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இலங்கை சனாதிபதி
President of Sri Lanka

Message on the BIMSTEC Day

I consider it a great privilege to convey greetings and best wishes of the Government and the people of Sri Lanka on the happy occasion of the 23rd Anniversary of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

Sri Lanka, a founder member of BIMSTEC has supported all collective initiatives throughout the years and has been a partner in its progress in facilitating trade, economic development and people to people contact.

As the current Chair of BIMSTEC, Sri Lanka has endeavored to strengthen institutional capacity of the organization and convened three Permanent Working Committee meetings and the 20th Senior Officials' Meeting in 2019 and 2020 respectively where BIMSTEC Charter and rationalization of sectors and sub-sectors were finalized with a view to adopt at the 5th Summit scheduled to be hosted in Sri Lanka later this year.

Although, BIMSTEC Member States represent 22% of the world's population, it only contributes 4% to the World GDP. Therefore, I strongly believe that as an organization well established and respected within the region, we could play a more proactive role in uplifting the economic development of Member States by way of trade, exchange of technological advancements, and specially by developing human capital which is our collective strength.

Furthermore, as the lead country for Science, Technology and Innovations, Sri Lanka has an important role to play within BIMSTEC during and post COVID-19 pandemic which has affected Member States adversely. I believe that only collective efforts based on cooperation can make the region flourish from the setbacks that has affected the very fabric of life and global supply chains.

I reassure to all Member States, Sri Lanka's continued commitment to BIMSTEC and its objectives and wish the organization all success.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa

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28 May 2020

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இலங்கைச் சனநாயக சோசலிசக் குடியரசு
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka