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NORDIC SOUTH ASIA NETWORK

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Research Community News

- **Doctoral thesis on Internal Displacement and Resettlement Processes in Sri Lanka**



Shantha Wanninayake, researcher within the field of Peace and Development at the School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, defended his doctoral dissertation entitled *"Making a 'Home': Internal Displacement and Resettlement Processes in Sri Lanka 2002-2006"* on Friday 27 January 2017. The faculty opponent was Professor Cahtrine Brun, Oxford Brookes University, UK. Go for the full-text thesis.



In his thesis, Wanninayake - hailing from University of Peradeniya in Kandy - has focused on internally displaced persons who either self-settled in host communities or stayed in welfare centres during the cease-fire in Sri Lanka between 2002 and 2006. Data for the study was gathered mainly from extensive field research in the districts of Vavuniya and Anuradhapura. Dr Wanninayake explores how social, economic and security factors influence decisions on whether to return to the original community or to stay in the host community. He found that self-settled people brought new skills in agriculture to the host community that helped the community develop and made both hosts and settlers better off. One conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that officials need to take multiple factors of why people want to stay or resettle into account when designing resettlement programs.

- Especially when resettling the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim groups in their original villages, the reintegration programs should include steps to achieve goodwill and rebuild trust, which can meaningfully build socio-economic cooperation between the groups, Shantha Wanninayake says. Read more in a press release from the university.

- **Double South Asia related dissertations at Dept. of Informatics in Oslo**



Cand. Polit. Hanne Cecilie Geirbo at the Department of Informatics, University of Oslo, will defend her doctoral dissertation entutled "*Crafting Connections – Practices of Infra Structuring. An Etnographic Study of Developing a Village Electricity Grid in Bangladesh*" on Wednesday 29 March 2017, at 13.15. Venue: Auditorium Smalltalk (1416), Ole-Johan Dahls hus, Gaustadalléen 23 B, Oslo. The Adjudication committee consists of Professor Paul Edwards, School of Information, University of Michigan, USA; Associate Professor Anna Croon Fors, Department of Informatics, Umea University, Sweden; and Postdoctoral Fellow Viktor Arvidsson, Department of informatics, University of Oslo. More information.

The thesis is an ethnographic study of the construction of a small power grid in a village in Bangladesh. The study examined the relationship between planning and execution in the development of infrastructure. A major theme is how figures, maps and other tools make it possible to deal with a complex reality while they can hide things that are important to get an infrastructure to work. Read more...



Two days later, on Friday 31 March 2017, at 13.15, M.Sc. Seghal Mukherjee at the same department, defends her doctoral dissertation entitled *"Empowerment: The invisible element in ICT4D projects? The case of public health information systems in India and Kenya"*. The adjudication committee consists of Senior Lecturer Yingqin Zheng, Technology and Information Management, University of London; Associate Professor Jaime Campos, Department of Informatics, Linnaeus University, Sweden; and Postdoctoral Fellow Guri Verne, Department of Informatics, University of Oslo. More information.

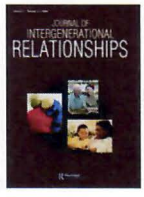
In her thesis, Seghal brings in a humanities centred perspective into the design, implementation and use of public health information systems within a broader development context. This perspective I believe helps to put the focus on the human, the end user, and redresses some of the excessive focus on technology, which many ICT4D initiatives tend to carry. Her perspective is grounded in her Indian roots, where living primarily in rural India, she has experienced developmental challenges, but also the potential of technology, namely the television, to disseminate useful knowledge about agricultural practices. The human-centred perspective was greatly enhanced by the theoretical perspective of the Capability Approach articulated by the Nobel prize winning economist Amartya Sen. Read more...

• Doctoral thesis on Role of Adult Literacy in Transforming the Lives of Indian Women



On Tuesday 4 April 2017, at 13.00, Khaleda Gani Dutt at the Department of Education, Stockholm University, defends her doctoral dissertation within the field of International and Comparative Education. The thesis is entitled *"The Role of Adult Literacy in Transforming the Lives of Women in Rural India: Overcoming Gender Inequalities. Comparative case studies in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan & Howrah District, West Bengal, India"*. Venue: Lilla Hörsalen, Naturhistoriska riksmuseet, Frescativägen 40, Stockholm. NSAN editor Lars Eklund will attend the dissertation.

Abstract: The Indian diaspora is woven around castes, languages, dialects, religions- a young nation boasting of an ancient civilization in which inequalities are deeply ingrained in its culture and traditions. Although vital government interventions have succeeded in increasing the literacy rate of women in both urban and rural areas general household characteristics such as income, caste, occupation and education attainments of parents still continue to determine access, attendance, completion and learning outcomes of girls and women from severely disadvantaged communities. The critical issue investigated in the comparative case study is why and how established hegemonic roles changed because of the catalytic role of adult literacy.



The research was conducted in Bhilwara District, Rajasthan and Howrah District, West Bengal, India where literacy has played an intrinsic role in transforming the lives of the rural and marginalized women. In Indian society social norms often prevent women from exercising their free choice and from taking full and equal advantage of opportunities for individual development, contribution and reward. Read more...

In the February 2017 issue of the peer reviewed magazine Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, Khaleda has published an article entitled *"Reversing the Gaze Through Intergenerational Learning"*. Go for the article.

• Copenhagen meeting to form a South Asia across the Nordic Region collective

The Centre of Global South Asian Studies and the Asian Dynamics Initiative (ADI) at University of Copenhagen invite scholars and practitioners across the Nordic region for what is supposed to become the First Annual Meeting of an initiative entitled *"South Asia across the Nordic Region (SANR)"*. The meeting will be held on Tuesday 27 June 2017 at University of Copenhagen. The new collective will offer a platform to present ongoing research, and generate fresh ideas and information that will enhance our knowledge of the South Asian region. This interaction is expected to increase scholarly collaboration across the region in fruitful ways, and the organisers invite participants to submit paper or panel proposals for this inaugural meeting. There is no conference fee required to present papers. The organizers will provide local hospitality, whereas the travel and accommodation costs will be borne by the participants themselves. Proposals (250 words max) should be sent to Ms. Marie Yoshida. For any further queries, please contact Dr. Ravinder Kaur. Deadline to send proposals is 31 March 2017.

