

# Nordic South Asia Network

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## Nordic South Asia Network Newsletter No. 1 – 23 June 2016

Submitted by Sasnet on Thu, 2016-06-23 10:06

### NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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#### Research Community News

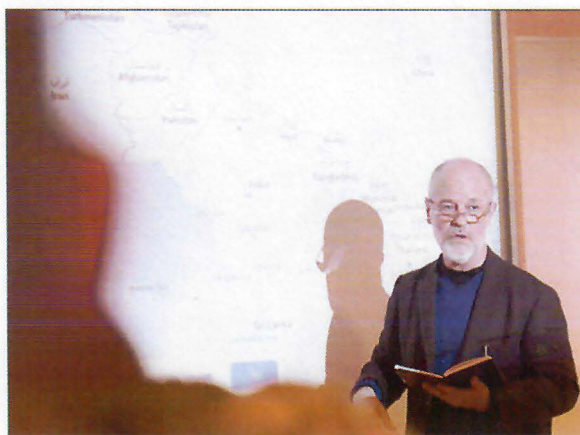
- **Lund meeting resulted in formation of new Nordic South Asian Studies network**

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More than 50 Nordic researchers and academics from 20 universities in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland participated in the Networking Day on South Asian Studies, that SASNET organized in Lund on Monday 25 April 2016. They are all working on South Asia-related issues, and were invited to discuss ways to expand collaboration on education and research. The meeting addressed the question: How we can strengthen a South Asian perspective across all faculties at Nordic universities? The objectives could include a commitment to hold collaborative workshops and other joint events; circulate information about visiting scholars for the benefit of Nordic partner institutions who may wish to invite them; and creating a common Nordic newsletter on South Asian Studies and a joint website focusing on South Asia. At the end of the day it was decided to form a Nordic Network, but the title has yet to be finalized upon. The Network will have its first conference next year in Stockholm.



Lars Eklund was given the task to create a new web page for the Nordic network, based upon the old SASNET web site, that was closed down in mid-April 2016.

The Networking Day was organized in collaboration with researchers at University of Copenhagen, and it opened with an introductory address by David Ludden (photo), Professor of History at New York University and former President of the Association for Asian Studies. Professor Ludden is well-known for his extensive writings on South Asia. His talk was entitled "Why do we need South Asian Studies? What are the Challenges?", and was followed by short presentations by representatives of Nordic universities on their current South Asian activities.

The afternoon was devoted to formal and informal discussions on how to strengthen collaboration. The planning committee for this event consisted of Lars Eklund and Anna Lindberg of SASNET at Lund University, and Ravinder Kaur and Peter B. Andersen at the University of Copenhagen. See the full programme with a list of participants.



Anna Lindberg and Ravinder Kaur



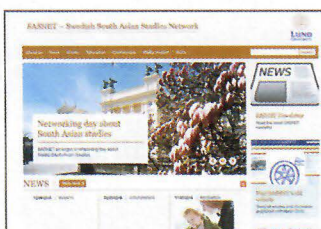
Staffan Lindberg and Marina Svensson.

• Nordic network takes over old SASNET web and newsletter material



Soon after the inception of SASNET in January 2001, the network launched its web site and introduced monthly newsletters, that gradually became richer and richer on information about South Asia related research not only at the hosting university of Lund and other Swedish universities, but also in the rest of Scandinavia, Europe and even in South Asia itself. In April 2016, the newsletter had more than 3,300 subscribers worldwide. The person in charge of SASNET's extensive web site and producing a total number of 186 Newsletters has been the deputy director Lars Eklund.

Since 2011, SASNET has also had a fruitful technical collaboration with the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) in Copenhagen, sharing the same cms web solution – drupal. This agreement however lapsed on 31 December 2015, and SASNET had to integrate into Lund University's (LU) web system, and adjust to the graphic profile that all LU units are obliged to follow. The new SASNET site (photo), focuses more on Lund University, with only a fraction of the material from the old site transferred into it. The new site was launched on Friday 15 April.



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Also the newsletters had to be changed, focus more on Lund University news and events, and follow the standard layout for other newsletters produced by LU departments.

The old site will however get new life, since Lars Eklund has initiated the formation of a new Nordic South Asia network, based on the old web material. This venture is being realized as a separate but complementary project from SASNET, and is carried out by Lars outside his SASNET working hours. It will also build on the collaboration between researchers at a large number of Nordic universities that gathered at SASNET's Networking Day in Lund on April 25, 2016.

