

Resebrev Nr 112

1-5 november 2012

DELHI



In 2012, I spent the period 20 October till 30 November in India. 2012, setting up a small SASNET office at our Sardar Sankar Rd residence in Kolkata, interacting with SASNET networking partners at the prime universities in Kolkata. I also made a contact journey to universities and other institutions in the north Indian cities of Varanasi, Kanpur and Delhi. **Third stop Delhi**, visiting the the South Asian Unlverslty and other networking partners. I also participated in the sixth Nobel Memorial Week, organised by the Swedish Embassy, and had meetings with the Ambassador Harald Sandberg.



Sixth Nobel Memorial Week in Delhi, organised by the Swedish Embassy included Nobel Quizz competitions among IIT students in the six cities. After local qualification games, the Grande Finale was held on Saturday 3 November at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi. Alfred Nobel present, in reality Peter Sundh.



The Swedish Trade Council and the Swedish Energy Agency event in their Innovation House, adjacent to the Embassy, visited by Annie Lööf, Swedish Minister for Enterprise.





Dr. Andreas Muranyi Scheutz, Counselor of Science and Technology, and Head of office for the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis



Stefan Jonsson, Uppsala University





Reception in the garden of the Swedish Ambassador. Jagganath Panda from the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) with Ashok Sajjanhar, former Indian Ambassador to Sweden.





Entertainment by by Swedish singer Amanda Mair, and the band Jump4Joy,





Birgitta Sacreus, Councillor representing the Christian Democrats in Landstinget Dalarna.



Dr. Fawad Hussain, Dept. of Mass Communication at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU)





Lars with Ashok Sajjanhar





Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi.



Lars with Swedish Ambassador, Mr. Harald Sandberg, and Daniel Wolvén, Deputy Head of Mission



Mr. P N Malik, Nordic Centre in India Delhi office manager





Meeting with
Professor A K
Rashid, Cultural
Counsellor at
Embassy of
Afghanistan in
Delhi