• Grundtvig in focus at Kalyani University conference



A two-day International Conference entitled *"Lifelong Learning in Developing Countries: Issues and Perspectives"* was organized at the University of Kalyani, India, on 17-19 February 2017. The conference was followed by a workshop for developing the curriculum of Lifelong Learning appropriate to post-modern India. The conference was attended by eminent scholars from USA, Denmark, Norway and Malta. The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Peter Mayo of the University of Malta. He is a highly acclaimed personality in the field of lifelong learning globally, and gave a historical perspective of the evolution of



the concept and practice of lifelong learning and how the conflict of capital and labour was visible in the implementation of lifelong learning in the West.
Several Danish researchers participated and a focus was to a large part on N. F. S. Grundtvig (*photo*) and his contribution in the field of present-day Lifelong Learning scenario. Grundtvig was the person behind the world's first folk high school and non-formal education institution way back in 1844. Read more about the Kalyani conference.

• Lund University workshop on Online Hate in India and Sweden

A workshop about Online Hate in India and Sweden was held at Lund University 9-10 February 2017. The workshop was a follow-up activity to the SASNET South Asia Media Project (coordinated by Andreas Mattsson) and its media workshops organised in 2015 and 2016. The purpose behind the February workshop was to bring together a diverse range of scholars, journalists, and activists from Sweden and India to reflect upon the similarities and differences in patterns of online harassment, abuse and hate in the two countries. The workshop was also the first step towards the publication of a book on online hate in comparative perspective.The participants included Dr. Vibodh Parthasarathi from Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi; and journalist Divya Rajagopal from the Economic Times, Mumbai. Read more...

• Kathmandu webinar on Participatory Gender Training Curriculum for Community Groups



The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) in Kathmandu, Nepal organised a webinar on *"Participatory Gender Training Curriculum for Community Groups"* on Thursday 2 March 2017. Led by the CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE), the purpose of this webinar was to discuss a participatory gender training manual for community groups that was developed by researchers at the the IWMI in Nepal. The main issue is how do we generate critical discussion of gender norms, roles and relations in rural communities? IWMI-WLE Nepal has developed a participatory gender training in Nepal (Eastern Terai and Far West), and in India (Bihar and West Bengal). With the intent of flattening prevailing top-down communication structures, the activities and discussions arose from science-based learning theories, research findings and evaluations from workshops in the field.
The webinar was presented by Stephanie Leder, post-doctoral fellow for gender and social inclusion at WLE (and working with IWMI in Nepal), holding a PhD in Cultural Geography/Geography Education at the University of Cologne in Germany for her research on Education for Sustainable Development on water conflicts in Pune, India; and Gitta Shrestha, Post Graduate in Geographical Development Studies with an MPhil in Resources and Human Adaptations from University of Bergen, Norway. Andrew Reckers, a Princeton in Asia fellow working in Communications for the IWMI Nepal office was the moderator.
The webinar recording, slides and the training manual and a documentary can be viewed here.

• Gates Foundation supports Aga Khan University's work on Maternal/Child Health



In late 2016, the Aga Khan University (AKU) in Karachi, Pakistan, secured a five-year, US $25 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, in support of its work to prevent deaths of mothers and children in the country. A variety of approaches will be tested in an effort to develop insights and evidence that can influence policy across the country and beyond its borders. An estimated 440,000 mothers and children under the age of five died in Pakistan in 2015. Only in India and Nigeria do more mothers and children die every year, according to a recent United Nations interagency report. Because the risks mothers and children face in rural areas are especially high, AKU researchers will focus on 14 mainly rural districts in Sindh, Punjab and Balochistan as well as urban slums in Karachi. In Balochistan, for example, the rate at which women die from causes related to pregnancy or childbirth is more than four times higher than in urban areas of Pakistan, and in some areas fewer than one in six women give birth with a health worker present. Read more about the Gates Foundation grant.

Maternal and child health has long been one of AKU's highest priorities, and the University's Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health, has emerged as one of the developing world's leading sources of research in the field. It has contributed to a number of influential Lancet Global Health Series and to the Countdown to 2015 effort, and its work helped to inform the new United Nations' Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health. Its research on community-based solutions to health challenges in rural Pakistan, often involving the government's Lady Health Workers programme, has been groundbreaking and influential. Umeed-e-Nau builds on the Centre's achievements over many years, and represents something of a culmination of its work to date. More information about the Centre.



Professor Zulfiqar Bhutta (*photo*) is the Founding Director of the AKU Centre of Excellence. Bhutta has a strong Swedish connection, from the time he was one of several Pakistani PhD candidates involved in a sandwich research collaboration programme with Karolinska Institutet (KI) in Stockholm from 1992. Prof. Bhutta defended his doctoral thesis at KI in 1996 with a thesis entitled "*Nutritional rehabilitation of Persistent Diarrhoea in Childhood. Factors determining recovery and the relationship of systemic infections with intestinal function*", and he has had regular contacts with KI after that. He was also a member of SASNET's South Asian Reference group, representing Pakistan, for many years. More information.

It should also be mentioned an important personality on the Swedish side behind the fruitful AKU-KI collaboration, namely Professor Emeritus Bo Lindblad at KI. He has been working at AKU in Karachi every winter season since 1992 (and before that he was connected to King Edward Medical College Lahore for another 20 years!)

- **Lars Eklund goes for reconnaissance tour to India and Bhutan**



The NSAN editor Lars Eklund, who is also Executive Director, Communications, for the Varanasi-based Centre for the Study of Indian Languages and Society (INLANSO), will do a reconnaisance tour to India in end-April 2017. He will spend time at INLANSO in Varanasi but also join Dr. Mirja Juntunen, Academic Director at INLANSO, and Dr. Dipak Malik, INLANSO Managing Director, to Mussoorie in Uttarakhand state, and launch the new summer course in Hindi there from early May.