The new web site address is [nordicsouthasianet.eu](http://nordicsouthasianet.eu)



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#### • Doctoral dissertation on Clay-Modelling in West Bengal



PhD candidate Moumita Sen from the [Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Language \(IKOS\)](#), University of Oslo, defended her doctoral dissertation entitled "*Clay-modelling in West Bengal: Between Art, Religion and Politics*" on Friday 20 May 2016. Venue: Auditorium 3, Helga Engs hus, Blindern, Oslo. The evaluation committee consisted of Professor Christopher Pinney, University College London (first opponent); Dr. Susan S. Bean, Chair of the Art & Archaeology Center of the American Institute of Indian Studies; and Professor Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, University of Oslo.

Moumita held her trial lecture the day before, on Thursday 19 May, at 16.15, same venue as for the dissertation. The lecture was entitled "*How does a Murti/Sculpture/Clay Model Represent its Divine/Mortal Subject in Bengal?*"

During her dissertation work Moumita Sen has been supervised by Prof. Ute Hüsken, University of Oslo; and Prof. Tapati Guha-Thakurta, Jadavpur University, Kolkata.

In her thesis, Moumita looks at the practices of clay modelling in West Bengal in eastern India. There are numerous settlements of caste homogenous communities of kumbhakārs or kumors who are engaged in the trade of making mūrtis of different kinds in unfired clay. Most towns and villages of Bengal have a few families of kumbhakārs who meet the local demand for god-images which are produced and worshipped seasonally. But some of these communities have transformed over the last two centuries and diversified into other kinds of image-making. The most notable out of these are Kṛṣṇanagar in Nadia District and Kumortuli in Kolkata. Both these clusters have been able to master a hybridized practice of academic realism which has allowed them to transcend the scope of their traditional craft of idol-making. Over the last two decades, these centres have embraced the technique of fiber glass casting. Primarily, this has allowed the ephemeral clay objects to be cast in a cheap and permanent material. But more crucially, it has led to a rapid remodelling of the visual cultures of Bengal in general, but most notably Kolkata and the surrounding towns. [Read more...](#)

#### • Andreas Johansson defended thesis on Muslim Politics in Sri Lanka

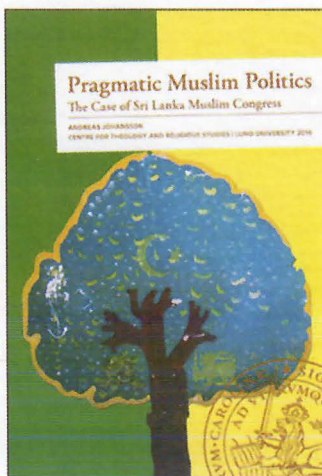


PhD candidate Andreas Johansson at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies (CTR), Lund University, defended his doctoral dissertation entitled "*Pragmatic Muslim Politics. The Case of Sri Lanka Muslim Congress*" on Friday 27 May 2016, at 13.15. Andreas has also been connected to the Department of Cultural Sciences, Linnaeus University in Växjö/Kalmar, and has therefore had double supervisors, Prof. Olle Qvarnström in Lund and Associate Professor Stefan Arvidsson in Växjö. The faculty opponent will be Professor Susanne

Olsson from the Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender studies at Stockholm University.

In his thesis, Andreas investigates the use of religious terms and symbols in politics, and more specifically Muslim politics. Its aim is to analyze the role of religious terms and symbols within a non-fundamentalist political party, namely the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC), a Muslim political party that has been part of the democratic process in Sri Lanka since the 1980s. Andreas' research is based upon two field work trips in 2006 and 2011 respectively, both of them completed with the help of the American Institute of Sri Lankan Studies. [More information.](#)

It should also be mentioned that Andreas Johansson has a part-time position as a research coordinator at SASNET. He is in charge of SASNET's seminar activities.



