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SAARC COUNTRIES PLEDGE TO COMBAT TERRORISM, HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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Bhutanese Prime Minister Lyonchhoen Jigmi Y. Thinley said on Feb. 8 that the member countries of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) would work together to stamp out terrorism, human trafficking and poverty from the sub-continental region.

Speaking at the inauguration of the SAARC Foreign Ministers meeting, Prime Minister Thinley said efforts of the past decades were bearing fruit as the organization celebrates its 25 years.

"We have signed a number of legal instruments to combat terrorism, narcotics, trafficking of women and children, poverty alleviation, health and so forth less visible, but equally meaningful. Each SAARC interaction in the last 25 years among the political leaders, officials, business, academics, youth, parliamentarians, artists and such like have helped to humanize our relationship and promote better people to people contacts," he added.

Prime Minister Thinley said that the destinies of the South Asian nations were interlinked because of their geographical proximity and no single country in the region could prosper without the help of its neighbours.

"No countries in South Asia can go alone for we are compelled by our geography, our culture and our history to a share future. South Asia or SAARC will be able to realize this vast potential only through cohesive thought and action," he added.

Bhutan currently heads the SAARC Chair and during the conference, the eight South Asian nations are scheduled to discuss ways to relax visa norms and take forward various other initiatives, including cooperation in the fight against terrorism. (ANI)