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The 18th SAARC Summit: Signing of Agreement on Energy to spur up integration Process

Private Sector also demands for Motor Vehicles and Railways Agreement for deepen regional connectivity.

The 18th SAARC Summit held on November 26-27, 2014 at Kathmandu concluded with a renewed commitment to achieve the “South Asian Economic Union” in a phased and planned manner through a free trade area, a customs union, a common market, and a common economic and monetary union.

The leaders of South Asia expressed strong determination to deepen regional integration for peace, stability and prosperity by intensifying cooperation in trade, investment, finance, energy, security, infrastructure, connectivity and culture. They vowed to implement projects and programmes in a prioritised, result-oriented and time-bound manner.

Amid structural constraints that have resulted in weak productive capacity affecting the trade competitiveness, the leaders committed to enhance support to least developed and landlocked member states in their development efforts with a view to ensuring equitable benefits of free trade arrangements.

“In this context, the existing preferential facilities under South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta) and SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (Satis) will be implemented effectively,” read the declaration. The leaders have directed the Safta Ministerial Council and the Safta Committee of Experts to accelerate free trade in goods and services in the region putting into operation simplified and transparent rules of origin, implementing trade facilitation measures, harmonising standards relating to technical barriers to trade and sanitary and phytosanitary measures.

Simplifying customs procedures, elimination of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers and smooth and efficient transit and transport facilities were among the measures the leaders have vowed to implement. They agreed to strengthen the social window of the SAARC Development Fund and operationalise its economic and infrastructure windows at the earliest for effective implementation of regional and sub-regional projects.

The heads of state welcomed the significant progress towards the finalisation of the SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement and SAARC Regional Railways Agreement, and agreed to hold a meeting of transport ministers within the next three months to finalise the agreements for approval. The leaders renewed their commitment to substantially enhance regional connectivity in a seamless manner through building and upgrading roads, railways, waterways infrastructure, energy grids, communications and air links to ensure smooth cross-border flow of goods, services, capital, technology
and people.

In the agriculture sector, the member states agreed to boost investment and promote research and development, facilitate technical cooperation and apply innovative, appropriate technologies to enhance productivity to ensure food and nutritional security. The leaders directed to eliminate the threshold criteria from the SAARC Food Bank agreement so as to enable the member states to avail food grains, during both emergency and normal food difficulty. They also urged for early ratification of the SAARC Seed Bank agreement and directed to constitute the Seed Bank Board, pending completion of ratification by all member states.

To boost tourism, the leaders agreed to make South Asia an attractive common tourist destination. They directed relevant bodies to effectively implement SAARC Action Plan on Tourism (2006) particularly through initiating appropriate public-private collaboration.

SAARC CCI engagements with 18th SAARC summit

A high-powered delegation of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) comprising Vice Presidents Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali (Bangladesh), Mr. Karma Lotey, (Bhutan), Mr. Ramesh Kumar Mutha, (India), Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, (Pakistan), Immediate Past President Shri Vikramjit Singh Sahney, former Presidents Mr. Annisul Huq from Bangladesh, Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji from Bhutan, Executive Committee Member from Pakistan Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Secretary General Mr. Iqbal Tabish, and Deputy SG, Mr. Zulfiquar Ali Butt visited Nepal to attend the 18th SAARC Summit held on November 26-27, 2014 at Kathmandu.

In addition to visiting delegation of SAARC CCI, the Executive Committee and General Assembly Members from Nepal, including in particular, Mr. Pradeep Jung Pandey, President of FNCCI and Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, Chairman  SAARC Chamber Young Entrepreneur Forum

The participation of SAARC CCI delegation in the 18th SAARC Summit was facilitated by Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Snr Vice President (Nepal) with close collaboration of Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FNCCI), SAARC Secretariat and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Nepal.

To meaningfully engage SAARC CCI, the senior Vice President also facilitated Call on and dinner Meeting with Hon’ble Prime Minister of Bhutan Mr. Tshering Tobgay, in presence of Hon’ble Foreign Minister of Bhutan, Mr. Rinzin Dorje on 26th November. The delegation also had a brief meeting with Hon’ble Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi on 27th Nov, and Hon’able Mr. Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal on 28th Nov, 2014.

During these calls on, the SAARC CCI delegation led by Senior Vice President Mr. Suraj Vaidya shared their view point while requesting them to provide business friendly environment so that present...
intra-regional trade which was insignificantly 5% could be increased to the potential available. The SAARC CCI leadership expressed its determination to further deepen economic cooperation through mutual trade and investment.

On behalf of SAARC CCI Senior Vice president presented communiqué, comprising set of policy proposals, demanding trade an efficient facilitation mechanism, improving people-to-people connectivity through flexible visa regime, infrastructure development, revival of economic corridors, setting up SAARC clearing union, expedite measures ushering towards creation of Customs Union in South Asia to improve regional connectivity and enhance cross border trade and investment to the desired level.

Hon’able Prime Minister of Nepal, Mr. Sushil Koirala, urged the private sector to increase their investments in Nepal stating that investment climate in the country has improved. Referring to recent signings of Project Development Agreements (PDAs) for development of Upper Karnali and Arun III hydropower projects and Power Trade Agreement (PTA) with India, PM Koirala asked members of SAARC CCI to invest in Nepal without any fear particularly in priority sectors like water resource, agriculture, tourism and herbal production and processing.

SAARC CCI delegation also met Dr. Abbas Akhoundi, Minister of Road and Urban Development, Islamic Republic of Iran and discussed ways and means to increase trade between Iran- the observer member and South Asian countries.

