



प्रधान मंत्री

Prime Minister

**MESSAGE**

I convey my felicitations to fellow citizens of BIMSTEC, as we mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment.

Ever since its inception in 1997, BIMSTEC, representing one-fifth of humanity, has striven to bring benefits of development to its people. Today, we have one of the fastest growth rates of any region. We have made considerable progress, although much more needs to be done.

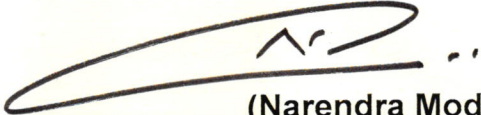
In India, we were honoured to host the leaders of Member countries for a Retreat during the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit in Goa in October 2016. Our collective resolve to impart fresh momentum to BIMSTEC has provided hope and optimism. BIMSTEC not only connects South and South-East Asia, but also the ecologies of the Great Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal. With shared values, histories, ways of life, and destinies that are interlinked, BIMSTEC represents a common space for peace and development. For India, it is a natural platform to fulfill our key foreign policy priorities of 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East'.

I am happy to note that we are implementing the robust agenda that we agreed on in Goa, to achieve greater connectivity, trade, people-to-people contacts, and sustainable use of resources.

I thank the Government of Nepal, the current Chair of BIMSTEC, for its leadership, as also the Government of Bangladesh, for hosting the Secretariat in Dhaka.

The 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary provides us a historical opportunity to re-dedicate ourselves to realizing the vast potential of our region.

I wish BIMSTEC all success in its endeavor.



(Narendra Modi)

New Delhi  
May 24, 2017