SASNET - Swedish South Asian Studies Network

Lund University

Newsletter 160 – 4 April 2014

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SWEDISH SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES NETWORK

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SASNET News

· We are the SASNET co-workers, April 2014

Anna Lindberg Lars Eklund Olle Frödin Linda Hiltmann Hawwa Lubna

SASNET that moved to new premises at the Dept. of Sociology in central Lund in December 2013 is currently staffed by five people. Besides the Director Anna Lindberg, since January 2014 working on a 50 p c schedule, and Lars Eklund, working full-time as deputy director in charge of research communication, Olle Frödin works as deputy director in charge of research collaboration on a 50 p c basis, Linda Hiltmann works as communicator on a 50 p c basis, and Hawwa Lubna works as

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communications assistant on a 20 p c basis. More information about SASNET's staff and board members.

• SASNET Inter-disciplinary Research Workshop focuses on Culture, Technology and Development

SASNET organises an inter-disciplinary research workshop on *"South Asia: Culture, Technology and Development 13* – 15 June 2014 in Höllviken, south of Malmö. Young scholars and researchers will present their papers in this workshop bridging the gap between Nordic researchers in various disciplines working on South Asia. Three eminent South Asia researchers will give keynote speeches at the workshop, namely Prof. Kirin Narayan and Dr. Assa Doron, both from the Australian National University (ANU); and Prof. Dhruv Raina from the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India. The workshop is co-organized by the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) university consortium, and the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen, and will be divided into three main thematic sessions:
Session A: Methods, Fieldwork and Ethics in the South Asian context; Session B: Culture , Religion and Technology in South Asia; and Session C: Theory, Practice and Development in South Asia.
A clear goal of the workshop discussions is to create strong academic cooperation on South Asia between different disciplines in the form of joint publications or new research projects. Around 40 appplicants whose abstracts have been accepted will participate. Full information about the 2014 Falsterbo conference.

• South Asia contributions to 27th Nordic Sociology conference in Lund

The Nordic Sociological Association will hold it's 27th conference in Lund on 14–16 August 2014. The conference, entitled *"Exploring Blind Spots"*, is organized and hosted by the Department of Sociology at Lund University. It will focus on the present age of accelerating and transforming social change, and one plenary session is dedicated to the theme *"Asian Encounters – Exposing or Creating Blind Spots?"*, including papers dealing with South Asia. The deadline for submitting abstracts to the conference has been extended till Monday 28 April. Full information about the conference.

SASNET is partly involved in the conference planning through the invitation of one of the eminent international plenary speakers, Professor Ravinder Kaur (*photo to the left*) from the Department of Humanities and Social Science at Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD). Her recent publications have dealt with the issues of Marrying in South Asia: Shifting Concepts, Changing Practices in a Globalising World; and Son Preference, Fertility Decline and the Future of the Sex Ratio at Birth.

The keynote speakers at the conference include Guy Standing from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, UK. He is a Professor of Development Studies, co-founder of the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN), and author of several books, including *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (2011) and *Work After Globalization: Building Occupational Citizenship* (2009). He is a famous advocate of the unconditional basic income and deliberative democracy. From 1975 to 2006 he worked at the International Labour Organization as a researcher on insecurity and flexibility of Labour, and he is known for having created the Decent Work Index. In recent years, Prof. Standing has been working with SEWA, the Indian Self-Employed

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Women's Association, to investigate the effect of unconditional cash transfers on India's rural villages *photo above*. A survey was made of rural and urban households in the state of Gujarat, focusing on an experimental concept of "social income" and economic insecurity. A book on the survey results was published in 2010 (Guy Standing, Jeemol Unni, Renana Jhabvala and Uma Rani, *Social Income and Insecurity: A Study in Gujarat*, New Delhi, Routledge).

The Nordic Sociological Association (NSA) organizes a Nordic Sociological Conference every second or third year. The responsibility rotates between the National Sociological Associations in the Nordic countries. In 2002 it was held in Reykjavik (Iceland), in 2004 Malmö (Sweden), in 2006 Åbo/Turku (Finland), in 2008 Aarhus (Denmark), in 2011 Oslo (Norway) and in 2012 it was again in Reykjavik (Iceland). The local organizing committee for the 2014 Lund conference is chaired by Professor Christofer Edling, who also happens to be the NSA President.

· Great interest for SASNET collaboration from South Asia researchers at Vilnius universities

On invitation by Raj Sekhar Basu, the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) Visiting Professor in Contemporary Indian Studies at Mykolo Romerio University (MRU) in Vilnius, Lithuania, SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund visited the Lithuanian capital 23–25 March 2014.

During his visit, he met researchers and administrators not only at MRU's Asian Studies Centre, to which Prof. Basu is affiliated, but also researchers at the Center of Oriental Studies at Vilnius University, the other major university in the city. At both places, the SASNET willingness to extend links with South Asia related researchers in Lithuania, which is a neighbouring country of Sweden, was met with enthusiasm, and Lars was able to pick up much valuable information about recent initiatives regarding South Asian studies in the Baltic republics, that also include Estonia and Latvia. Read Lars Eklund's report from the Vilnius universities.

· SASNET/UPF seminar on good and evil effects of tourism

Nils Finn Munch-Petersen holds a SASNET/UPF seminar entitled *"Who benefits from Tourism? Tourism as modern colonialism – while provider of employment and protector of nature and history"* at Lund University on Tuesday 8 April 2014, 19.00–21.00. Venue: Auditorium, Eden, Dept. of Political Science, Paradisgatan 5 H, Lund. See the poster.

The lecture will give examples of tourism, good and evil, mainly based on examples from Asia, Africa and the Pacific. Munch-Petersen is a social anthropologist, tourism planner and senior expert at the Nordic Institute for Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen. He holds lesser degrees in zoology, botany and geology, and has been involved with environmental and cultural tourism planning for more than 30 years. As a tourism planner he has worked in a wide range of countries including Eastern Europe, Arabia, South- and Central Asia, Indochina, Indonesia, the Philippines, most of the Island Pacific, Eastern-, Western-, and Southern Africa, Central America and the Caribbean. Read the abstract.

· SASNET seminar on Madeleine Slade, Romain Rolland and Gandhi: Friendship and Work

Susan Visvanathan, Professor of Sociology at the Centre for the Study of Social Systems at Jawaharlal Nehru Unversity (JNU) in Delhi, will hold a SASNET lecture at Lund

University on Friday 11 April 2014, 14.15–16.00. Venue: Conference room 3, Dept. of Sociology, Paradisgatan 5 G, Lund. See the poster.

Romain Rolland with Mahatma Gandhi.

Madeleine Slade – Mira Behn.

The presentation is based on Prof. Visvanathan's essay entitled "*Romain Rolland and Gandhi*", published in Think India, Vol.10 (2) April-June 2007. She looks at the way in which Khadi or homespun cloth becames the symbol of the Indian Freedom Movement. Romain Rolland, who was a close friend of Madeleine Slade, sent her to Mahatma Gandhi in India. In the years that followed, Slade became a close companion to Gandhi, and was known as Mira Behn. Going beyond the friendships, was the momentum of ideas, and the forgeing of the plan for freedom for individuals and communities. The paper looks at how this compulsion towards autonomy in a war torn world, makes three intellectuals put aside their personal travails in order to stand as symbols for a more humane world.

Susan Visvanathan is the author of *The Christians of Kerala: History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakoba* (OUP 1993), *An Ethnography of Mysticism* (IIAS 1998), *Friendship, Interiority and Mysticism* (Orient Blackswan 2007), *The Children of Nature: The Life and Legacy of Ramana Maharshi* (Roli 2012), and *Reading Marx, Weber and Durkheim Today* (Palmleaf Publications 2012). She is the editor of *Structure and Transformation:Theory and Society in India* (OUP 2001), and *Culture and Society* (Sage 2014). Besides, she is also the author of several works of fiction. *Nelycinda and Other Stories* (Roli 2012) is her latest work, dealing with diaspora communities in Kerala from the 3rd century AD to the present.

