

Pakistani, Indian media urged to help exploit Saarc potential

RECORDER REPORT

LAHORE: Business leaders, economists and academicians have urged Pakistani and Indian media to play an active role for promotion of people-to-people contacts and trade ventures among the SAARC countries.

They were addressing a seminar on "Role of media for stable and prosper South Asia" held in connection with 26th anniversary of SAARC, organised by media and Communication department, University of Management and Technology (UMT) here on Friday.

Former Secretary-General SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Rahmatullah Javed was the chief guest, UMT Rector Prof Dr Hassan Sohaib Murad presided over the seminar while

Chairman Dept of Media and Communication Prof Dr Mujahid Mansoori and well-known political scholar of Canada and Paksitan Prof Mian Muhammad Asif and a large number of media students were present in the seminar.

Former Secretary-General SAARC CCI Rahmatullah Javed briefed the students about the SAARC history, objectives and its functioning. He said ties between India and Pakistan based on mutual trust are crucial to utilise maximum potential of the SAARC member states for the collective well-being of the people of South Asian region. "Unfortunately, the trust deficit increases at once even after a firework blast in India or Pakistan."

He said if Germany, France and other countries could come closer with their exemplary ties in the form of European Union even fighting the Second World War then why shouldn't Pakistan and India bridge their differences that lived with each other for 800 years before creation of Pakistan. UMT Rector Dr Hassan Sohaib Murad said that Pakistan and India need to learn lessons from other regional blocks and associations like European Union, NAFTA, ASEAN, GCC (Gulf Cooperative Council) and ECO (Economic Cooperation Organisation), etc.

He said Pakistan must cash its geopolitical position by working as an active member of all regional and international level organisations and

also by getting status of an observer in other regional associations in order to get maximum advantages out of the upcoming developments. He urged the media students to think out of the box and besides becoming reporters of the events they should try to become creator of events.

Prof Dr Mujahid Mansoori said that unfortunately SAARC has not been much successful so far; however, it has very favourable environment to promote regional stability and transform it into the prosperity of the member states. "Our needs are common and we have tremendous potential and capacity to meet each other's needs but the soar relations between Pakistan and India are a great hurdle in the promo-

tion of trade and commerce."

Dr Mansoori said it is an era of internationalism and media is not merely meant for propaganda it is also playing its new role as peace-maker.

Political scholar Prof Dr Mian Muhammad Asif while presenting a comparative study of SAARC and European Union said that European nations have set an example by giving less importance to their sovereignty and borders than to improvement of living standards of their people. He said that Pakistan and India must realise problems of their people and in the greater interest of the people of

South Asia, they badly needed to activate and strengthen SAARC forum.