#### • Key persons behind thriving Fermented Foods network met in Lund

In early June 2016, Professor J B Prajapati, Head of the Dairy Microbiology Department, SMC College of Dairy Science, Anand Agricultural University, Gujarat, India, again visited Lund University and its [Food for Health Science Centre](#). There, Prajapati has had a long collaboration with Prof. emeritus Baboo Nair, and during this visit discussions were held with Prof. Richard Öste and Prof. Inger Björk on continued joint research collaboration in the field of Fermented Foods. While in Lund, he also got an opportunity to meet SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund, since SASNET has played a specific important role in establishing an international Fermented Foods Network. It was SASNET that gave initial funding to the project in the form of three planning grants in 2002 and 2004. This was followed by a large European Commission grant in support for the networking activities making it possible to organise seminars and conferences in South Asia. The entire project came to be called SASNET-Fermented Foods, and this has now successfully grown during a period of 12 years, now involving hundreds of researchers both in Europe and South Asia. [More information on the SASNET-Fermented Foods project's home page.](#)

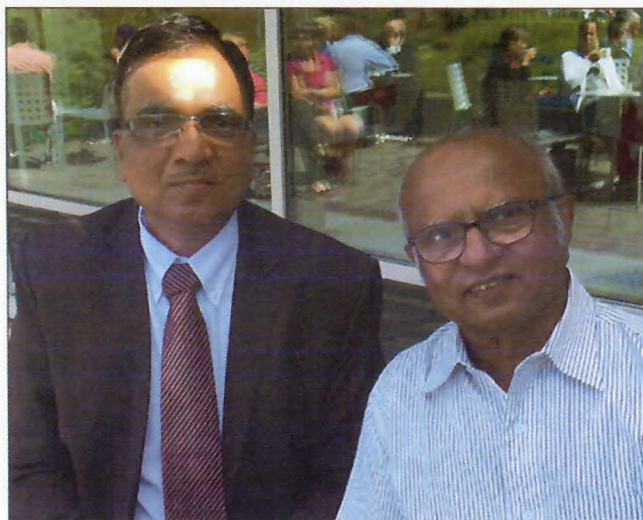
#### • Khalid Wasim from TISS visited SASNET in Lund

On Monday 20 June 2016, Assistant Professor Khalid Wasim from the School of Rural Development at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai, India, met with SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund. Wasim had come to Europe for a month long stay at University of Münster in Germany, but took a chance also to visit Lund University and SASNET with an aim to search for research collaboration. His focus area is Violent conflicts and Ethnic Movements in South Asia.

At TISS, he teaches courses on Political Theory, Identity Politics in South Asia and State, Polity and Democracy in South Asia. His 2012 PhD thesis in Political Science was completed at the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) in Bangalore. It was entitled "*Kashmir Conflict: A People-centric Study*" and was based on fieldwork

undertaken in the conflict prone areas of Kashmir. It was an account and analysis of the various stake holders in the Kashmir conflict, subtly and sensitively portraying the tensions and conflicts between what Wasim terms as 'secular nationalist' and 'Islamist streams' respectively. Previously, Wasim had a Master's in Politics and International Relations from Pondicherry University in south India.

More recently, Dr. Wasim has completed a research project in collaboration with London School of Economics (LSE) on "*Violence against Women in Conflict Zone: A Study of Rapes by Military in Kashmir*". He is now interested to look at the Conflict Resolution and Post-conflict processes in general and challenges of non-state actors faced by the democratic Institutions in India in particular. For this he looks for fruitful collaboration partners. [More information about his research.](#)



Professors J B Prajapati and Baboo Nair in Lund.

• **49 panels accepted for 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies in Warsaw**

The 24th European Conference on South Asian Studies – ECSAS 2016 will take place at the University of Warsaw, Poland from 27 to 30 July 2016. The biannual conference, organised by the European Association for South Asian Studies (EASAS) is this time hosted by the [Faculty of Oriental Studies at University of Warsaw](#). The chief convener is Prof. Danuta Stasik. A total number of 49 panels and 480 papers have been accepted, including interesting panels on *Mediating South Asian religious traditions*; *Politicizing Hunger: Famine, Food security and Political Legitimacy in South Asia (19th & 20th century)*; *Print journalism in modern South Asia*; *Security challenges in contemporary India-Pakistan relations*; and *Policing the city – how public order and security are conceptualised and delivered in contemporary South Asia* ([see the full list](#)).



