

South Asian TV programme launched

On the eve of the SAARC summit, seven private TV channels from member countries got together here Monday to launch Southasian, a weekly programme that would project a 'non-establishment view' to the people of the region with the aim of forging a common 'South Asian identity'.

Coming together were Tara Network, NDTV and India TV from India, Aaj/Geo TV from Pakistan, Channel I from Bangladesh, Maharaja TV from Sri Lanka and Image TV from Nepal.

Hosting the initiative at the India International Centre, Broadcast Worldwide Ltd chairperson Rathikant Basu announced the half an hour weekly programme every Sunday evening at 6.30 p.m. April 8 onwards.

The weekly programme would have news, special features, reports on cultural events as well as profiles and interviews with celebrities from South Asia.

The programmes from the subscribing SAARC countries would be made separately by the respective news channels. These would be edited and packaged at Tara Studios in [Kolkata](#) and simultaneously telecast by all the TV channels together.

Basu said: 'Southasian was formed... to rediscover and reinforce a South Asian identity based on shared history, civilization and culture.'

He said the programme was aimed at producing and telecasting a non-establishment view to the people of the region.

'Pakistan is passing through a stage where it has an unprecedented will both on the part of the government and the people to reach out to the rest of South Asia, forgetting past acrimony and recriminations,' added Shaid Nadeem from Aaj/Geo TV who had flown in for the occasion.

The event was marked by the presence of eminent journalists from South Asia such as HIMAL editor Kanak Mani Dixit from Kathmandu, India TV CEO Rajat Sharma, Narayan Rao from NDTV, Chevaan Daniel from Maharaja TV in Colombo, Faridur Reza Sagar from Channel I in Dhaka and Ram K. Manandhar from Image TV, Kathmandu.

Depending on its popularity and acceptability, Basu hoped the programme would eventually be extended to 50 minutes eventually.

The co-launchers are also hoping that Mauritius and the Maldives join the effort.

(© IANS / India eNews)