SAARC CCI in collaboration with FNCCI also organised a press conference as response of to the 18th SAARC Summit. Senior Vice President, and Vice presidents from Bangladesh, Bhutan and Pakistan along with former President from Bhutan during the press conference appreciated the signing of SAARC energy pact, regarding it as commencement  of new era, which will not only lighten up South Asia but also energises the whole region provided the agreement is implement in letter & spirit. They hoped that other two agreements i.e. Motor Vehicles and Railways, which were expected to be signed in the 18th SAARC Summit, would be inked in the spirit of the declaration.
SAARC CCI Activities

December 2014 Issue

30th SAARC Charter Day Celebration:

As a regular annual feature of activities, SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry in partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation (FNF) organised a seminar under the theme “South Asia on Move: From Talks to Actions” on the occasion of the 30th SAARC Charter day on 8th December 2014 at Islamabad. Hon’ble Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr. Khurram Dastagir khan inaugurated the Seminar.

Hon’ble Federal Minister for Commerce, Mr. Khurram Dastagir khan, in his inaugural address reiterated the need for extending unconditional and mutual cooperation by member states of SAARC to eradicate poverty through trade and investment, promote fair and free trade, greater market access and hurdle free movement of goods and people across the region. He was of the opinion that SAARC need to move from suspicious attitude to facilitation. While citing to the vision of Hon’ble Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, he added that history has divide us but common problems, threats and abundant resource in each member states will unite us economically in the larger interest of the masses.

Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI(Pakistan), in his welcome remarks expressed that the signing of SAARC Framework Agreement for Energy Cooperation (Electricity) by Heads of States during the recently concluded 18th SAARC Summit at Kathmandu, Nepal has given new ray of hope and the a serious step forward towards regional connectivity in South Asia.

Mr. Zubair A. Malik, Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI read out the message of H.E Arjun Bahadur Thapa, Secretary General SAARC in context of the SAARC Charter Day and emphasized for movement of hurdle free movement of business people across South Asia.

The inaugural session was also addressed by Dr. Almut Besold, Resident Representative –FNF Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Janan Mosazai, Ambassador, Embassy of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Suhrab Hossain, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI (Pakistan) presenting SAARC CCI official crest to Hon’ble Engr. Khurram Dastagir Khan, Minister for Commerce, Government of Pakistan in presence of diplomats and senior members.

High Commissioner of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to Pakistan, H.E. Maj General Rtd Moosa Ali Jaleel, High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Tirtha Raj Aryal, Acting Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to Pakistan, Mrs. Wijayanthi Edirisinghe, Minister Counsellor of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, Mrs. Shalista Pervaiz Malik, Member, National Assembly of Pakistan & Chairperson of SAARC Chamber’s Women Entrepreneurs Council offered vote of thanks.

The inaugural session was followed by Technical session “SAARC Allied Organisations : Role and functions under the chaired of Mrs. Shalista Pervaiz Malik and addressed by Mr. Amir Mustafa, Research Officer, SAARC Human Resource Development Centre, Islamabad, Mr. Thusantha Wijemanna, Director General, SAARC Arbitration Council, Islamabad, Mr. Shahzada Khalid, Acting Director, SAARC Energy Centre, Islamabad, Ms. Ferzeen Khan., Deputy Secretary General, South Asian Federation of Exchanges, Islamabad. The presenters enlightened the participants with work and functions of their respective organizations particularly highlighting measures towards regional integration of South Asia.
The Emergent Meeting of SAARC CCI:

The emergent meeting of SAARC CCI under the chair of Senior Vice President was held on November 27, 2014 at Kathmandu.

The meeting was attended by Vice Presidents Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali (Bangladesh), Mr. Karma Lotey, (Bhutan), Mr. Ramesh Kumar Mutha, (India), Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Pakistan), Immediate Past President Shri Vikramjit Singh Sahney, former Presidents Mr. Annisul Huq from Bangladesh, Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji from Bhutan and Executive Committee Member from Pakistan Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik.

The meeting appreciated Senior Vice President Mr. Suraj Vaidya for his splendid efforts and hard work put in by him to meaningfully engage the organisation with 18th SAARC Summit. The meeting reviewed the current situation and recommended for undertaking appropriate measures to further activate the organisation by organizing more productive activities without disturbing the current mechanism within and partnership with supporting organisations. The meeting also proposed adoption of life membership applications of businesspersons and reconstituted the SAARC CCI Headquarters Building Committee while emphasising for commencing construction work at the earliest.
Glimpses

SAARC CCI hosted a dinner in honor of Prime Minister of Bhutan, Hon’able Mr. Tshering Tobgay, on 25 Nov, 2014, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Hon’able Mr. Tshering Tobgay, Prime Minister of Bhutan while addressing the dinner gathering.

Hon’able Prime Minister of Bhutan, Mr. Tshering Tobgay & Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Immediate Past President, SAARC CCI during the dinner.

(L-R) Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh), Mr. Pradeep Jung Pandey, President, FNCCI and Hon’able Prime Minister of Bhutan, Mr. Tshering Tobgay.

(L-R) Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Past President, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Snr. Vice President (Nepal) Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President (Pakistan) of SAARC CCI.

(L-R) Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Pakistan), Mr. Hakim Ali, Businessman from Bangladesh & Mr. Zubair A. Malik, EC Member, SAARC CCI (Pakistan).

Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General & Mr. Kerma Lotey, Vice President (Bhutan) of SAARC CCI.
Meeting with Hon’able Mr. Narendra Damodardas Modi, Prime Minister of India, on 26 Nov, 2014, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Group photo of Hon’able Mr. Narendra Damodardas Modi, Prime Minister of India, with (L), Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Immediate Past President, (R), Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Snr, VP & Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, VP-Pak, Other includes Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, EC, Member (Pak), Mr. Annisul Huq, Past President, Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Past President, Mr. Karma Lotey, VP (Bhutan) & Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General of SAARC CCI along FNCCI senior members.