The 24th ECSAS' keynote speaker will be Sumit Guha, Professor of History at the University of Texas in Austin, the author of the highly acclaimed book "*Beyond Caste Identity and Power in South Asia, Past and Present*". Early registration is now open and will continue until 4 May. Please note that panel convenors and paper presenters are obliged to join EASAS for 2015 and 2016 in order to attend. Deadline for registration is 5 May 2016. [Full information on the conference web site.](#)

The ECSAS has met regularly since 1968, and has provided an important opportunity to discuss current research and scholarship on topics relating to South Asia within the humanities and social sciences. The 2004 conference was organised by SASNET in Lund, [see the 2004 conference page.](#)

The most recent ECSAS conference was held in Zurich, Switzerland, in July 2014. SASNET was represented at this conference by Lars Eklund and Hawwa Lubna. [Read their reports.](#)

• **EASAS Research Student Awards to be presented at Warsaw conference**

One of the stated aims of the European Association for South Asian Studies is to encourage and support young scholars working in the field of South Asian Studies. In pursuit of this aim, the Association is offering awards linked to its biennial conference. Awards are to be made for the most outstanding papers by currently registered research students presenting at the conference. At the 24th EASAS conference in Warsaw, up to three awards of €300 each will be made. All current PhD students fully registered and presenting at the conference may submit their paper for consideration. The submitted papers will be considered by a panel of judges selected by the EASAS Council. It is hoped that by offering three Awards, the competition will reflect the full range of disciplines represented at the conference.

Authors must be currently registered PhD students, and their papers must be delivered at the conference. The papers will be assessed in terms of their contribution to the field, the quality of their research data, and their ability to convey ideas and arguments clearly and effectively. After these primary considerations have been taken into account, the panel will hope to make awards that reflect the full range of disciplines represented at the conference. [Full information.](#)



• **Uppsala University announces PhD position in Indology**

Uppsala University announces a 4-year PhD position in Indology starting 1 January 2017 or earlier, during which the PhD student will receive a salary as an employee of



the department. Doctoral students are expected to engage in full-time study and research, and contribute to and participate in the department's activities. Teaching and/or administrative tasks may be involved up to a maximum of 20%. The dissertation project should fall within the area of modern Southasian languages or literatures, with preference for Hindi. Applications should include a letter in which the applicant describes herself/himself and the research interest. The application should contain an outline of the planned project, CV, copies of diplomas and certificates, thesis and other documents that the applicant wishes to submit. [More information.](#)



#### • SASNET organizes conference on Modernity in South Asia



SASNET organizes a conference entitled "*Modern Matters: Negotiating the Future in Everyday Life in South Asia*" from 20 – 22 September 2016 at Lund University. 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'.

The keynote speakers will be Dipesh Chakrabarty, University of Chicago, USA; and Sumi Madhok, London School of Economics, UK. Eight panels will be held:

Panel 1. **Religion and Modernity in South Asia** (chaired by Clemens Cavalin); Panel 2. **Mapping Subaltern Modernities in Neoliberal India** (chaired by Alf Gunvald Nilsen & Kenneth Bo Nielsen); Panel 3. **Beyond the Desirable: Critical Perspectives on Media-Modernity** (chaired by Britta Ohm, Per Ståhlberg, and Vibodh Parthasarathi); Panel 4. **Staging Marriage and Modernity among the Middle classes in South Asia** (chaired by Ajay Bailey, and Anindita Datta); Panel 5. **The Transformation of Caste** (chaired by Winnie Bothe and Staffan Lindberg); Panel 6. **Youthful modernities: negotiating with the past, the present and the future** (chaired by Ravinder Kaur, Sanolde Desai, and Rajni Palriwala); Panel 7. **Women and Gender in South Asian Modernity: Vulnerabilities and Violence** (chaired by Ulrika Andersson); and Panel 8. **Open panel** – for papers that do not fit any of the other panels but make an original contribution to understandings of modernity in South Asia. [Full information about the conference.](#)



Dipesh Chakrabarty and Sumi Madhok.

#### • Uppsala conference on Environment, Land and Society

The Forum for South Asia Studies at Uppsala University invites you to participate in the Second Annual FSAS Conference with a special focus on Environment, Land and Society - Past, Present and Future Challenges for South Asia to be held 3 - 4 November 2016 at Uppsala University.

South Asia has long been characterized by an especially complex relationship between the natural environment, the ownership and use of land, and society. This has had a profound impact on the region's history and also forms the basis for many modern-day challenges ranging from the depletion of natural resources, to conflicts over land and water, from rapid urbanization to serious problems of air, ground and water pollution. As one of



the potentially worst-hit regions by climate change the social and ecological effects of these challenges are expected to increase. A better understanding of these processes can contribute to policy making, to human and environmental security and to a more holistic view of the region and its history.