• SASNET/SASA seminar on the struggle for Azadi in Kashmir

Assistant Professor Farrukh Faheem from the South Asia Centre for Studies in Conflict Peace and Human Security, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, India, holds a SASNET lecture at Lund University on Tuesday 22 April 2014, 15.15–17.00. He will speak about *"Understanding Struggle for Azadi in Kashmir: Interrogating the Ordinary"*. The seminar is co-organised by the South Asian Students Association (SASA) and the School of Social Work, Lund University. Venue: Room 12, School of Social Work, 1st floor, Bredgatan 26, Lund. See the poster.

Dr. Faheem's research mainly focuses on Identity politics, Political Mobilization, Religious Nationalism, and Community Development, with a focus on Jammu and Kashmir. In his presentation, he will discuss the fact that Kashmir as a disputed territory presents itself as a space and the site of contestations between India, Pakistan and its inhabitants. While India and Pakistan respectively claim Kashmir to be their *Atoot Ange* (Inseparable part) and *Shahrage* (Jugular Vein), the people of Kashmir have resisted such claims. By attaching meanings to the historical events people of Kashmir have continuously shaped the political discourse and resisted interpretations by others. This 'meaning making' as a part of Kashmiri struggle for Azadi can be located in the everyday life of Kashmiris.

Dr. Farrukh argues that the process of 'meaning making' can be traced to the two decades of massive mobilizations that preceded the 1990s Azadi uprising in Kashmir. New generation of Kashmiris continuously developed interpretive sketches explaining the range of problems encountered by Kashmiri society. It was this generation which ultimately challenged and replaced Sheikh Abdullah's brand of politics in Kashmir. This

chapter will trace how different actors in Azadi mobilizations have influenced the interpretive processes by which Kashmiris negotiated the meaning of key political events subsequently informing the 1990s Azadi mobilizations.

• Nepal in focus for first SASA Fika without borders event

The South Asian Student Association (SASA) at Lund University – the student body of SASNET – now launches a new series of what is called *Fika Without Borders* events. In collaboration with SASNET and the voluntary organisation ABC Sweden, SASA organises a Fika Without Borders gathering focusing on Nepal, on Wednesday 16 April 2014, 17.00–19.00, at the Social Sciences Students Union building, Paradisgatan 5 S, Lund (close to SASNET's office). The programme includes presentations by Nepalese students and researchers in Lund, Nepalese music, and of course some Nepalese food will be served.

Fika Without Borders events were popularised by participants in the "Social Innovation in a Digital Context (SIDC)" programme at Lund University. The concept comes from the belief that a coffee table gathering can bring together people from all over the world. Fika is a social institution in Sweden; it means having a coffee break with one's colleagues, friends, date or family. These simple egalitarian social interactions can help break barriers and change the world one fika at a time.
SASA plans to organise Fika without borders events once a month, and having one of the eight SAARC countries as a theme each time.
More information about the April 16th event will be posted soon.

• SASNET/UPF seminar on India's Democracy in a South Asian Perspective

Subrata Mitra, Professor of South Asian Politics at the South Asia Institute, Heidelberg University, Germany, held a joint SASNET/UPF seminar entitled *"Beyond Exceptionalism: On India's Democracy in a South Asian Perspective"* at Lund University on Tuesday 1 April 2014, 19.00–20.45. See the youtube video of the seminar, shot by Talat Bhat.
The seminar was well-attended and much appreciated by Lund University students, researchers and others interested, who came to hear Prof. Mitra's arguments regarding the specific character of Indian democracy, explaining how similar origins lead to dissimilar outcomes? Asked broadly of the successor states of British colonial rule in South Asia, the question puts the Indian way, consisting of regular, free and competitive elections, full citizenship, secularism and federalism as the only appropriate path of transition from colonial to democratic rule. India's neighbouring countries, particularly Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bhutan may attach a different salience to the relationship of religion and politics or to the indivisibility of unitary power of the nation, with an invidious choice between their national identity as written into the constitutions, and a radical change in their institutional arrangement.
During his visit to Lund, Professor Mitra being invited by SASNET naturally also visited its office at Paradisgatan, and had fruitful discussions with deputy director Lars Eklund and asistant research communicator Linda Hiltmann.
Read more about Prof. Mitra and the Lund University seminar.

• More information about SASNET and its activities
See SASNET's page, http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasnet-news

Research Community News

• Linnaeus University seminar on Education and Entrepreneurship in India

The Linnaeus University in Växjö/Kalmar organised a one-day seminar entitled *"Education and Entrepreneurship in India – New challenges, new opportunities"* in Växjö on Thursday 3 April 2014, 09.00–16.00. The purpose was to highlight, inspire and learn more about India and collaboration possibilities in India. The event focused on education and entrepreneurship in the belief that both perspectives could learn from each other, but also on busnes opportunities. Dr. Kristina Myrvold, who earlier worked at the Centre for Theology and Religion, Lund University, but now works at the School of Cultural Studies in Växjö, has been the driving force and main organiser of this event, that was targeted towards staff and students at the university that wish to learn more about India and how to find collaboration possibilities. Venue: Room Myrdal, House K, Entrance 4, Linnaeus University campus Växjö, Georg Lückligs väg.

The speakers included Professor Chandra B. Sharma from the School of Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in New Delhi, who spoke about Higher Education in India; and Indian Ambassador Mrs. Banashri Bose Harrison, who spoke about India-Sweden Relations. Dr. Sirpa Tenhunen, Director for the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) presented its activities; and the SASNET Director, Dr. Anna Lindberg, spoke about the fifteen years of SASNET networking on South Asia. In the afternoon, business representatives from IKEA and Oria talked about their India experiences; and finally Mr. Robin Sukhia, Secretary General, Sweden-India Business Council (SIBC), gave a presentation entitled *"How to do business in India"*. More information.

• IPCC Fifth Assessment Report predicts severe consequences for South Asia

On Monday 31 March 2014, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published its Fifth Assessment Report (AR5), said to provide a clear view of the current state of scientific knowledge relevant to climate change. The report concludes that climate change already has had effects in real time – melting sea ice and thawing permafrost in the Arctic, killing off coral reefs in the oceans, and leading to heat waves, heavy rains and mega-disasters. And the worst was yet to come. Climate change poses a threat to global food stocks, and to human security, the blockbuster report claims. *"Nobody on this planet is going to be untouched by the impacts of climate change,"* says Rajendra Pachauri, chair of the IPCC. Go for the IPCC Fifth Assessment Report.

For Asia, the report predicts a gloomy picture where most of the countries, including India and China, will not only have to face more extreme weather events but also have to experience severe stress

on drinking water and food-grains by middle of this century. More specifically it predicts that both India and China, as well as Bangladesh and Pakistan will have to see *"negative impacts on aggregate wheat yields"*, impacting the overall food security in the continent. It also predics increased *"riverine, coastal, and urban flooding leading to widespread damage to infrastructure, livelihoods, and settlements, in Asia"*. This prediction may well see the impacts of sea-level rise on cities like Mumbai and Kolkata in India and Dhaka in Bangladesh, and other key predictions for Asia include "increased risk of heat-related mortality, permafrost degradation in Siberia, Central Asia and Tibetan Plateau, shrinking mountain glaciers across most of Asia, changed water availability in many Chinese rivers and increased flow in four rivers due to shrinking glaciers in the Himalayas". Read more in an article published by Economic Times, India.

• IGNOU Professor on month-long contact journey to Sweden and Finland

Dr. Chandra B. Sharma, Professor of Education at the School of Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), based in Delhi, India, makes an extensive study tour to Sweden and Finland during the period 24 March – 20 April 2014. He has been invited by the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) consortium, and the Linnaeus University in Växjö and Kalmar. The objective of his visit is to understand the Nordic education system and also find experts/institutions who would like to collaborate with Indian scholars and institutions (especially in the areas of school education, in-service teacher training, inclusive education, research). In Sweden, Prof. Sharma first visits the Linnaeus University campuses in Växjö and Kalmar, holding seminars at different departments, such as Media and Journalism, Religious Studies, and Psychology. He proceeds later to Lund University, where he has been invited to visit SASNET, and also the departments of Sociology, and Educational Sciences at campus Helsingborg. In Finland, Dr. Sharma will visit Helsinki University and the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu. More information about Prof. Sharma.