Meeting with Hon’able Mr. Sushil Koirala, Prime Minister of Nepal on 26 Nov, 2014, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Group photo taken along Hon’able Mr. Narendra Damodardas Modi, Prime Minister of India with Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali, VP- Bangladesh, (L-R) Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Former President, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Immediate Past President, and Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Snr, VP. Other includes Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, EC (Pak), Member, Mr. Annisul Huq, Past President, Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Past President, Mr. Karma Lotey, VP (Bhutan) & Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General of SAARC CCI, Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General of SAARC CCI along FNCCI senior members.

Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali, VP- Bangladesh of SAARC CCI along the Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon’able Mr. Sushil Koirala.

Group photo taken along Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon’able Mr. Sushil Koirala, (L-R) Ms. Deki Chhoden, In-charge SAARC CCI Desk, BCCI, Mr. Phub Tshering, Secretary General, BCCI, Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Former President, SAARC CCI and President, BCCI, Mr. Karma Lotey, VP, SAARC CCI (Bhutan) and Mr. Sonam Dorji, Sr. Research Officer, BCCI.
Group photo taken along Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon’able Mr. Sushil Koirala, with SAARC CCI delegation (Nepal) (L-R) includes Mr. Gyanendra Lal Pradhan, EC Member, Mr. Abhinash Bohra, EC Member, Mr. Shanker Prasad Pandey, EC Member, Mr. Rajendra Man Shrestha, EC Member, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Sr. VP of SAARC CCI, Mr. Pradeep Jung Pandey, President, FNCCI, r. Saurabh Jyoti, EC Member SCCI & Chairman SYEF, Mr. Samir Thaha, GA Member, Mr. Ashok Kumar Baidya, GA Member, Mr. R.B. Rauniar, EC Member of SAARC CCI

Emergent Meeting of SAARC CCI, 27 November, 2014, Kathmandu, Nepal

(L-R) Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Former President, Mr.Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Immediate Past President, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Sr. Vice President of SAARC CCI.

Group photo of Prime Minister of Nepal, Hon’able Mr. Sushil Koirala, with SAARC CCI delegation (Pakistan) (R-L) Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Secretary General, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, Mr. Zubair A. Malik, EC Member, Mr. Zulfiqar Butt, Deputy Secretary General.

(L-R) Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, VP-Pakistan & Mr. Zubair A. Malik, EC Member (Pakistan), of SAARC CCI.

(L-R) Mr. Karma Lotey, VP-Bhutan & Mr. Ramesh K. Mutha, VP-India, Mrs Monawara Hakim Ali, VP-Bangladesh of SAARC CCI.
Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, VP-Pakistan of SAARC CCI hosted a luncheon in honor of Dr Ronald Meinardus, Regional Director- South Asia, FNF, on his visit to Islamabad, Pakistan.

Meet with Press at the conclusion of 18th SAARC Summit on 27th Nov, 2014, Kathmandu Nepal.

Mr. Annisul Huq, Past President, SAARC CCI & Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI presenting his point of view to Indian Channel “Times Now” at conclusion of 18th SAARC Summit.

Mrs. Monawara Hakim Ali, VP-Bangladesh of SAARC CCI presenting her point of view to Indian Channel “Times Now” at conclusion of 18th SAARC Summit.

Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Former President, Mr. Vikramjit Singh Sahney, Immediate Past President, and Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik EC Member (Pak), presenting their point of view to Indian Channel “Times Now” at conclusion of 18th SAARC Summit.

(R-L) Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali VP- Bangladesh, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, VP-Pakistan, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Snr VP, Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Past President, Mr. Zubair A. Malik, EC Member (Pakistan) and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, of SAARC CCI.
Meeting with Dr. Abbas Akhoundi, Minister of Road and Urban Development, Islamic Republic of Iran.

SAARC CCI delegation calls on to Dr. Abbas Akhoundi, Minister of Road and Urban Development, Islamic Republic of Iran. Picture includes Mr. Dasho Ugen Tsechup Dorji, Past President, Shri Vikramjitt Singh Sahney, Immediate Past President, Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Shri Vice President, Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, EC Member (Pak), Mr. Ramesh Kumar Mutha, Vice President (India) Mr. Karma Lotey, Vice President (Bhutan), Mrs. Monowara Hakim Ali, Vice President (Bangladesh), Mr. Aminul Huq, Past President, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, Mr. Zulfikar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General, of SAARC CCI and senior members of FNCCI and Officials of Govt of Iran.

30th SAARC Charter Day, Islamabad, Pakistan

Cake cutting ceremony of 30th SAARC Charter day, Hon’able Mr. Khurram Dastagir, Federal Minister for Commerce, Govt of Pakistan cutting cake while celebrating 29th Anniversary of SAARC in presence of Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President (Pakistan), H.E. Mr. Janan Mosazai, Ambassador, Afghanistan H.E. Mr. Suhrab Hossain, High Commissioner Bangladesh, Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Immediate Past President, FPCCI, H.E. Dr. T. C. A. Raghavan, High Commissioner, India, H.E. Mr. Tirtha Raj Aryal, Acting Ambassador of Nepal, H.E. Maj General Rtd Moosa Ali Jaleel, High Commissioner Maldives and Mrs. Shaista Pervaiz, Chairperson SCWEC, Senator Haji Ghulam Ali, Former President, FPCCI, Mrs. Wijayanthi Edirisinghe, Minister Counsellor, Sri Lanka and Dr. Almut Besold, Resident Representative –FNF Pakistan.

