

SAARC CCI BIZ

July, 2019

MESSAGE FROM
**MR. RUWAN
EDIRISINGHE**
pg: 03

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
WITH
**MS. RAMANI
PONNAMBALAM**
(SCWEC)
pg: 14

SAARC
TRADE LEADS
pg: 38

SAARC CCI DIARIES
**TAKING
SAARC CCI
FORWARD**
pg: 16

SAARC CCI
**HEADQUARTER
BUILDING**



**SAARC CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**

APEX BUSINESS ORGANIZATION OF SAARC



SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATION



SAARC CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
APEX BUSINESS ORGANIZATION OF SAARC

SAARC CCI HEADQUARTER BUILDING PROJECT

LAUNCHING IN 2019 at G-10/4, Mauve Area, Islamabad.

A STATE OF THE ART PROJECT FEATURING:

- Ground + 9 Stories
- Attractive, unique architecture
- Prime location of Islamabad
- 2 levels of basement parking
- Auditorium for 250 persons
- And much more!!

- Aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and economic integration!
- Grow your business with SAARC CCI and be a part of this milestone project!
- For further details on the SAARC CCI headquarter building project, write to us at info@saarcchamber.org



TABLE OF CONTENTS

pg 02 **Note from
Secretary General**

pg 03 **Message from
President SAARC CCI**

From the Desk of

- pg 05 Mr. Hossain Fahim, Chairman ACCI
- pg 06 Mr. Sheikh Fazle Fahim, President FBCCI
- pg 07 Ms. Phub Zam, President BCCI
- pg 08 Ms. Bhawani Rana, President FNCCI
- pg 09 Engr. Daroo Khan Achakzai, President FPCCI
-

In the Spotlight

- pg 28 Inspiring Interview with Ms. Pushpa Chhetri,
Leading Woman Entrepreneur of Bhutan
- pg 32 The Startup Journey: In conversation with
Mr. Ashraful Islam, Director, Oggro Dairy Ltd.
- pg 14 Exclusive Interview with Ms. Ramani Ponnambalam,
International Executive Council Member SCWEC, (Sri Lanka)
- pg 36 Startup Unfold: A talk with Mr. Abu Sayed Al Sagor,
CEO, BD Assistant Limited
-

SAARC Insights

- pg 10 Industrialization and Climate Change in South Asia
- pg 40 Trade Among SAARC States

pg 16
**2019 - SAARC
CCI DIARIES:
Taking SAARC
CCI Forward**

pg 47
**Did you
know?**

pg 38
**SAARC Trade
Leads**

pg 46
**History
Counts:
Archives from
the glorious
past of
SAARC CCI**



Note from **SECRETARY GENERAL,** SAARC CCI

Dear Readers,

It is my great pleasure to present to you another issue of SAARC CCI Biz in 2019.

The SAARC Biz aims to keep its stakeholders abreast of SAARC regional dynamics and offers insights, developments, successes and initiatives undertaken by SAARC CCI across the region. This Issue features messages from Presidents of SAARC CCI founding members and National Chambers who play an integral role in taking SAARC CCI forward.

SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneur Council (SCWEC) has always been an active platform for women entrepreneurs across the region to network and collaborate on pertinent subjects and issues facing women entrepreneurs of South Asia. We are proud to share interviews with two inspiring women entrepreneurs of the region, sharing their experiences and successes during their journey towards successful entrepreneurship.

SAARC CCI has recently embarked on a program aimed at collaboration of startups of South Asia and sharing best practices to grow startups. In this regard our partner Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) has been gracious to execute

programs with SAARC CCI across the region, mentoring over 100 startups to date. Two such exemplary startups have been invited to share their insights in SAARC CCI Biz. We are thankful to young entrepreneur's for being a part of SAARC CCI startups journey.

We invite all our esteemed members to participate in SAARC biz, be it contribution to the editorial content, enhancing the image and brand of your company via advertising with SAARC CCI biz or sharing your news, views and success stories.

As always, we welcome constructive feedback on our SAARC CCI biz initiative and hope that our work inspires you to contribute to this endeavor of SAARC CCI. To stay up to date, please follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@saarcchamber.org.

Happy Reading!

Hina Saeed
Secretary General



Message from
PRESIDENT
 SAARC CCI

“A JOURNEY OF A THOUSAND MILES BEGINS WITH A SINGLE STEP”

Lao-Tze

As I observe the journey of SAARC CCI, it reminds me of the deep notions on life journey portrayed by the great ancient philosopher Lao-Tze. Despite numerous challenges, the story of SAARC CCI has been remarkable. The challenges infact make the SAARC CCI even stronger as we strive to achieve success in our journey towards the highest possible socio-economic development in South Asia.

Being the President of SAARC CCI, it is with immense

pleasure that I extend my greetings to the new version of SAARC CCI Biz 2019. This creative magazine has proven to be utilitarian in terms of disseminating up-to-date socio-economic facts, data and knowledge along with recent SAARC CCI activities and initiatives amongst a vast array of people in South Asia and beyond.

During the past few years, SAARC CCI has witnessed enhanced outreach with other regions and countries especially with Southeast Asia and China. The SAARC CCI representation has been remarkable in 14th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF), China South Asia Business

Cooperation Meeting (CSABCM) and South and Southeast Asia Commodity Expo and Investment Fair (SSACEIF), held in June 2019 in Kunming, Yunnan, China, where SAARC CCI successfully organized 104 stalls from South Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for the first time in our history. In fact, Sri Lanka was the theme country of SSACEIF and Chaired the 14th CSABF in Kunming, Yunnan, China. Moreover, the SAARC CCI is about to play a key role in China (Sichuan) - South and Southeast Asia Business Leaders' Summit (CSSABL), held in September 2019. Our partnerships with China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) Yunnan and Sichuan Councils have so far been pragmatic and utilitarian. In terms of our relationships with Asia Pacific, we actively took part in 32nd Summit of Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI) held in Istanbul, Turkey, in November 2018. We further expect to expand our links to Americas, Africa, Europe and Middle East. These relationships indeed create more economic opportunities for our entrepreneurs in South Asia and promote deeper economic cooperation between South Asia, Southeast Asia, Asia Pacific, Europe, Middle East, Americas and others generating win-win situations for all of us.

Intraregional trade, nevertheless, has hitherto been insignificant due to manifold socio-economic and socio-political factors. Despite the fact that the South Asian economy has been growing at a steady fast rate, averagely over 6 percent, the intraregional trade has been significantly low; intraregional trade currently accounts for merely 5 percent of South Asia's total trade compared to 25 percent in ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations). Trust deficit, poor regional connectivity, political and security barriers, and extremely protectionist economic measures such as tariff, non-tariff and para-tariff barriers diminish the intraregional trade among SAARC Countries. Pronounced economic integration and enhanced socio-economic cooperation can overcome trade frictions and enhance gains for the South Asian countries. Thereby SAARC CCI has been playing a pivotal role in this regard.

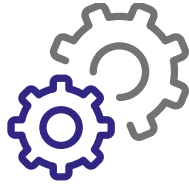
To reap the benefits of these economic opportunities for the betterment of people in the region, SAARC CCI ought to take the lead and formulate pragmatic strategies in its journey of becoming one of the strongest chambers in the world by 2030. SAARC CCI's innovative initiatives and activities such as Startup Bootcamps, Cross Border Trade Dialogues, Trade Fairs, Investment Forums, Business Leaders Conclaves, etc. are indeed praiseworthy in terms of socio-economic cooperation and economic integration in the region.

Moreover, we have taken strong steps to strengthen the SAARC CCI Secretariat. In fact, the SAARC CCI Headquarter building project is a predominant step in this regard. The state-of-the-art architecture of the SAARC CCI headquarter building comprises full-fledged 9 storeys and will generate a significant amount of income for SAARC CCI activities in future. Within the next 6 months, it is expected to inaugurate the new SAARC CCI Headquarter building for the betterment of the region.

All our leaders and members of SAARC CCI, Councils and Committees along with the Secretariat staff have hitherto been persistently working hard to achieve our worthy objectives. Hence, I would like to take this opportunity to convey my heartfelt gratitude to all these great people who are the integral parts in our journey towards happiness and sustainable development. I wish you all a great future filled with good health, wisdom and prosperity!

RUWAN EDIRISINGHE

President
SAARC CCI



MESSAGE FROM HOSSAIN FAHIM, CHAIRMAN, ACCI



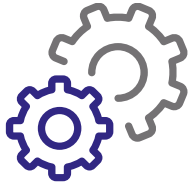
Hossain Fahim
Chairman, ACCI

As the Chairman of Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries, I am delighted to convey my warm greetings and best wishes to SAARC CCI Biz esteemed readers and commence my message with a quote by Mike Byers “Quality growth of a region does not happen by chance. It is the result of community and business leaders working together with a shared vision and common goals.”

The private sector is the engine of growth, and the chamber is its engine room. The enhancement of the enabling environment is the fundamental element in harnessing numerous untapped opportunities in Afghanistan and the creation of local wealth and employment. In order to turn the comparative advantages of the country into genuine competitiveness, the private sector contribution requires confidence in the future, mutual trust, dialogue and most of all a streamlined regulatory framework with diverse and efficient institutions. An effective economic and social dialogue that will build the required confidence and trust is an essential aspect of a well-functioning private sector. Therefore, the building of capacity of business representative organizations is crucial.

Whatever the case, our similarities in SAARC are greater than our differences. The most important of them is our desire for economic collaboration and integration. This sentiment is rooted in our efforts to improve the standard of living of the people of the region, so they have better access to welfare and free and socially conscious life. Afghanistan believes that SAARC has the potential to be a powerful symbolic and practical actor that contributes to regulating and countering destructive and anarchistic efforts. We can and we must learn from history. This is the most important and most persistent heritage of humanity.

I look forward to a fruitful and effective cooperation in terms of economic growth and integration in the SAARC region.



MESSAGE FROM SHEIKH FAZLE FAHIM PRESIDENT, FBCCI



Sheikh Fazle Fahim
President, FBCCI

I am happy to learn that SAARC CCI is going to bring out their regular publication SAARC CCI Biz 2019.

South Asia belongs to the fastest growing regions in the world. South Asian nations have become new driving engines for global economic growth. The countries within this region are economically complementary to a greater extent and regional cooperation has great potentials in the context of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

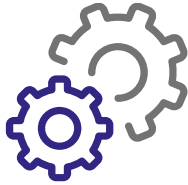
This region has the potential to become a hub of innovation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR); with its young population well connected to new global technological developments; opportunities created by the growth of 4IR technologies; and a large, educated labour market. The rise of emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IOT), block chain and autonomous vehicles present interesting opportunities to tackle some of the large-scale systemic challenges in South Asia.

We need to take concrete and result-oriented steps for greater economic integration of the region. I firmly believe that the close partnerships among the business communities will further facilitate businesses of South Asia and to encourage investors from SAARC region and beyond to invest in SAARC countries.

As a founding member of SAARC and SAARC CCI, Bangladesh always attaches high importance to the principles and objectives of the SAARC and SAARC CCI both. Bangladesh is willing and eager to pursue closer cooperation with SAARC countries.

We acknowledge the proactive role of SAARC CCI in providing an institutional framework for promoting economic and regional cooperation in South Asia. We believe that business community under the canopy of SAARC CCI will gain from strength to strength in achieving economic integration of the region.

I thank all involved in the publication of SAARC CCI Biz 2019. I wish the publication a success.



MESSAGE FROM PHUB ZAM PRESIDENT, BCCI



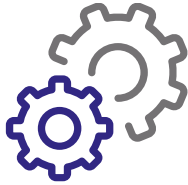
Phub Zam
President, BCCI

It is indeed a great privilege and honor for the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry to contribute a message to the SAARC CCI Biz. The National Federation Chambers together with the SAARC CCI has come a long way in fostering the private sector by promoting regional trade and economic cooperation.

For the SAARC region to attain sustainable economic growth, factors such as political instability, shortage of skilled labour force and pro-private sector policies are major reasons for low Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the region. Hence the settlements of all unconstructive factors are the preconditions for high growth, long term development, and prosperity in the region. The region needs to work on its comparative advantages for intraregional cooperation in strategic areas such as infrastructure, connectivity, environment sector, etc. to overcome the emerging challenges faced by the region. A dynamic South Asia can only be created by utilizing a vast pool of our human capacity, therefore investment on our human capital is a must to increase efficiencies and create more value.

We have to realize that regional economic integration in South Asia is desirable as it has the potential to exploit their considerable synergies and complementarities for their mutual advantage.

Therefore, I would like to urge for the cooperation and support of the SAARC CCI and its Member Federations for their selfless commitment to peace, prosperity and economic development in South Asia through a collective effort with the ultimate goal to attain a notable position in the global economy.



MESSAGE FROM BHAWANI RANA, PRESIDENT, FNCCI



Bhawani Rana
President, FNCCI

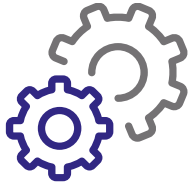
I would like to congratulate SAARC CCI for the publication of another edition of SAARC CCI Biz which will help all to learn about SAARC activities and achievements over the past years, providing valuable information about SAARC region and their initiatives.