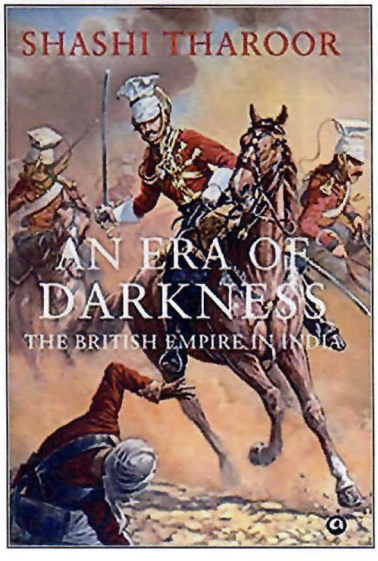
Since 2012 INLASNSO, which is an independent registered trust, successfully runs Hindi Study Programmes for Nordic and European students in Varanasi. In recent years, it has also launched an Urdu programme in Lucknow, a Tamil programme in Pondicherry, and soon a Bengali programme will be set up in Kolkata. INLANSO is currently expanding its activities, teaching more languages, and attracting new groups of students. Lars role is to develop the INLANSO web site but also represent the organisation at international conferences and events. The work will be carried out both from Sweden and India.

Besides, Lars will also spend a week in Bhutan in May 2017, on invitation by the Royal University of Bhutan and in particular its School of Education in Samtse, where he will give a presentation on Swedish Research on South Asia. All in all, Lars will be in the region from 24 April till 15 May, including a few days in Kolkata in the end.

- **Shashi Tharoor brings the true history of the British Empire in India**



An Era of Darkness by Shashi Tharoor. Aleph Book Company 2016. A brilliant book with information that will shock many. Finally the history of the British Empire in India being told by an Indian as it was. Tharoor is currently a second-term Lok Sabha MP representing the Thiruvananthapuram constituency and Chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs.



In 1930, the American historian and philosopher Will Durant wrote that Britain s conscious and deliberate bleeding of India... [was the] greatest crime in all history . He was not the only one to denounce the rapacity and cruelty of British rule, and his assessment was not exaggerated. Almost thirty-five million Indians died because of acts of commission and omission by the British in famines, epidemics, communal riots and wholesale slaughter like the reprisal killings after the 1857 War of Independence and the Amritsar massacre of 1919. Besides the deaths of Indians, British rule impoverished India in a manner that beggars belief. When the East India Company took control of the country, in the chaos that ensued after the collapse of the Mughal empire, India s share of world GDP was 23 per cent. When the British left it was just above 3 per cent. In this explosive book, Tharoor reveals with acuity, impeccable research, and trademark wit, just how disastrous British rule was for India. Besides examining the many ways in which the colonizers exploited India, ranging from the drain of national resources to Britain, the destruction of the Indian textile, steel-making and shipping industries, and the negative transformation of agriculture, he demolishes the arguments of Western and Indian apologists for Empire on the supposed benefits of British rule, including democracy and political freedom, the rule of law, and the railways. The few unarguable benefits the English language, tea, and cricket were never actually intended for the benefit of the colonized but introduced to serve the

interests of the colonizers. Read more...

- **David Shulman writes on the Wonderful Allure of Tamil**



The Wonderful Allure of Tamil by Professor David Shulman, a leading Indologist and scholar of classical South Asian languages, now emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Belknap Press/ Harvard University Press 2017.



Tamil is spoken today by approximately 80 million people, mostly in India but also in Sri Lanka, Singapore, and Malaysia, and in an international diaspora. It is also one of the world's oldest languages, with a continuous history stretching back to at least the late centuries BCE. It has served as a language of trade and statecraft, and as a medium for poetry, philosophy, linguistic science, visionary esotericism, and the expression of Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian religious cultures over the past two millennia. This is an attempt to give a comprehensive vision of the language within the compass of a brief book intended for nonspecialists. Read more in an article by Whitney Cox in New York Review of Books.

- **The Indian Railway Strike of 1974 raised Hopes but failed the Rank and File**



The Crisis of 1974: Railway Strike and the Rank and File by Ranabir Samaddar. Primus Books 2017.



Samaddar is the Director of the Calcutta Research Group (CRG) in Kolkata, India. He was however a Global Fellow at the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in Norway from 2014 till 31 January 2017. This book on the Indian Railway Strike of 1974 looks at the history of the time, the role of the rank and file in the strike, and the fate of the strike itself. Even as one of the most distinctive aspects of the strike was the autonomy of the rank and file, the significance of the struggle had much to do with the nature of the time. The country was in the midst of a general political crisis, sections of the peasantry were in revolt, and there were expressions of solidarity from the industrial working class. However, the strike leadership was not resolute and decisive, and failed the rank and file. In the absence of a political vanguard, the uprising was left without a determined subject.

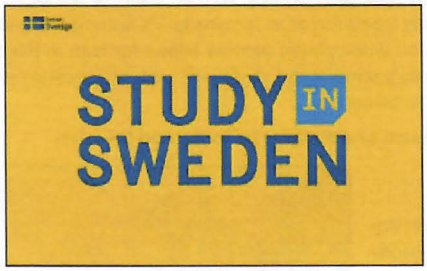
The railwaymen did not transform India, but established for the first time in the political history of post-Independent India the autonomy of the political practice of masses. Suddenly, the strike had opened up a vision whose infinite nature unnerved both the party of order and the parties of constitutional opposition. Read an excerpt from the book in Outlook Magazine 6 March 2017.

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

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

Educational News

- **Pre-departure seminars for admitted students from India and Bangladesh**



For the fourth year, a number of Swedish universities - including KTH Royal Institute of Technology, and Lund University - organise what is known as Pre-Departure Seminars for newly admitted students from India and Bangladesh. The India seminars, held in five cities - Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi - are organized in collaboratio with Business Sweden and the Swedish Institute (SI), and are meant to provide the practical information on studying in Sweden. The Swedish Embassy also participates and provides information regarding the visa to the adopted. Some universities prefer to talk to their adopted via Skype also associated with these seminars. In 2017, the India seminars are held during the period 3-9 April; and they are followed by a seminar for admitted students in Dhaka, Bangladesh on April, 10th. More information.

