

Secretary General of BIMSTEC Visits Bhutan

Secretary General(SG) of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, paid his introductory visit to Bhutan from 10-14 June, 2024.

During the visit, SG was blessed by His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck with an audience. His Majesty assured SG of Bhutan's continued support to BIMSTEC. His Majesty the King also shared with SG his vision of Gelephu Mindfulness City (GMC) who assured His Majesty of the support of BIMSTEC.

During the visit SG was privileged to call on Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan H.E. Dasho Tshering Tobgay. SG apprised Hon'ble Prime Minister of the current state of regional cooperation within the BIMSTEC framework. While reiterating Bhutan's commitment to enhancing regional cooperation, Hon'ble Prime Minister underscored the critical role that BIMSTEC can play in promoting growth and development in Bay of Bengal region.

SG also called on Hon'ble Foreign Affairs and External Trade Minister(MoFAET), H.E. D.N. Dhungyel, and reviewed with him the progress in regional cooperation within the BIMSTEC, the way forward and the vital role of Bhutan in the success of the BIMSTEC. Hon'ble Minister reiterated Bhutan's commitment and reassured SG of Bhutan's full support to BIMSTEC.

Besides, SG called on Hon'ble Energy and Natural Resources Minister, H.E. Gem Tshering, and discussed with him regional cooperation under BIMSTEC, particularly in the environment, climate change and energy sectors. He had met with the Energy and Natural Resources Secretary, H.E. Karma Tshering, and had discussed in detail the prospect of regional cooperation in the above sectors.

SG was honoured to meet H.E. Lyonpo Namgyal Dorji, Minister for Industry, Commerce and Employment at the dinner hosted in his honour by H.E. Sudhakar Dalela, Ambassador of India to Bhutan.

During his calls-on and meetings, SG underscored the significance of the entry into force of the BIMSTEC Charter on 20 May 2024 which will provide impetus to expanding and deepening regional cooperation in Bay of Bengal region. He highlighted the potential outcomes of the upcoming 6th BIMSTEC Summit and underlined the significance of the work of the BIMSTEC Eminent Persons' Group.

SG made a presentation on "Promoting Regional Cooperation through BIMSTEC" as part of MoFAET Lecture Series, in presence of Foreign Secretary H.E. Pema Choden, MoFAET officials both at the Headquarters and the Missions abroad, as well as relevant officials from the government agencies.

Besides official engagements, SG interacted with Bhutanese media and briefed them on his introductory visit to Bhutan and progress in regional cooperation under the BIMSTEC framework.

SG also attended the opening ceremony of the 4th Parliament of Bhutan and visited places of cultural and spiritual significance in Thimphu, Punakha and Paro.

Bhutan is one of the seven member States of BIMSTEC and leads regional cooperation in Environment & Climate Change Sector and Mountain Economy Sub-sector of BIMSTEC. Bhutan joined the BIMSTEC in 2004.

Attachment: Photographs