The legacy of SAARC CCI leaderships in helping to materialize SAARC economic integration is very laudable. I believe that this legacy would further continue and evolve stronger.

South Asian countries have been playing an important role to become a major part of the global economy. In order to further contribute to the global economy, emphasis on increasing intra-regional flow of funds for investment as well as deepening of trade synergies among SAARC countries is of paramount importance. Connectivity among us is the crucial element to materialize the potential of the region. We need to focus more on quality infrastructure, ensuring regional connectivity and trade facilitation through rails, roads, air, sea and rivers, and digital connectivity through information highways. When there is ease of movement of people, trade, tourism, and investment also flourish, paving the way for the positive socio-economic impact on the people and the national economies.

In order to broaden the economic engagement among SAARC countries, the FNCCI is ready as ever to provide complete support and remain fully committed to fulfilling its role for this vital purpose.

On behalf of FNCCI, I would like to extend my best wishes to the SAARC CCI and SAARC BIZ team.



MESSAGE FROM ENGR. DAROO KHAN ACHAKZAI PRESIDENT, FPCCI



**ENGR. DAROO
KHAN ACHAKZAI**
President, FPCCI

It gives me immense pleasure to congratulate SAARC CCI for its endeavors to promote economic and trade activities in the region and providing information through its various publications. The SAARC CCI magazine is an attempt to highlight the challenges, opportunities and remedial measures in the way of economic integration and trade of the region.

SAARC CCI stands as the sole regional platform in South Asia which brings together National Chambers in the region to create links, build bridges and form cooperative partnerships in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. This collaboration has reinforced the determination of the South Asian people to realize their dreams and aspirations of building an economically prosperous, socially progressive, technologically advanced and culturally enriched regional community.

I also appreciate the efforts of SAARC CCI in bringing together the countries of South Asia and achieving considerable progress in areas of economic, social, and technical fields. It is equally important for us to recognize and address the numerous challenges faced by SAARC. With this in mind, we must endeavor to make this Organization more dynamic and forward looking. We should be ready to undertake emerging modern day challenges and take advantage of global developments. Hence, I believe it is time for us to aspire for more and support SAARC CCI to perform to its maximum potential. We should attempt to modernize the functioning of SAARC CCI and its mechanisms. We should aspire to make our decision making process more business-like and our delivery more result oriented and deliver tangible benefits to the people. We must ensure that our decisions and recommendations are followed through till results are achieved. We should emulate global good practices and be more innovative in our approach and resolution of regional issues.

I must appreciate SAARC CCI biz editorial team for publishing yet another issue in 2019. I wish SAARC CCI all the success!



Industrialization and Climate Change in South Asia

The universe is a gift to the creatures, especially mankind for the betterment in life; but human himself is creating lots of issues impairing the natural resources on earth. Human activities are destroying the whole ecosystem. Drought, flood and deglaciation are enhancing aquatic ecosystem. Emission of CFC, NO, N₂O, Br, etc. from industries creates holes in the ozone layer. Deforestation, urbanization reduces infiltration of water to groundwater, which imparts change in the climate.

All of the above-mentioned reasons are due to industrialization, which is caused by the development of businesses and fabrications. Production of more than 80% of Carbon in the world is in cities. Consumption by more than 50% of energy is in cities. Most of the damage to Ozone layer is from urbanization. After 2030, cities will be in a severe crisis of climate change and about 76% of businesses will be in the stage of vanishing. If we have a look at these kinds of information, we will understand more about the role of medium scale and large scale businesses in an intense change in the climate.

Climate change is being accelerated by human activities and in response, human is going to be suffering more.

Immigration to the cities, price fluctuation, shortage of food, shortage of drinking water, lack of nutrient in agriculture farms and so forth are the negative impacts which directly or indirectly affect the lives of people. On the other hand, although developed countries and industrialized countries are strongly contributing to climate change, developing countries, like SAARC countries are in the adverse impact of climate change because developing countries are not having strong strategies and policies to control on it. For example, Afghanistan has suffered the most due to global pollution even though it is one of the least contributors to global climate change.

In the current decade, developing countries are initiating strong strategies and policies to come over any adverse contribution to global climate change. For example, India, the world's fourth-largest carbon emitter with its population of 1.3 billion people, accepted the Paris agreement on climate change. In this agreement, member countries committed to curbing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emission to keep global average temperature from rising above 1.5°C as compared to the pre-industrial years.

Nowadays, policies in the world are planned and

implemented to reduce any type of harm towards climate change in short term and long term. Some of these policies are specific to developed nations which have the most critical role in this issue. But as it is clear from their name, developed countries, they can have many facilities to receive the least impact of harms against their people and their environment while in third world countries like most of the Asian countries whose role is not very highlighted in damaging to the climate but most of the harms return them. Therefore, with all of these points, finding the solutions for protecting the least producer but the most receivers of climate change impacts is an essential duty of government and regional platforms of the respective region.

Since climate change is not a challenge in a small level, all regional or even global collaboration is needed to come over harms to the ecosystem, human life and future generation. For example, it is appropriate to mention that India as one of the SAARC countries which has an important role in the region, planned to reduce its carbon emission intensity by 33% to 35% from 2005, over a period of 15 years. It aims at producing 40% of its installed electricity capacity by 2030 from non-fossil fuels. This would mean India will have to shift significantly from coal-based power generation to renewable energy sources. It will have to produce 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW of biomass and 5 GW of small hydropower by 2022. This example can help other regional countries as a case study to make plans for short term and long term of energy consumption to save all organisms from the risk of climate change.

On the other hand, if we have a look at Afghanistan, which has a strategic role in the region in many aspects, its role should not be disregarded in protecting the region with other countries.

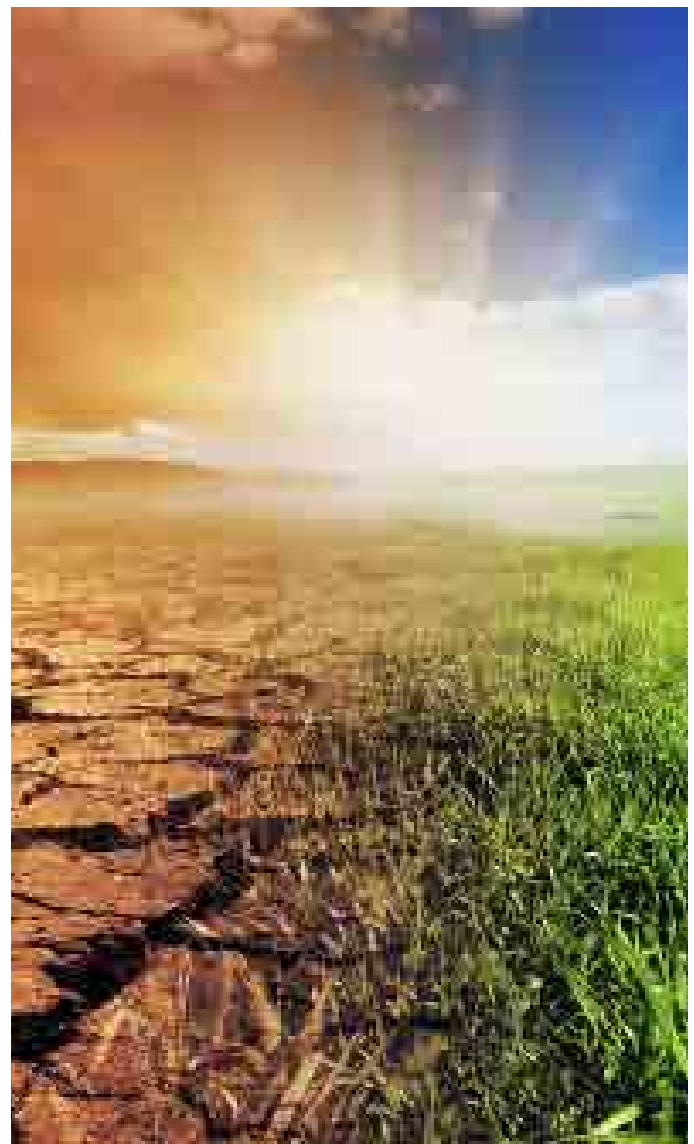
Using experts in this field, active participation in related conventions as well as introducing specialists to these conventions, find practical solutions and force governmental and non-governmental organizations to implement all these regulations, implementing the plans seriously and effectively, collaboration of governmental and nongovernmental organs at all levels are some of the activities every country has to do.

But, as we mentioned, that industries and businesses in any country have a critical part in climate change, most of the responsibility goes to them to control their energy consumption, carbon emission, GHG production, water use and so forth. Direct and indirect quality control of the government on the private sector, preparing facilities for private sector meanwhile exerting the regulations on energy consumption and using proper machineries can help society to reduce climate change problems to a greater extent.

The last but not the least point which is very necessary for developing countries refer to facilities in these countries.

Maintaining and rearranging are always more difficult and more costly than make a plan from the beginning. This point can be addressed in construction and infrastructure, making industries as well. Nowadays, topics about eco-cities are significant discussions among developed countries. But this topic can come to the developing countries table as well, so that they can develop their future plans, in line with the eco-city models such as garden cities, cities with renewable energy, zero-carbon cities, zero-waste cities and etc. One of the major and most noticeable economic impacts of the movement towards becoming an eco-city is the notable increase in productivity across existing industries as well as the introduction of new industries, thus creating jobs. Presenting this plan in an address of SAARC to all SAARC members can be a huge step to guarantee a safe environment in South Asian Region for coming generations.

“I believe in one South Asia.”



Habiba Sadeqi

President, Gateway ICT Solution Company
President, Afghanistan Green Future Organization

the wheel history....

GUARD AGGRI MACHINERY

GUARD RICE

GUARD ENGINE OIL

GUARD BRAKE LINING

GUARD FILTERS

GUARD CAR CARE

GUARD SOCIAL SECTOR

GUARDAUTOZONE

GUARD GROUP

TRUSTED SINCE 1947
OEM original equipment manufacturer
guardfilters.com

IT'S ALL ABOUT SERVING

GENERATION TO GENERATION



Guard Head Office 80 - Badami Bagh Lahore, P.O.Box # 465 (Pakistan) Tel: 92 42 772 5616-18, www.guardfilter.com.pk

GUARD GROUP

TRUSTED SINCE 1947

NAVEENA DENIM MILLS

**PROUD TO DRESS DENIM
LOVERS ALL OVER THE
WORLD SINCE 2003!**

**BRINGING INSPIRATION, INNOVATION AND
RESPONSIBILITY TO THE DENIM WORLD**

Established in Karachi, Pakistan, and passionately committed to denim, we specialize in manufacturing premium yarn and denim fabrics.

Our fully integrated production facilities are powered by 2000+ employees who produce 36 million yards and more than 47 million pounds of yarn per year.

LEADING THE WAY IN SUSTAINABILITY

Committed to push the boundaries of the denim industry, we constantly strive to drive change for the benefit of society and a sustainable future.

naveena
DENIM MILLS
www.ndm.com.pk



/naveenadenim



/naveenadenimill



Inspiring and Empowering Women in Business:



Exclusive Interview with

Ms. Ramani Ponnambalam,

International Executive Council Member, SCWEC (Sri Lanka)

Ramani Ponnambalam is currently a Director of McBolon Polymer (Pvt) Ltd and CEO/ Managing Director of Mcbertan (Pvt) Ltd. She is actively involved in Product Development, Finance Planning and overlooks the Fevicol Business Development for Macbertan (Pvt) Ltd. She was appointed to the Board of Directors & also Audit Committees of Hotel Services (Ceylon) PLC & Amaya Leisure PLC Ms. Ramani Ponnambalam currently serves as a Director of Alliance Finance Co. PLC.

1. Please share any interesting experience as International Executive Council Member of SCWEC.

The launch of a much needed Sanitary Napkin Manufacturing Project in Sri Lanka, which contributes to the hygiene of women, had been a great initiative that I was involved with. We further took measures to train women in manufacturing of this product which would create potential jobs particularly for unemployed females in the country.

2. What is your vision for SCWEC and SAARC CCI?

My vision for SAARC is to draw on the deep female untapped talent pool and to develop their entrepreneurship abilities implementing training and development programmes especially for rural women. Moreover, it is important to recognize achievers and facilitate global opportunities for the female communities in South Asia.

3. How important is the SAARC platform for women entrepreneurs to grow and prosper?

It is very important, not only to be a launching platform for entrepreneurs but also continue to be the helping hand to train and develop their capacities, thereby, significantly contributing to the socio-economic development in South Asia.

4. What has been the greatest challenge in your career and how did you overcome it?

In the past, I have served as the only lady board member on some private as well as on public company boards.

Currently, I am the Chairperson of Alliance Finance Co. PLC, a Finance Company which has a history of over 50 years. I am also the First lady to be appointed as the President of a Male dominated Motoring Club in Sri Lanka – The Classic Car Club of Ceylon.

After taking the challenge to keep reaching higher in the corporate hierarchy, the fact that I am in the minority or sole female representative on a board or committee has never been an issue for me. I have not been intimidated by this and proceed in carrying out my role, focusing on achieving expectation as a leader in general and not particularly as a women leader.

5. What does success mean to you?

To be a leader you need to succeed and keep driving success until all personal goals and corporate visions are achieved.