Professor Rajeev Thottappillil of KTH's School of Electrical Engineering is the Director of International Affairs for India. It should be mentioned that there are four Indian universities with which KTH currently has formal partnerships, namely the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) in Mumbai, Delhi and Roorkee, plus the University of Pune. Besides, the KTH-India Scholarship Foundation provides an opportunity for two scholars from India per academic year to educate themselves on advanced level at KTH. More information.

- **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

- **Lund University seminar on Cosmological Activism among Pakistani Sufi Muslims**





Ida Sofie Matzen from the Institute of Anthropology at University of Copenhagen held a seminar at Lund University on Thursday 23 March 2017. She spoke about "*Extremists of Love: Cosmological Activism among Pakistani Sufi Muslims in Lahore, Pakistan*", which was also the topic of her PhD thesis that she defended in November 2016. The Lund seminar was jointly organised by at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) and the Swedish South Asian Studies Network (SASNET).

Abstract: Since the advent of the so-called "war against terror", Sufi shrines in Pakistan have been attacked, supposedly by factions of the Taliban or ISIS affiliated groups. The most recent suicide attack took place at the shrine of the major saint Lal Shahbaz Qalandar on February 16, 2017 and claimed the lives of more than 80 people. In her presentation, Matzen attends to some of the Sufi responses to, and absorption of, these kinds of events in order to explore some of the multiple political forms of Sufi Islam in Pakistan. Sufism is often described as the 'spiritual' and 'soft' dimension of Islam. Moreover, Sufi followers in Pakistan – the majority of the country's almost 195 million people – are frequently characterized as disengaged in worldly affairs, if not outright apolitical. Based on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork in Lahore between 2009 and 2012 for my PhD thesis, she argues that Sufi cosmological concepts and practices also amount to more or less explicit forms of political activities and visions. Read more...

- **Aarhus seminar on Legal Termination of the Right to Life - the Indian scenario**



Professor B. Krishnamurthy from the Department of Politics and International Studies, Pondicherry University in Puducherry, India, holds a guest lecture on *"Legal Termination of the Right to Life - the Indian scenario"* on Wednesday 29 March 2017, at 13.00. The seminar is organised by CISCA - Contemporary India Study Centre Aarhus at University of Aarhus. Venue: Nobelparken, 1467-316. Krishnamurthy also heads the Centre for European Studies and Centre for Foreign Languages. He specializes in India-EU Relations, European Human Rights Regime and Indo-French Relations. He has authored two books, edited three volumes and has published around 50 research articles in international and national journals and in edited volumes by other scholars.

Seminar abstract: While the Indian Constitution ensures the right to life and livelihood of its citizens and the Su-preme Court of India has interpreted that the right to life as including the right to live with dignity and not mere physical existence, death penalty continues to remain in the statute books at the same time - though inflicted on "rarest of the rare" cases. Gravity of the crime and occasional occurrence of terrorist activities, which results in public opinion being in fa-vour of death penalty to the concerned individuals, need to be weighed by the Indian Gov-ernment whenever it thinks of dispensing with the capital punishment.

- **Oslo seminar on Decline, Hope and the Politics of Work in Jamshedpur**



Dr. Andrew Sanchez from University of Cambridge, UK, holds an open seminar at University of Oslo on Wednesday 29 March 2017, 14.15-16.00. He will present a paper entitled "*Relative Precarity: Decline, Hope and the Politics of Work*" based on ethnographic fieldwork among industrial workers in the Indian city of Jamshedpur. Venue: Department of Social Anthropology, room 648, Moltke Moes vei 31, Blindern, Oslo.

Andrew Sanchez has an PhD from London School of Economics and Political Science in 2009. He is a specialist on the anthropology of class, labour and corruption, and has conducted ethnographic fieldwork in urban India among industrial workers, trade unionists and entrepreneurs. In his Oslo lecture, he explores the political distinctions that divide insecurely employed people. By comparing the political discourses of a corporate workforce whose employment security has declined during the past two decades, with an insecure labour force in the informal sector. For recently precarious labourforces in Jamshedpur's automotive sector, an historical experience of labour struggle and employment security allows for faith in the capacity for social advancement. By contrast, workers in the city's scrap metal yards lack such historical reference points, and tend to doubt the capacity for positive change. Full information.

- **Varanasi conference on Gender, Activism and Politics in India and Sweden**

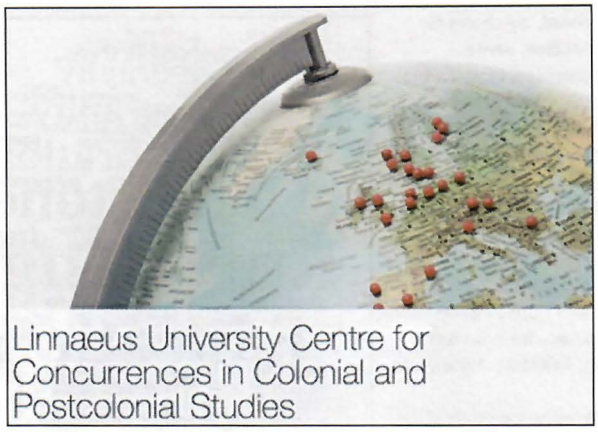


A joint Indo-Swedish conferennce entitled *"Gender, Activism and Politics in India and Sweden"* will be held at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Varanasi on 2-4 April 2017. The Swedish organizing partner is Karlstad University.