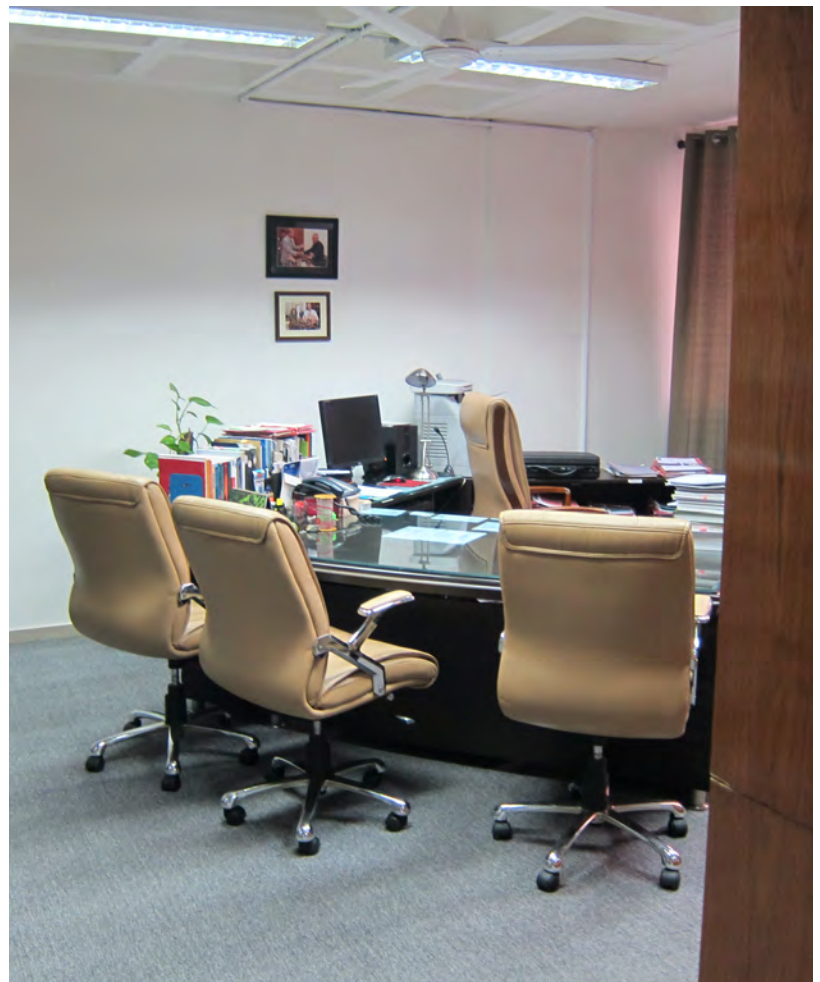


Rajib Nandi, Associate Director, Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST) och Aparajita De, Assistant Professor på Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi.





Professor G K Chadha, President, South Asian University (SAU)