6. Tell us about your past endeavors, what accomplishments are you most proud of?

Shareholder and being a part of Starting up a Pioneer Manufacturing Operation in Sri Lanka for Macbertan (Pvt)

Ltd, which I am now the Managing Director.

Serving as the Local Director in a JV Company between Macbertan and Pidilite Singapore and Dubai, to set up a Manufacturing Plant in Polgahawela to Manufacture in Sri Lanka one of Asia's Leading Adhesive Ranges, FEVICOL.

Having been appointed as the First Female President of a Motoring Club in Sri Lanka is another accomplishment I can proudly share. The Classic Car Club of Ceylon has a Membership of 270 of which only around 4 percent are ladies. This Club is the local representative of FIVA (Fédération International des Véhicules Ancients) and I travel overseas to attend General Assemblies and very often find myself as the only Lady President attending.

Furthermore, having being the first lady to be appointed on the Board of Kingsbury Hotel, we now have 3 ladies on the Board.

7. What are the 3 key characteristics of a successful entrepreneur?

In my view, following are the 3 key characteristics of a successful entrepreneur:

- Be innovative, follow your dreams till they are realized and go forward with clear plans in mind.
- Be positive
- Be a Leader and don't give up when a situation becomes a challenge.

8. What piece of advice would you give to women who want to become entrepreneurs?

Go for it and be confident in yourself.

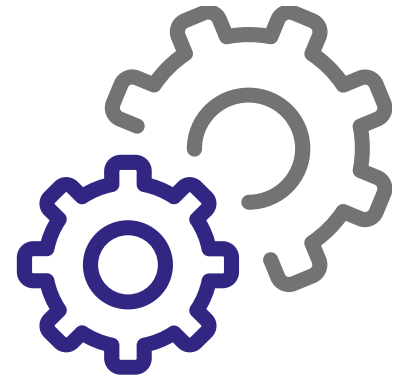
9. How SCWEC has facilitated women entrepreneurs of South Asia?

SCWEC has facilitated women in many ways, especially by developing women novices as skillful entrepreneurs and encouraging the existing entrepreneurs to improve their ventures.

10. What is your key message for the women of SAARC region?

We have a great global talent pool of Women in SAARC Region, who need to take the challenge and reach for the Stars!

Our capabilities as women leaders and entrepreneurs are diversified and proven.



SAARC CCI DIARIES

SAARC WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR AWARDS 2018

March 2, 2019, Colombo, Sri Lanka



Welcome address by Ms. Rifa Musthapha, Chairperson, SCWEC (term 2017-2018) at SAARC Woman Entrepreneur Awards 2018



The SAARC Chamber Women Entrepreneurs Council (SCWEC) organized the SAARC Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Awards 2018 from March 1-3, 2019 at Shangri-La Hotel in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The aim of the event was to recognize the entrepreneurial spirit of women of SAARC region and encourage women who possess vision, innovation, entrepreneurial drive, leadership, individuality and tenacity thereby portraying female icons for other women in the region to aspire from. Hon'ble Mrs. Chandrani Bandara, Minister of Women and Child Affairs and Dry Zone Development was invited as the Chief Guest.

Ms. Rifa Musthapha, Chairperson, SCWEC, welcomed the distinguished guests and dignitaries from the SAARC member states.

Ms. Zarghona Walizada of Afghanistan, Ms. Priti Chakraborty of Bangladesh, Ms. Chogyel Lhamo of Bhutan, Ms. Suiza Ibrahim of Maldives, Ms. Shyam Badan Shrestha of Nepal and Ms. Hina Mansab Khan of Pakistan

were recognized for their exceptional entrepreneurial contributions in the year 2018 from the respective countries in the SAARC region.

Ms. Lakmini Wijesundara, Founder and CEO of Iron One Technologies and BoardPac Sri Lanka was crowned the overall winner of the SAARC Woman Entrepreneur Award 2018.

The awards were presented at the SAARC Musical Couture, a gala fundraising event. Each SAARC country was allotted a segment in the Musical Couture to showcase their best in Fashion Design and Music.

Entrepreneurs and businessmen/women from SAARC region, representatives of Diplomatic missions, members of women organizations and institutions and SCWEC members participated in the event and applauded a lovely evening rich with cultures across SAARC region.

SAARC CCI'S STARTUP'S BOOT CAMP STRENGTHENING STARTUP ECOSYSTEMS IN SOUTH ASIA: CROSS-BORDER BOOT CAMPS FOR INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURS FROM BHUTAN AND NEPAL

April 20-22, 2019, Kathmandu, Nepal

SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) organized a three-day cross border startup's Boot Camp on April 20-22, 2019 at Hotel Yak and Yeti, Kathmandu, Nepal, in collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF).

The objective of the three-day boot camp was to develop a mechanism to accelerate cross border learning, exposure, mentoring and acceleration of the startups from Bhutan and Nepal. The SAARC CCI startup boot camps aim to mentor startups especially in the member countries with no ecosystems or least developed startup ecosystems like Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal.

A total of 24 startups, 7 from Bhutan and 17 from Nepal participated and gathered on a common platform to network, share knowledge and best practices, and enhance the cross-border collaboration among the South Asian nations. Some of the ideas of the startups included; innovation in the shoe industry infusing local culture in designs, e-commerce platform using Uber like business models to provide services to its clients, using drones to rebuild heritage sites, food innovation in ice creams using natural fruits and local flavors, education platform to connect urban and rural communities, paper products produced from elephant dung, manufacturing soaps using medicinal herbs, among others.

The three-day boot camp was facilitated by three leading startup mentors from India, Mr. Vijetha Shastry from Lead, Open Innovation at NASSCOM Centre of Excellence; Mr. Pankaj Agarwal, CEO, HelloTravel, and, Mr. Saravana Mani, Head of Open Innovation at Future Groups. The mentors were well experienced in advising various startups in domains such as Retail, Hospitality, Consumer Products, Consulting, Travel, Finance and E-commerce.

Mr. Imran Ali, Director, Research & Development, SAARC CCI, opened the boot camp with an overview of SAARC and emphasized the need for all participating nations to encourage collaboration and cooperation to promote entrepreneurship and the need for everyone to help develop startup ecosystems across the region.

Mentors coached the startups on ways to make their content more compelling. The participants were advised to present their successes in a storytelling format for maximum impact. The startups had an opportunity to hear stories from various successful entrepreneurs on their journey so far.

The participants got an opportunity to learn about the difference in startup ecosystems across SAARC nations, shared and learnt the pains and joys of being an entrepreneur and went back with a determination to scale up their startups and eventually disseminate the information received from the boot camp.



Mr. Vijetha Shastry, Lead - Open Innovation at NASSCOM CoEIoT Center of Excellence mentoring startups from Bhutan and Nepal during the Bootcamp in Kathmandu, Nepal



Mr. Saravana Mani mentoring the startups from Bhutan and Nepal during SAARC CCI three-day boot camp in Kathmandu, Nepal

LEVERAGING SAFTA: CROSS BORDER TRADE DIALOGUES

April 29, 2019, Peshawar, Pakistan

SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) organized a two-day workshop on Cross Border Trade Dialogue in partnership with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and in collaboration with Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) on April 29, 2019, in Peshawar, Pakistan.

The aim of the workshop was to facilitate interaction and networking among the private sector of the region to augment their efforts and advocate for policy fine tuning pertinent to trade facilitation generally and non-tariff barriers specifically. The outcome of the dialogues was a brief report including the observations/evidences shared by the representatives, a set of policy guidelines, suggestions and recommendations to be shared with the private sector and the governments of the SAARC countries and the SAARC Secretariat.

The workshop was attended by 20 participants which comprised of members from the Chambers of Commerce and Industry in the bordering areas and office bearers of corresponding Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General of SAARC CCI in her



Opening Remarks by Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General, SAARC CCI at workshop on "Leveraging SAFTA: Cross Border Trade Dialogues"

opening remarks welcomed the participants and thanked them for their valuable presence at the event.

Mr. Faiz Muhammad, President of Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) highlighted the importance of bilateral trade and shared his insights on the prevailing non-tariff measures (NTMs) and non-tariff barriers (NTBs), impeding bilateral trade between Pakistan and Afghanistan, during the SAARC CCI border trade dialogue in Peshawar.

During the workshop, Mr. Mohammad Daood Musa, President, Pashto Kandahar Group of Companies, Afghanistan, addressed the gathering and shared great insights on Pak- Afghan border trade.

On the second day of the workshop, a field visit to Torkham Border was conducted to examine the level of port efficiencies, potential trader barriers, scrutinize the security and infrastructure challenges and issues pertinent to standardization. Furthermore, the prevailing of NTMs and NTBs at the border point were also examined during the visit.



Participants of workshop on Leveraging SAFTA: Cross Border Trade Dialogues

SAARC CCI 77TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AND SAARC CCI 23RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

May 2, 2019, Kathmandu, Nepal



Rt. Hon'ble Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Federal Parliament of Nepal, invited as chief guest at the SAARC CCI 77th EC Meeting & SAARC CCI 23rd General Assembly Meeting, at Chandragiri Hills, Nepal.

The SAARC CCI 77th Executive Committee Meeting and SAARC CCI 23rd General Assembly Meeting were organized by SAARC CCI in collaboration with Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) on May 2, 2019 at Chandragiri Hills in Nepal.

The SAARC CCI 77th EC and 23rd GA Meetings were chaired by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI.

Honorable EC and GA members from South Asian countries gathered in Nepal to take significant decisions in terms of taking SAARC CCI to new heights.

Rt. Hon'ble Krishna Bahadur Mahara, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Federal Parliament of Nepal, was invited as the Chief Guest at the inaugural session of the SAARC CCI 77th EC and 23rd GA

Meetings. H.E. Mazher Javed, Ambassador of Pakistan to Nepal graced the occasion with his valuable presence. Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General SAARC CCI commenced the inaugural session with her welcome note.

Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, SAARC CCI Vice President (Nepal) and Mrs. Bhawani Rana, President FNCCI warmly welcomed the distinguished guests and reinforced FNCCI's support to the SAARC CCI delegation attending the meetings in Kathmandu, Nepal.

During the meeting, President SAARC CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe said that the main aim of the organization

is to improve intra-regional trade in the SAARC region, regional connectivity and socio-economic cooperation for the benefit of the people in South Asia.

Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI further articulated that the mandate of the organization is to represent SAARC countries for accelerating economic integration for the prosperity of the people of South Asia.

Senior Vice President of SAARC CCI, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, while addressing the meeting, reinforced the commitment of Pakistan business community to the process of economic integration in South Asia.



Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal) delivering a welcome address at the opening session of SAARC CCI 77th Executive Committee Meeting and SAARC CCI 23rd General Assembly Meeting



Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI, addressing the distinguished guests during the inaugural session of SAARC CCI 77th Executive Committee Meeting and SAARC CCI 23rd General Assembly Meeting at Chandragiri Hills, Nepal.



Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Senior Vice President SAARC CCI addressing the hon'ble delegates during SAARC CCI 77th Executive Committee Meeting and SAARC CCI 23rd General Assembly Meeting



Group photo at the conclusion of the inaugural session of SAARC CCI 77th Executive Committee Meeting and SAARC CCI 23rd General Assembly Meeting at Chandragiri Hills, Nepal.

SAARC CCI PRESIDENT LED DELEGATION CALLED ON RT. HON'BLE PRIME MINISTER OF THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF NEPAL, MR. KHADGA PRASAD SHARMA OLI

May 3, 2019, Kathmandu, Nepal

Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI and SAARC CCI leadership called on Hon'ble Rt. Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli. The President led delegation included Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Senior Vice President SAARC CCI, Mr. Mohammad Yonass Momand, Vice President SAARC CCI (Afghanistan), Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President

SAARC CCI (Nepal), Dr. Rohita Silva, Vice President SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka), Mr. Zubair Ahmed Malik, Executive Committee Member SAARC CCI and Chair of Accounts and Finance Committee SAARC CCI, Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General SAARC CCI and Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General SAARC CCI.

During the meeting, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI apprised the Hon'ble Rt. Prime Minister of Nepal on SAARC CCI's upcoming initiatives and stated that "Asia is going to be the economic leader in the world in the next decade and South Asia is an integral part of Asia, having one of the world's highest GDP growth rate of 6.5 percent on average in the SAARC region". The region is significantly rich with untapped natural resources, President SAARC CCI reinforced. Mr. President further stated that SAARC CCI's long term target is to become one of the strongest chambers in the world

by 2030 and we will make sure that our future leadership will reach this target collectively.

The Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of Nepal, Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli, in his address stated that "We are not eight nations in SAARC, in fact we are a one family". Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister further added that South Asian region is the mother of civilized society, and it is the mother of discipline and philosophy, the region is prosperous with natural resources and is fast becoming the best in the world.



Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI, addressing Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli



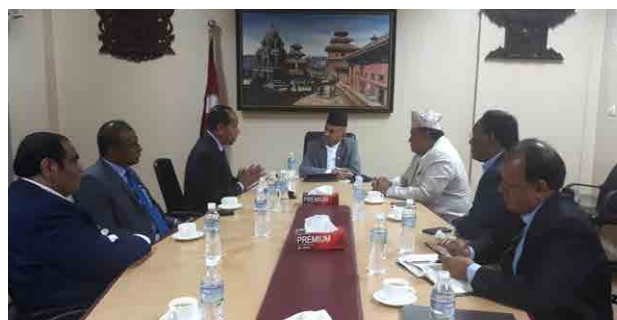
Group picture of SAARC CCI delegates with Rt. Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, Mr. Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli in Kathmandu, Nepal

PRESIDENT SAARC CCI, MR. RUWAN EDIRISINGHE CALLED ON HON'BLE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF NEPAL, MR. PRADEEP KUMAR GYAWALI

May 3, 2019, Kathmandu, Nepal.

President SAARC CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, led a delegation with Senior Vice President SAARC CCI, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal), Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, and Vice President SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka), Dr. Rohitha Silva, for a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon'ble

Mr. Pradeep Gyawali, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kathmandu, Nepal, on May 3, 2019. The Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs and the SAARC CCI delegation discussed the importance of enhancing socio-economic cooperation in South Asia to meet the future goals as a region.



SAARC CCI Delegates Meeting with the Nepalese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon'ble Pradeep Kumar Gyawali on May 3, 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal

SAARC CCI STARTUP TASK FORCE MEETING

May 3, 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal

The SAARC CCI Startup Taskforce Meeting was held at the Yak and Yeti Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal, on May 3, 2019.

The objective of the meeting was to introduce the

Presidium of SAARC CCI to the SAARC Taskforce on Startups and provide them an opportunity to network and discuss areas of mutual interest. The members of Startup Task force presented a strategic plan and road map for

future activities of the SAARC Startups Taskforce.

Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General SAARC CCI, in her introductory remarks welcomed the Startup Taskforce members and all the distinguished guests to the meeting and introduced the taskforce members to SAARC CCI Executive Committee members.

The SAARC CCI Startup Task Force meeting was attended by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Senior Vice President SAARC CCI, Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal), Dr. Rohitha Silva, Vice President SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka), SAARC CCI Executive Committee Members and General Assembly Members, and officials of SAARC CCI and member Federations including Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Investment (ACCI) and Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) SAARC Startups Taskforce was represented by Dr. Shanta

Thoutam, Vice President, Corporate Innovation & BD, T-Hub, India, Mr. Dulith Herath, Chairman and Founder, kapruka.com, Sri Lanka, Mr. Furqan Kidwai, CEO and Founder, dawai.pk, Pakistan and Mr. Ahmed Fahim Didar, Executive Director, Aghaez, Afghanistan.

President SAARC CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe shared recommendations at the conclusion of the meeting. He stated that it is imperative to hold dialogues frequently between the Startups Taskforce and SAARC CCI Executive Committee and request Startups Taskforce members to present the progress of their activities.

Furthermore, he recommended maintaining a directory of all business entities in SAARC region based on the membership details of SAARC CCI which will be instrumental in networking for startups to grow within the region by identifying potential joint ventures and venture capitals among the business community in the region.



SAARC CCI Startup Taskforce with hon'ble SAARC CCI EC members in Kathmandu, Nepal

SAARC CCI STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKSHOP

May 4, 2019 in Kathmandu, Nepal

SAARC CCI Strategic Planning Workshop was held on May 4, 2019, in Yak and Yeti Hotel, Kathmandu, Nepal, Chaired by President of SAARC CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe.

The Strategic Planning Workshop was attended by the Senior Vice President SAARC CCI, Mr. Iftikhar Ali Malik, Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal), Dr. Rohitha Silva, Vice President SAARC CCI (Sri Lanka), SAARC CCI Executive Committee Members and General Assembly Members, Secretary General SAARC CCI, Ms. Hina Saeed and Deputy Secretary General SAARC CCI Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt and representatives from SAARC CCI's primary members.

The objectives of the workshop were to update the participants about the context in which the SAARC CCI is working, the challenges and opportunities it faces and to discuss a way forward.

While addressing the participants at the strategic planning workshop, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI stated that business can and should be means to help resolve some of the socio-economic challenges today the SAARC faces as a region and realize the economic potential of the region to achieve prosperity. Mr. President reinforced that SAARC CCI needs to become an effective platform for facilitating business and trade across the region. He stated that the SAARC CCI must aspire to become one of the strongest chambers of commerce in the world by 2030.

Group activities were conducted to develop a set of ideas and recommendations that would be further discussed and improved in the next SAARC CCI Executive Committee Meeting.



Group picture of participants of SAARC CCI Strategic Planning Workshop with President, SAARC CCI Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe in Kathmandu, Nepal

PRESIDENT SAARC CCI, CALLED ON HONOURABLE MR. FAYYAZ ISMAIL, MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, GOVERNMENT OF MALDIVES

May 22, 2019, Male, Maldives

Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI and Secretary General SAARC CCI, Ms. Hina Saeed called on Mr. Fayyaz Ismail, Hon'ble Minister of Economic Development, Government of Maldives. President SAARC

CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe discussed the way forward for SAARC CCI and Maldives business community to work closely for the prosperity of the people of Maldives.



PRESIDENT SAARC CCI, MET MR. ISMAIL NOORADEEN, PRESIDENT MNCCI AND MR. ISMAIL ASIF, FORMER PRESIDENT SAARC CCI

May 22, 2019, Male, Maldives

Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI called on Mr. Ismail Nooradeen, President of Maldives National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) to discuss the pertinent areas for cooperation between Maldives and

SAARC member countries. Former President SAARC CCI, Mr. Ismail Asif and Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General SAARC CCI were also present during the meeting.



14TH CHINA SOUTH ASIA BUSINESS FORUM (CSABF)

June 11-13, 2019, Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) in partnership with the Yunnan Sub Council of China Council for Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), supported by The Peoples Government of Yunnan, China, organized 14th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF), held from 12th to 13th June 2019, in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China.

The theme of the 14th CSABF was "Promoting Industrialization and Manufacturing Competitiveness" with an aim towards enhancing economic cooperation between China and SAARC member states.

SAARC CCI President, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe led a delegation of leading businessmen from South Asian countries to participate in the 14th China South Asia



Hon'ble Mr. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha, Deputy Minister of Development Strategies and International Trade, The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka addressing the 14th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF).

Sri Lanka being the theme country of the forum, Hon'ble Mr. Nalin Bandara Jayamaha, the Deputy Minister of Development Strategies and International Trade of the

Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, addressed the inaugural session of the forum. In his remarks, Hon'ble Minister emphasized that the cooperation between China and Sri Lanka under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative has not only brought tangible benefits to the two nations, but also generated new opportunities for regional development.

Hon'ble Minister further mentioned that the government of Sri Lanka expected to bring more investments to Sri Lanka, to make Colombo Port City a commercial center in South Asia. The Colombo Port City project had completed a key stage of its construction for the reclamation of land in the earliest possible time. Hon'ble Minister added that Sri Lanka benefitted from China's tourism market and last year, more than 260,000 Chinese tourist had visited Sri Lanka, and the country would expect to attract more tourists from China in coming years.

At the inaugural session of the 14th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF), Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI and President Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL), in his keynote address stated that "Tremendous potential between two of the world's oldest civilizations needs to be harnessed through meaningful cooperation." President SAARC CCI further emphasized that the rise of China as an economic power and the emergence of South Asia as a center of global attention are significant developments in the arena of international economics and politics.

Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI stated "China is an economic ocean and South Asia has the potential to become a part of the ocean. Hence, successful integration will generate mutual gains and win-win situations for both regions."

President SAARC CCI, Mr. Edirisinghe stated that China South Asia Business Cooperation started back in 2004, and was a great initiative that bridges the gap between China and South Asian business communities. "Industrialization is the best way of developing South Asia with its born capacity of natural resources, large young working-class and excellent geographical location. As we know that China shares its border with almost all South Asian countries, the trade complementarities between China and the South Asian region is high. South Asian region is rich in untapped natural resources and low labor cost, whereas China is strong in finance, technical know-how and industrialization," President SAARC CCI added.

At the conclusion of the opening ceremony of 14th CSABF, leadership from SAARC CCI member Chambers signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with



Address by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI at the inaugural session of 14th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF) in Kunming, China

CCPIT-Yunnan. The objective of the MoU was to build a China South Asia Business Cooperation database and sharing of bilateral trade data and research reports with trade associations in Yunnan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bangladesh, India and Bhutan. The MoU were signed by Ms. Shirley Jayawardana, Senior Vice President on behalf of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCISL), Engineer Daroo Khan Achakzai on behalf of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Mr. Chandī Raj Dhakal, Vice President of SAARC CCI (Nepal) on behalf of the Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FNCCI) and Mr. Rajeev Singh, Director General on behalf of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

The 14th CSABF inaugural session was also addressed by H.E Mr. Hussain Zamir, Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Republic of Maldives, Mr. Zong Guoying, Standing Deputy Governor of Peoples Government of Yunnan Province, Engineer Daroo Khan, President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Mr. Nizam Uddin Rajish, Vice President, Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI), Dr. Rajeev Singh Tyagi, Director General, Indian Chamber of Commerce (CII), Ms. Li Jingjing, Vice President of Sany Heavy Industry Co. Ltd, Mr. Shri Mahesh Chandra Keyal, Vice-President, Federation of Indian Export Organizations and Mr. Chen Zhou, Vice Chairman of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.



Mr. Chen Zhou, Vice Chairman of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, addressing opening ceremony of 14th China South Asia Business Forum (CSABF) on June 12, 2019

Council for the Promotion of International Trade in his address said that CCPIT expects to contribute toward cooperation between China and South Asia. He called for new measures to tap the potential for trade growth, develop innovative trade patterns in e-commerce and

promote international cooperation to allow more South Asian companies to access cost-effective and high-quality Chinese technologies and equipment.



MoU signed between SAARC CCI member Federations/ National Chambers and China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), Yunnan Sub-council on Co-Building China South Asia Business Cooperation Database.

SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMODITY EXPO AND INVESTMENT FAIR 2019

June 12-18, 2019 in Kunming, Yunnan Province, China

The SSEACEF 2019 aimed at promoting stronger cooperation between Yunnan, China South and Southeast Asian countries. Exhibitors from 74 countries, regions and international organizations were featured. A total of 3,348 enterprises from home and abroad attended the SSACEIF.

For the first time in the history of SAARC CCI and China Cooperation, SAARC CCI presented a SAARC Pavilion comprising of 104 stalls displaying and promoting products from SAARC member states.

The opening ceremony of SSACEIF was addressed by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI, Hon'ble Mr. Ruan Chengfa, Governor of Yunnan, Ms. Shirley Jayawardena, Senior Vice President, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCI) and Executive Committee member SAARC CCI. President SAARC CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, added that SSACEIF started in 2017 and is a great initiative that helps in bridging the gap between China and South Asian business people. He stated, "Today, once again the participation from South Asian countries is a sign of consistency and a long-term mutually beneficial relationship between China and the South Asian countries." "Through these forums, China and South Asian private sector has recognized the great potential and shared benefits which are only realized through true partnerships and win-win arrangements such as the China South Asia Business Forum, China South Asia Cooperation Forum and trade-related initiatives such as South and South East Asia Commodity Expo and Investment Fair", Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, added.

Ms. Shirley Jayawardena, Senior Vice President, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sri Lanka (FCCI) and Executive Committee member SAARC CCI, during her address shared that the region of South Asia will become more dominant in the coming years. She further added that economic trade between China and Sri Lanka has upheld an upward momentum in recent years; therefore, developed nations should encourage less developed countries for shared prosperity.



Address by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI and Chair of 14th CSABF at the opening ceremony of South and Southeast Asia Commodity Expo & Investment Fair (SSACEIF) on June 12, 2019 in Kunming, China.



Hon'ble Mr. Ruan Chengfa, Governor of Yunnan welcoming Excellencies and distinguished guests at the opening ceremony of South and Southeast Asia Commodity Expo and Investment Forum

2ND CHINA SOUTH ASIA BUSINESS COOPERATION FORUM

June 10, 2019 in Yuxi, Yunnan Province, China

Prior to 14th CSABF, SAARC CCI delegation participated in the 2nd China South Asia Cooperation Forum which was held in Yuxi, Yunnan Province, China. The forum aimed at strengthening cooperation between China and South Asian Countries across various industries.

His Excellency Mr. Ruan Chengfa, Governor of Yunnan Province, China graced the forum with his presence.

The forum was also addressed by President SAARC CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, Mr. Md. Tauhedul Islam, Consul General of People's Republic of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Ajmal Ahmadi, Acting Minister of Industry and Commerce, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and Mr. Daroo Khan Achakzai, President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI).



A pictorial view of participants attending the 2nd China-South Asia Cooperation Forum (CSACF) held in Yuxi City, southwest China's Yunnan Province, June 10, 2019.



SAARC CCI delegation led by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI including Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President (Nepal), Dr. Rohitha Silva, Vice President (Sri Lanka), Mr. Ruwan De Silva, General Assembly member (Sri Lanka), Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General SAARC CCI meet Mr. Liu Guangxi, Chairman of CCPIT, Yunnan Sub-council.

THE CCPIT LEGAL TEAM AND SAARC CCI DELEGATION MEETING

June 13, 2019, in Kunming, China

The CCPIT Legal team led by Mr. Liu Chao held a meeting with SAARC CCI delegation led by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI in the presence of Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal), Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General SAARC CCI, and Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General SAARC CCI, on June 13, 2019, in Kunming, China.