• India the world's largest importer of weapons according to SIPRI

India's arms imports are now almost three times as high as those of the second and third largest arms importers –China and Pakistan – according to new data on international arms transfers published on 17th March 2014 by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Overall, the volume of international transfers of major conventional weapons grew by 14 per cent between 2004–08 and 2009–13.

The SIPRI Arms Transfers Database contains information on all international transfers of major conventional weapons (including sales, gifts and production licences) to states, international organizations and armed non-state groups from 1950 to the most recent full calendar year. SIPRI data reflects the volume of deliveries of arms, not the financial value of the deals. As the volume of deliveries can fluctuate significantly year on year, SIPRI presents data for 5-year periods, giving a more stable measure of trends.

The volume of Indian imports of major weapons rose by 111 per cent between 2004–08 and 2009–13, and its share of the volume of international arms imports increased from 7 to 14 per cent. Meanwhile, Pakistan's imports of major arms increased by 119 per cent. The major suppliers of arms to India in 2009–13 were Russia (accounting for 75 per cent of imports) and the United States (7 per cent), which for the first time became the second largest arms supplier to India. In contrast, the USA's share of Pakistani imports in the same period was 27 per cent. China was also a major supplier in the region, accounting for 54 per cent of Pakistani arms imports and 82 per cent of Bangladeshi imports.

'Chinese, Russian and US arms supplies to South Asia are driven by both economic and political considerations,' said Siemon Wezeman, Senior Researcher with the SIPRI Arms Transfers Programme. 'In particular, China and the USA appear to be using arms deliveries to Asia to strengthen their influence in the region.' Read more about the SIPRI 2014 data on arms transfers.

· Government proposal to facilitate international researchers' right to stay and work in Sweden

The Swedish government has presented a proposal to the the Council on Legislation making it easier for international researchers to stay in Sweden after completing their degrees – a demand long raised by Swedish universities. The proposal aims at increasing Sweden's attractiveness for doctoral students, by making it possible for those who have conducted research in Sweden for a total of four years (during a seven-year period) should receive a permanent residence permit. Students who have studied for at least two semesters should be allowed to stay for six months after the end of their studies to apply for jobs. These changes, when enacted, will enable international students to stay and work in Sweden after graduation. At present, students and researchers are only allowed to stay a few days after completion of their studies, which makes Sweden among the worst in Europe. More information about the government proposal.

· Giant in global water management wins 2014 Stockholm Water Prize

John Briscoe, Professor of Environment Engineering at at Harvard University, USA, is named the 2014 Stockholm Water Prize Laureate for his unparalleled contributions to global and local water management, inspired by an unwavering commitment to improving the lives of people on the ground. In its citation, the Stockholm Water Prize Committee states that Professor John Briscoe "has combined world-class research with policy implementation and practice to improve the development and management of water resources as well as access to safe drinking water and sanitation."

In the mid 1970s Briscoe lived in a small village in the interior of Bangladesh, and learned first-hand how infrastructure for protection from floods and droughts could transform the lives of the poor. He wrote about his experiences in SYDASIEN No. 1/1999 (read the article, in Swedish). Later, he has also worked in dozens of other countries around the world including Mozambique and Brazil. At the other end of Professor Briscoe's spectrum of accomplishments is the 2003 Water Strategy for the World Bank. This strategy provided a new, creative and enduring benchmark for global understanding of the need for both better infrastructure and improved institutions. He has become known for his passionate commitment to sustainable economic development, his disrespect for constructed boundaries between sectors and people, and for his insistence that the voice of people who are affected – from the poorest of farmers, to the private sector, to political leaders – be heard.

H.M. King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden, Patron of the Stockholm Water Prize, will present the prize to Professor John Briscoe at a Royal Award Ceremony during 2014 World Water Week in Stockholm on September 4th. More information about Briscoe and the award.

· Wendy Doniger keynote speaker at 2014 AAS Annual conference

The 2014 AAS (American Association for Asian Studies) Annual Meeting was held 27–30 March 2014 in Philadelphia, USA. Opening Keynote Address speaker was Professor Wendy Doniger, University of Chicago Divinity School. Her address was entitled *"Academic Freedom and Censorship: Publishing Controversial Books in India"*, focusing on the recent ban in India of her book "The Hindus. An Alternative History" (more information)

Founded in 1941, AAS is a scholarly, non-political, non-profit professional association open to all persons interested in Asia. It seeks through publications, meetings, and seminars to facilitate contact and an exchange of information among scholars to increase their understanding of East, South, and Southeast Asia. It counts among its members scholars, business people, diplomats, journalists, and interested lay persons. Each spring, AAS holds a four-day conference devoted to planned programs of scholarly papers, roundtable discussions, workshops, and panel sessions on a wide range of issues in research and teaching, and on Asian affairs in general. Full information.

· H-Asia discussion forum seeks new team of editors and review editors

H-ASIA is a vibrating well-run discussion forum on Asian History and Studies, part of the Humanities & Social Sciences OnLine network (H-Net). The primary purpose of H-ASIA, that was launched already in 1994, is to enable historians and other Asia scholars to easily communicate current research and teaching interests; to discuss new articles, books, papers, approaches, methods and tools of analysis; to test new ideas and share comments and tips on teaching. H-Asia is especially committed to discussing region wide, comparative and professional issues important to scholars of Asia.

For 20 years, H-Asia has been administered by Frank F. Conlon (*photo*), Professor Emeritus of History, South Asian Studies & Comparative Religion at University of Washington, USA. He however retires from his editorial responsibilities on 5 April 2014. Three other current editors – Ryan Dunch, Linda Dwyer and Veronika Lehner – now take full responsiblity for H-Asia. Full information about the H-Asia Discussion Network.

Since January 2013, H-Net has been slightly transformed. A new prototype on publishing and communications platform for H-Net was launched. It will integrate messaging and other forms of moderated content into one searchable space and offer great potential for editors and contributors to network and share information that one could only wish for in 1993. Go for the H-Asia page.

H-ASIA is now, April 2014, seeking to expand the team of volunteers who serve as editors and review editors for the network. Editors will be trained to use the H-Net Commons, our new content management platform, to moderate discussions, build content-rich projects for teaching and scholarship in Asian studies, and collaborate in the management of the network. The Commons interface is a simple site-design and publishing system that requires no advanced technical knowledge and enables editors to create custom pages that dynamically update with fresh material. The H-Net Commons is a new adventure for H-ASIA after twenty years of operation via listserv software delivered by email. It will open up new possibilities for H-ASIA as a thriving resource for academic specialists in Asia-related scholarship. More information.

· Goran Basic keynote speaker at Dhaka conference on Urban Violence

Dr. Goran Basic, Department of Sociology, Lund university, was a keynote speaker at the 2nd Annual Conference of Urban Research and Development Society that was held at University of Dhaka, Bangladesh on 12–13 March 2014. The theme for the conference was *"Democracy, Citizenship and Urban Violence"*, and was primarily based on Bangladeshi experiences where inequality and social polarization has led to new forms of urban violence, and with disjunctions between democracy and modernity – producing fragmented urban spaces. Dr. Basic's presentation was entitled *"Competing for victimhood: Stories of Bosnian war survivors"*, presenting the retold experiences of 27 survivors of the 1990s war in northwestern Bosnia.

The conference was organised by Prof. Shahadat Hossain, and Dr. Samina Luthfa, both from the Dept. of Sociology, University of Dhaka, but Professor Mashiur Rahman, alumni PhD from Lund University, was also instrumental to assist Dr. Basic with practical matters while being in Bangladesh. More information about the conference.

· M S University Baroda handles Swedish-funded Afghanistan education project

The M S University of Baroda in Gujarat, India, will be in charge of administering a Swedish-funded programme to train education officers for the Government of Afghanistan. It will be the first time education officers of

Afghanistan are undergoing training and study programme outside their own country. From 1 March 2014, 16 education officers deputed by the Ministry of Education, Afghanistan are undergoing a training programme at the Department of Educational Administration of M S University's Faculty of Education and Psychology. The programme is funded by the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA). At M S University, the key person behind the project is Karanam Pushpanadham, Professor of Educational Administration, and since everal years involved in collaboration with Scandinavian universities, especially Aarhus, Stockholm and Jönköping, but he also visited SASNET and Lund University (more information).

