-mediated creativity across various platforms, allowing for sharing, tweaking, co-creating and repurposing of digital media content in the public sphere. While the digital divide reproduces and intensifies various social hierarchies of gender, caste, class and region, one sees a simultaneous deployment of the digital by sections of society that previously were denied access. Papers are invited, from scholars across disciplines on the following themes falling within the rubric of local appropriations of digital technologies in the Indian context, such as Subaltern Image-making Practices; Regional Cinemas; Internet Censorship and Regimes of Control; Social Movements and Online Spaces; and Hate Speech and the Internet. An edited volume and a journal issue of *SubVersions* are envisaged, based on the seminar papers. [Full information.](#)



• **16th International Conference on Maharashtra: Culture and Society in Aurangabad**

The 16th International Conference on Maharashtra: Culture and Society (ICMCS) will be held at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University in Aurangabad, India, 8–10 January 2016. The



theme of the conference will be the formation, practices, and delineation of Places and Spaces in Maharashtra. The multidimensional approach required to study spaces and places provides a very broad scope for the conference. It is convened by Dr. Bina Sengar from the university's Department of History and Ancient Indian Culture, School of Social Sciences.

The conference will encourage the use of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches from the social sciences, the humanities, and the natural sciences. The space/place dynamics in the region of Maharashtra provide an array of historical and contemporary themes for our conference. Within the five major sub-regions of Maharashtra (Konkan, Western Maharashtra, Khandesh, Marathwada and Vidarbha), migrant cultures have been silent users of dominant spaces, and have created niche cultural spaces within them, by asserting local, global, transnational, migratory, religious, semiotic, connected, public or private identities. [Full information.](#)

• **Kolkata conference on Contemporary Debates in Public Policy and Management**

The 2nd International Conference on Contemporary Debates in Public Policy and Management will be held in Kolkata, India on 15–17 January 2016. It is organised by the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta (IIMC), and focuses on emerging policy challenges like public health and education policies, labor market reforms, social insurance and informal sector, management of rapid urbanization and domestic macro policies in the post-recession international economic order. Scholarly works on public policy and management from all disciplines are invited—including theoretical papers, case studies, historical studies, econometric work, ethnography, survey-based studies, experimental work and others. [More information.](#)



• **Third International Conference on Languages, Literature and Society in Bangkok**

The Third International Conference on Languages, Literature and Society (LLS2016) will be held on 18–19 January 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand. It is jointly organised by Ithaca College, New York, USA; the International Center for



Research & Development, Sri Lanka; JK University, India; and Unique Conferences Canada. Dr. Ramaratnam, Vice Chancellor, JK University, will be the academic chair, whereas Prabhath Patabendi is the conference convener. The event, the largest conference on languages in Asia, includes a chair by Dr. Ramaratnam, as well as a wide variety of panels on a broad range of language related topics such as indigenous languages, semiotics, classical literature contemporary literature, pragmatics, the history of linguistics among many others. [Full information.](#)

• **Goa conference on Regional Cooperation, Conflicts and Constructiveness in South Asia**

Parvatibai Chowgule College of Arts & Science in Margao, Goa, India, organises an international conference entitled "Regional Cooperation, Conflicts and Constructiveness in South Asia: Strengthening SAARC" on 21–23 January 2016. The conference aims at enabling researchers, planners, academicians and social workers to put forth their views on South Asia's promotion and growth as a region of global importance. South Asia, a composite of eight countries, is knitted historically, socio-culturally and economically. It represents diversity in human development, resource enhancement and socio-economic welfare. The



region with 3.8 per cent of the world's geographical area, supports nearly one fourth of the world's populace. But in the context of Human Development Index, in South Asia, Maldives and Bangladesh show dismal figures which are as low as 77 and 132 ranks respectively. Even the Human Poverty Index of Nepal and Afghanistan show discouraging figures. In fact, one billion of the world's 2.5 billion poor reside in South Asia. The Global Employment Trend 2013, states that youth employment rate in South Asia is 9.8 per cent, which is significantly higher than global figure of 3.8 per cent.



However, South Asia shows promises for the future. The current labor pool which is 1.8 billion, is expected to increase to 3.1 billion by 2025. Its "demographic dividend" will increase enormously as 60 per cent of its population is below 30 years. Further, 14 per cent of the world's urban population resides in this region and three-fourths of South Asia's economic growth is led by cities. From the present level of 31 per cent urbanization, it is expected that 50 per cent of South Asia's population will reside in cities, especially, megacities in the next 20 years.