Mr. Liu Chao invited SAARC CCI to become the founding member of International Commercial Dispute Prevention and Settlement Organization (ICDPASO). SAARC CCI President, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, and Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal), discussed the formation and structure of ICDPASO in detail.



CCPIT Legal team led by Mr. Liu Chao meeting with SAARC CCI delegation led by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President, SAARC CCI along with Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal, Vice President SAARC CCI (Nepal), Ms. Hina Saeed, Secretary General SAARC CCI and Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Butt, Deputy Secretary General SAARC CCI, on June 13, 2019, in Kunming, China.

SAARC CCI PRESIDENT LED DELEGATION MEETS CCPIT, SICHUAN SUB COUNCIL

June 14, 2019, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

SAARC CCI delegation led by Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President of SAARC CCI visited Sichuan province and held meetings with the leadership of Sichuan Sub Council of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade.

During the meeting with Mr. Li Gang, President CCPIT Sichuan Council Chengdu, China, President SAARC CCI reinforced the commitment of SAARC CCI to enhance Sichuan - South Asia business cooperation, by mobilizing

a delegation from SAARC member countries to participate in forthcoming South and Southeast Asia Business Leaders' Summit in Chengdu, China from September 17-20, 2019. Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, President SAARC CCI,

reinforced the importance of B2B meetings between Chengdu businessmen and SAARC member countries at this platform.



MR. RUWAN EDIRISINGHE, PRESIDENT OF SAARC CCI LED DELEGATION TO MEET CAFTEC

June 14, 2019, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China

SAARC CCI delegation led by President SAARC CCI, Mr. Ruwan Edirisinghe, held a meeting with Mr. Chen Xiao, Secretary General of CAFTEC in Chengdu, China, aimed at meaningful cooperation between SAARC CCI and CAFTEC.

In the light of the discussion, it was decided that SAARC CCI would lead a business delegation from each SAARC member country to participate in Chengdu Dialogue, scheduled in September 2019.



SAARC CCI'S BOOT CAMP FOR STARTUPS

June 27, 2019, Dhaka, Bangladesh



Welcome address by Mr. Mahbubul Alam, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh)

The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) organized a three-day boot camp in Dhaka, Bangladesh from June 27-29, 2019. The boot camp was organized in partnership with Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom (FNF) and in collaboration with Federation of Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Speed Trust Bangladesh.

The Boot camp was attended by 41 startups from Bangladesh and four Leading startups mentors from India. The objective of the three-day boot camp was to develop a mechanism to accelerate cross-border learning, exposure, mentoring and acceleration of the startups across the region, especially in the member countries with no ecosystems or least developed startup ecosystems like Afghanistan,

Bhutan, Maldives and Nepal. While speaking on the occasion Mr. Mahbubul Alam, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) said "By contributing in the form of job creation for the next generation of the young labour force through their innovative entrepreneurial skills startups are contributing to the economic growth of economies in the South Asia region. Startups are the driving force behind structural changes in South Asian economies." Ms. Mashraka Binta Mosharraf, an emerging entrepreneur from Dhaka said "I came to this boot camp nervous with no expectations of making friends but I came back confident, inspired, with new ideas and a vision. Also, I have made friends who are so supportive and empowering. It was one of the best experiences of my life." "In the United States, working in an MNC (Multinational Corporation) is the last option for a youngster and working in a Startup is the

first option," said Mr. Khadem Mahmud Yusuf, Managing Director & CEO, Bangladesh Petrochemical Company Ltd. SAARC CCI is organizing interactive cross border boot camps for capacity development of Young entrepreneurs in all the SAARC member states and this Boot camp was second in the series.



Group picture of participants & mentors with Mr. Mahbubul Alam, Vice President SAARC CCI (Bangladesh) at the SAARC CCI Boot Camp for Startups on June 27-29, 2019, in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

PRIVILEGES & BENEFITS OF SAARC CCI MEMBERSHIP

Access to Pertinent Trade Data and Information

Being a member of SAARC CCI, you will be updated with reliable and pertinent information on South Asian economies and dynamics of trade and investment. SAARC CCI ensures to keep its members informed on all seminars, programs, B2B meetings and Presidential delegations via online and offline platforms including emails, telephone calls, post and fax.

Visibility and Promoting your Brand

With a SAARC CCI membership, you can reach your potential audience through exclusive advertising and business-to-business publicity. As a member, you will be listed on the website directory and can avail sponsorship opportunities to leverage your business needs. SAARC CCI membership aims to satisfy the marketing needs of its members. To fulfill your marketing needs, the SAARC CCI magazines and our Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter serve as an excellent platform to showcase your brand to a broad target audience.

Networking within SAARC and Beyond

SAARC CCI membership provides unique opportunities to network and expand your reach via participating in Presidential Delegations, Conferences, Seminars, Business to Business (B2B) meetings, Trade Fairs, Investment Forums and many such initiatives.

Business Opportunities

The SAARC CCI's mission is to create business linkages and generate more business activity for the business community of SAARC region. As a SAARC CCI member, you can leverage the SAARC CCI network and create strategic business linkages to grow your business. Furthermore, the SAARC CCI platform promotes opportunities to identify new avenues of economic cooperation and grow existing businesses.

Visa Facilitation

SAARC CCI is committed towards providing value added services to its members while addressing their business needs. One of the primary goals of SAARC CCI is to provide SAARC CCI members with Visa Recommendation services which ensure effective visa facilitation. This service encompasses visa facilitation including visa application process and follow-up.

Women Empowering South Asia

SAARC CCI provides a unique platform to enable the women entrepreneurs of South Asian region to network amongst themselves and contribute to enhancing trade and investments across the region. SAARC region women entrepreneurs are welcome to join SAARC CCI as prestigious Life Members and are facilitated with rewarding incentives.

An Encouraging Platform for Young Entrepreneurs

SAARC CCI engages and encourages young entrepreneurs to become a member of SAARC Young Entrepreneurs Council (SYEF). SYEF is an organized platform for young business professionals to network and engage them with young entrepreneurs of South Asia, in order to contribute to regional cooperation in a dynamic manner.

SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers (SVES)

SAARC CCI provides an exclusive service of providing SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers (SVES) to its members subject to applicable rules. The SAARC Visa Exemption Stickers facilitate the members to travel in the region without the need to apply for bilateral visas (subject to policy governing SVES).

Promoting Policy Advocacy

SAARC CCI influences policy recommendations and development by identifying and addressing the core issues, challenges, opportunities and priorities that drives growth and prosperity in the region. Representing a broad range of business community of South Asia, SAARC CCI is uniquely positioned to advocate the interest of the business community and communicate with governments to influence policies. SAARC CCI initiatives include formulating evidence-based policy, building strategic relations with partners and taking initiatives that enable the government and private sector to effectively work together.



INSPIRING INTERVIEW WITH

MS. PUSHPA CHHETRI

LEADING WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR OF BHUTAN

Ms. Pushpa Chhetri established Bhutan Media and Communications Institute (BMCI) in 2011 to contribute towards a professional development of media and communications industry in Bhutan.

She measures success in terms of social service and impact rather than financial benefits. Ms. Chhetri shares her journey and experiences with SAARC CCI editorial team.

1. Please Share A Brief On Your Business.

In Bhutan, media has emerged as a powerful instrument of social, political and economic change and has substantially evolved in recent years. Yet, the majority of media employees in Bhutan today do not receive adequate training.

Bhutan Media and Communications Institute (BMCI) provides a wide range of effective trainings suited for both experienced professionals who wish to grow their skills and inexperienced individuals who plan on working in media. We play a crucial role in training competent and independent result-oriented professionals in the fields of Public Relations (PR) and Communication. Every program and activity is carefully planned striving to solve a problem of a particular group, industry or society.

BMCI partners with a large number of international organizations and individuals who believe in supporting the development of professional media and other organizations. Thus, BMCI has been able to provide high-quality training at locally affordable fees.

2. Please share any interesting experience as an active member in regional dynamics.

I had the privilege of being a part of the first SAARC Women Association's Meeting in Thimphu a couple of years ago. It was an eye opener to a number of issues related to women in Business in our region.

3. Tell us about your past endeavors, what accomplishments are you most proud of?

I established Bhutan Media and Communications Institute, the first private institute of its kind in Bhutan in 2011 along with my younger brother. Ever since, we have conducted over 100 short-term trainings for media, CSOs, private sector, corporate and government officials. Since 2011, engaged in several research and Communication for Development projects for both local and regional organisations, initiated youth activities and introduced ICDL (international computer skills certification) as a local partner in Bhutan.

I was announced as the best Loden Entrepreneur in 2016, received a pioneering award from ICDL Asia. Singapore in 2016, received Bhutan Woman leader Award in 2018. I now serve as a trustee on Loden Foundation's Board and Executive member of SCWEC (Bhutan chapter), Executive Member on the board of Bhutan ICT and Training Association of Bhutan.

The most important accomplishment is being able to sustain as a social entrepreneur while entrepreneurship itself is a new concept in Bhutan.

4. What has been the greatest challenge in your career and how did you overcome it?

The biggest challenge for me has been to start a long-term journalism course for which I left my previous job. Our team worked hard on other short-term trainings and consultancy services to sustain the initiative. Finally, we are starting a Diploma this year or early next year.

5. What does success mean to you?

Success to me is making a meaningful contribution for a positive change in the society.

6. What are the 3 keys characteristics of a successful entrepreneur?

In my view a successful entrepreneur must possess the following 3 characteristics:

1) Clarity 2) Purpose driven 3) Perseverance

7. What piece of advice would you give to women who want to become entrepreneurs?

As a Social entrepreneur myself, I would advise aspiring women entrepreneurs to follow their passion, be ready to work hard and think of business as a service and be purpose/impact driven rather than being commercially driven.

8. What is your vision for SCWEC and SAARC CCI?

I would like to see SCWEC and SAARC CCI to play a very active role in engaging young and aspiring women entrepreneurs in the region.

9. How important is the SAARC platform for women entrepreneurs to grow and prosper?

It is very important. It can leverage on the experiences and resources in the region to address specific country's problems.

10. How has SCWEC facilitated women entrepreneurs of South Asia?

I believe SCWEC has played a big role in facilitating networking and business linkages among the women in the region through various events. They have also been involved in providing skills to the women.

11. What is your key message for the women of SAARC region?

I believe women have a great potential to nurture the future of our region. Let's all come together to make a safe, peaceful, inclusive and a strong SAARC region.

ACCELERATING THE GROWTH OF MSMEs IN SOUTH ASIA WITH MODERN TECHNOLOGY



SAARC CCI Meeting with Asia Pacific Exchange and Cooperation Foundation

It is noteworthy that Dr. Xiao Wunan, Executive Vice Chairman, Asia Pacific Exchange and Cooperation Foundation (APECF), Beijing, China, recently visited Sri Lanka at an invitation of the Sri Lankan Government. Subsequent to the meetings with the government of Sri Lanka, SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI) had an important meeting with the APECF focusing on the development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in South Asian region and in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Nawaz Rajabdeen, Ambassador to World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises (WUSME), Vice President of Confederation of SAARC Industries (CSI), Executive Committee Member of SAARC CCI and Past President, Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry Sri Lanka (FCCISL), and Mr. Macky Hashim, Past President and Executive Committee Member, SAARC CCI and Past

President of FCCISL called on Dr. Xiao Wunan, Executive Vice Chairman of APECF on July 30, 2019 at Shangri-La, Colombo, Sri Lanka. Ms. Hui Dias Bandaranayake, Coordinator of Asia Pacific Trade Agreement Chamber of Commerce and Industry (APTA CCI), and Ms. Nilu Rajapaksha, Coordinator of Confederation of Micro, Small and Medium Industries (COSMI) were also present at the meeting.

The discussion had been extremely productive in terms of establishing an in-depth cooperation between South Asia, Asia Pacific and Southeast Asia accelerating the growth of MSMEs which are the backbone and engines of socioeconomic development. According to research, in emerging economies, especially in the developing world, the majority of business entities are MSMEs which comprise over 90 percent of the total stock of enterprises. A recent study commissioned by the International Finance

Corporation (IFC) states that in developing economies microenterprises are approximately 65 – 75 percent of total enterprises, small enterprises are about 20 percent, and medium enterprises are around 5 – 10 percent whereas large enterprises and multinationals comprise merely 1 percent in most of the economies. Nevertheless, the MSMEs in the developing world, especially in South Asia, face numerous difficulties and challenges in terms of maintaining their businesses and scaling up to the next levels. They mainly lack funding opportunities and modern technologies. Hence, creating a business environment, which gives them easy access to high technological advancements and funding opportunities.

Therefore, Dr. Xiao Wunan mentioned that China has significantly been investing in rapid technological advancements and thereby APECF can facilitate the proliferation of modern technology, especially digital advancements, amongst South Asian and Sri Lankan MSMEs.

Furthermore, he mentioned that APECF can assist in terms of providing modern manufacturing technologies and other relevant technical expertise to MSMEs in the region. He emphasized that supply of modern machinery and equipment for the industrial sector in South Asia is important, especially modern machinery such as drones, and China being the largest producer of drones, approximately 70 percent of the global market, can assist in providing modern machinery to the MSME sector in South Asia and Sri Lanka. He added that the MSME entrepreneurs can also be given extensive training opportunities for developing their entrepreneurial skills and know-how in modern technology.