"The aim of this training and study visit is to increase awareness among the Afghan education authorities on approaches used in India and globally in managing schools," says Sayed Mukhtav Sadaf, project manager of SCA, which works closely with Ministry of Education of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its provincial and district departments to support community-based education.

"Although there are near one lakh teachers and over one million students enrolled in the 10,000-odd schools in Afghanistan, quality of teaching is a big issue. For instance, during our visit to a school here, we realized that biology, which is taught to grade XI students here, is taught in grade eight in Afghanistan. This is happening as the context of education is not understood by the curricular development department and teachers are not being able to cope up with this," Abdul Baseer, senior education officer, said. Interestingly, the organizers had explored many other destinations before they finalized to undergo training at MSU. More information.

· Bergen announces fellowship positions in project on Indian democracy

The Department of Sociology, University of Bergen, offers two 3-year positions for postdoctoral fellows within the research project on *"Democratizing Indian Democracy? Social Movements and the State in India: Towards a New Research Agenda"*, which is funded by the Norwegian Research Council. The candidates that are hired will conduct sub-projects within the parameters of the main project. The main goal of the project is to develop a new research agenda for the study of the relationship between social movements and processes of state formation in modern India, with a particular focus on understanding how the relationship between the state and social movements has contributed to the shaping of Indian democracy from 1920 until the present. Closing date for applications is 1 May 2014. More information.

· Uppsala networking with scholars from NUST University, Pakistan

On 14 April 2014, two representatives from NIPCONS – the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies at the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) in Islamabad, Pakistan, will be visiting Uppsala University. The two delegates are Maj Gen (Retd) Ali Baz, Principal for the Institute; and Dr Zahid Shahab Ahmed, Head of department for the Centre for International Peace and Stability within NIPCONS. They would like to meet with scholars working on South Asia and learn about research and teaching conducted at Uppsala University. If you are interested in joining the meeting (14.00-16.00), please contact Forum for South Asia Studies. More information.

· University Lectureship in Sanskrit and Ancient Cultures of South Asia at Leiden

The Faculty of Humanities at Leiden University invites applications for a fulltime University Lectureship in Sanskrit and Ancient Cultures of South Asia. This is a temporary replacement position, and appointment will be fixed-term from August 2014 through August 2016. The position will be funded by the ERC Synergy Project 'Beyond Boundaries: Religion, Region, Language and the State.' The Lecturer will hold a position in the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS). LIAS is committed to the integration of disciplinary and regional-historical perspectives, on a solid foundation of excellent language skills, and comprises a School of Asian Studies and a School of Middle-Eastern Studies. S/he will teach in South and Southeast Asian Studies, Asian Studies, and other programs and courses as required, including Sanskrit courses and courses on premodern cultures and literatures of South Asia. Applications must be received by 5 May 2014. More information.

· Report on Multiple Modernities and Social Inclusion conference

An international seminar on *"Multiple Modernities and Social Inclusion"* was held 25 – 27 February 2014 at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi, India. The seminar was on a thematic note presented by its convener Prof. Ashok Kaul. About sixty papers were presented in the seminar and the scholars from India, Sweden, Canada and some other countries keenly took interest in deliberations and presentations in the sub themes of the seminar. The seminar threw light on the reductive imperative of monoculture assimilation to the various critique of social sciences articulated through different theories of human nature and order making. Prof. Åke Sander from University of Gothenburg was one of the main speakers at the conference. Read a report by Prof. Ashok Kaul.

• 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 grants to 29 South Asia related collaboration projects

In early March 2014, the Swedish International Programme Office for Education and Training decided upon the fourteenth round of Linnaeus Palme Exchange Programme grants, for the period 1 July 2014 – 30 June 2015. A total amount of SEK 58 Million will be distributed to 231 educational academic collaboration projects. The grants are funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Out of 231 projects given grants, 3 relates to collaboration with university departments in Bangladesh, 22 with India, 2 with Nepal, and 2 with Sri Lanka.

Please note that SASNET provides additional value. Not only do we provide the decisions proper, but for most of the Swedish departments involved, SASNET has produced specially designed presentation pages with detailed information about the researchers and teachers involved in South Asia related projects within the specific department. (Altogether SASNET currently provides extensive information about South Asia projects at more than 300 Swedish university departments, a unique material, go for it.

More information about the South Asia related 2014/15 Linnaeus Palme grants.

· Örebro University celebrates 20 years of India project

The Social Work programme at Örebro University established an Indian-Swedish educational project in 1994. The SWEDEN-INDIA PROJECT as it is called – now administered by the School of Law, Psychology and Social Work – will celebrate its 20th anniversary on Friday 16th May 2014. Örebro University and a few other Swedish universities every semester send students of Social Work for training in India, where the counterpart is the Orchid School in Pune, headed by Lakshmi Kumar. In November 2007, Anna Lindberg and Lars Eklund from SASNET visited the Sweden-India Project in Pune, as part of their contact journey to India. Read their

report.
At the jubilee function in Örebro, Indian Ambassador Banashri Bose Harrison will participate with an introductory speech, Lakshmi Kumar will tell about the development of the project during 20 years, and representatives of Örebro University and Mid-Sweden University will share their experiences. Linda Hiltmann from SASNET will also be present at the function. Full information.

· 2014 Tamil Summer School in Puducherry

The Puducherry (Pondicherry) Institute of Linguistics and Culture holds its regular Tamil Summer School from 28 July - 6 September 2014. 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 April 2014. 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.

· South Asian Student Association (SASA) now active for one year

The South Asian Student Association (SASA) at Lund University will soon celebrate its first year of existence. SASA is the student body of Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET), and was officially launched on 24 April 2013 at a high level South Asia Symposium organised by SASNET. SASA has an elected board for the academic year 2013/2014 with Hawwa Lubna, Maldivian Bachelors student in Development Studies Program (and currently working as an intern for SASNET) being the SASA President, and Sharmin Rashid from Bangladesh, a Masters student in Gender Studies, SASA Vice President.
SASA has held several seminars and other seminars during its first year of existence, sometimes in collaboration with SASNET, sometimes independently.

- South Asian Movie Night Featuring "Lagaan"
- Indian Cultural Concert at Sagohuset
- SASA Diwali Celebration
- Seminar and Documentary film on Kashmir
- One Billion Rising (Lund) event to demand justice for rape victims
- Seminar on Maldives
- South Asian Youth Seminar

Full information about the South Asian Student Association (SASA) and its activities.

· Lund University's Masters programme in Asian studies gets criticised

The Masters programme in Asian Studies at Lund University was recently evaluated by the Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetskanslersämbetet). This interdisciplinary programme is run by the Centre for East and South East Asian

Studies (ACE), and started in September 2003. It had for some years, but no more, a specific South Asian track in collaboration with SASNET. The students are also today given an option of taking a course at an Indian partner university – Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai.
Taken together, Universitetskanslersämbetet in its evaluation critizises the programme on some points, stating that it lacks evidence of fulfillment of the objectives, and ability to critically, independently and creatively identify and formulate problems. The Centre now has one year to improve on the criticised issues,
before Universitetskanslersämbetet makes a re-evaluation. Read the evaluation.

· Time to apply for the 60 credits SIDC programme at Lund University

It is now time to apply for the Social Innovation in a Digital Context (SIDC) programme 2014-15, carried out by the Lund University Internet Institute (LUii) and Lund University Commissioned Education (LUCE) on behalf of the Swedish Institute.
The SIDC programme supports social and digital innovators from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia to pursue work in the fields of digital technology, new media, and socio-political change. It focuses on the relationship between digital technology and socio-political change, and how change makers can harness this relationship to build better societies. The programme is designed to support participants to develop creative and viable projects that help strengthen human rights and democracy building in their home countries, as well as boosting understanding of the use of digital tools for sociopolitical change. SASNET has been involved to some extent in the programme during 2013-14, including organising a seminar on Democratic Struggle in South Asia from a youth perspective, and participating in the Fika without borders events (see report).
From this year the SIDC programme will give 60 academic credits. Deadline for applications is 14 April 2014. Full information about the SIDC programme 2014/15. Application form.