Hon’able Mr. Khurram Dastagir, Federal Minister for Commerce, Govt of Pakistan while delivering inaugural address.

Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Pakistan) while delivering welcome address.

Mrs. Shaista Pervaiz Malik, Chairperson SCWEC.
Dr. Almut Besold, Resident Representative – FNF Pakistan while delivering speech.

Mr. Amir Mustafa, Research Officer, SAARC Human Resource Development Centre, Islamabad

Mr. Thusantha Wijemanna, Director General, SAARC Arbitration Council, Islamabad

Dr. Shabana Holder, representatives, SCWEC (Pakistan)

Mr. Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairman, Diplomatic Affairs Committee of FPCCI.

Mr. Shahzada Khalid, Acting Director, SAARC Energy Centre, Islamabad

Ms. Ferzeen Khan, DSG, South Asian Federation of Exchanges.

(L-R) H.E. Mr. Janan Mosazai, Ambassador, Embassy of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Suhrab Hossain, High Commissioner of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh to Pakistan, & Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, EC Member, SAARC CCI (Pak).

(L-R) H.E. Dr. T. C. A. Raghavan, High Commissioner of India to Pakistan, Mr. Monawer Mughal, Vice President, FPCCI, H.E. Maj General Rtd Moosa Ali Jaleel, High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to Pakistan H.E. Mr. Tirtha Raj Aryal, Acting Ambassador of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to Pakistan and Mrs. Wijayanthi Edirisinghe, Minister Counsellor, High Commission of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

Luncheon hosted by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Former Vice President, SAARC CCI in Kathmandu Nepal.
**Glimpses**

*Luncheon hosted by Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Snr, Vice President, SAARC CCI in Kathmandu Nepal.*

(L-R) Mr. Suraj Vaidya, Snr, Vice President, Mr. Daso Ugen Techup Dorji, Past President, Mr. Rajendra Man Sherchan, EC Member (Nepal), Mr. Abhinash Bohra, EC Member (Nepal) during the luncheon.

*The pictures includes Mr. R.B. Rauniar, EC Member (Nepal), Mr. Sourab Jyoti, Chairman, SYEF and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.*

The picture includes Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President (Pakistan) and Mr. Karma Lotey, Vice President (Bhutan) of SAARC CCI

*(L-R) Mr. R.B. Rauniar, EC Member (Nepal), Mr. Sourab Jyoti, Chairman, SYEF and Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.*

**Dinner hosted by Mr. Rajendra Man Sherchan, EC member, SAARC CCI (Nepal) in honor of SAARC CCI Officer bearers.**

(L-R) Mr. Rajendra Man Sherchan, Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.

Mr. Hakim Ali, Businessman from Bangladesh and Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Pakistan).

Mrs. Monawara Hakim Ali, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Bangladesh).
The Guard Research Division has been integral in this journey of excellence. Our demand-driven research team headed by Late Dr. Abdul Najeeb (Pride of Performance) commercialized extra long grain Super Basmati Rice which was demand of the International Market, bringing quantum jump in country’s export.

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MUHAMMAD ADREES
Chief Executive Officer
SITARA CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES LTD

Mr. Muhammad Adrees is the Chief Executive Officer of Sitara Chemical Industries Ltd – the largest Chlor-Alkali Chemical Complex of Pakistan. Mr. Adrees is a distinguished name in the business world at regional and national level and as a Corporate Leader. He belongs to a well-known business family ‘Sitara’ engaged in the business of Chemicals, Textiles, Energy, Real Estate and Education.

He graduated from Punjab University and then went to England in 1982 for higher Business Management Studies. He also has innumerable professional qualifications at his credit from LUMS, Pakistan Institute of Management & Leadership course from Montreal Canada.

Under his Corporate leadership, Sitara Chemicals is today the largest chlor-alkali Chemical Complex of Pakistan with annual turnover of Rs 8.1 billion per annum. The production capacity was gradually increased from 30 MT/day (1984) to current 610 MT/day (2014).

Mr. Muhammad Adrees has also been holding following important positions:

- Member Steering Committee for Promotion of Islamic Banking constituted by Finance Division Government of Pakistan (2013-14).
- Chairman FPCCI Standing Committee on Industries (2007-08 and 2013).
- Chairman FCCI Office Management Committee (2007 to 2014).
- Chairman FCCI HR Committee (2009 to 2014).
- Chairman FCCI Land & Building Committee (2007 to 2014).
- Former Honorary Secretary of Chenab Club (Guaranteed) Ltd. Faisalabad.
- Director -Pakistan Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) – (2008-11).
- Director -STEDEC Technology Commercialization Corporation of Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd, Government of Pakistan.
- Director - Pakistan Kidney Institute Islamabad (A Project of Shifa International Hospital).
- Life Time Special Member of Confederation of Asia – Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI).
- Life Member of SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry.
- Member, Managing Committee, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry for two years (01-01-2005 -2006).
- Member Citizen Police Foundation Faisalabad (CPF).
- Multiple Council Chairman MD 305 Pakistan (2003 –4), International Association of Lions Club.

Distinctions
- Received ‘Special Recognition Award 2005 – Management’ from 21st Century Business and Economic Club, Karachi.
- AS A LION: Received many awards and Certificates from Club, District, and International Lions Clubs. He has been attending District Conventions. Also attended International Convention in Phoenix USA 1994, Seoul Korea 1995, Montreal Canada 1996 and San Diego USA 1999.
Kathmandu Declaration urges trade facilitation measures: The 18th SAARC Summit concluded here today calling on various bodies in South Asia to implement measures to facilitate free trade of goods and services, eliminate threshold criteria from the SAARC Food Bank Agreement and create a seed bank board, among others.