Dr. Xiao Wunan explained that APECF is an international organization founded by diplomats, corporate and public leaders, eminent scholars and academics, social activists, prominent enterprises, and research institutes in Asia-Pacific. Therefore, he added that APECF can assist in research and development in terms of improving the MSME sector in South Asia and in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Nawaz Rajabdeen and Mr. Macky Hashim emphasised that South Asia is the most densely populated geographical region in the world having approximately 1.8 billion people which account for about 25 percent of the world's population.

They added that South Asia is abundant with a large educated labour force and numerous untapped natural resources making the region a paramount place for sustainable investments and economic ventures. Hence, they advocated that it is momentous for the South Asian business sector to enhance joint ventures with China and to establish bilateral and multilateral cooperation and agreements with China and other countries in Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asia.

It is worth noting that they further discussed on establishing a Confederation of MSMEs in South Asia and Asia-Pacific which will be significant in accelerating the sustainable socioeconomic development in the regions. They emphasised that SAARC CCI, APECF and other relevant regional economic entities should play a pivotal role in achieving the sustainable development goals with a special focus on the MSME sector for the betterment of people in South Asia, Asia-Pacific and Southeast Asia.



Dr. Xiao Wunan (Executive Vice Chairman, APECF), Mr. Nawaz Rajabdeen (Ambassador to WUSME, Vice President of CSI, EC Member SAARC CCI and Past President FCCISL), Mr. Macky Hashim (Past President and EC Member SAARC CCI, Past President of FCCISL), Ms. Hui Dias Bandaranayake (Coordinator of APTA CCI) and Ms. Nilu Rajapaksha (Coordinator of COSMI) at the Meeting held on July 30, 2019 in Shangri-La, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

THE STARTUP JOURNEY



Interview with

Mr. Ashraful Islam,

Director, Oggro Dairy Ltd.

1. Would you please share a brief on your startup initiative?

Our startup is to supply unadulterated, fresh and quality dairy products and milk to every doorstep in Dhaka. In fact, the startup was founded with a main focus on uncompromising quality of dairy products and building a network of smallholder model farmers that would be instrumental in a significant growth of the dairy sector, thereby improving health and living standards of the community.

2. How did you build up an entrepreneurial spirit at such a young age?

My professional experience goes back to my undergraduate life. I had been professionally engaged for about 6 years while studying for my undergraduate programme. In fact, I had identified some untouched needs and gaps in the industry that reflected viable potentials. Moreover, my entrepreneurship has been exciting, tiresome and more rewarding.

3. What were the core challenges you faced at the early stage of your startup?

I faced numerous challenges at the outset of my startup. In fact, the main challenges had been the lack of accurate and up to date information on the industry to develop a suitable business model. There were no startup guidelines in terms of administrative, legal, compliance, financial, and also the lack of access to purchase and procure. However, I had always strived to overcome those challenges and thereby to improve the business.

4. Which business icon do you look up to?

Well, I have many business icons in my mind. For instance, Sheikh Nasir Uddin, Chairman AKIJ group, has had an incredible journey and great business acumen. Anis Ahmed, MGH group, has been incredibly hardworking and eccentric. Iqbal and Kamal Quader, founder of Bkash, have also been great business icons.

5. What are the three keys characteristics for a successful startup?

In my opinion, the major elements of a successful startup are as follows:

- Solid business framework or a model and an innovative way of implementation
- Proper policy and administrative framework
- Appropriate team and competent individuals to handle the key areas of the business.

6. What elements and environment are conducive to growing startups?

A conducive environment for the development of startups is of utmost important. In general, we can consider the following elements as key components of a conducive environment in businesses and startup organizations:

- Right team with clear designations, roles and responsibilities
- Constant and relentless efforts in improving
- Relentless targeted marketing
- Operation streamlining
- Cash flow management and accountability
- Monitoring, controlling and adapting

7. What advice would you give to the beginners thinking about starting a business?

I would like to advise the beginners to focus on the following aspects when starting a business.

- Properly and extensively study potential markets, competitiveness, market size, product offering,

distribution channel and networks.

- Build appropriate financial and business models covering all aspects of the business as comprehensively as possible.
- Start piloting, prototyping or selling. No mentor or a teacher is better than your own experience.

8. What are your short and long-term goals?

In the short run, I expect to increase sales and capacity by 100 percent and to target high margin (premium) markets for my business. In the long run, the goals would be to diversify products and to build a wider and broader distribution network.

9. What is the role of youth in a nation building?

In fact, young people bring more energy to generate new ideas and action on socioeconomic development. Young people have huge potentials to expand their skills and knowledge base in innovative sectors as opposed to the traditional sectors. They also can conduct more open-minded research and can focus on different development avenues.

10. How important is the SAARC platform for South Asia Startups?

I believe that the SAARC is a great platform that connects various minds, ideas and resources to collectively develop the region and achieve prosperity. SAARC is in fact a regional support to access global markets. Moreover, regional cooperation builds a cohesive business environment.

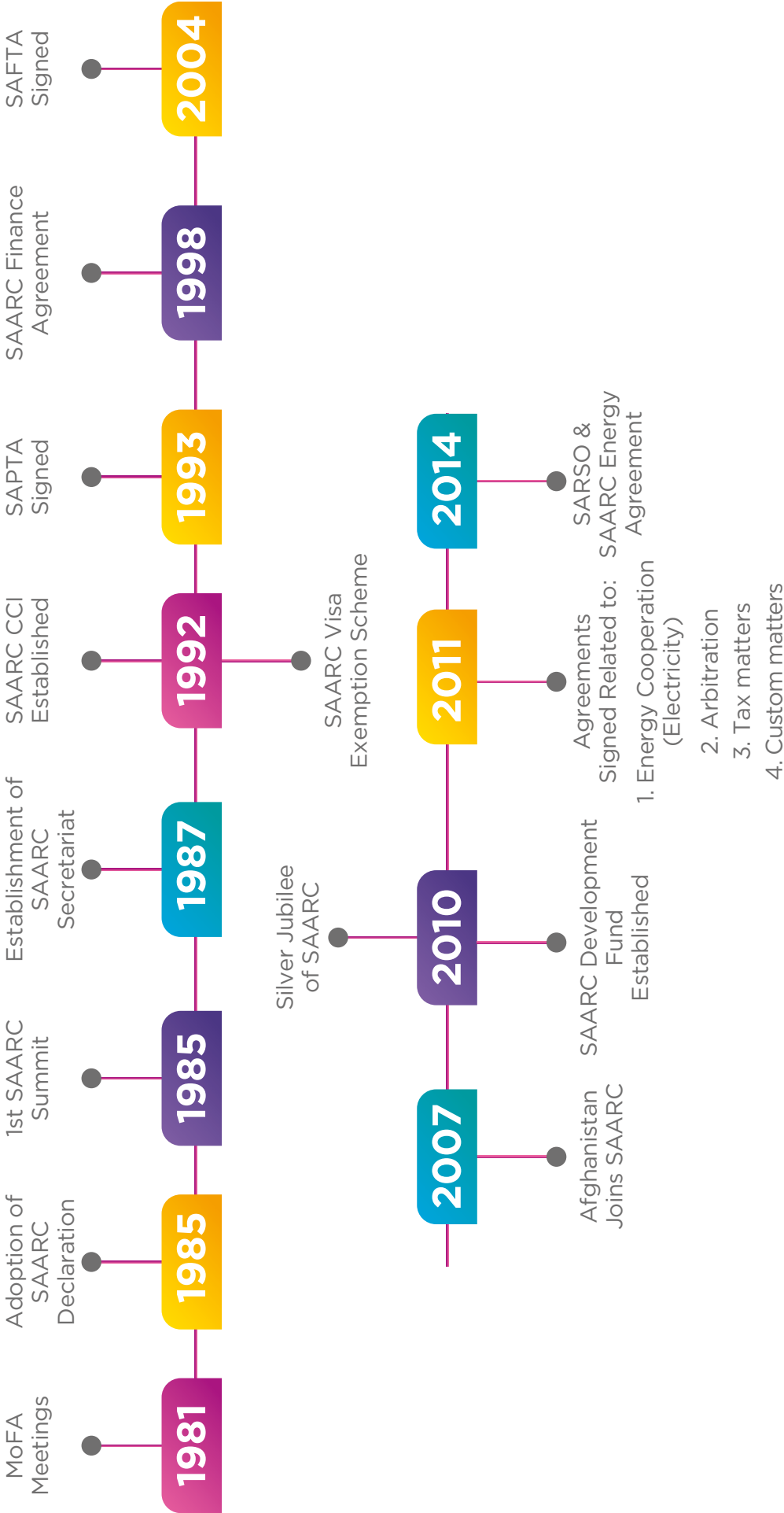
11. How has SAARC CCI facilitated your startup?

It was my first time attending SAARC CCI startup boot camp which had been a great opportunity where I gained new knowledge, identification and crystallization of our business problems and how to tackle them, and networking with other startups and mentors in the region. I would like to thank SAARC CCI for organizing a successful bootcamp for the development of startups in the region.

12. What is your key message for the youth of SAARC region?

I would like to urge young people to continuously strive and innovate, continuously research and identify problems that need solutions, to collaborate and connect with peers in the region, and importantly to share ideas and build networks.

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Milestones



Tibet

— snow —

Daily use of Tibet Snow:

- Makes face and hands velvety, soft & smooth.
- Absorbs excessive oil and makes skin fresh & radiant.
- Protects skin from dust pollution.
- Prevents skin from premature ageing.



Tibet Snow - Beauty Cream of The East

Kohinoor Chemical Co. (Pvt) Ltd.
Karachi - Pakistan



STARTUP UNFOLD

MR. ABU SAYED AL SAGOR

a young startup shares his story with SAARC CCI editorial team

1. Please share a brief on your startup initiative?

We founded the BD Assistant Limited with noble attitudes and worthy objectives. We call it a hospital for machines, where we provide repairing and maintenance services for machineries ranging from home appliances to vehicles through an online platform. It is similar to urban clap of India.

2. How did you build up an entrepreneurial spirit at such a young age?

Before initiating the startup, I have worked for different organizations as a social worker. One of them was BRAC. As I was a student of statistical background, I extensively researched on the machinery sector and started the venture.

3. What were the core challenges you faced at the early stage of your startup?

I have always been a very motivated person. I had been a university student two years ago when I started the venture and I did not have business knowledge. Then I started joining different workshops, took part at

competitions where I won a few awards, and gradually started my business.

4. Which business icon do you look up to?

I do follow Warren Buffett. I love his strategies and leadership skills in business.

5. What are the 3 keys characteristics for a successful startup?

I believe that for a startup to become successful, these key features are important:

- Passionate team
- Customer centric marketing strategy
- Good control on financial management

6. What elements and environments are conducive to growing startups?

Having an affordable digital and internet-based environment is significant for the growth of startups. The government policies and legal structure should facilitate the development of startups and those policies and legal frameworks should not be complicated to follow.

PHILIPS
AVENT

NO.1 BRAND
RECOMMENDED BY
MOMS
WORLDWIDE



www.philipsaventpakistan.com

Above all, people should understand the failures of businesses in society and such entrepreneurs should be encouraged to overcome those failures and to be successful for the betterment of society.

7. What advice would you give to the beginners thinking about starting a business?

Find your passion. Network with compatible people. Start selling and learn from feedbacks and strive for improvements.

8. What are your short and long term goals?

In the short term, I expect to create a habitat for customer services through online platform by using apps thereby expanding the startup strongly and rapidly. In the long term, I have a plan to establish one single platform for all machines repairing solutions as a “hospital” for machinery.

9. What is the role of youth in a nation building?

They have the energy to take the lead, whether they fail or succeed, that doesn't matter. They have the potential for innovation that can create a bigger change.

10. How important is the SAARC platform for South Asia startups?

SAARC should play a big role in developing startup ecosystems in south Asia. The regional cooperation is the key to open cross-border business partnerships between startups in member countries.

11. How has SAARC CCI facilitated your startup?

The recently held startup bootcamp has truly been useful and important for me. It has opened my mind to think globally. The insight gained from the Indian mentors has really been effective as they presented ideas and instructions from different perspectives. The participants would be an effective network of startups for mentoring and sharing good practices with other startups in the region and beyond.

12. What is your key message for the youth of SAARC region?

SAARC opens the door to collaborate with business startups in our neighboring countries. Let's share our knowledge, ideas, experience, and good practices to grow together for a better world.

SAARC TRADE LEADS



LEADING INDUSTRIES OF SAARC COUNTRIES

MALDIVES

Tourism Industry

Tourism is the largest industry in the Maldives, accounting for 30% of GDP and accounts for more than 62% of the Maldives' foreign exchange receipts. Travel & Tourism industry directly supports 45,500 jobs (8.2% of total employment) which is expected to rise by 1.9% to 55,000 jobs (9.4% of total employment) in 2027.

Fisheries Industry

Fishery employs about 11% of the labor force. The fisheries industry, including fish processing, traditionally contributes about 7% of GDP. Fish export earnings were accounted to US\$ 70 million in recent years. Around 40% is exported, largely to Sri Lanka, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, and the European Union.