· Joint South Asia discussion seminars for Aarhus and Copenhagen students

The South Asian discussion group at Aarhus University, based at the Contemporary India Study Centre Aarhus (CISCA), in collaboration with students at Copenhagen University, invites participants to join a two day seminar sesion at Copenhagen University on 24-25 April 2014. The seminars main aim is to enhance the collaboration between students at the two represented universities and inspire an 'out-of-the-box' approach when it comes to studying South Asia. Examples of topics that will be discussed are tribal religions, Hindu nationalism, Sikhism and other various topics. Lectures, debates and discussions will be led by both students, academics and private persons. The seminar will be held both in Danish and English. More information on Facebook.

• 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

· Uppsala seminar on the Begampurā poem in the Guru Granth Sahib

Associate Professor Gurdeep Kaur from the Department of Political Science, Sri Guru Nanak Dev Khalsa College, University of Delhi, India, but currently guest professor at the Dept. for Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University, holds an open seminar on *"Ravidās' Begampurā and related concepts in Guru Grānth Sāhib"* on Thursday 10 April 2014, 16.15–18.00. The "Begampurā" poem in the Guru Granth Sahib is particularly striking because the hierarchy does not play a role in this vision of an ideal state. However, the question that Gurdeep Kaur is concerned with is whether this is "only" but a vision, in the sense of some kind of divine presence unrelated to one's contemporary caste status, or is this somehow spiritually or in real terms meant as a revolutionary idea that is leads to some earthly realization of "utopia".

Dr. Kaur is staying in Uppsala for ten months starting in September 2013 under the Expert Exchange Fellowship Programme. Venue for seminar: Room 9-2029, Engelska Parken, Thunbergs väg, Uppsala.

• India in focus at Framgångsdagarna in Gothenburg

Framgångsdagarna (days of Success) is a four-day event currently going on in Gothenburg. Its focus is on the shopping mall Nordstan in central Gothenburg. The event targets aspiring and current entrepreneurs, and has a special focus on females and people born abroad.

Saturday 26 April will focus on India with several seminars on doing business in India and Sweden. At 5 pm the Indian Ambassador to Sweden and Latvia, Hon Banashri Bose Harrison, will hold a speech entitled *"The role of Entrepreneurship in economic growth – The Indian Experience"*. Among the seminars held during the day, researchers K.V.S Prasad and Devdatt Dubhashi, both from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Chalmers University of Technology, will talk about *"Swedish for Indians"* and *"IT and Biomedicine: A winning Indo-Swedish collaboration"* respectively. Sundar Shankaralingam, Associate Vice President, Tech Mahindra, will speak about *"Work culture – India vs. Sweden"*.

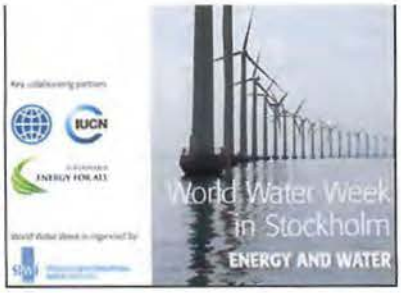
There will also be cultural performances, with a performance by the famous Indian contemporary dance artist Astad Deboo being the highlight. See the full programme for Framgångsdagarna.

• 22nd European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art conference in Stockholm

The European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art (EASAA) holds its 22nd conference in Stockholm 30 June – 4 July 2014. Conference contributions should draw on current and unpublished research dealing with the archaeology and art history of South Asia, or from neighbouring regions if the topic illuminates issues and problems in South Asian archaeology or art history. The conference will be held in parallel sessions in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (Östasiatiska museet) and the neighbouring Museum of Modern Art (Moderna Museet) respectively. More information.

• 2014 World Water Week focuses on Energy and Water

The 2014 World Water Week in Stockholm will be held 31 August – 5 September 2014. The theme being *"Energy and Water"*. As ususal, the 24th World Water Week is organised by the Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI). The World Water Week is the leading annual global meeting place for capacity-building, partnership-building and follow-up on the implementation of international processes and programmes in water



and development, with large relevance to South Asia. Every year around 200 delegates from South Asia participate (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka).
When addressing the "energy and water" theme during 2014 World Water Week in Stockholm the organisers want to take an overall "systems view" of how we develop and manage energy and water for the good of society and ecosystems – at local, national, regional and global levels – and avoid unintended consequences of narrow sectoral approaches. The "water, energy and food security nexus", underpinning the green growth approach, will be central to the agenda. The registration link will open in April 2014.
The 2013 World Water Week report "Cooperation for a Water Wise World - Partnerships for Sustainable Development" is now available. The report provides input into the discussions at the 2013 World Water Week in Stockholm. The report also explore emerging issues such as the role of information and communications technology in advancing water cooperation, the importance of climate mitigation and adaptation coherence and the interplay between actors in the water, food and energy nexus. Full information about the 2013 World Water Week.

• Lund University symposium on Social Resistance in Non-Democracies

The Centre for East and South-East Asian Studies, Lund University will be organizing an international symposium on "*Social Resistance in Non-Democracies*" from 24 to 26 November 2014. This symposium aims to understand different types of social resistance in non-democracies, and to what extent they have yielded significant political claims. How and why are some social resistance movements successful in eliciting reactions and compromises from the state, while others do not? Through analyzing case studies from Asia, this symposium also compares the active and dynamic power relationships between social resistance actors and the regimes, as well as reactions of the regimes towards these resistances. The symposium features invited lectures and peer-reviewed paper presentations. The scope of the symposium includes case studies of social resistance from Southeast Asia, East Asia, and South Asia. Interested speakers are invited to submit paper proposals before 30 June 2014. 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

• Baltic Alliance for Asian Studies conference at Vilnius Conference

The Baltic Alliance for Asian Studies (BAAS) organises its second biannual conference at Vilnius Conference in Lithuania 3–4 April 2014. BAAS operates as an institutional alliance of the university departments, the activities of which comprise studying and/or research in the field of Asian, Middle Eastern, African or Oriental studies. Till 2014 it has had five members (alphabetically after the University): Department of Middle Eastern and Asian Studies (Tallinn University), Centre for Oriental Studies (Tartu University), Department for Asian Studies (University of Latvia), Centre of Oriental Studies (Vilnius University), and Centre of Asian Studies (Vytautas Magnus University). The Conference is aimed at creating a

forum of the researchers in Asian, Middle Eastern and African studies from the three Baltic states and their international partners. The conception of the conference is that topics for panels may include area-specific or discipline-specific or interdisciplinary subjects; panels may comprise no less than three papers. More information.

· Vienna workshop on Kiranti Culture in Contemporary Nepal

A two-day workshop on *"Kiranti Culture in Contemporary Nepal"* will be held at the Dept. of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies (ISTB), University of Vienna, Austria, on 4–5 April 2014. There has been a growing academic interest in the diverse traditions of Kiranti-speaking groups in East Nepal since the 1970s, when N.J. Allen published his pioneering studies on the Thulung Rai. Especially linguists have done extensive research and documentations of the highly variable languages belonging to the Kiranti subgroup of Tibeto-Burman. However, ethnographic studies have lagged behind: whereas now sketch grammars exist for more than a dozen Kiranti languages, this is not matched by thorough description of cultural traditions. Therefore the workshop is meant to give a platform for the existing expertise on Kiranti cultures and to discuss the present state of research. A particular focus will be on "Kiranti religion", which is a label acknowledged in the Nepal Census since 1991 but which is still a little known entity. In the present political context of ethnic politics it will be of particular interest to study the changing configuration of these traditions. Speakers include Prof. Martin Gaenszle from ISTB, and Dr. Vishnu Singh Rai, guest researcher at ISTB. More information.

· Princeton University South Asia Workshop on Cultures – Past and Present

Princeton University in the US is organising its *Early Career South Asian Studies Workshop 2014* on 11–12 April 2014. The chosen theme for the workshop is *Cultures – Past and Present*. The concept of "culture" has emerged as the mainstay of scholarship in early modern and modern South Asian studies in the last few decades. From Louis Dumont's Homo Hierarchicus to Partha Chatterjee's "inner" and "outer" domains of colonial society, debates over the merits of "culture" as a field of analysis have been central to these studies. More recently, some concepts of culture have enabled linguistic and religious parochialism, but others have become a rallying point for the opposition of the hegemony of social structures. While some of these applications of the culture-concept have been discredited, many others are still being intensely debated. In the context of the past scholarship and ongoing debates and controversies, this workshop aims to bring together participants from multiple disciplines and facilitate an intellectual exchange to review the career of "culture" in South Asian Studies, assess its importance today and engage in insightful prognostications of its future. Princeton is now accepting papers to be presented at the workshop. More information about the workshop and call for papers.