The region also has bountiful human and natural resources. But, there are several barriers within the region which restrict their optimum utility and promotion of growth at different scales. The removal of these barriers, optimum and judicious use of all resources will surely help the region in a big way. Further, various issues like bilateral trade, sharing of river water, border disputes and border lands encroachment, cross border mobility of human resources, terrorism, illegal trade, political grievances amongst neighbors, power polarization and third party intervention that affects regional power balance, have put the regions on an edge of high Indo-centric discontent amongst neighbors.

[More information.](#)

• Noida workshop on Chronologies of 'Labour'

The Association of Indian Labour Historians (AILH) convenes an International Workshop entitled "*Chronologies of 'Labour': a Global Perspective*" in New Delhi 22–23 January 2016. It is organised in collaboration with the Research Module 'Labour as a Political Category' on behalf of the newly established and New-Delhi-based M.S. Merian International Centre of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences and Humanities. The Research Module is coordinated by Ravi Ahuja (Göttingen), Rana Behal (Delhi), Sharit Bhowmik (Mumbai), Andreas Eckert (Berlin), Chitra Joshi (Delhi), Nicole Mayer-Ahuja (Göttingen), Prabhu Mohapatra (Delhi), Christoph Scherrer (Kassel), Aditya Sarkar (Warwick), Marcel van der Linden (Amsterdam) and Willem van Schendel (Amsterdam). Venue for the workshop: V.V. Giri National Labour Institute in Noida.

The workshop seeks to bring together an interdisciplinary group of younger as well as experienced scholars from both the social and historical sciences in order to compare notes with regard to the temporal dynamics of 'labour' as a political category in the course of the long twentieth century. Such transregional comparisons, it is hoped, will permit to rehistoricize 'labour' by tracing convergences and divergences in its chronologies. Contributions based on original research that examine crucial transformations of 'labour' as a political category in one specific context are invited, the appropriation or adaptation of certain transnational political discourses to specific labour regimes or compare such processes in more than one context. [More information.](#)

• Göttingen conference on rural-urban dynamics in India and China

On 22-23 February 2016, the Centre for Modern Indian Studies (CeMIS) and Centre for Modern East Asian Studies (CeMEAS) at the University of Göttingen, Germany, organize a conference entitled *Rural-Urban Dynamics and Emergent Forms of Labor in India and China*. The conference will explore the ways in which, in recent decades, economic reforms in India and China have changed the adaptability, speed, and direction through which capital flows in the global market economy. This development reveals the fluidity and dynamism of the division between rural and urban, creating ambiguous interstitial spaces and networks through which new forms of labor arise. The conference now invites proposals for papers, to be submitted not later than 4 January 2016. [Full information.](#)



• Sri Lanka Conference on Peace, Reconciliation and Development Challenges

The Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka organizes an international conference on Peace, Reconciliation and Development Challenges (ICPRD) to be held on 24-25 March 2016. The conference seeks to create an alternative form of dialogue focused on peace, reconciliation and development that is vital for the sustenance of diverse communities, nation states, territories, cultures, values, and environments with input from a variety of disciplines. The deadline for the submission of abstracts is 31 December 2015. [Full information.](#)



• Seattle dissertation workshop for doctoral students working on New Media in Asia

The American Association for Asian Studies (AAS) organizes its 15th consecutive Dissertation Workshop, to be held in conjunction with the 2016 AAS Annual Conference in Seattle during the period 28–31 March 2016. The workshop is intended for doctoral students in the humanities and social sciences who are proposing or in the early stages of conducting dissertation research. The 2016 workshop focuses on the social, political and cultural consequences of New Media within and across Asia. The deadline for applications is 8 January 2016. [More information.](#)



• Canberra Conference on Religious Transformation in Asian History in Australia

On 7–9 April 2016, the Australian National University (ANU) in Canberra organizes an international conference entitled *Religious Transformation in Asian History*. Asian history and culture have been profoundly influenced by a number of religions. The primary aim of the conference is to explore various phenomena of socio-religious transitions in Asian history. The religiosity of Asian people is used as a new perspective by which Asian modernization can be reinterpreted in a fresh way. Deadline for abstracts and biographies is 9 February 2016. [Full information \(as a pdf file\).](#)



• Craig Jeffrey keynote speaker at ASAA conference in Canberra



The Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) holds its next Biennial



Conference at the Australian National University in Canberra on 5 – 7 July 2016. The conference organisers invite submission of proposals for panels and individual papers from scholars, students and others conducting research on Asia across the full range of academic disciplines. Participation by researchers from beyond

Australia is strongly encouraged.

