

## **Saarc CCI team leaves for Dhaka**

Page NO.20 Col No.06

RECORDER

REPORT

LAHORE: A high-level delegation of SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) (Pakistan chapter) Thursday left for Dhaka-Bangladesh to participate in the upcoming SAARC one-day seminar on "A Climate Resilient South Asia: Turning Climate Smart Investment Opportunities into Reality" on July 15.

Talking to media, the delegation leader Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan remains committed to playing its role in global efforts for tackling the issue of climate change. Pakistan had ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in 2015 and is following the principles therein to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent. "Climate change has become one of the biggest challenges for mankind today and has united the international community for action against its hazards," he added. Pakistan had recently passed the climate law - Pakistan Climate Change Act 2016 - and Pakistan was fully aware of its national and international obligations under United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), he added.

He said an extreme unhealthy temperature in South Asia - a region that includes India, Pakistan and Bangladesh - affects around 15 percent of the region's population. "A number of deadly extreme weather events in the region reflect that reality including a 2015 heat wave that killed more than 2,500 people," he added.

South Asia as a region has witnessed favourable economic growth and is gearing up to capitalize on opportunities provided by urbanization, economic diversification and a young population. At the same time, the region is also home to the world's largest population of the poor and is extremely vulnerable to adverse impacts of climate change, he said. Malik further said that Bangladesh and Pakistan have been assigned a global rank as high as 6 and 7 respectively in terms of risks associated with climate change with related annual GDP losses of close to 0.7 percent. Coping with fragile mountainous ecosystems is a challenge for Bhutan and Nepal, and addressing risks associated with low-lying coastal areas remains crucial for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. India and Pakistan also face the challenge of sustaining agricultural production in drought prone arid and semi-arid regions, he said. He said droughts are recurrent in South Asia, and their impact on agriculture is enormous. In 2002-03, South Asia faced one of its worst droughts. In India alone, a drought has been reported at least once every three years in the last five decades resulted in financial losses of about \$149 billion and approximately 350 million people have been affected by droughts in the past 10 years.