To increase intra-regional trade volume, SAARC heads of the state or government today directed South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) Ministerial Council and SAFTA Committee of Experts to put into operation simplified and transparent rules of origin. They also called on SAFTA Ministerial Council and Committee of Experts to harmonise standards relating to technical barriers to trade, and sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, says the Kathmandu Declaration issued on the last day of the SAARC Summit.

SAARC member countries had signed the SAFTA Agreement in January 2004 during the 12th SAARC Summit held in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad. The agreement came into force on January 1, 2006.

But even after eight years of implementation of the agreement, intra-regional trade contributes to less than five per cent of the total trade of member countries. One of the reasons for this is presence of various non-tariff barriers and reluctance shown by member countries to simplify transit rules.

In this regard, the SAARC leaders today urged for implementation of various trade facilitation measures, harmonisation, streamlining and simplification of customs procedures, elimination of non-tariff and para-tariff barriers, and smoothening of transit and transport facilities.

SAARC need not make too many new agreements at every summit as the implementation aspect is lacking: The 18th SAARC Summit, the third in Kathmandu since Nepal played host in 1987, has been saved the embarrassment of drawing a blank in making a new area of cooperation towards the closing hours of the summit. At last, the Kathmandu Declaration has been able to show an important agreement on energy cooperation, which is the major achievement of this summit. The agreement will pave the way for collaboration between member states in power generation, transmission and trade. This will enable any member country to sell electricity to or buy from another member. The aim is to create an uninterrupted power grid across South Asia. This will promote common interest of all member states, as energy is the main engine of economic growth; and within the region some countries are power-hungry and some others like Nepal have potentials that exceed their demand by far.

Two other expected agreements – on SAARC motor vehicle movement and railway services – could not materialize because of the objection of Pakistan, the 19th host of the SAARC Summit in 2016, on the grounds of “inadequate homework”. However, it was agreed that the SAARC foreign ministers would give a final shape to these within three months, meaning that the next SAARC summit is likely to make these agreements functional. Another important change that the 18th summit made was the realistic decision to hold the SAARC summit every two years instead of every year. Reiteration of the need to implement the past agreements, resolutions and decisions was there, as in the past summits, and to further widen and deepen regional cooperation in the years to come. The need for deeper integration (for peace and prosperity) has been stressed so much, as also at this summit as its official theme. But there is a big shadow that has fallen between promise and performance.

The progress of SAARC has been hit this time too by the frosty relationship between the region’s two largest and nuclear-armed nations, India and Pakistan. The SAARC outcome could not be much different from the failure of Indian and Pakistani prime ministers, Narendra Modi and Nawaz Sharif, to hold talks on the sidelines of the summit. However, Prime Minister Sushil Koirala, who played his role of host commercially, made the extra effort to reduce the frostiness between the Indian and Pakistan leaders in their morning retreat at Dhulikhel yesterday. During the 2002 Kathmandu summit, too, the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the then Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf had coolly shaken hands. This time around, it took the rivals the occasion of the lunch at Dhulikhel retreat to make a perfunctory handshake, which was repeated at the closing ceremony. This overflow of bilateral bitterness onto the forum of SAARC has regrettably held back the forward movement of SAARC all these years. But what is a consolation is that SAARC still exists and is moving ahead though at a snail’s pace. Regional integration is not something that can be achieved overnight for this least integrated region. SAARC need not make too many new agreements at every summit; there is still a lot to be done to implement the earlier agreements and commitments.

Source: www.thehimalayantimes.com

A Zero-Sum Game in South Asia Benefits Nobody: India needs to change its approach towards Chinese participation in SAARC. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi concluded his speech at the 18th SAARC Summit in Kathmandu saying that India’s vision of the South Asia rests on five pillars: trade, investment, assistance, cooperation and people-to-people connections. Progress within the five pillars can only be achieved by focusing on “all through seamless connectivity.” India, being the biggest country in the regional bloc, explicitly highlighted that it would lead the sub-continent to shared peace and prosperity.

Since the inception of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in 1985, India has been a leader, in which capacity it has delivered very little. Modi has been unable to change that; Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz
Sharif blocked all three key connectivity agreements, including the motor vehicle pact, which was proposed by India. Worse, at least from the perspective of the Modi government, might be the increased pressure from other member states to upgrade China’s role in SAARC. Led by Pakistan, China’s closest friend within the bloc, the summit saw intense lobbying to change China’s status from an observer to a member. Nepali politicians also called for China to be made a member. Interestingly, Nepal had also proposed to involve China as an observer state on the 2005 Dhaka summit.

While the Chinese government remained silent on the possibility of a full Chinese membership, the idea of a “SAARC+1” had in fact been floated at the 17th SAARC summit in Bhutan, emerging as a major concern for India. Almost all other small members of the SAARC have been hinting that the SAARC+1 should be materialized in order to have the deep pocketed China in the forum. Unfortunately for New Delhi, Chinese leaders Xi Jinping and Li Keqiang visited 26 countries within the 70 days prior to the summit, demonstrating again the strength of China’s investment appeal, for instance in the Pacific Islands and Fiji. More significantly, China’s Deputy Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin announced in Kathmandu that “China has put forward a series of initiatives, including increasing trade between South Asia and China to 150 billion U.S. dollars and investment to 30 billion U.S. dollars in the next five years.” Indeed, the five pillars of the Indian vision for South Asia resemble China’s goals for the South Asian region. Apart from possessing more financial power, China’s crucial advantages over India are its huge experience and efficiency in economic areas like infrastructure construction, trade and investment.