This year's conference invites contributions from all disciplines in the humanities and social sciences that deal with the three highly interrelated topics of environment, land and society. We especially encourage interdisciplinary contributions and submissions from early career scholars (graduate students and junior faculty). Proposals can be for single submissions (in which case, if your proposal is accepted, we will assign you to a panel) or for a panel. Panels should have a maximum of six (6) contributors and the proposal should include a title, a panel abstract and short individual abstracts for each participant's paper. The submissions deadline for paper abstracts is 1st September 2016. [More information.](#)

#### • Bangalore professor toured Lund University and Sigtuna

Professor Meera Chakravorty from the Dept. of Cultural Studies at Jain University, Bangalore, India, visited Sweden in the first week of April 2016. She gave two interesting lectures. The main function was at Sigtunastiftelsen (the Sigtuna Foundation) in the small town of Sigtuna, outside Stockholm. Here, she was invited to speak on "*Rabindranath Tagore: The Poet of Joy*" in connection with a launch of a book written on this theme by Prof. Chakravarty and a Swedish poet/artist friend, Ms. Elsa Maria Lindqvist. The book is entitled '*The Remnant Glory*', and has been published by the reputed and prestigious Kolkata publishing house Writers Workshop. During the Sigtuna presentation, Hannah Lindqvist had put some of the poems to music and enthralled the audience with her melodious voice. Prior to this event, on Monday 4 April, Meera Chakravorty was invited to hold a seminar at Lund University. The seminar was organised by Anton Geels, Professor Emeritus in History and Psychology of Religion, and it was held for the students at the Centre for Theology and Religious Studies (CTR). The theme for the lecture was "*Ecology from an Indian (Indigenous) Perspective*", and focused on how environment is used as a commodity and how the vested interest is making a profit from this, thereby damaging the ecological balance.



She said that for anyone interested in the future impact on environment, it is important not realise that a change of perspective can transform our understanding of the relation between people and environment. Hence, the principal aim, is to help people better comprehend this perspective and to apply it to their work situation. The discussion that

followed revealed how students and faculty members from different disciplines give environment a centre stage in Sweden. Some of the students informed Prof. Chakravorty how many young people are taking to second hand clothing in an attempt to save environment. Details, such as these provide much appreciation, and will encourage youth in other countries for innovative measures that can be easily adopted. At the end of the discussion, the general feeling was that it had resulted in a fascinating dialogue with different cultures and traditions pursuing the historical developments of some of the concepts from the indigenous sources are to be disseminated widely, while finding ways to delink the environment from the market economy.

#### ● SASNET seminar on successful Indian microalgal biotechnology research

Two visiting Indian researchers – Dr V. Sivasubramanian and Professor N Thajuddin, held a SASNET lecture at Lund University on Monday 23 May 2016, 13.15–14.00. The seminar, organized in collaboration with the [Division of Environmental and Energy Systems Studies](#), Department of Technology and Society at Lund University, was entitled “*Microalgal Biotechnology and Phycoremediation technology research in India*”. The two researchers are in the forefront when it comes to research on Phycoremediation technology, dealing with how micro algae can take up nutrients and clean up waste water more efficiently than any other organisms. This quality of micro algae has been successfully exploited in cleaning industrial effluents during the last 14 years, and PERC has implemented small scale and large scale treatment plants based on algal technology in a variety of industries in India and abroad. The main advantage of this technology is it is ecofriendly and cost effective. [Read more](#).



N Thajuddin and V Sivasubramanian.

#### ● SASNET seminar on Governing of Sexuality: Indian Police enforcing the Anti-Sodomy Laws



On Thursday 12 May 2016, SASNET organized a seminar with Professor Jyoti Puri from Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts, USA, on the Criminalization of Homosexuality in India. The seminar was entitled “*(Un)Making Sexual States: Antisodomy Law and Racialization in India*”, and was a joint event with the Global Gender Matters network within the [Department of Gender Studies](#), Lund University. Venue: Room M 221, Dept. of Gender Studies, Allhelgona Kyrkogata 14, Lund. Professor Puri is an interdisciplinary scholar who writes and teaches at the crossroads of Sociology; Sexuality and Queer studies; and Postcolonial Feminist Theory. In her presentation, Prof. Puri argued that governing sexuality helps constitute states. Drawn from fieldwork among police in Delhi, she explores how enforcing the controversial anti-sodomy law is mediated by racialized discourses.