While both India and Sweden acknowledge the need for enhancing women participation and empowerment; their immediate concerns and priorities have been diverse. In Sweden there is growing concern about the declining participation of women in electoral politics and how it relates to the growing sway of neo-liberalism. Also there are anxieties about the proportionately low

participation of women from the community of immigrants, diasporas and the minorities.
On the other hand, India pins great importance to empowerment of women in the context of feminization of poverty, illiteracy, hunger and gender based violence. In parallel we observe a re-masculinisation of politics in both countries with a steadily growing populism that are following an authoritarian sentiment sweeping over the world. More information.

• Indo-Swedish workshop on Global Social Theory in New Delhi



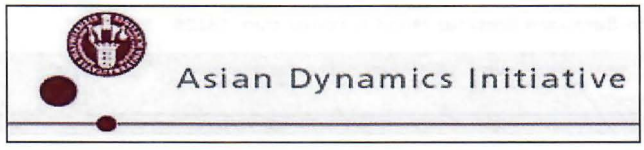
A workshop entitled "*Towards Global Social Theory? Possibilities and Tensions*" will be held at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi, India, 18-20 April 2017. It is organized by Henrik Chetan Aspengren, with logistical assistance by the Nordic Centre in India (Umeå and Delhi). The workshop is funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond and LNU Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies.
This workshop is addressing current debates regarding the dominance of Northern thought in social theory. The role of modern European Empire and European modernity, as well as the structure of current knowledge systems in marginalising theory from the South has been discussed in this connection. Although the liveliest debate on these issues has been coming out of the discipline of sociology, scholars from other parts of the social sciences have also contributed.
The workshop format is unconventional in the sense that there will be no open call for papers; instead ten scholars active within the field have been invited to submit previously unpublished papers. Invited participants include Gurminder K Bhambra, Professor of Sociology, University of Warwick; Ananta Kumar Giri, Madras Institute of Development Studies; Stefan Jonsson Professor of Ethnic studies, Linköping University; Sujata Patel, Professor of Sociology, University of Hyderabad; Aakash Singh Rathore, Visiting professor Centre for Philosophy, Jawaharlal Nehru University; and Sanjay Seth Professor of Politics, Goldsmith, University of London.
The participants have been asked to relate their contribution to one of three specific questions, ensuring a tighter fit between each paper and the general aim of the workshop:
• How can the work of contemporary social theory, generally produced in Northern/Western universities, be useful to social movements around the global south?
• How can Southern and decolonial theories connect over disciplinary and geographical boundaries and what is the role [place] of the university in this process?
• How can concepts developed in the South effectively be introduced to studies of social processes also in the North?
During the third day of the workshop, two separate panels will take place at Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi and the Observer Research Foundation, respectively.
More information.

• Aarhus conference on Anthropology of Fright. Perspectives from Asia



A workshop on "Anthropology of Fright. Perspectives from Asia" will be held at Aarhus University 18-19 May 2017. The conference is jointly organised by Stefano Beggiora (Dept. of Asian and North African Studies, Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy); Lidia Guzy (India Study Centre Cork, School of Asian Studies, UCC Cork, Ireland); and Uwe Skoda (CISCA, Dept. of Global Studies, Aarhus University, Denmark.
Headlines around the globe in 2016 – ranging from terrorist attacks to war in Syria, Brexit etc. – were dominated by "frightful" events. For this workshop the organisers would like to focus on fright and fear in a broad sense – not limited to the above-mentioned global events. Taking a distinctive Asian perspective they are interested in the idea of fright: what are sources of fright and fear, how do we encounter them and handle such fears whenever we are confronted with them, when and how are 'monsters' produced, what mechanisms are employed to suppress, transform or seek fright? In a comparative and multidisciplinary approach we would like to bring together different but often overlapping contexts of fright. Contributions are invited from across the humanities, arts and social sciences spectrum including anthropology, sociology, religious studies, area studies, folklore studies, political science etc based on empirical research. Please send an abstract (250-300 words) by 28th of Feb to cisca@cas.au.dk.
Full information.

• Asian Century in focus for 2017 ADI conference in Copenhagen



The Asian Dynamics Initiative at University of Copenhagen organizes its 9th annual international ADI conference on 26-28 June 2017. The focus for the 2017 annual ADI conference will be the question of 'the Asian century' that is yet to be fully examined. The ways in which new connected histories, flows and connections both within, and beyond, territoriality are taking shape will be discussed. What kind of circulatory worlds are produced through these multiple connections forged across temporalities via commodity trade, investments, human migration, technology, tourism, religion, art, literature and other forms of cultural consumption? How has Asia historically circulated beyond its territorial boundaries? And how do these circulations shape the contemporary world?
The conference organizers invite abstracts for paper presentations addressing Asian circulations and dynamics in a global context, but especially welcome perspectives relating to one of the panels listed below.
There is a panel with a direct South Asia focus, entitled "(En)countering sexual violence in the South Asian city", convened by Atreyee Sen and Emilija Zabiliute, University of Copenhagen; Raminder Kaur, University of Sussex. The

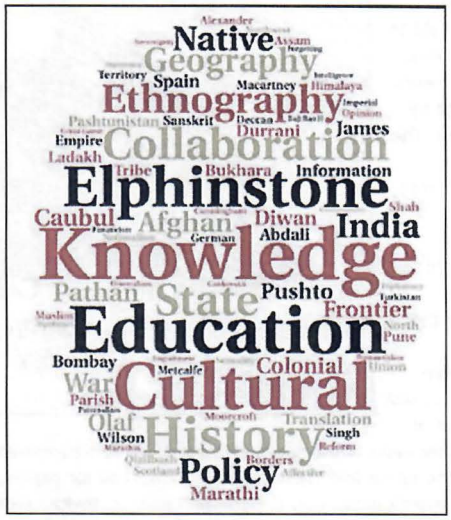
deadline for submitting paper proposals is 1 March 2017. More information.

- **Information about South Asia related lectures and seminars**

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

Conferences and workshops outside Scandinavia

- **Mumbai conference on Mountstuart Elphinstone: between Global and Local Forces**



Drs. Shah Mahmoud Hanifi and Spencer Leonard, co-chairs for the Elphinstone Conference Organizing Committee, invite participants for a second conference on Mountstuart Elphinstone (1779-1859) to be held 20-21 April 2017 at Elphinstone College in Mumbai, India. The theme for the conference will be *"Mountstuart Elphinstone between Local and Global Forces. Colonial Knowledge, National Histories and Regional Realities in South Asia"*. It will be a follow-up to a similar conference held in London in November 2015.