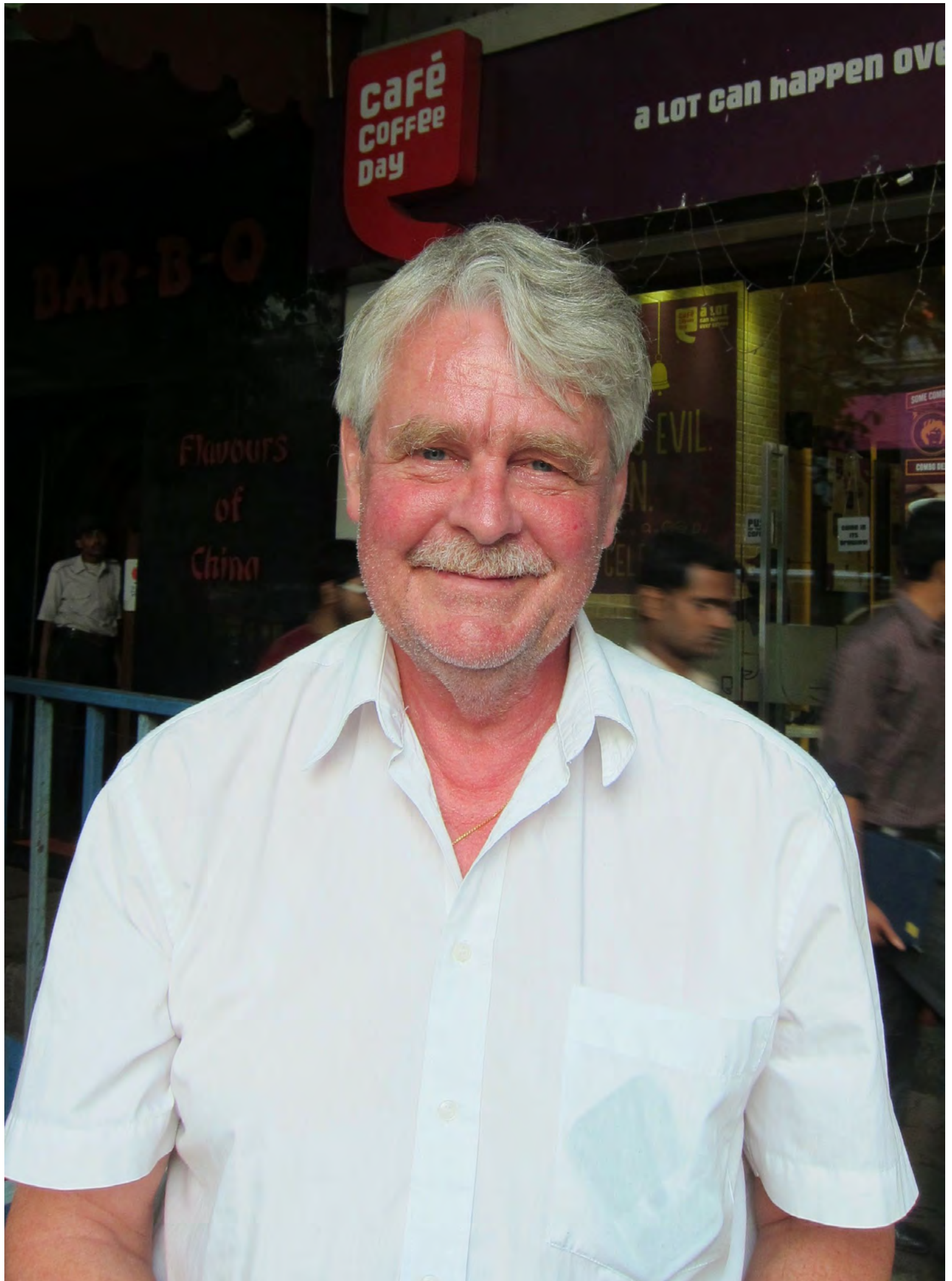




Meeting on formation of European STI Platform in India Suboor Bakht, Heideiberg University South Asia Centre, and P N Mallk, Nordic Centre In Indla.



Dominique Aymer, Director for the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) Office in India



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By **Lars Eklund**

Nordic Centre in India (NCI)

Arriving Delhi by a small propeller plane from Kanpur in the early evening of Thursday 1 November, a waiting car took me straight away to the Nordic Centre in India (NCI) flat at Nizamuddin East. This oasis for Nordic researchers and academic staff would be my home away from home for five days.



The NCI is managed locally by Mr. P N Malik (*photo*), who has done a tremendous job through the years assisting Nordic researchers with practical problems in India. The new NCI Director, Dr. Kristina Myrvold from Lund University, has also put her mark on the Centre by freshening the premises up with new linen and textiles. Since my previous stay at NCI in 2007, the most remarkable improvement was however the well-functioning wifi connection that makes work easy.

A nice thing with NCI is also that you happen to meet other visiting Nordic academics, and so was the case even this time. All through my stay, I shared my time with Aase Hjelde, Norwegian Social Anthropologist from the University of Bergen ([more information](#)), and her husband Martin Kvanneid (*together on the photo*). Aase was going to start with a new research



project, a village study entitled "*Gender, Environment and Change*", to be carried out in the Sivalik Hills, north of Chandigarh.

The purpose of my visit to Delhi was varied. The Swedish Embassy organised for the sixth consecutive year a Nobel Memorial Week in India, and this was completed with a number of events during this weekend. I was going to attend some of these, and in addition meet Mr. Harald Sandberg, new Swedish Ambassador to India, and Dr. Andreas Muranyi Scheutz, Counsellor of Science and Technology, and Head of office for the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis, based at the Embassy.

I was also going to visit the recently established South Asian University (SAU); meet the Educational and Cultural Counsellor at the Embassy of Afghanistan; visit the Institute of Social Studies Trust at India Habitat Centre; and attend a formative meeting to establish

a European Science/Technology/Innovation (STI) Platform in India, under the auspices of New INDIGO, a consortium of European and Indian STI ministries, funding agencies and research organisations promotion research cooperation between Europe and India.

Nobel Memorial Week in India 2012

Web page:

<http://sinmw.com>

The Swedish Embassy, together with a number of partner companies including SAAB, Sandvik, Volvo and Ericsson, organised the sixth Nobel Memorial Week with a programme including lectures, seminars and round tables, student quizzes and photo



competitions, exhibitions and cultural performances at different places in India, besides Delhi also Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Chennai and Hyderabad.

The theme for the 2012 Memorial Week was "Co-creating the Future", and focused largely on Creativity and Talent, Education and Clean Technology. The Swedish Trade Council and the Swedish Energy Agency organised events in their Innovation House, adjacent to the Embassy, visited by Annie Lööf, Swedish Minister for Enterprise (on photo).