Prof. Puri had come to Lund also to be the faculty opponent for the doctoral dissertation by PhD candidate Maria Tonini the following day – a thesis entitled “*The Ambiguities of Recognition – Young Queer Sexualities in Contemporary India*” ([read more](#)).

#### ● Doctoral thesis on Homosexuality in Contemporary India

PhD candidate **Maria Tonini** at the Department of Gender Studies at Lund University defended her doctoral dissertation entitled “*The Ambiguities of Recognition – Young Queer Sexualities in Contemporary India*” on Friday 13 May 2016. The faculty opponent was Professor Jyoti Puri from Simmons College, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. Venue: Auditoriet/Hörsalen, Kulturen, Tegnérplatsen in Lund. The thesis deals with homosexuality in a non-Western setting, namely contemporary neo-liberal Hindu/Muslim India. The project intends to fill a gap the knowledge about this phenomenon, addressing the intersections between the recent decriminalization of homosexuality in India, human rights, globalization and India’s post-colonial status. It aims to bring into dialogue current Western studies on (“queer”) sexualities with the constructions of sexualities in India, and in doing so examine how the rights of female and male homosexuals in today’s India might be constrained, or facilitated.



Data has been collected in an Indian field site and contrasted with empirical findings, for instance, from Sweden. The material will consist of a combination of qualitative individual interviews and focused group interviews, first of all with homosexuals but also with NGO organizations and politicians. In addition, Maria has carried out a discourse analysis of legal documents and media debates in India. [More information](#).

#### ● Lund and Copenhagen seminars on Neoliberal Nationalism in India

Assistant Professor Nitasha Kaul from the University of Westminster in London, UK held public guest lectures at University of [Copenhagen on Tuesday 17 May 2016](#), 13 – 17, and at [Lund University on Thursday 19 May 2016](#), 15.15–17.00. The seminars were entitled “*From Charkha to Gear – Postcolonial Neoliberal Nationalism in India*”. The Lund seminar was jointly organised by SASNET and the Dept. of Political Science, Lund University, whereas the Copenhagen seminar was organised by the Center for Global South Asian Studies.

Dr. Nitasha Kaul is a Kashmiri novelist, academic, economist and poet. She has a position at the Department of Politics and International Relations (DPIR), University of Westminster, where she teaches postgraduate courses on ‘State, Politics and Violence’ and ‘Postcolonial International Relations’. She has previously been a tenured academic in Economics at the Bristol Business School in UK; and also led courses in Creative Writing at Royal Thimphu College in Bhutan.



Her research and writing over the last decade and a half has been on identity, political economy, democracy, feminist and postcolonial theory, Kashmir and Bhutan. In her recent work, she has addressed issues of nationalism and neoliberalism in contemporary India and the question of nation-states and refugees in Europe. She has authored books including the scholarly monograph ‘*Imagining Economics Otherwise*’ (Routledge, 2007/2008) and a Man Asian Literary Prize shortlisted novel ‘*Residue*’ (Rainlight, 2014). [More information about Dr. Kaul](#).

#### ● More information about South Asia related research at Swedish and Nordic universities

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

### Educational News

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

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/education-news>

## Seminars and Conferences in Scandinavia

### • Sustainable Growth theme for 2016 World Water Week in Stockholm

The 2016 World Water Week in Stockholm is held 28 August - 2 September 2016. World Water Week in Stockholm is the annual focal point for the globe's water issues. It is organized by [Stockholm International Water Institute \(SIWI\)](#). This year, the theme is [Water for Sustainable Growth](#). It is also the 20th jubilee of the Stockholm Junior Water Prize. In 2015, over 3,000 individuals and close to 300 convening organizations from 130 countries participated in the Week.



Experts, practitioners, decision-makers, business innovators and young professionals from a range of sectors and countries come to Stockholm to network, exchange ideas, foster new thinking and develop solutions to the most pressing water-related challenges of today. Every year around 200 delegates from South Asia participate (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka).