Copper, Iron & Steel industry

The copper, iron & steel industry is the 3rd largest industry after tourism and fishery industry, accounts only 2% of its total share in exports and of total exported volume of US\$ 2,552,549 in 2017.

NEPAL

Tourism Industry

Nepal's travel and tourism industry contributed NPR 177 billion into the economy and supported more than 452,500 jobs. The tourism industry accounts for 7.5% percent of Nepal's GDP and is forecast to rise 4.3 percent annually to 8.3 percent of the GDP in coming decades.

Woolen Carpet Industry

Woolen carpets are Nepal's largest exports industry, earning the country over US\$ 135 million per year. Carpet has been the unrivalled commodity in export for Nepal which leads the list with a total worth of NRs. 8 billion and contributes to 11.2% of the total revenue generated from exports.

Tea Industry

The tea Industry is a major leading industry of Nepal which constitutes to 3.2% of its total exports. A total of 12.6 million of fermented black tea from Nepal were sold in the world market in the recent years which has helped Nepal earn a total NPR 2.56 billion.

PAKISTAN

Textile and Cotton Industry

The textile industry is the largest and major industry of Pakistan accounting for almost 66% of the exports and about 40% of the employed labor. On the average around 30 to 40 percent of the cotton is consumed locally and the rest is exported in raw or finished form to many countries of the world.

Sugar Industry

It is the 2nd largest industry in Pakistan after textile industry. Sugarcane contribution in agriculture sector is 3.4% and in GDP is 0.7%. It employs around 1 million of total workforce. Pakistan ranks 15th in the world for sugarcane production Sugar acreage in Pakistan are 5th in the world and it is grown on over 1 million hectares.

Cement Industry

It is one of the leading industries in Pakistan and contributes 3.5% to its nations GDP. Pakistan cement exports increased 47% in the recent years and exported US\$ 700 million to the world. Pakistan is ranked 5th largest exporters of cement globally. The cement industry of Pakistan is growing at a rate of 13.84 percent. In 2017-18 Pakistan has exported 4.746 million tons of cement to the world.



SRI LANKA

Tourism Industry

Tourism is one of the main industries in Sri Lanka and has surged to a new limit of over 2.1 million arrivals in 2017. The portion of tourism's contribution to total foreign exchange earnings in 2017 amounted to 15.5 per cent. Employment generated in the tourism sector increased from 320,000, in 2016 to 336,000 in 2016 with a growth rate of 5.1%.

Tea Industry

Tea production is one of the main sources of foreign exchange for Sri Lanka, and accounts for 2% of GDP, contributing over US \$1.66 billion in 2016 to the economy and it employs, directly or indirectly, over 1 million people in Sri Lanka.

Apparel Industry

Sri Lanka's apparel industry is the most significant and dynamic contributor for Sri Lanka's economy and has exported US\$ 4.6 billion worth of goods to the world in the recent years. The industry has enjoyed epic growth levels over the past four decades and is today Sri Lanka's primary foreign exchange earner accounting to 43% of the total exports and 52% of industrial products exports. The apparel industry of Sri Lanka employs about 15% of the country's workforce.





SAARC is to provide a platform to the people of South Asia to make joint efforts to promote harmony, conviction, and understanding among the states. WTO regulations and governmental policies are also trying to improve trade among SAARC nations. The Secretariat of the organization is located in Kathmandu, Nepal and SAARC represents 3% of the world area and 21% of the world population. The meetings of the head of states usually are scheduled to meet on an annual basis and the foreign secretaries meetings are scheduled twice annually. There are 11 areas where SAARC countries cooperate with each other which includes agriculture, education, culture and sports, population and child welfare, health, environment and meteorology, rural development, tourism, science and technology, transport and prevention of drug trafficking and drug abuse. SAARC maintains permanent diplomatic relations with the European Union and United Nations being an observer. SAARC has six Apex Bodies that includes SAARC CCI, SAARCLAW, SAFA, SAF, SAIEVAC and FOSWAL. SAARC conducted 19 SAARC Summit's so far. The activities and the initiatives of

SAARC are monitored by the SAARC Secretariat, and it acts as the communication channel between SAARC and its member states. SAARC is appraised for the increase in the scope in the regional cooperation of SAARC and the rise in the interactions of commerce of the SAARC countries.

MAJOR CONTRIBUTION OF SAARC IN THE PROMOTION OF TRADE:

WTO aims to facilitate free trade among member countries. But the issues of restriction on trade, customer's safety, human privileges, and environmental harms are prominent in developed, developing and least-developed countries. After the failure of the WTO implications, an alternative regional trade agreement (RTA) was established by WTO and then developed and developing countries moved to regional trade agreements or bilateral trade agreements. SAARC was entered into a regional trade agreement in 2004. Before entering in the (RTA), South Asian Preferential Trading Agreement (SAPTA) was formed in

TRADE AMONG SAARC STATES

It gives an idea about the structure of trade among the SAARC economies, which help to annotate that why there is low intra-SAARC trade and how to maximize it.

BRIEF HISTORY OF SAARC:

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is a regional organization in South Asia, it was established on December 08, 1985, with the specific aim of promoting regional economic cooperation among the seven-member states (Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Afghanistan was added on the request of India on November 13, 2005, and became a member of SAARC on April 3, 2007, in 14th SAARC Summit. Moreover, for the very first time, China, Japan, U.S.A., European Union and South Korea attended this summit as observer members. SAARC is modeled on the lines of ASEAN. Pakistan is a sectoral dialogue partner of ASEAN, while India has become a summit level partner as well as being included in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).

1993 and was later changed into South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) in January 6, 2004, on the 12th Summit in Islamabad. Agreements among SAARC were analyzed to elaborate the trade conflicts and measures, like the major agreements SAPTA and SAFTA.

The principles for the governance of SAPTA are the member states shall be benefited equally. SAPTA will gradually be discussed, improved and extended in subsequent stages. The special needs of the least developing member states would be agreed upon in their favor. All products and unprocessed, semi-processed and processed manufactures and goods will be included in SAPTA. For the promotion of the trade, SAPTA is revised into a new agreement SAFTA that puts down the basis for the enhanced area in the world for the purpose of trade in such a region where there is maximum population. All the countries belonging to the SAARC give the confirmation for the acceptance of this trade agreement.

SAFTA facilitates free trade of goods without concerning the legal restrictions. Trade facilitation and other measures, and the progressive agreements shall be required for the adoption in relevant areas. The special needs of the least developed contracting states will be agreed upon in their favor.

There is a great contribution of SAFTA to the economic and social development of the region. Pakistan can gain many benefits from SAFTA. The access to the huge market of SAARC countries for trade purpose is in the favor of Pakistan, as Pakistan can get access to a cheaper and better quality of products from the customer's point of view also. Through enhanced competition, trade liberation permits Pakistan to promote its export sector. Pakistan's economy can boost up by generating profits and revenues through using Pakistan's roads/sea as routes for trade among neighboring countries. Agreements of SAFTA have many benefits like the members can easily negotiate with one another, discuss trade related issues and also play a role in reducing political disputes. After the tax reforms agreed by the member states in SAARC summit, an increase of exports from US\$ 206.7 billion in 2009 to US\$ 354.6 billion in 2012 was observed and the imports too increased from US\$ 330 billion in 2009 to US\$ 602 billion in 2012.

If both India and Pakistan focus on the economic aspects of their ties, the strain between both the countries may be mitigated. The highest Indian exports to Pakistan was during the Government of Gen(R) Musharraf after the year 1998 when was on peak.

Afghanistan is unable to export to the hypermarkets of India and China and also to the whole world through different seaports like Karachi port and Qasim port. Afghan Pakistan transit trade agreement (APTTA) allows Afghanistan to carry exports to India through the Wagah

Border in Pakistan. As mentioned in SAFTA and charter of SAARC that all countries should trade between regional countries. Pakistan, being responsible state of SAARC, formulated procedures for Afghanistan to India via its land route apart from the observations of local business community.

PAKISTAN FACILITATIONS TO TRADE AMONG SAARC AND OTHERS:

The purpose of developing a peaceful relationship among the neighboring states, trading is an important way. Through trade, SAARC member states able to interact with large population of eight countries. It also helps the member states to take the competitive advantages globally over the trade items of other member states.

As there are a lot of obstacles to trade, that creates hindrances in the way to imports and exports across the regional boundaries. Similarly, there are various ways to facilitate the trade across the member states. These facilitations may be provided by the Governmental regulations or by the management of the SAARC. These facilitations help to promote as well as try to remove the obstacles in the way to trade between the SAARC member states. The discussion begins with basic trade agreements that play a very important role in the promotion of trade. These agreements give the detailed regulations for trade like the import and export duties, etc. Replacement of SAPTA into SAFTA improved the trade regulations that better enable the member states to trade their essentials across the boundaries. The recent trade agreement between Pakistan and Afghanistan is a call to promote trade named as APTTA.

CONCLUSIONS:

WTO worked for the enhancement of trade in under developing countries. The SAARC nations must work under the SAARC cooperation SAARC cooperation creating pragmatic successes and mutuality beneficial situations for all member states. However, SAARC is criticized as it has not been able to achieve anything big in the past three decades and there has also been a rise of terrorism in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The time has come to get SAARC out of the era of theoretical cooperation and make it a dynamic and active association for regional cooperation in South Asia.

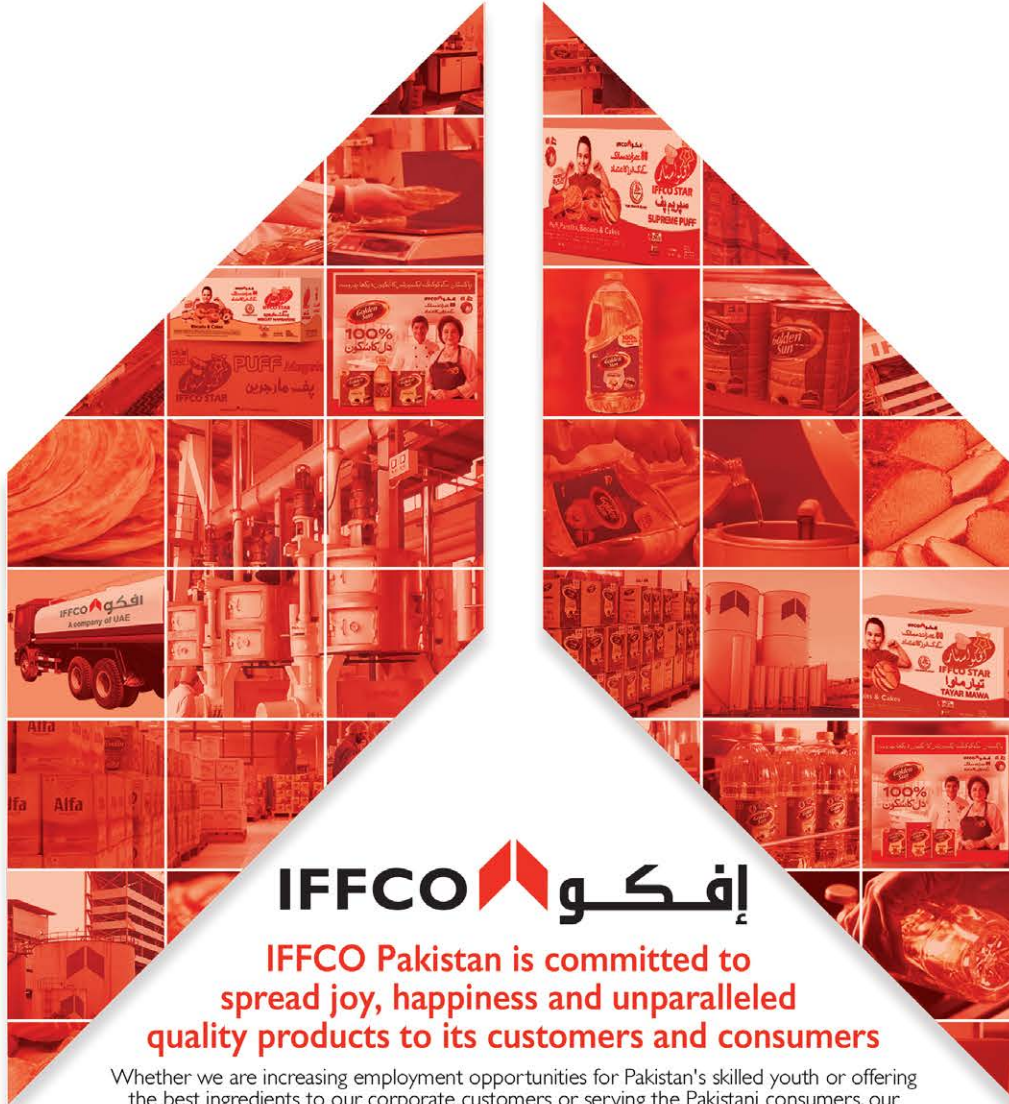
Summing up the article **"TRADE AMONG SAARC STATES"** in a few words, the most important role played in trade among SAARC is by SAFTA. The SAFTA needs to be executed in a "business-like" spirit and only then it can be of some value.