At a reception organised by the Swedish Trade Council, I met four Swedish students doing internships at the Swedish embassy. Rasmus Jönsson, and Kajsa Olofsson, from Industrial Economy, Linköping University, both doing their final exam paper (examensjobb) studying Swedish companies in India; Frida Forsman, also from Linköping, but a student of Psychology; and Malin Petersson, studying International Economics at Uppsala University.

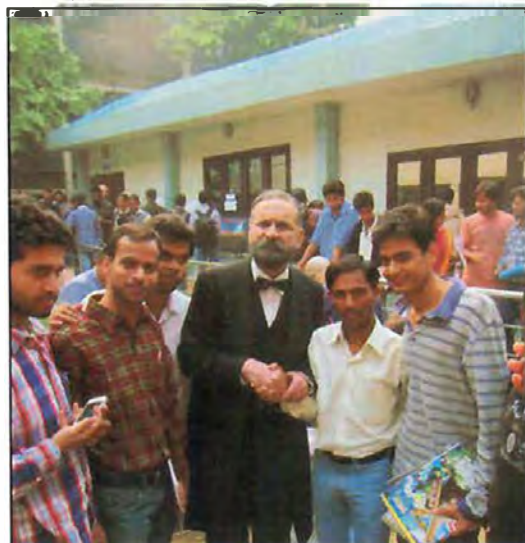


Swedish students Kajsa Olofsson, Rasmus Jönsson and Malin Petersson.

One of the highlights of the Nobel Memorial Week is the Nobel Quizz competitions among IIT students in the six cities involved in the programme. After local qualification games, the Grande Finale was held on Saturday 3 November at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi.

The winning teams from the six IITs now competed on their knowledge not only on the Nobel Prize history, but on their general

knowledge about Sweden. I was there along with a large number of hopeful students, embassy staff and representatives of Swedish companies, most notably SAAB promoting its military airplanes. And then sticking out from the rest, a man completely looking like Alfred



Nobel himself dressed in clothes of his time, walked around talking to the students and being photographed with them. The man was of course an actor, Peter Sundh. (*On photo along with competing IIT students*)



Read about his Indian experiences.



I was completely stunned by the impressive knowledge displayed by the Indian students. The questions were namely so advanced and sophisticated that even a native Swede like me would not be able to answer half of them correct. And here IIT students from Delhi and Hyderabad easily comes out with right answers to questions about Swedish history, geography, sports, film production. The winning three-person team came from a Bangalore college (*on photo*), and their prize will be a tour to Sweden, visiting universities and companies.

It could be recalled that in 2009, SASNET on a request from the Swedish Embassy organised a programme in Lund and at Lund University for the winning quiz team - from IIT Mumbai - of that year's Nobel Memorial Week. [More information.](#)

The Grand Finale of the whole Nobel Memorial Week was a Reception in the garden of the Swedish Ambassador on Saturday night. It became a party with several hundred guests, music by Swedish singer Amanda Mair, and the band Jump4Joy, both specially invited to India for this



performance, excellent food and liquor stalls sponsored by Swedish companies.

It was also an evening to meet people, and it did not take long before I met former Indian Ambassador to Sweden, Mr. Ashok Sajjanhar, with whom SASNET has had a close interaction. Mr. Sajjanhar is now retired but is keeping his Swedish contacts.

I also met Dr. Jagganath Panda from the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) in New Delhi. He was a guest researcher at the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) in Stockholm in 2010, and also visited Lund University holding a SASNET lecture on "*The Pattern of Sino-Indian Relations: Evaluating the Strategic Discourse*". IDSA is a premier think-tank under the Government of India, and along with Dr. Panda was also his senior colleague Dr. R N Das.



Jaggannath Panda, IDSA, and Ashok Sajjanhar, former Indian Ambassador to Sweden.



Among a few other academics at the reception, I met Dr. Fawad Hussain (*photo*), from the Dept. of Mass Communication at Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). By chance a coincidence, since a young researcher at the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (CME), Lund University, recently had asked me for finding contact persons at AMU. Finally, I met Birgitta Sacrédeus, Councillor representing the Christian

Democrats in Landstinget Dalarna, currently on India tour along with other Swedish councillors, and had a long rewarding discussion with her.