The focus lies on the themes of colonialism, knowledge production and ideology, multiform social and political geographies, and colonial liberalism and its crisis. Academics and public intellectuals from all over the world are invited, but especially from across South Asia - India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.



The idea is to explore the enduring intellectual and political impact of Elphinstone considered in the broadest sense, as a presiding figure over the historical nexus that was the 19th century Bombay Presidency. The local public in Mumbai and the global public via streaming webcast is welcome to join this trans-national scholarly conversation. More information.

Montstuart Elphinston was a Scottish statesman and historian, associated with the government of British India. He later became the Governor of Bombay where he is credited with the opening of several educational institutions accessible to the Indian population. Besides being a noted administrator, he wrote books on India and Afghanistan.

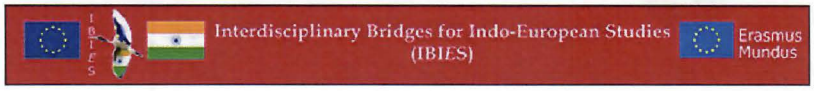
- **Swedish support to Guwahati spring school on the India-China Corridor**



The India-China Corridor Spring School will be held in Guwahati, Assam, India, on 25-26 March 2017. The theme for the pring school will be *"Modern Empires, Flows, Environments and Livelihoods"*, and it is jointly organised by Prof. Gunnel Cederlöf, Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies, the Linnaeus University, Sweden (lead faculty member); Prof. Arupjyoti Saikia, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati; Dr. Mandy Sadan, Department of History, SOAS, University of London, UK; Prof. Em. Willem van Schendel, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands; Prof. Dan Smyer Yu, Director, Center for Trans-Himalayan Studies, Yunnan Minzu University, China; and Prof. Mahesh Rangarajan, Ashoka University, India. The Spring school is sponsored by IIT Guwahati, and the Swedish Research Council.

For the first time in three hundred years, India and China are rapidly emerging as global powers in a world economy gravitating from the Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific. Deep histories of interconnection have materialized via enormously varied ecologies and eco-zones, and a broad spectrum of polities across times of interaction, alliances, and warfare. Borders and boundaries have variably hardened, softened and moved, from the times of imperial Mughal, Manchu and British domination until the formation of the nation-states we know today. The transregional effects have not only cartographically reshaped the interconnected territories of the Himalayas, Northeast India, and the highlands of Southeast Asia. They have also engendered geopolitical perceptions of the eco-geological contiguities, and geo-economic alterations of traditional trade and religious networks between multiple nations and multi-centred ethnolinguistic societies. Deadline for the submission of applications was 10 November 2016. Full information.

- **Concluding Kolkata workshop for Indo-European Erasmus Mundus consortium IBIES**



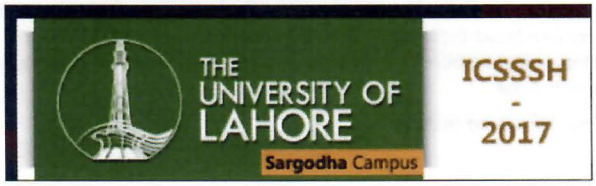
The Indo-European Erasmus Mundus Action 2 consortium IBIES (Interdisciplinary Bridges for Indo-European Studies), coordinated by Aarhus University, Denmark, organises a concluding workshop entitled *"'Discovering Europe' - Ideas, Experiences and Reflections from an Indo-European Mobility Consortium"* at University of Calcutta in Kolkata 6-7 April 2017. Abstracts shoukd be submitted before 6 March.

IBIES has six European and 13 Indian partner institutions (see the list) and has strived to promote Indo-European higher education, to support the improvement and enhancement of scholars' career prospects as well as the promotion of intercultural communication and understanding through cooperation with the partner countries.

IBIES has supported mobility at all level of higher education, including both mobility for students (undergraduate, master, doctoral and post-doctoral) and for staff (academic and administrative).The IBIES network in the frame of the Erasmus Mundus programme has also promoted further enhancement of the individual student, researcher or teacher

in order to improve not only their knowldedge, qualifications and skills but also to strengthen the cooperation between India and EU and contribute to the development of theses societies.
Given the specific Indian angle of this Erasmus Mundus consortium enabling mobilities from India to Europe, the Kolkata workshop invites reflections on the impact of contemporary encounters with Europe. How have prolonged stays in one of the six European partner universities – in academic environments and beyond - influenced the view of Europe and the EU member countries respectively. More information about the workshop.
The workshop will be followed by a final Steering Committee Meeting to be held at University of Calcutta on 7-8 April.

- **Lahore conference on Social Sciences in Service of Humanity**



Lahore University Sargodha Campus, Pakistan, organises an International Conference on Social Sciences in Service of Humanity (ICSSSH-2017) on 12-13 April 2017. The conference welcome papers on a large number of research themes, including "Role of Leadership in Promotion of National Cohesion"; "Refugees, Migration and Human Trafficking"; "The Role of Civil Society in Sustaining and Strengthening Democracy"; "Nuclearization of South Asia: Deterrence or Insecurity"; "Microfinance and Human Welfare"; and "Role of Literature and Language/ Linguistics in the Promotion of Peace and Tolerance". Abstracts clearly indicating objectives, methodology, results, and conclusion along with abrief biographical note should be delivered by 8 February. More information.