However, the deep-rooted Indian political sentiment that wants to keep China out of the region is unrealistic. Chinese money is imperative to materialize Modi’s formula of five pillars for peace and prosperity on the sub-continent. Bilateral and multilateral agreements to enhance trade and investment flows in the region have been stymied by the procrastination of the giant Indian bureaucracy. No significant progress has been made on the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) that came into force in 2006, mainly because India is very reluctant to reduce the list of sensitive goods. Meanwhile, China looks as if it might be using disagreements among the member states to boost its future influence. Could it have even blocked India’s proposals via Pakistan? It is hardly far-fetched to think it could have. China changed its status from an observer to a member. Nepali politicians also called for China to be made a member. Unfortunately, the current Indian leadership appears unable to think about long-term outcomes and appears to lack the courage to stand up to domestic nationalism.

“India has to lead and we will do our part,” Modi told the audience at the opening session of the summit. This statement shows that India does not like to share its sphere of influence with China or other powerful observer states like the U.S. Instead of claiming South Asia as its exclusive sphere of influence and achieving no tangible progress at all, the Modi government should rethink its strategy, especially its long-term approach to the region. If South Asia cannot come together, it will be to India’s detriment, as it falls even further behind China.

Bringing China into SAARC could create a win-win situation for India, China, and all of South Asia. Unfortunately, the current Indian leadership appears unable to think about long-term outcomes and appears to lack the courage to stand up to domestic nationalism.

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### Energy Integration: SAARC countries are in need of as much energy as they can find no matter where it is produced:

Regional energy integration has long been a dream in the South Asian sky. But the prospect remains one of the most well analyzed issues. Several research institutes and donor-supported programs have dedicated countless research report, consultant hours and conference proceedings to establish that regional integration would be a boon to the South Asian region.

Despite the promise, however, the prospects for regional energy integration in South Asia remains mired in distrust, lack of a political will and absence of an overarching operational vision.

But it is not without hope. Despite the confusion on whether India and Pakistan would meet in the sidelines of the SAARC Summit in Kathmandu, petroleum ministers of the two countries met quietly in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan last Thursday. They were there with ministers from Turkmenistan and Afghanistan to discuss the ambitious Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) natural gas pipeline. At the end of the meeting, the four ministers announced that they would all take necessary steps to ensure that the project gets underway in 2015.

TAPI has advocates of regional energy integration salivating.
in the mouth. The project involves a 1,800 km natural gas pipeline that would ferry approximately 90 million standard cubic meters (per day) of natural gas from land-locked Turkmenistan to Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Turkmenistan, which has the fourth largest proven reserve of natural gas in the world, is desperate for a market. India, Pakistan and Afghanistan are increasingly in need of gas. The pipeline is technically feasible and makes commercial sense.

The first reaction of any observer to the TAPI pipeline is typically that surely it isn’t possible—not in the context of the distrust and hostilities between the countries. That distrust and hostility has slowed progress but not stalled it altogether. To the contrary, the TAPI pipeline has made considerable progress if you take into account the atmosphere of distrust and open hostility between India and Pakistan.

Part of the reason for the progress on TAPI is that the project—a complex inter-country pipeline and energy deal—is increasingly finding space in negotiations, relatively buffered from the vitriolic political atmosphere. The petroleum ministers met in Turkmenistan last week even as tensions between India and Pakistan remained high. The TAPI petroleum ministers will meet again in February 2015, most likely even if the two countries are on the brink of war.

As TAPI progresses against the odds, it is becoming clear that the only possibility for regional energy integration are deals constructed outside political considerations and on commercial terms based on it being mutually beneficial for all parties.

Unfortunately, regional energy integration is being pursued as a diplomatic imperative. The drivers of the discussion are governments, not businesses. The commercial logic in the deal, even if there is one, is overshadowed by the political rhetoric. As a result, the perception is that most recent inter-country deals on energy have been executed for political considerations rather than commercial efficiency.

That perception may not be entirely true. But it invites domestic political opposition. It is easier for a domestic constituency of a country—like Baidya’s CPN-Maoist in the case of the recent Power Trade Agreement with India—to oppose an energy trade if it is regarded more as a political rather than a purely commercial deal.

At the same time, it is also true that political rhetoric doesn’t make a regional or inter-country energy deal transformative on its own. Consider the case of Nepal and the recently concluded Power Trade Agreement (PTA) with India.

The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, was disappointed that a PTA was not ready for signature during his last official visit to Nepal. He set a deadline of 45 days. Sure enough, a PTA was signed and sealed within the allocated time.

In Nepal, the PTA was hailed as the next big thing after sliced bread. Endorsed by experts, government argued that Nepali hydro-power exports could now make its way safely into India and be provided non-discriminatory access to its power markets.

The PTA did certainly provide Nepali hydro-power non-discriminatory access to Indian power markets. The question is whether that was anything new. Didn’t Nepal hydro-power exports already enjoy that privilege even before the PTA?

As early as 2009, the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC), India’s central regulatory agency on inter-state (and inter-country) power flows, had already granted non-discriminatory access to power exports from neighboring countries.

In a case against Power Trading Corporation (PTC) in 2009, CERC ruled that PTC couldn’t discriminate against power imports from Bhutan, in that particular case by charging a higher trading margin than the regulated rate. PTC argued that power import from Bhutan was a sovereign deal between two countries, India and Bhutan, and that the power deal originated from outside of the boundary of India. Therefore, PTC argued, CERC’s trading margin should not apply on the case of imports.

CERC disagreed. It made two important points.

First, “It is true that the Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) was entered into between the Governments of India and Bhutan, but those PPAs relate only to the purchase of power generated at Chukha and Kurichhu Hydel Power Projects and the same would not apply to the sale of this power within India.”

Second, “Once electricity is imported into India, it would cease to have the character of an imported commodity.”