The South Asian Studies Association of Australia (SASAA) – the organisation behind the excellent South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies – actively participates in the Canberra conference with special panels; and Professor Craig Jeffrey (*photo*), Director for the Australia India Institute, has accepted to present the SASAA keynote lecture at the ASAA conference. Prof. Jeffrey, former Professor of Development Geography at the University of Oxford, UK, is a leading authority on South Asian youth and also writes on Indian democracy, educational transformation, globalization, and the 'social revolution' that he sees occurring across India in the Twenty-First Century. Panel and individual paper proposals for the ASAA conference should be submitted by 8 April 2016. SASAA members should also list their submission as a SASAA Panel or Paper in the title and copy their submission to Dr. Meera Ashar. She is working closely with the ASAA organisers Robert Cribb and Edward Espinall to ensure a strong and lively South Asia presence at the ASAA. [Full information on the conference website.](#)



• **San Francisco conference on Masculinities in Asia**

On 3-4 November 2016 the Center for Asia Pacific Studies at the University of San Francisco organizes a conference on Masculinities in Asia. The conference seeks to provide a forum for interdisciplinary discussion and the sharing of the latest research on issues related to the construction of masculinities in Greater China, Japan, Korea, India and the Philippines. Possible themes include empire, nation, and globalization, gender identity, sexuality, medicine, masculinity in advertising, among others. The deadline for paper proposals is on 4 January 2016. [Full information.](#)



• **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

• **People's Peace Prize awarded to Mahatma Gandhi posthumously**

On Saturday 5 December 2015, the Peace Movement (Fredsrörelsen) at Island Orust on the Swedish west coast (50 km north of Gothenburg), gave a posthumous People's Peace Prize in memory of Alfred Nobel's Will to (Mahatma) M K Gandhi. The award was handed over to Ms. Radha Bhatt, Chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi, India. During his lifetime, Gandhi never received the more well-known Nobel Peace Prize, even though he was nominated five times.



The award ceremony took place at Svanviks skola near to fishing village Stocken, but was preceded by a day full of seminars, from 10 AM till 5 PM, on

Gandhi's life and mission. Peace researcher Jørgen Johansen from the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research in Lund, and Mr S Upadhyay (Jaya), educator and founder of Jagriti Vihara, a development organisation in Indian state of Jharkhand, lectured on "The Importance of Gandhi for Today's World". The International Tagore Choir from Lund, led by Bubun Munshi Eklund, performed at the award ceremony, and Indian food was served. The entire function was organised by Fredsrörelsen på Orust and its driving forces, Ola and Erni Friholt. [Read more...](#)

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

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

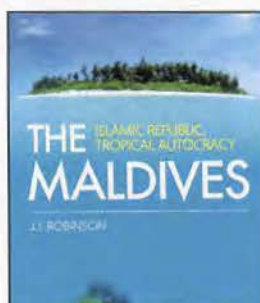
New and updated items on SASNET web site

• **New book by J J Robinson on the Maldives, Islam and Autocracy**



J.J. Robinson, former editor of the Maldives' only independent English news service, Minivan News, and an appreciated guest lecturer at a SASNET seminar on the Maldives in 2014 ([more information](#)), has recently published a new book entitled *The Maldives – Islamic Republic, Tropical Autocracy*.

The book pays attention to the Maldives as a country rather than as a luxury resort for tourists illustrating how the island nation has been a bellwether of change, good and bad, across much of the Islamic world. It does so by exploring how in 2008, Asia then longest-serving dictator, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, was brought down by Mohamed Nasheed, environmental activist, journalist, and politician, to hold the first democratic elections in the country. Nasheed thrust the Maldives into the spotlight as a symbol of the fight against climate change and the struggle for democracy and



human rights in one of the world's strictest Islamic societies. However democracy brought turmoil, protests, violence and intense political polarization resulting in the ousted dictatorship to overthrow Nasheed's government in 2012, supported by Islamic radicals and mutinying security forces.

Robinson, who is also a Fulbright scholar and graduate of the [Columbia School of Journalism](#), thus illustrates the shameless use of Islam for political ends and a politically manipulated judiciary. [More information about the book.](#)



• Swedish departments where research on South Asia is going on

This month there were 2 new departments added to SASNET's list:

- ‡ [Developmental Biology, Division of Microbiology and Molecular Medicine \(MMM\), Department of Clinical and Experimental Medicine \(IKE\), Linköping University](#)
- ‡ [Department of Physics, Chemistry and Biology \(IFM\), Linköping 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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