- **BASAS 2017 conference at Nottingham**

BASAS
British Association for South Asian Studies



On 19-21 April 2017, the British Association of South Asian Studies (BASAS) holds its annual conference in Nottingham. The conference is hosted by Nottingham University's Institute of Asia and Pacific Studies (IAPS) and Nottingham Trent University's Postcolonial Studies Centre. The keynote speaker is feminist historian, publisher and writer Urvashi Butalia, sponsored by IAPS.
An award of £250 will be made for the best paper presented at the Annual Conference. Entries should be no longer than 7000 words and submitted no later than 15 March 2017 to the conference organisers at basas2017@nottingham.ac.uk. A panel of judges comprising the conference organisers and council members will make the final decision based on the paper and the presentation. The winning paper may be considered for publication in one of BASAS's associated journals, Contemporary South Asia or South Asian Studies. More information.

- **Brandeis University conference on the Unfinished Legacy of Ambedkar**



The third annual international conference on the Unfinished Legacy of Dr B.R. Ambedkar will be held 28-30 April 2017 at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, USA. The theme for te conferece will be *"Re-imagining Religion, Caste, and Social Justice in South Asia"*. It is being organised by the Center for Global Development and Sustainability (GDS) at Brandeis University, and co-sponsored by the The Indian Institute of Dalit Studies in New Delhi; The India China Institute at The New School, New York, USA; The Centre for the Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy at the National Law School of India University in Bangalore; the Boston Study Group; The W.E.B. DuBois Department of Afro American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, USA; and the Ambedkar International Mission, USA. Abstracts should be submitted before 3 March 2017. More information.

- **Kings India Institute graduate conference on Narratives of Indian Democracy**



The King's India Institute in London, officially launched in January 2012, is committed to building India's human and intellectual capacities to address global issues on its own terms, foster long-range thinking on India's most essential dilemmas, and deepen international comprehension of the distinctive character of India's growth path and its challenges. The Institute's activities encompass academic research and scholarship, postgraduate teaching and research, policy analysis and debate, and public engagement in arts and culture. It is headed by Professor Sunil Khilnani, and the academic staff includes several eminent South Asia specialists such as Professor Christophe Jaffrelot, Professor Harsh V Pant and Dr Jahnavi Phalkey.
On 31 May 2017, the King's India Institute organises its 5th annual Graduate Conference in London. The theme is *"Narratives of Indian Democracy"*. The Graduate Conference offers an opportunity for research students to share their work and receive feedback from eminent academics/experts from various disciplines. Deadline for submitting abstracts is 15 March. Full information.

- **4th Evaluation Conclave on Gross National Happiness in Bhutan**

The Community of Evaluators – South Asia (CoE-SA) announces its 4th Evaluation Conclave (Conclave 2017) to be held in Bhutan from 6 – 9 June 2017. It will be a collaborative Event of CoE – SA, the Gross National Happiness Commission (GNHC) of the Royal Government of Bhutan, and the Evaluation Association of Bhutan. Conclave 2017 will focus largely on the relationship between well-being and sustainable development with a view to demonstrate the importance of evaluations in these areas. Conclave 2017 will be a forum for government, civil society, donors and evaluation fora. Call for contributions and conclave registration are now open. Full information.

THE EVALUATION CONCLAVE 2017

Happiness – or people's satisfaction of their lives – has become the key indicator of well-being. Many factors contribute to happiness; these include personal factors such as income, health, the freedom to choose life styles etc. Additionally, there are social conditions such as community interactions and governance. The conditions of the environment in which we live also contribute significantly to well-being and happiness. In the recent times, work has progressed on quantifying happiness; for example, the evaluative happiness, as detailed in the World Happiness Report, looks at overall quality of life and has developed benchmarks. The ultimate aim of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is human well-being examined from economic, social, and environmental objectives, rather than from a narrow agenda of economic growth alone.

• Triple conferences on Comparative Peacebuilding in Asia



Three conferences with the theme *"Comparative Peacebuilding in Asia - Liberal and Illiberal Transitions from Ethnic Conflict and Authoritarianism"* will be held in Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the United Kingdom in 2017 and 2018, supported by the British Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF). This series of three conferences seeks to promote research and facilitate interdisciplinary discussions on the illiberal, nationally driven peacebuilding processes in conflict-affected South and Southeast Asia. There has been an extraordinary expansion of academic interest in this field, and a new generation of scholars is producing exciting research drawing on theoretical innovations and empirical advances, including interesting comparative work. More information about the project.

The aim is to bridge academic nodes and peacebuilding knowledge and practice in the UK, Europe, Australia, North America and Africa, with Asia, and also to connect scholars and policy-makers within South and Southeast Asia. In particular, the organisers - including Dr Rajesh Venugopal, London School of Economics and Political Science - are looking for contributions that deal with liberal and illiberal peacebuilding conditions in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Indonesia, Cambodia, Nepal, India, Timor-Leste, Philippines, and Thailand. The conference dates are:

Colombo, Sri Lanka: 30 June - 2 July 2017
Yogyakarta, Indonesia: December 2017 (precise dates to be confirmed)
London, UK: June 2018 (precise dates to be confirmed)
Full information.

• Vilnius conference on Nation, Gender and History in Asian film



Asian Arts Centre and The Centre of Oriental Studies at Vilnius University, Lithuania, organises an international conference entitled '*Nation, Gender and History: Asian Cinemas in Perspective*' on 7 - 9 September 2017. Scholars, film professionals and other interested are invited to participate. Deadline for abstracts is 30 April 2017.

The idea of a national culture has played a fundamental role in the definition, historiography and evaluation of Asian cultural practices for at least two centuries, and cinema is no exception. In today's world, however, ideas of the nation appear as increasingly problematic. The same can be said of gender, the pertinence of which in individuals' understanding of themselves and their history has, over the last decades, been challenged from many fronts. And yet both ideas of nation and gender continue to mark discourses about identities and countries, including and perhaps especially in situations of conflict. 2017 marks the 70th anniversary of the independence and partition of India and Pakistan. The conference takes this opportunity to raise the question: can we still argue for the centrality of national cinemas? What role do notions of gender play in our appreciation of a nation's cinema? And how do the interconnections between gender and nation in cinema help us understand the present historical moment?