· Bangalore workshop on International Material Culture

A workshop entitled "*International Material Culture workshop - Collaborative Training/Participative*" will be held from 11-14 April 2014 in Bangalore. This workshop is jointly organized by Jain University and Canara Bank in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bangalore and University of Exeter, UK. Venue: Jain University Campus, 9th block, Jayanagar, Bangalore.

The study on material culture evolved in the context of connecting artifacts with social life. The study of ancient objects furnishes an understanding about a particular culture

and its functioning over a period of time. The human perceptions are co-related with objects and their socio-cultural relevance. The material culture around the world is rich and offers a wide scope for research. These are also collected and exhibited in the museums adding value to the material culture of the area. A critical enquiry surrounding ancient to the contemporary material culture is essential to comprehend the socio-cultural aspects through the areas of study like history, archeology, architecture, jewelry, apparel, art and design. The present Material Culture workshop which is collaborative training and participative, will focus on the diverse objects of the material culture on a global perspective and investigating the socio-cultural aspects they represent. This workshop will cover the areas of research and practice in the field of material culture. More information.

· Honolulu symposium on Science, Technology and Society in South Asia

The Center for South Asian Studies at the University of Hawai'i is holding its 31 Annual Spring Symposiam themed *"Brave New South Asia: Science, Technology, and Society"* from 16 - 18 April 2014 in Honolulu, Hawai'i. This symposium invites critical reflections on science and technology as they transform the relationship between humans and their environments and reshape our conceptions of the human and natural in the context of South Asia and the diaspora. The aim of the symposiam is to generate a conversation across the sciences, social sciences and humanities that examines the interface between science and technology and the varied social, political and cultural ecologies as they have developed over time to bring us to our current moment — when South Asia figures as an incubator of innovations and as a striking example of their utopic and dystopic manifestations.
The organisers are currently accepting papers for presentation at the symposiam. For more information please visit from Center for South Asian Studies website.

· Tenth European Social Science History Conference to be held in Vienna

The International Institute for Social History (IISH) will organise the Tenth European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC) in Vienna, 23-26 April 2014. The Asia Network of the ESSHC invites proposals for papers and panel sessions on Asian countries. The Conference welcomes proposals on any topic and any historical period. Thematic panel sessions that compare various Asian countries are particularly encouraged.
The IISH organizes the ESSHC once every two years. The conference does not have a central theme and welcomes papers about all periods and subjects. The main objective of the conference is to introduce historians who use the insights and techniques from the social sciences to social scientists that focus on the past in their research and vice versa. The programme revolves around 28 thematic networks that address various subjects. Specialists in each field serve as network chairs and are the driving forces in elaborating the program. This approach is conducive to organising interdisciplinary panel sessions for an interdisciplinary and international audience. More information.

· Arizona conference on human/nature interaction in Maharashtra

The 15th International Conference on Maharashtra: Culture and Society will be held at Arizona State University (Tempe and Phoenix, USA) during April 23-26, 2014. The theme of the conference will be *"Interactions between Humans and the Natural World in Maharashtra."* Proposals are invited for presentations related to this theme from scholars in any field of the humanities or social sciences, as well as from natural scientists interested in the human dimensions of the natural environment in Maharashtra.
The theme of the conference encompasses a wide variety of relationships between humans and the natural world and topics to be covered include the whole range of Maharashtrians' interactions with mountains, rivers, plants, animals, soil, fire, water, and air. Prospective participants are encouraged to present papers examining the

intentional and unintentional effects of human actions on the environment, as in agriculture, gardening, water management, forestry, and mineral extraction. Studies highlighting the constraints and inspiration that the natural world provides to human social and cultural activities, including material culture, literature, ritual life, work, and recreation are also of interest. As the International Conference on Maharashtra is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary endeavour, the hope is to bring together scholars who are examining the same sets of phenomena from different disciplinary points of view.
More information.

• Thiruvananthapuram conference on Disaster, Risk and Vulnerability

The Department of Geology, University of Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram, India is organizing the *"Disaster, Risk and Vulnerability Conference 2014"* (DRVC 2014) from 24 – 26 April 2014. It coincides with the department celebrating its Golden Jubilee Year. The conference is in continuation of the successful DRVC2011 conference which was held in the School of Environmental Sciences, Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala, India in March 2011. Deadline for submitting abstracts is 1 March 2014. More information.

• SAARC conference on Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) holds a Regional Conference on 'Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Sustainable Development (CHTSD) in South Asia' in Colobo, Sri Lanka, 28–29 April 2014. It will be a brainstorming session to discuss the key issues and moot research questions and also to identify themes and subthemes that merit independent and in-depth research. Academics and experts on the subject are invited for the Conference to present papers on a relevant theme. They include Tourism Management at the Cultural Heritage Sites in South Asia; Development of Cultural Heritage Tourism Products (CTP); New Avenues for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for promoting Cultural Heritage Tourism: Harnessing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Potential; Cultural Heritage Tourism as a Tool for Poverty Alleviation; and Urban and Local Regeneration of Cultural Heritage Sites through Tourism. A one day post-conference tour will be organized on 30 April 2014 to Anuradhapura and Sigiriya, for all registered delegates of the Conference. Last date for nominating participants is Tuesday 18 March 2014. More information.

• Maharishi University of Management organizes Vedic Studies Conference

Maharishi University of Management in Fairfield, Iowa, USA, is holding the "World Association for Vedic Studies (WAVES)" conference 31 July – 3 August 2014. The conference aims at bringing together individuals and organizations having academic interest in diverseareas of Indic / Vedic Studies. This includes independent scholars, academics,writers, journalists, media persons, artists and others interested in Indic /Vedic Studies.
World Association of Vedic Studies (WAVES) is a multidisciplinary academic society. It is a forum for all scholarly activities and views on any area of Vedic Studies variously called Indian Studies, South Asian Studies or Indology. WAVES is not confined to study related to Vedas alone or to India alone. It encompasses all that applies to traditions commonly called Vedic, past, present and future, anywhere in the world. The call for paper abstracts is now closed. For more information about the conference visit the website.

• Hamburg Indological Graduate Research Symposium

The Sixth International Indological Graduate Research Symposium (IIGRS 6) will be held at the University of Hamburg, Germany, on 6 – 7 October 2014. M.A. students, PhD candidates and early stage researchers who have completed their PhDs within the past five years are invited to send to send their abstracts no later than 29 June 2014. All papers dealing with any indological research centered around the study of texts in their original language will be considered by the selection committee. More information.

• Third Students' Conference on Bengal Related Studies in Halle

The Third Conference on Bengal Related Studies for Students and Young Scholars will be held in Halle (Saale), Germany, on 25–26 October 2014. It is hosted by the South Asia Seminar, Institute of Oriental Studies, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg along with the association Bengal Link e.V. and the Arbeitskreis Neuzeitliches Südasien of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Asienkunde e.V. (DGA). The Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg is a leading German university where research on the Bengal regions, Bengali language and culture has been an integral part for a long time. The conference organisers realised the necessity of giving students and young scholars an option to discuss their various topics and after the success of the first and second conference in 2010 and 2012 the organisers are now very much looking forward to hosting the third one interdisciplinary network for Bengal Related Studies. There is no overarching theme; any topic from the humanities and social sciences is welcome as long as the region of study is either Bangladesh or Bengali speaking India. Abstracts should be submitted before 30 April 2014. More information about the Halle conference.