Meeting with Andreas Muranyi, Head of office for Growth Policy

Web page:

<http://www.tillvaxtanalys.se/en>

On Friday 2 November, I met Dr. Andreas Muranyi Scheutz, Counsellor of Science and Technology, and Head of office for the Swedish Agency for Growth Policy Analysis (in short Growth Analysis – Tillväxtanalys), at his office inside the Swedish Embassy in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. Andreas has held this position since October 2010, when he succeeded Stefan Jonsson – with whom SASNET interacted frequently at the time of our contact journey in India in 2007 ([more information](#)).

Growth Analysis is a cross-border organisation with head office in the city of Östersund in Sweden, but activities are also conducted in Stockholm, Brasilia, New Delhi, Beijing, Tokyo, and Washington D.C. Its mission is to shed light on the

areas most significant to growth. The Agency's overriding objective is to strengthen Swedish competitiveness and create the conditions for more jobs in more and growing companies throughout the country.

In India, Andreas Muranyi keeps a close watch on Indian higher education. In a recent Growth Analysis report, possibilities are discussed on how Swedish universities could develop further their processes of internationalisation and attract more Indian students to study in Sweden after the introduction of fees for studying at higher education institutions. In April 2012, Andreas led seminars on this issue in both Stockholm and Gothenburg. [More information, with link to the report.](#)

In 2005 Sweden and India signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on Science & Technology for which the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems, VINNOVA, was assigned the operational responsibility on the Swedish side. SEK 40 m has been invested in three programmes (in total 12 3-year projects) with three different Indian counterparts – The Department of Science and Technology, DST; the Department of Biotechnology, DBT, and the Department of Information Technology, DIT). VINNOVA later asked the Swedish Energy Agency (Energimyndigheten) to engage in supporting Swedish-Indian research collaboration under this agreement. At the same time, the Swedish Energy Agency is responsible for bilateral collaborations within the area of energy, including research collaborations, with India according to an MoU on Renewable Energy from 2010 – that refers to the 2005 S&T MoU.

In order to prepare for this engagement the Swedish Energy Agency commissioned Growth Analysis to map out areas where India has a strong position in energy research. The mapping should cover subject areas, geographical areas and universities/institutes as well as other relevant players. This report, published in 2011, was prepared and written by Rajeev Palakshappa under the auspices of Andreas Muranyi Scheutz. [Go for the report](#) (as a pdf-file).

The main area of bilateral Indo-Swedish cooperation is environment and climate change but also health has developed into a strong focus area. Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) have been signed in these areas between the Swedish and Indian Governments.

– The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the field of Environment was signed 5 November 2009.

– The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in the field of Health Care and Public Health was signed on 24 February 2009.

I our meeting, Andreas informed about the outcome under the MoU in Science &



Technology. Also under the MoU in Health research collaboration is encouraged, although no specific source for funding of research under the Health MoU has been established on the Swedish side. The person in charge of the Health MoU at the Embassy is Ms. Yasmin Zaveri Roy.

Meeting with Swedish Ambassador Harald Sandberg

On Monday 5 November I was given time for a meeting with the Ambassador, Mr. Harald Sandberg, in his spacious office room. The Ambassador listened with great interest to my presentation about SASNET and our networking experiences. When learning about my close connection to Kolkata and my personal efforts behind organising Rabindranath Tagore 150th birth anniversary events at Lund,



From left to right: Daniel Wolvén, Lars Eklund and Harald Sandberg.

Stockholm and Uppsala in 2011, Mr. Sandberg informed that the embassy has plans to celebrate the centenary of the Tagore's Nobel Prize in Literature 1913, with an event to be held in Kolkata sometime during the later part of 2013.

The Ambassador immediately called for the Deputy Head of Mission & Minister, Mr. Daniel Wolvén, who will be the person directly in charge for the planned event. I promised to provide the embassy with input on possible programmes to include in such an event, and this idea was eagerly accepted by the two.