In its ruling, CERC drew extensively from precedents of India courts, including the Supreme Court, and from cases outside the power sector. CERC’s 2009 ruling could be interpreted to argue that Nepali hydro-power exports technically enjoyed non-discriminatory access to Indian power markets long before the PTA.

It is not clear that the PTA gave Nepal anything new that it didn’t already have. What the PTA did do was open up Nepali power markets to Indian power exports. And Nepal must now be prepared to live with the double-edged swords of purely commercial inter-country energy deal.

If Nepal is fantasizing about how hundreds and thousands of its hydro mega-wattage will be exported to India, it must also be prepared to bear the risk that lower-cost electricity from India could potentially freeze large scale development of Nepali hydro-plants.

The notion that Nepali hydropower will have large scale export potential in India rests on one critical assumption: that electricity produced in Nepal will always be cheaper than electricity produced in India. It is an assumption that needs closer scrutiny. Ask yourself: Can anything produced in Nepal be cheaper than the same product produced in India?
As SAARC leaders converge in Kathmandu, this is no time for self-doubt on regional energy integration. It is clear that all SAARC countries are in need of as much energy as they can find, no matter where it is produced, or where it comes. Regional energy integration could help create a pathway for the flow of energy from one place to another.

SAARC isn’t even ready to allow free movement of people. Will the member states agree instead to free flow of electrons?

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Beyond Geopolitics: SAARC has failed to find its true north! As SAARC accomplishes three decades of its existence, there is a widespread disillusionment about its achievements—it has neither emerged as an economic bloc nor a grouping of geopolitics. The SAARC accounts for less than one percent of the world trade. Intra-regional trade has also been an insignificant four percent of its total trade. Most of the conventions and summits become photo opportunities for attendees; many of the decisions are just in papers in the form of protocols, conventions, reports and studies. A summit whose success is measured by the warmth of a few handshakes cannot have a meaningful future.

Much needs to be learnt from the ‘ASEAN Way’—how member nations rose above petty political differences to deliver robust economic results for decades. For a start, compare and contrast the very first point in the charters of two organizations. ASEAN puts it clearly: “To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavors”. On the other hand, SAARC describes its mission as “Promoting peace, stability, amity and progress in the region through strict adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter and Non-Alignment, particularly respect for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, national independence”. It smells of deep mistrust, factionalism, self-centeredness and above all collective confusion on both means and ends of the organization. This is symptomatic of how the successes and failures of the two organizations have unfolded.

SAARC needs a fresh start and this is only possible if its leaders think beyond treating this platform as a geo-political playground and put economic interests at the center. There are several ways of going about it. A good starting point could be to reconstitute SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) to allow more meaningful interaction between leading Chief Executive Officers of corporations from the member countries with equitable representation of big companies and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).

The current structure is too cumbersome with layers of hierarchy (a secretary general, a president, vice presidents, executive members and general assembly members). We need a simple body that can regularly and effectively provide private sector feedback and suggestion on the goals set by the governing council. The CCI Summit should be held alongside the SAARC summit to give it momentum and higher visibility. Among various programs, skill development should be given primacy at CCI.

To ensure regional stability, the governments and the corporations of member states have to play a key role in providing its 300 million-strong youth workforce not just meaningful job opportunities but also the necessary skills to make them employable. This is a big task that needs immediate attention and regional coordination.

Next, we need to create institutional frameworks for unlocking the entrepreneurial potential of the youth. In 2009, CCI launched a South Asian Young Entrepreneurs Forum (SYEF) with the noble intention of promoting entrepreneurship in the region. Since its inception it has barely met once, highlighting the failure of yet another program. We need to unshackle bureaucratic entanglements that surround such programs to expect meaningful results. A program like Middle East Education through Technology (METE) can be effective in promoting student interest in technology-based entrepreneurship. Such a program should not be housed within the secretariat buildings but in university campuses. Students across the region should be given a platform to mix and mingle and form cross-national teams. Mentorship program and seed capital could be provided through a competitive process to innovative ideas. Such an exercise will promote bright minds in the region.

Lastly, if SAARC expects the status of high powered groupings like ASEAN, APEC and Shanghai Cooperation Organization it has to start contributing to the provision of global public goods such as lower carbon emissions, lower trade tariffs, and peace and security. For the reasons of population and poverty, South Asia is most vulnerable to the threats from climate change. According to UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), flooding, food shortages, and stagnating economic growth are just some of devastating impacts South Asia may experience due to climate change.

Our leaders need to get their acts together and propose a robust plan for mitigation and adaptation. India has aggressively expanded her installed solar and wind capacity whereas Pakistan and Bangladesh are yet to harness renewable energy potentials. The opportunity for sharing best practices is too valuable not to pursue. Regional energy markets are still highly segmented and an integrated grid system seems a distant reality. The successful commissioning of South Asia’s first High Voltage DC line between India and Bangladesh should be scaled up to other regions.

When the world is adopting a multilateral regional approach to development, the SAARC is struggling to play an effective role both in driving economic prosperity and reducing inter-state tensions in the region. Amidst the gloom, there is still a silver lining. With a new leadership at the helm in India, Pakistan, Maldives, Afghanistan and Nepal, SAARC
Your reliable partners for intellectual property matters in Pakistan, South East Asia, Arabian Gulf, Middle East & Africa

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Manufacturers and exporters from SAARC countries are advised to protect their valuable business assets comprising of trademarks, designs, patents and copyrights in SAARC and other countries of the GULF, MIDDLE EAST & AFRICA.

UTS has more than 65 years of experience in the field of Intellectual Property protection services and have rendered invaluable services to world famous business houses in protecting their interests in Intellectual property assets.