• Kolkata Conference on Gender, Empowerment and Conflict in South Asia

Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG) and the Norwegian Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) are jointly organizing an international conference on "Gender, Empowerment and Conflict in South Asia" on 7–8 November 2014. This is the final conference for a collaborative project entitled *Making Women Count for Peace: Gender, Empowerment and Conflict in South Asia*. Funded by the Research Council of Norway's INDNOR and NORGLOBAL programmes, the project aims to generate new knowledge and debate on women's empowerment and the challenges facing implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Nepal and India. With a focus on Northeast Indian experiences and a comparative look at Nepal, the project addresses the role of women in local governance and politics, particularly within the context of peace and security processes.
The best papers presented at the conference will be included in an edited volume with the aim of contributing new insights to the debate on gender and political change in conflict-ridden societies. The volume would endeavor to generate awareness about the empowerment of women in peacebuilding efforts and their roles as political activists, members of social movements, politicians or writers. More 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

• First Afghan Embassy in Sweden inaugurated

On Tuesday 1 April 2014, Afghanistan's deputy foreign minister Ershad Ahmadi participated in the inauguration of the first Afghan Embassy in Stockholm. Sweden and Afghanistan have had diplomatic relations since the 1930s, and Sweden has had an embassy in Kabul for several years. Now Afghanistan is opening its first embassy in Sweden, before Swedish issues have been handled by the Embassy in Oslo. The embassy is located at Kastellgården, Frestavägen 120 in Sollentuna.

• 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

• Manipuri Pung Cholam drummer dancers perform in Stockholm

On Friday 25 April 2014, at 19.00, Astad

Deboo (*photo*), among India's best contemporary dancers, performs along with the Manipuri Pung Cholam drummer dancers at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. They

appear for the first time in Scandinavia, with their combination of Manipuri martial arts tradition and rhythm with classical Indian dance movements, adding a modern sensibility which makes this a truly unmissable performance. It is part of the India Unlimited cutural festival. Venue: Moderna Museet, Exercisplan, Stockholm.
Three days later, on 28 April 2014, at 19.00, Astad Deboo has a solo performance at Dansens hus, Barnhusgatan 12-14, Stockholm. Deboo is a celebrated and honoured choreographer dancer being bestowed the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi award by the Government of India. In this sixty minute performance, he weaves together a tapestry of dance, often described as poetry in movement. Having been trained in the Indian Classical Dance styles of Kathak and Kathakali, and studied dance overseas, Astad has developed a uniquely distinctive style which is minimal and lyrical in nature. More information about both events.

• Multitude of business and culture events during India Unlimited festival in Stockholm

For the first time, the Indian Embassy in Stockholm coordinates India Unlimited, a series of interesting events in both business and culture during the period 22 April – 26 June 2014. All events take place in Stockholm.
India Unlimited is a platform which seeks to strengthen India-Sweden connections and partnerships in all the areas. The goal is to bring together the best of India and Sweden in enduring, sustainable win-win partnerships. This is realized through business seminars, conferences, and exhibitions in collaboration with platform partners Swedish India Business Council (SIBC) and Business Sweden; and regarding culture contemporary India will be presented through its culture, literature, music, film, education, cuisine & wine, art, design & architecture, fashion and its many traditional crafts. Many organisations and institutions are involved, but the Indian Embassy of Sweden has the main responsibility. See the full programme.
Besides a large number of business events, involving all the major Swedish companies working in India, the programme includes an Indian food festival at Clarion Hotel, exhibitions of photography and Indian design, a Bollywood party, an Indian film festival, seminars on Sustainable Infrastructure, and Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and a fascinating event entitled Varanasi Junction on 26–27 April.

Varanasi Junction is is an art vernissage as well as an Indian cultural theme weekend held in Kista underground bazaar, in the northern suburb of Stockholm. The artist Elin Thorsén exhibits her photos, painting and other artwork, inspired by traditional cultural interactions from the swarming Varanasi. Guest lecturers Willy Pfändtner, Uppsala University, and Stig Lundgren, Stockholm University, will speak about about hinduism, pilgrimages and the holy city as a concept.
This event is jointly hosted by SYDASIEN web magazine and Svensk-Indiska föreningen. Both adults and children are welcome to workshops, where you can write your name in Devnagari and create your own art. There will be Indian food and chai in the underground bazaar – once you step down the flight of stairs you will be in Varanasi with all your senses. More information about Varanasi Junction.

• Statue of Rabindranath Tagore to be raised at Uppsala University

A spectacular event in honour of the Indian/Bengali Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore will take place in Uppsala on

Wednesday 7 May 2014. On this day, at 14.00, a bust of the poet will be unveiled in Engelska Parken, near to the university's departments of Humanities.
The event is jointly organised by the Forum for South Asia Studies at Uppsala University, and the Indian Embassy in Stockholm. Ambassador Banashri Bose Harrison will participate, but there are also high-profile visitors from India to be expected. The Lund India Choir led by Bubu Munshi Eklund (*photo*) will perform at the occasion, singing rabindrasangheet, Tagore's songs in the original Bengali language. Prof. Heinz Werner Wessler from the Dept. of Linguistics and Philology is responsible for the academic part of the event that will follow after the bust raising ceremony in the park. In recent years, statues of Rabindranath Tagore have been raised in many places on initiative from the Indian embassies. The photo to the right shows one such statue unveiled in Houston, USA, a couple of years ago.

• Endangered Archives programme keeps digital catalogues of Bhutanese temple archives

Every year, the Endangered Archives Programme at the British Library in London is accepting applications for funding to support the preservation of archival material worldwide that is in danger of destruction, neglect or physical deterioration, not the least in South Asia. The programme is being financed by Arcadia (formerly known as the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund), in pursuit of one of its charitable aims to preserve and disseminate cultural knowledge and to promote education and research. The deadline for receipt of preliminary grant applications is 1 November every year. In South Asia, approximately 30 projects in Bhutan, India and Nepal are currently supported by the Endangered Archives Programme. They include projects on digital documentation of manuscripts at Drametse and Ogyen Choling monasteries in Bhutan (*photo from Drametse*). Read more about the programme.
The Endangered Archives Programme now also keeps digital catalogues. In March 2014, the addition of a new catalogue was announced. It gives details of material copied by a project on Digital documentation of Dongkala, Chizing, Dodedra and Phajoding temple archives in Bhutan. In addition, permission was received to also digitise a small number of manuscripts at four other temples, Phurdogkha, Menrikha, Thujedra and Pumola, totalling nearly 800 manuscripts and 300,000 images.Go for the new catalogue.

• Special issue on Bengal by German Asiatic Journal

The German Association for Asian Studies (DGA – Deutsche Gesellschaft für Asienkunde) publishes a journal entitled ASIEN – The German Journal on Contemporary Asia. The recent issue No. 130 (January 2014) is a special issue on "Bengal: A Region with a Pioneering Past and an Uncertain Future". It includes articles by Sukla Chatterjee on *"Breaking the Cage: Traveling, Freedom, and English Society in Imlande Bangamahila"*; by Hia Sen on *"From Rabindra Sangit to Doraemon: The Inheritance and Globalization of Children's Leisure Culture in Kolkata"*; by Elisabeth Fink on *"Trade Unions, NGOs and Transnationalization: Experiences from the Ready-made Garment Sector in Bangladesh"*; and by Bishawjit Mallick on *"Cyclone-Induced Migration in Southwest Coastal Bangladesh"*. The issue can be ordered from DGA.
ASIEN – founded in March 1967 – supports scientific studies of contemporary Asian affairs and informs a wider public about the area. It aims to increase scholarly activities and to stimulate the exchange of experience and knowledge about Asia. Furthermore,

the DGA promotes co-operation among individuals and institutions interested in Asian affairs and working in the field of politics, business, culture, and science, both on national and international levels. More information.

· Rabindranath Tagore cultural programme in Stockholm

A cultural programme focusing on the 100th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore's Nobel Prize was held in Stockholm on Saturday 29 March 2014. The programme was jointly organised by Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF) and the Vox Pacis Ensemble, and featured lectures by Swedish Tagore specialists Olavi Hemmilä and Per Olov Henricsson, and vocal music by rabindrasangheet singer Bubu Munshi-Eklund from Lund, besides Shipra Nandy, Marie Kvernmo, Loten Namling and other members of Vox Pacis, led by its artistic director Gunilla Nordlund. Read Lars Eklund's report. More information.