Visit to the South Asian University (SAU)

Web site:

<http://www.southasianuniversity.org>

The South Asian University (SAU) is an international university sponsored by the eight member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) -Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAU started admitting students in 2010, at a temporary campus at Akbar Bhawan, in premises belonging to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of India.

SAU is still housed in this extremely ugly high rise building close to the embassy region of Chanakyapuri, and that is where I headed late in the afternoon on Friday 2 November to meet the President, Professor G K Chadha.



After some waiting I was ready to get a brief interview as per appointment with this dynamic person, an academician of fame, having been an economic advisor to the prime minister of India during the period 2004-09, and before that the Vice Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU). Due to selection committee meetings he was obliged to attend all through the day, Prof. Chadha



had only promised me maximum 10 minutes time and that at the end of day.

However, once we met, he gave me half an hour of engaged talk about the development of this first ever South Asian regional university initiative of great interest to SASNET. It was first launched as an idea at the thirteenth SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in 2005, when Indian Prime Minister proposed that a South Asian University should be established to provide world-class facilities and professional faculty to students and researchers from SAARC member countries. A formal agreement was signed in 2007, and the university was officially inaugurated on 7th March 2011.

Hopefully, SAU will open up its permanent campus, located at Maidan Garhi in South Delhi, next to Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), in 2013 or maybe 2014. It will be hosting nearly 7,000 students and an international faculty, representing all SAARC countries. The university will also have linked campuses in other South Asian countries. India, being the largest country, would get a 50 per cent reservation of students, Bangladesh and Pakistan would get ten per cent each. Another 10 per cent has been reserved for students coming from countries other than SAARC nations.

At present, SAU offers post-graduate academic programs in Biotechnology, Computer Science, Computer Applications, Development Economics, Law, Sociology, International Relations and Applied Mathematics. Research programs are expected to begin from the 2013 academic session.

Plans are also that SAU establishes an Institute of South Asian Studies that will be an autonomous centre, managed by experts selected after an international screening procedure.

Professor Chadha himself has a background as a researcher working on comparative India/China projects with an impressive number of published articles. In the mid-1990s he was involved in a collaboration project with [Stockholm School of Economics](#), and this resulted in a research paper in 2001.



Meeting with Educational and Cultural Counsellor, [Embassy of Afghanistan](#)

Sunday 4
November 2012.

Once again travelling from the comfortable Nordic Centre in India flat at Nizamuddin East, along the wide boulevards of New Delhi, towards the diplomatic enclave of Chanakyapuri. However, this time not to visit the Swedish Embassy, but instead



heading for the Embassy of Afghanistan on Shantibagh, inbetween the embassies of Russia, USA and the Netherlands.

My purpose was to meet Professor A K Rashid, who has worked as Cultural Counsellor since 2008, and with added responsibility for Educational issues from 2011. Prof. Rashid is a dynamic and learned academic with a PhD in Literature from the School of Languages at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in New Delhi in 2003. His doctoral thesis was entitled "*Contributions of Allama Iqbal to Afghan studies*", highlighting the strong role the poet Iqbal played not only being a nation builder for Pakistan, but also to the literary development of Afghanistan.

After getting through the security apparatus around the Afghan embassy's compound, I

am invited to have tea and typical Afghan snacks in the form of nuts and raisins. Prof. Rashid informs about the large presence of students from Afghanistan currently studying at Indian universities, more than 6,000. Out of these, 300 are funded by ICCR, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations; 250 by the Afghanistan government; and the rest are self financed. The students are spread out all over India, with large groups studying at the universities in Pune, Hyderabad, Delhi, Aligarh and Chandigarh. No other foreign destination is so attractive for Afghan students as India, and they have a predecessor in current Afghanistan President Karzai, who many years ago studied for a Masters degree at the University of Simla.