Contact:
Mr. M.Y.I. Khan and Ms. M.F.I. Khan
First India-Nepal bus service launched:

NEW DELHI/KATHMANDU: India and Nepal launched the first ever bus service between the two countries on Tuesday afternoon. To begin with daily buses will ply between Delhi and Kathmandu. Later, there will be similar buses which will ply on two other routes - Delhi-Pokhara and Varanasi-Kathmandu.

Before the launch, both PMs hopped onto the bus and interacted with travellers of the bus, which was decorated with streamers, balloons and flowers. In Delhi, the first bus carrying 14 passengers and three personnel from Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) started from Ambedkar stadium bus terminus.

Regional Integration in SAARC: “Today, goods travel from one Punjab to the other Punjab through Delhi, Mumbai, Dubai and Karachi—making the journey 11 times longer and pushing the cost four times up.” This was what Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the 18th SAARC Summit, referring to the lack of regional integration among South Asian countries. South Asia is indeed the least integrated region when it comes to trade and economy.

An Asian Development Bank report on “Asian Economic Integration Monitor” published in November states trade integration in South Asia is the lowest, with just 6 percent of the trade taking place among the states.

The region is also at the bottom of the table in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI), bond holding and tourism, and it is in the second position in terms population migration, compared to five other regions of Asia, according to the report.

How disappointing the regional trade has been can be gauged by the fact that Nepal’s trade with other South Asian countries, besides India, barely registers on the scale. India accounted for 93.9 percent of Nepal’s exports to South Asia and 99.4 percent of imports from the region in 2013-14, according to the Trade and Export Promotion Centre.

However, South Asian nations have failed to prioritise economic integration—evident at the 18th SAARC summit being held in Kathmandu. Three agreements—on motor vehicle, railway and energy—could not be endorsed, which is likely to affect regional connectivity. The proposed agreements would help integrate the region with cross-border bus and rail services and energy flow.

“The failure to endorse the agreements is disappointing, and it has made the summit’s theme “Deeper Integration for Peace and Prosperity” meaningless,” said Purusottam Ojha, former commerce secretary. “If the SAARC fails to deliver, it is necessary for the nations to go for sub-regional groupings by abandoning SAARC.”

While physical connectivity has continued to remain a big problem, the hassles in transit and customs are other factors affecting regional trade. The SAARC still does not have a regional transit agreement, which would have reduced transit hassles. “The agreement on railway and road would have paved the way for transit agreement,” said Posh Raj Pandey, chairman of South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment, a Kathmandu-based thinktank.

Long sensitive lists (including products with high tariff) under the South Asia Free Trade Area (Safata), frequent imposition of para-tariff barriers (such as counter-veiling duty) and non-tariff barriers citing quality reasons are other factors slowing trade growth, according to experts. Nepal’s sensitive list for non-least developed countries has as high as 1,036 products, while that for least developed countries has 25 goods. “Without bringing down the number of products on the lists to less than 100, a remarkable growth in trade is difficult,” said Pandey. “As a majority of the goods on the sensitive lists are exportable ones, categorising them under the list has limited the prospects of trade growth.”

SAARC nations have agreed to shorten the sensitive list by 95 percent by 2020 to increase intra-regional trade during the eighth meeting of the SAFTA Ministerial Council held in Thimpu, Bhutan, in July. To reduce non-tariff barriers, experts suggest setting a regional standard on laboratory, and giving recognition to lab certificates of member countries.

With Courtesy to Author Mr. RAJAT SETHI, The author is a student at Harvard Kennedy School of Government who is pursuing his Masters in Public Administration with focus on International Affairs.

Pandey, chairman of South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment, a Kathmandu-based thinktank.
Established in December 1992, South Asian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) serves as apex organization of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, mandated to promote economic cooperation in the region.

The year 2014 will be a landmark in the history of SAARC CCI, bringing in its fold the commencement of SAARC CCI Headquarters Building Project to further strengthen and up grad its permanent Headquarters at Islamabad- the capital city of Pakistan. The project is supported by all National Chambers of South Asia region and boasts of excellent contribution made by corporate houses from across South Asia particularly from Pakistan, Bangladesh and India and from other countries.

After accomplishment of pre-construction phase, this architectural masterpiece of the 21st century is ready for construction at its location Plot No. 26, Mauve Area, G-10/4, Islamabad. The project is well equipped of Energy efficient systems, spaces, security and safety features and have been well planned to execute the start of construction.

Mandated by SAARC CCI Building Trust, the leadership of FPCCI, Mr. Tariq Sayeed, founder and former President SAARC CCI and Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President of SAARC CCI, is making earnest endeavours to accomplish this task.

**Salient Features of the Building**

- The building will provide state of the art facilities, having central air-conditioning and heating system
- The structure will be basements+Ground+Mezzanine+1st Floor to 9th Floor for office use
- 9th Floor will have an auditorium with seating capacity of 256 participants and conference rooms
- It is located at a central and ideal place of Islamabad surrounded by many important government and on the way to future Islamabad airport
- The building will be RCC frame building.
- The size of the building is approximately 160ftx70ft, having covered area of about 1,60,000 sq. ft.
- The maximum grid/column spacing is 25ftx24ft. The loading on columns will be in the range of 2000-2400 Kips.
- The maximum height of the building is about 128 feet above natural ground level.
- World class parking facilities will be available.

This project offers tremendous opportunities for offices on rental for multinational, Banks, Insurance companies, corporate house and members of SAARC CCI to wish to establish their offices in this magnificent building.

SAARC CCI welcomes any offer regarding the completion of the project from any interested organization based mutual consent. The interested parties may contact Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI or Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI at our official address and contact Numbers.