Mahesh Raja Manglani
Treasurer PPIA (Proposed) & Director of PRBC (FPCCI)

Disclaimer: The viewpoints expressed by the author do not necessarily reflect the opinions, viewpoints and editorial policies of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry



IFFCO spreads joy across 5 continents and in more than **80** countries



IFFCO  **إفكو**

**IFFCO Pakistan is committed to
spread joy, happiness and unparalleled
quality products to its customers and consumers**

Whether we are increasing employment opportunities for Pakistan's skilled youth or offering the best ingredients to our corporate customers or serving the Pakistani consumers, our mission remains singular and steadfast to improve quality of life for every Pakistani.



 **IFFCO PAKISTAN (PRIVATE) LTD. AN IFFCO GROUP COMPANY, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES**

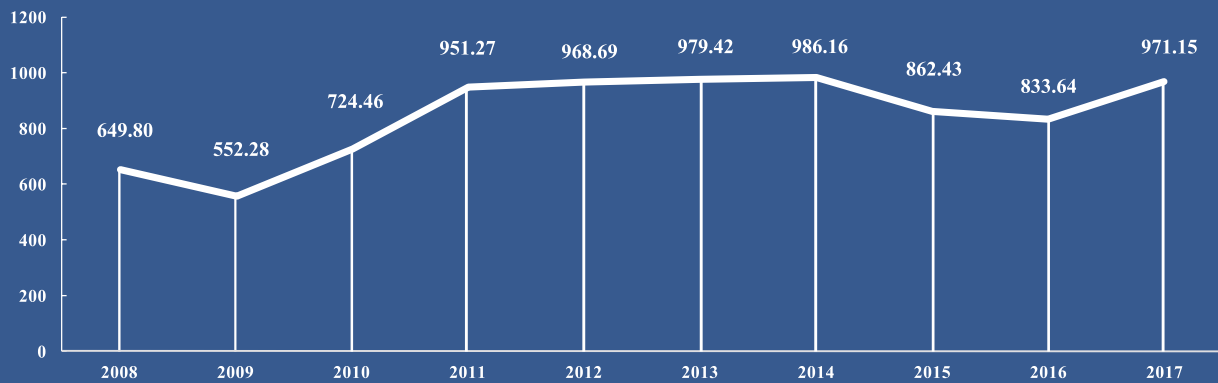
Postal Address: IFFCO Pakistan (Pvt) Ltd., Plot # OZ/1/P-44, Port Qasim Industrial Area, Karachi - Pakistan.





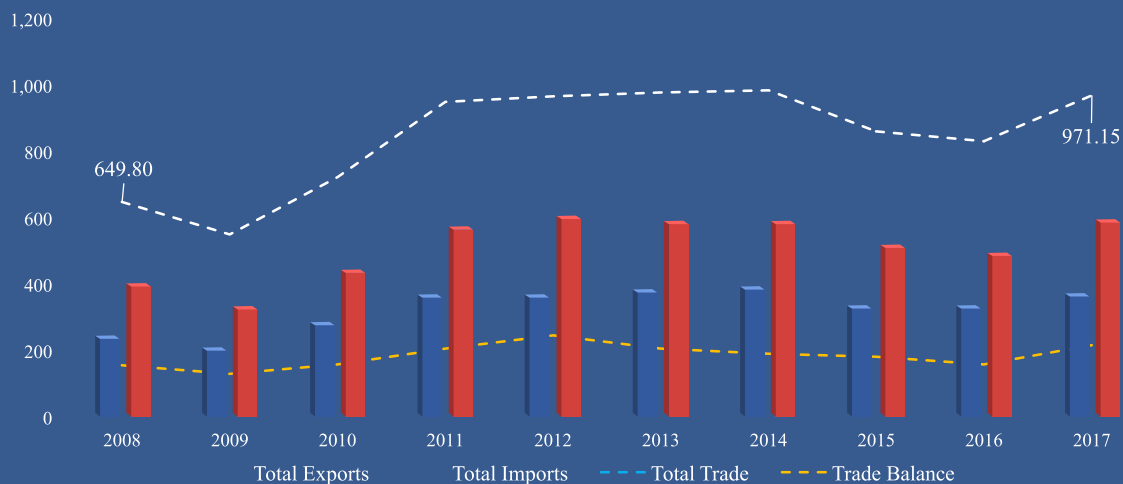
SAARC INSIGHTS

Trends in South Asia Trade (US\$ billion)



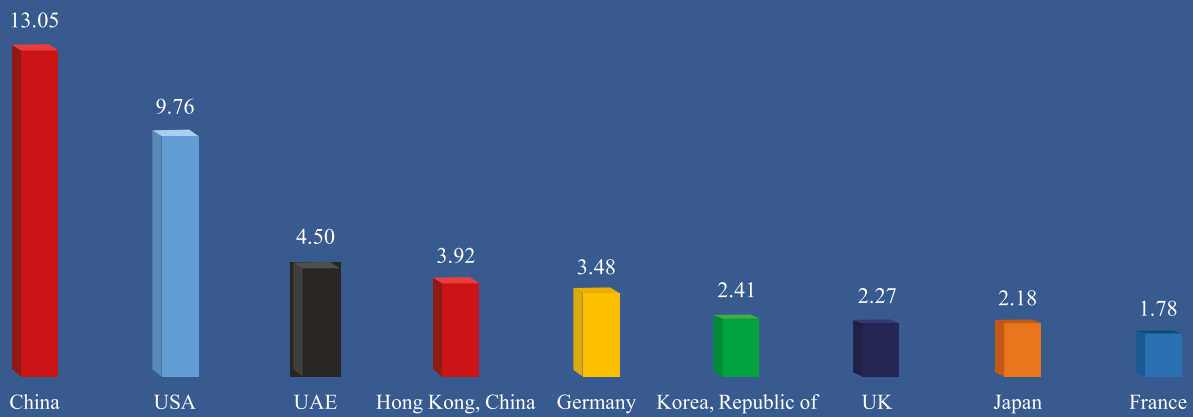
Source: ITC/Trade Map

Trends in South Asian Merchandize Trade (US\$ billion)

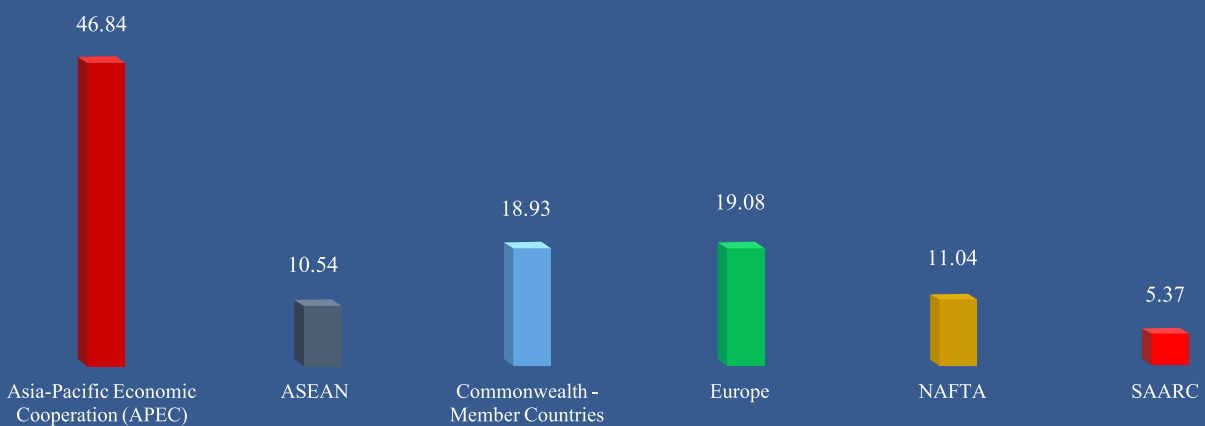


Source: ITC/Trade Map

Percentage of South Asia Trade with Major Trading Economies

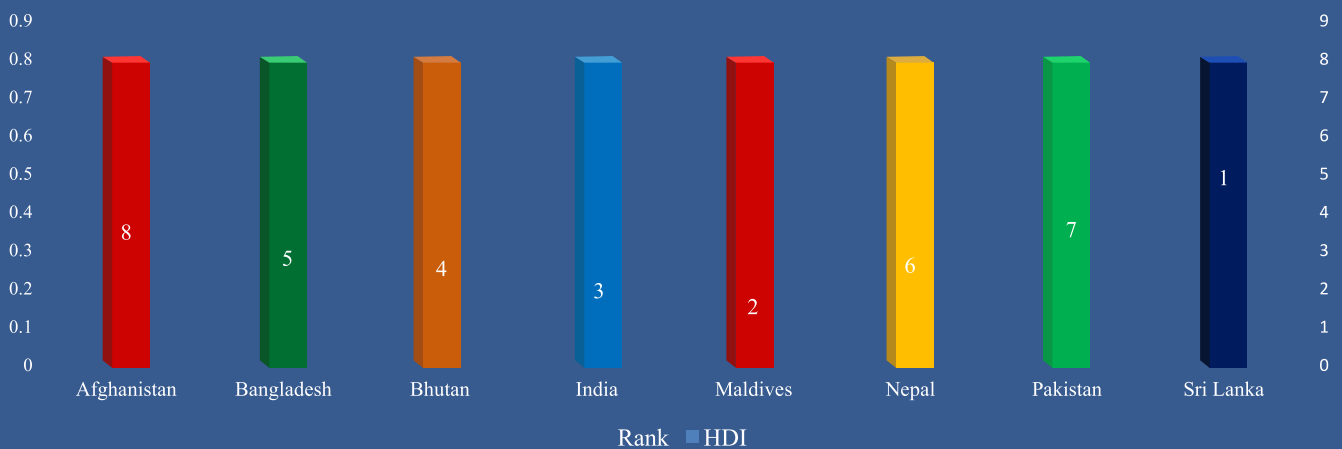


Percentage of South Asia Total Trade with Major Regional Blocs



Source: ITC/Trade Map

Rank of Human Development Index in South Asian Region



Source: hdr.undp.org

DID YOU KNOW? SOUTH ASIA

01

TOWARDS GREATER ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY

South Asia is home to some of the oldest civilizations and offers solace, soothe and recuperation, meditation, hot spring baths, and traditional medicines. The eye-catching destinations of South Asia capture some of the most incredible beauty of a pleasingly assorted region. The diversity of the region itself is the main strength for South Asia to prosper as a tourist hub.

South Asian tea is famous across the world. The Sri Lankan tea industry has played a significant role in terms of its contribution to the national output, foreign exchange earnings and providing employment opportunities. Sri Lanka ranks as the 4th largest tea producer of the world. In the global export front, the country holds the position of 3rd largest exporter of tea.

A REGION FULL OF EXPERIENCES

02

03

EXCEPTIONAL AROMA, EXCEPTIONAL TEA

South Asian region is rich and diverse in natural and cultural resources. The textile and clothing industry of South Asia has grown into a noteworthy part of manufacturing, production, employment, and trade. There is a growing community of like-minded manufacturers, trademarks, and designers who share a genuine passion for ethnic fashion and job creation.

It is widely believed that the stability and growth of the South Asian region are essential for the stability and growth of entire Asia. In particular, improved physical infrastructure connectivity will play a crucial role in achieving socio-economic benefits and to maintain regional growth and stability.

REGION OF SOLACE

04

HISTORY COUNTS





HOPE, HEALTH AND HAPPINESS

Hilton Pharma envisions a world full of hope and good health by providing high quality solutions with evolving patients' needs for a fulfilling life.



Hilton Pharma (Pvt) Ltd.

Progressive Plaza, Beaumont Road, Near P.I.D.C House, Karachi

Tel: (021) 111-123-000 Email: hilton@hiltonpharma.com

Website: www.hiltonpharma.com



ENABLING HEALTHY & HAPPY LIVES AROUND THE SAARC COUNTRIES

With operations in over

14
COUNTRIES

across South Asia, South East Asia, Central Asia and Africa, we offer a vast range of products in major therapeutic categories. Strategic alliances and agreements with global and regional companies have been forged to bring healthcare benefits to the global community to help them lead healthier, happier lives.

CCL Pharmaceuticals

65 Quaid e Azam Industrial Estate Kot Lakhpat Lahore – 54770 Pakistan

Tel: +92 42 111 225 678 | Fax: +92 42 35140981 – 82

Mail.ccl@cclpharma.com | www.cclpharma.com



SAARC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

APEX BUSINESS ORGANIZATION OF SAARC

**SAARC CCI SECRETARIAT
PERMANENT HEADQUARTER**
No. 397, Street 64, I-8/3,
Islamabad-44000, Pakistan.
Tel: +92 51 4860612-3, 8316023
Fax: +92 51 8316024
Email : info@saarcchamber.org
Website: www.saarcchamber.org

SAARC CCI Sub-Office (North)
Plot No. 33-8, Krishnamai CHS Ltd,
Pochkhanwala Rd. Worli, Mumbai 400 030,
Maharashtra, India.
Email: mumbai.office@saarcchamber.org

SAARC CCI Sub-Office (South)
Federation House
No: 17/1, 1st Lane, Gothami Road, Colombo 00800
Email: colombo.office@saarcchamber.org

FOLLOW US ON

 SAARCCCI

 SAARCCCI

 SAARC_CCI