· Ninth Annual Day celebration for Saraswathy Kalakendra in Huddinge

Saraswathy Kalakendra Institution of Fine Arts in Huddinge invites for its ninth Annual Day celebration on Saturday 19 April 2014 from 16.00. The Bharata Natyam dance school was started in 2004 by Usha Balasundaram, originally from Kerala and trained at the famous dance institution Kalakshetra College of Fine Arts in Chennai, India. Performances have been frequent during the past years in the Stockholm region, most recently for example at functions organised by the Hindu temple Association in Stockholm, by Karolinska Institutet, and the Indo-Swedish Association. See the poster. This year's program will feature traditional and folk dances from various Indian states. A dance drama performance will in addition present stories related the Indian culture. The programme will finish with Bollywood dance and possibility to try Indian food.
Venue: Saraswathy Kalakendra Institution of Fine Arts, Gymnasietorget 1, Huddinge. More information on Saraswathy Kalakendra Institution of Fine Arts and the Annual day celebration.

· Uppsala Poster exhibition on Women's Movement in India

On Friday 25 April 2014, the Forum for South Asia Studies at Uppsala University is opening a poster exhibition on the women's movement in India. Alessandra Consolaro will introduce to the exhibition with a short lecture, entitled '*Constructing identity on women's body: Writing the Nation and globalization on women's bodies in India*'. All over the world the construction of tribal, feudal, class, ideological, ethnic, religious, and national identities have been constructed on women's bodies. Alessandra Consolaro will introduce the process of 'gendering the nation' as it appeared in the Indian mediascape at the turn of the century, focusing on popular culture, particularly cinema, TV and beauty pageant contests.
Venue: Blåsenhus, Gunnar Johanssonsalen (BH/14:K1209), Uppsala.
The exhibition is made by Zubaan, an NGO working on women's issues in Delhi, as part of a project on visual mapping of the women's movement in India through the posters the movement had produced. Zubaan is convinced that it is important to collect and document posters from the movement because the women's movement has been – and remains – an extremely rich, complex and multi-layered movement, which lacks an easily accessible knowledge base. The event is organised in cooperation with Kulturum Uppsala. 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

• Swedish departments where research on South Asia is going on

This month there were 1 new department added to SASNET's list:

‡ Smart Textiles Design Lab, Swedish School of Textiles, University of Borås, http://www.sasnet.lu.se/institutions/smart-textiles-design-lab-swedish-school-textiles-university-boras

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/reserch-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 in charge of Communication
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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Datum: 17 april 2014 14:11
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SASNET
Swedish South Asian Studies Network

SASNET/SASA seminar on the struggle for Azadi in Kashmir

Assistant Professor Farrukh Faheem from the South Asia Centre for Studies in Conflict Peace and Human Security, School of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai, India, holds a SASNET lecture at Lund University on Tuesday 22 April 2014, 15.15–17.00. He will speak about "Understanding Struggle for Azadi in Kashmir: Interrogating the Ordinary". The seminar is co-organised by the South Asian Students Association (SASA) and the School of Social Work, Lund University. Venue: Room 12, School of Social Work, 1st floor, Bredgatan 26, Lund. Read more... http://www.sasnet.lu.se/farrukh

Nepal in focus for first SASA/SASNET/ABC Fika without borders event

The South Asian Student Association (SASA) at Lund University – the student body of SASNET – now has launched a new series of what is called Fika Without Borders South Asia events. In collaboration with SASNET and the voluntary organisation ABC Sweden, SASA successfully organised a Fika Without Borders gathering focusing on Nepal, on Wednesday 16 April 2014, 17.00–19.00, at the Social Sciences Students Union building, Paradisgatan 5 S, Lund (close to SASNET's office). The programme was being planned for by Sharmin Rashid from SASA and Lars Eklund from SASNET, and included a skype onversation with a documentary film maker in Kathmandu, presentations by Rebecca Palmer from ABC on their projects in Nepal; by Leif Bjellin from the Dept. of Biology, Lund University with 40 years of experience of working in Nepal; and Hawwa Lubna from SASNET, on her Nepalese travel experiences. Nepalese food was served to the audience of about 30 people. http://www.sasnet.lu.se/sasa_april2014
The next Fika Without Borders South Asia will be held on Wednesday 21 May 2014, and the theme country will be India. More information. http://www.sasnet.lu.se/content/indian-culture-focus-second-sasasasnet-fika-without-borders-event

Oslo seminar on Sex Change in Buddhist Tradition

Oslo Buddhist Studies Forum at University of Oslo invites to a lecture by Dr. Petra Kieffer-Puelz, Akademie der Wissenschaften in Mainz, Germany, on Tuesday 22 April 2014, 16.15. She will talk about "Sex change and glimpses into a Buddhist nun's life". The idea of sex-change in one and the same life - not effected by surgery - is a widespread topic in Indian literary culture. There are stories of involuntary sex change caused by gods as a revenge or of voluntary sex change by magic pills or herbs, etc., in Hindu literature (Purāṇas, Ramāyāṇa, etc.), or as an act of truth in Buddhist literature. Venue: PA Munch's hus, room 10, Blindern, Oslo. Read more. http://www.sasnet.lu.se/content/oslo-seminar-sex-change-buddhist-tradition

Multitude of business and culture events during India Unlimited festival in Stockholm

For the second year, the Indian Embassy in Stockholm coordinates India Unlimited, a series of interesting events in both business and culture during the period 22 April – 26 June 2014. All events take place in Stockholm.
India Unlimited is a platform which seeks to strengthen India-Sweden connections and partnerships in all the areas. The goal is to bring together the best of India and Sweden in enduring, sustainable win-win partnerships. This is realised through business seminars, conferences, and exhibitions in collaboration with platform partners Swedish India Business Council (SIBC) and Business Sweden; and regarding culture contemporary India will be presented through its culture, literature, music, film, education, cuisine & wine, art, design & architecture, fashion and its many traditional crafts. Many organisations and institutions are involved, but the Indian Embassy of Sweden has the main responsibility. See the full programme.
Besides a large number of business events, involving all the major Swedish companies working in India, the programme includes an Indian food festival at Clarion Hotel, exhibitions of photography and Indian design, a Bollywood party, an Indian film festival, seminars on Sustainable Infrastructure, and Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and a fascinating event entitled Varanasi Junction on 26–27 April.
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http://www.sasnet.lu.se/content/multitude-business-and-culture-events-during-india-unlimited-festival-stockholm

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women's body: Writing the Nation and globalization on women's bodies in India'. All over the world the construction of tribal, feudal, class, ideological, ethnic, religious, and national identities have been constructed on women's bodies. Alessandra Consolaro will introduce the process of 'gendering the nation' as it appeared in the Indian mediascape at the turn of the century, focusing on popular culture, particularly cinema, TV and beauty pageant contests. Venue: Blåsenhus, Gunnar Johanssonsalen (BH/14:K1209), Uppsala. Read more. http://www.sasnet.lu.se/content/uppsala-poster-exhibition-womens-movement-india

Manipuri Pung Cholam drummer dancers perform in Stockholm

On Friday 25 April 2014, at 19.00, Astad Deboo, among India's best contemporary dancers, performs along with the Manipuri Pung Cholam drummer dancers at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. They appear for the first time in Scandinavia, with their combination of Manipuri martial arts tradition and rhythm with classical Indian dance movements, adding a modern sensibility which makes this a truly unmissable performance. It is part of the India Unlimited cutural festival. Venue: Moderna Museet, Exercisplan, Stockholm.
Three days later, on 28 April 2014, at 19.00, Astad Deboo has a solo performance at Dansens hus, Barnhusgatan 12-14, Stockholm. Deboo is a celebrated and honoured choreographer dancer being bestowed the Padma Shri and the Sangeet Natak Akademi award by the Government of India. In this sixty minute performance, he weaves together a tapestry of dance, often described as poetry in movement. Having been trained in the Indian Classical Dance styles of Kathak and Kathakali, and studied dance overseas, Astad has developed a uniquely distinctive style which is minimal and lyrical in nature.
http://www.sasnet.lu.se/content/manipuri-pung-cholam-drummer-dancers-perform-stockholm

HAPPY EASTER!

Lars Eklund,
Deputy Director in charge of Research Communication

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