Few other international scholarships are available for Afghan students, even though some have been made possible through Erasmus Mundus Action 2 mobility programmes offered by the European Union, and also through Fulbright scholarships offered by the US government, but these are far from enough.



Prof. Rashid himself, originally hailing from the historic city of Ghazni, completed his bachelors and masters degrees at Kabul University. In 2003, he was offered a position as visiting professor at JNU in Delhi, and moved there with his family. He worked on his PhD thesis simultaneously with his teaching assignments. His main supervisor for the Iqbal thesis was Amir Hossia Abdi, Baba-e-Parsi Hind Professor at University of Delhi, now retired.

The Counsellor work is intense, to take care of and assist the 6,000 Afghan students in India, each one with individual problems, and therefore he has three assistants to deal with the educational issues at the Embassy, and another two to assist with cultural affairs. But

Prof. Rashid is still strongly involved in research work and participates regularly in international conferences on Persian and Pashto Literature. At the end of November 2012, a conference on the Mawlānā Abul-Ma'āni Mirzā Abdul-Qādir Bēdil, also known as Bedil Dehlavī (1642–1720), famous Persian poet and sufi born near Kabul, is held at the University of Balkh in northern Afghanistan. Bedil is considered as one of the prominent poets of Indian School of Poetry in Persian literature, and owns his unique Style in it. Both Mirza Ghalib and Iqbal-e Lahori were influenced by him.

And just a few days after our meeting, in early November, Prof. Rashid was supposed to take part in a conference on the Silk Road in Delhi, being organised by the Centre of Russian Studies at the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, JNU. The conference, being held 5–7 November, is entitled *"Revisiting the Silk Road. India and the Silk Road Regions Cultural Connections, Current Challenges"*. [More information on this conference.](#)

Since SASNET is planning to put more focus on Afghanistan in its future work, my visit to Prof. Rashid at the Afghanistan Embassy in Delhi was part of this strategy. It may well result in SASNET organising a conference at Lund University with Prof. Rashid's assistance sometime during 2013.

Meeting on formation of European STI Platform in India

New INDIGO website: <http://www.newindigo.eu>

After coming to Delhi, Mr. Malik at the Nordic Centre in India (NCI), informed me that NCI and its Director, Kristina Myrvold, had received an invitation to attend a meeting on Monday 5th November with an objective to form a European Science/Technology /Innovation (STI) Platform in India. A project to be worked out within the framework of New INDIGO, a consortium of European and Indian STI ministries, funding agencies and research organisations promotion research cooperation between Europe and India.

Since Kristina was in Sweden and thereby unable to attend, Mr. Malik suggested that I should accompany him to the meeting held at the luxurious Hotel Le Meridien at Windsor Place/Janpath. I readily agreed since this could be of some interest also to SASNET.



Suboor Bakht, Heidelberg University South Asia Centre, and P N Malik, Nordic Centre in India.



The meeting had 14 participants, most prominent



Philippe de Taxis du Poët, Science Counselor, European Union Delegation in India; Dominique Aymer (*photo to the left*), Director for the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) Office in India; and Purnima Rupal, Head, Indian Council of Scientific & Industrial Research's (CSIR) International Relations Department. Other participants, besides Mr. Malik (representing NCI) and myself, included representatives for the French Embassy; the German Research Foundation (DFG); Heidelberg University South Asia Centre; and the Research Councils UK, based at the British High Commission in Delhi.

The meeting was aimed to identify the needs of a joint STI Platform supporting the daily work of European public and private organisations liaison and representation offices in India. This should be accomplished through regular information sharing and strengthen the visibility of the organisations. Besides networking and information sessions on issues related to research and innovation in India, the platform should also organise working groups serving as pools of expertise, and arrange an annual networking event. The discussions at the meeting, that was organised by the French National Centre for Scientific Research, focused on who should be members, which activities to carry out, and how often networking meetings ought to be held. A decision was made that an enquiry will be sent out to all interested organisations working in India, and hopefully make the platform a reality during 2013.

Lars Eklund