After a few years otherwise, the World Water Week is again being held in the heart of Stockholm at the City Conference Centre. The 2016 World Water Week programme consists of more than 140 events of different formats and covering a range of subjects. During the 90-minute convenor events, the most relevant topics relating to "Water for Sustainable Growth" will be discussed – i.e. Financing, 2030 Agenda, Integrity, Gender issues, Climate Change, Energy, Sanitation, Food, Conflict Resolution, Water Management.

Plenary speakers include Ms. Naina Lal Kidwai, Chair, FICCI Water Mission, and Chair, India Sanitation Coalition. [Full information about the 2015 World Water Week.](#)

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

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/lectures-in-scandinavia>

## Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

### • 23rd Conference of the European Association for South Asia Archaeology and Art announced

On 4–8 July 2016, the [European Association for South Asian Archaeology and Art](#) will take place in Cardiff, Wales, UK. Conference contributions should draw on current and unpublished research relating to the archaeology and art history of South Asia from all periods. Topics from neighboring regions will also be considered if they throw light on South Asian archaeology or art history. [More information.](#)



### • 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 Espinal to ensure a strong and lively South Asia presence at the ASAA. [Full information on the conference website.](#)

### • 45th Annual University of Wisconsin–Madison Conference on South Asia

The 45th Annual Madison Conference on South Asia is held 20–23 October 2016. This year's theme is DECAF. The conference,



sponsored by the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, attracted over 550 scholars and specialists on South Asia last year, coming from countries all over the world and much of the United States. This year the Joseph W. Elder keynote lecture at the conference will be given by Professor Radhika Coomaraswamy, and the 2016 Plenary Address speaker will be Pankaj Butalia.

The Annual Conference on South Asia invites scholars, students, professionals, and anyone interested in research on the region to Madison, Wisconsin, for a four-day event featuring research panels and roundtables, lectures and addresses, film screenings, booksellers, association receptions, and other special presentations. Venue: The Madison Concourse Hotel and Governor's Club, 1 West Dayton Street, Madison. The schedule for the 45th Annual Conference on South Asia is almost finalized. [More information.](#)

This year, SASNET deputy director Lars Eklund will participate in the Madison conference, also representing the European Association for South Asian Studies, EASAS, an organisation for which he serves as the Treasurer.

### • Coimbatore conference on Sustainable Utilization of Tropical Plant Biomass

The Fifth International Conference on



Sustainable Utilization of Tropical Plant Biomass – Bioproducts, Biocatalysts, and Biorefinery (SUTB4) will be hosted by the Tamil Nadu Agricultural



University (TNAU) in Coimbatore, India, 17 – 18 November 2016. The conference organised in association with Lund University; the SASNET Fermented Foods research network; the Indian Biomass Association (IBA); the Phycospectrum Environmental Research Centre (PERC); and Sustainable Kerala Net.



The conference is chaired by Professor Emeritus Baboo Nair, [Food for Health Science Centre, Lund University](#), and the scientific committee also includes Professor Richard Öste from the same Lund University Centre; Dr. Jörgen Holm, Glucanova AB, Lund; Professor Sagarika Ekanayake from Jayawardenapura University, Sri Lanka; Professor S Achuthsankar Nair, Kerala University; Dr. J B Prajapati, Anand Agricultural University – current SASNET-Fermented Foods CEO; and many other South Asian researchers in the field.

Energy is a critical input in sustainable growth and development of both developed and developing countries. Fastest depletion of fossil fuels, ever increasing crude oil prices, burgeoning population growth, increased concern over drastic climate change and consequent global warming, has forced nations to shift from fossil fuels to renewable alternative sustainable energy resources to solve the aforementioned problems. In this context, Biomass (including agronomic residues, forestry and paper mill discards, the paper portion of municipal waste, and dedicated energy crops), are the cheapest among the candidates to be considered as an energy source. Moreover, biomass resources are locally available in plenty, requires less capital investments for conversion, reduces green house gas emissions, create employment opportunities in rural areas, helps to solve the disposal problem, any ventures in developing and refining the technology for cost effective production of transport fuel, chemicals from biomass becomes highly essential. Deadline for the registration to the conference is 14 October 2016. [Full information.](#)

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

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/conferences/conferences>

**Business and Politics**

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

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/news-sources/swedish-politics-and-business-related-south-asia>

**South Asia related culture in Scandinavia**

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

See SASNET's page, <http://nordicsouthasianet.eu/cultural-events>

**New and updated items on web site**

• **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**

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