

South Asian University
CRS Language Lab, JNU Old Campus
Aruna Asaf Ali Road, New Delhi 110067 (India)



About South Asian University

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India mooted the idea of establishing a South Asian University (SAU) at the 13th SAARC Summit in Dhaka in 2005. He said, *"The people of our subcontinent are at the cutting edge of scientific and technological research and in the front ranks of the knowledge society across the world. Wherever an enabling environment and world-class facilities are made available to our talented people, they excel"*. He suggested member countries to pool their resources for creation of a Centre of Excellence in the form of a University that would provide world-class facilities and professional faculty to students and researchers drawn from every country of the SAARC region. *"Let this become a forum where our academicians, scholars, researchers and gifted students can work together in the service of human advancement,"* Dr. Singh said.

Mr. Gowher Rizvi, former Director of Ash Institution of Democratic Governance & Innovations at Harvard University, was entrusted with the task of preparing a Concept Paper for SAU. He suggested that the SAU should adopt a middle path between government-funded and private education institutes to facilitate autonomy from bureaucratic stranglehold while maintaining social commitment towards the under-privileged. Prepared after a series of consultations across the SAARC countries, the note was submitted to the SAARC Governments to elicit their views. Following this, an inter-ministerial Agreement for Establishment of South Asian University was signed on 04 April 2007, during the 14th SAARC Summit in New Delhi.

A SAARC Steering Committee was constituted to oversee the establishment of SAU. A subcommittee of the Steering Committee comprising UGC chairmen of each SAARC country selected Prof. GK Chadha, a former Vice Chancellor of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and a member of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, for the post of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the SAU Project Office. Prof G K Chadha said, *"You cannot compare this university with any other. It will prepare global students from the region. Faculty, course curricula, facilities and infrastructure will be of global standards."*

Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee laid the foundation stone of the SAU campus at a 100-acre plot in Maidan Garhi, Mehrauli in South Delhi on 26 May 2008. The campus construction is due to start in late-2011. The capital cost of establishing the SAU is being funded by the Indian government, while all SAARC member countries contribute towards the operational costs. The University would also raise money from international financial institutions, educational foundations and donors.

Current Status: The SAARC Steering Committee has completed its work and the Rules, Regulations, Academic Structure and Business Plan of the South Asian University are ready. A temporary campus has

been set up in space provided by the Jawaharlal Nehru University. An international design competition for the permanent SAU campus is under way.

The first academic session of the SAU commenced in August 2010 with the following two courses:

M.A. (Development Economics)

Master of Computer Applications (MCA)

In the second academic year that will commence in July 2011, there will be fresh intake of students for the M.A. (Development Economics) programme. New courses that are being offered are:

M.Sc. (Biotechnology)

M.Sc. (Computer Science)

M.A. (Sociology)

M.A. (International Relations)

Master of Law (LLM)

The University will focus overwhelmingly on research and post-graduate level programmes. It will ultimately have 12 post-graduate science and non-science Faculties, as also a small Faculty of Undergraduate Studies. At full strength, the SAU will have 7000 students and 700 teachers. A flagship Institute of South Asian Studies will also be established in the University.

Students of the University will be predominantly from the eight SAARC countries. Tuition fees for them are heavily subsidised. Some students from non-SAARC countries may also be admitted on full cost recovery basis.

Teachers of the University will also be predominantly from the eight SAARC Countries, but up to 20% of teachers may be from other countries. To attract quality talent, attractive salary and benefits packages have been designed for teachers.

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