While the organisers are interested in papers on the cinema of every Asian country, they particularly welcome papers

on the all too often overlooked and still poorly researched cinemas of Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, as well as on regional language formations such as Pashto, Sindhi, or Bhojpuri cinemas. They especially welcome papers on popular, low-budget genres (exploitation, B-grade, horror, sci-fi, and erotic films). Full information.

- **Peshawar conference on State and Society in South Asia**

The 26th International Pakistan History Conference will be held at University of Peshawar on 9-11 October 2017. The theme for the conference, jointly organised by the the Pakistan Historical Society; the Dept. of History at University of Peshawar; and the Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, is *"State and Society in South Asia: Historical Perspective"*.

Historically South Asia consists of the present day states of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The region has more than 2,000 ethnic entities with populations ranging from hundreds of millions to a few thousand. The blend of these various groups has produced composite cultures with some common traditions and beliefs. Despite the tendency towards assimilation, the traditions of some ethnic groups in South Asia have persisted throughout history, sometimes giving rise to strong local traditions such as the distinctive South Indian and Bengali cultures. The conference aims to generate an academic debate on different aspects of State and Society in South Asian context from earlier times to the recent past. The debate would look into the various phases of the development and growth of Society and State in the past, their role in present, and impact on the future. Abstracts should have been submitted before 15 March 2017. Selected papers will be published in a reputable journal or edited volume from a reputable publisher, subject to fulfillment of procedural requirements including plagiarism check and blind peer review. Full information.

- **46th Madison conference will be an open-topic conference**

The 46th Annual Madison Conference on South Asia will be held 26 – 29 October 2017. The conference, that is sponsored by the Center for South Asia at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, attracts over 800 scholars and specialists on South Asia, who travel from countries all over the world and much of the United States. It is a great venue for intellectual, professional, and social exchange. Panels, roundtables, and individual papers on all topics pertaining to South Asian studies are welcome. Registration and proposal submission forms (single papers, panels, roundtables, preconferences) are available on line. Registration as a non-presenting participant at the Conference is open to the general public. The conference features nearly 100 academic panels and roundtables, as well as association meetings and special events ranging from performances to film screenings. This year's conference chair has invited an open-topic conference; there is no theme. Submissions for the 46th Annual Conference on South Asia opened in February 2017. The deadline for Preconference Submissions is March 1. All other submission types are due April 1. Letters of acceptance will be sent in early June, and at that time the full schedule will be available online. Venue: Madison Concourse Hotel, 1 West Dayton St., Madison, Wisconsin, USA. More information.

- **Time to propose panels for the 2018 ECSAS conference in Paris**



The 25th European Conference on South Asian Studies (ECSAS) is scheduled for 24-27 July 2018 in Paris, France. It will be held at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, (54 and 105, Blvd. Raspail). It is organized by the Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud (CNRS-EHESS). The call for panels is now open and will close on 30 April 2017. Panel convenors and paper presenters at the 24th ECSAS must be members of EASAS through 2017 & 2018 or 2018 & 2019. Non-members cannot attend the conference. More information at the conference web page.



If you would like to convene a panel at this conference, please submit your proposal via the online form: https://portal.smart-abstract.com/ecsas2018

Conveners may also present a paper during the conference, either in their own panel or another. Due to the 'competition for time' within such a conference, colleagues are allowed to convene no more than one panel and present only one paper during the conference. All panels are open to paper proposals through the website and not just to previously-solicited contributions. EASAS appreciates a well-balanced composition of convenors and panelists within a panel (by gender, with an international mix of participants, and senior and junior scholars) but the main criterion will be the high academic quality of your panel. One convenor per panel must be based in a European institution. The conference organizers will also seek to ensure that the wide range of disciplines usually represented at the conference finds adequate coverage, both separately and in interdisciplinary panels.

ECSAS requires all accepted panels to be open to paper proposals through the website: proposed panels should not be 'closed' to further papers ab initio. Young researchers are advised to contact panel convenors to be considered for inclusion in their panel; young researchers are also encouraged to propose panels themselves. No panel may run for more than 4 sessions of 90 minutes.

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 Warsaw, Poland, in July 2016. Lars Eklund attended the conference, at that time representing SASNET, Lund University (but also as a member of the EASAS board - re-elected for the position as treasurer). Go for his Warsaw report.

- **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://nordicsoutasianet.eu/news-sources/swedish-politics-and-business-related-south-asia

South Asia related culture in Scandinavia

- **Indian Ambassador attended IAS celebrations event in Malmö**

The Indian Association in Sweden (IAS) is a registered non-profit organization affiliated with Indian Embassy of Sweden, with an aim to disseminate Indian culture through its activites. On Saturday 11 March 2017, IAS organised its fifth anniversary celebrations with an "India Day in Skåne" event in Malmö. The recently installed new Ambassador of India to Sweden and Latvia, Ms. Monika Kapil Mohta (*photo*), was the key guest at the celebrations, along with local VIP guests, including Mats Lindroos, Head of Accelerator Division, European Spallation Source (ESS); Carina Nilsson, Councilor for Social Affairs, Malmö Kommun; and Lars Eklund, Nordic South Asia Network.



Inauguration ceremony with Ambassador Monika Kapil Mohta and invited VIP guests.

The programme included an ambitious and beautifully choreographed regional dance performances from Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan; Carnatic music rendering; and an amazing pan-Indian fashion show. More information.



- **Gothenburg exhibition of contemporary Afghani photography**

The Museum of World Culture in Gothenburg presents a photo exhibition with 22 Afghani photographers who all give a different image of their home country. This exhibition of contemporary photography is entitled Afghan Tales, and will be on display from 6 April till 12 June 2017. It offers a sort of counter image to the usual news reports about the country. Through different themes and techniques the photographs explore everyday life, vulnerability and hope. Mohammed Ibrahim Wahid, one of the photographers in the exhibition explains: "I like assignments that involve the general population and daily life, because there is life behind it. (...) Yes, there is war, poverty and corruption in Afghanistan, no one can deny that, but there is also a normal daily life and good things are happening too". Read more about the exhibition.



(*Photo by Fardin Waezi*)

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

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

Best regards

Lars Eklund

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