

BIMSTEC Secretariat, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Press Release, 29 September 2024

Inaugural Meeting of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of 79th Session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

An Informal Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was held in New York on 27 September 2024 on the sidelines of 79th Session of the UNGA. The Meeting was hosted by India and chaired by H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Honourable Minister of External Affairs of India. It was attended by Honourable Ministers of Foreign Affairs/ Foreign Affairs Adviser of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, Permanent Representatives to UN of Sri Lanka and Thailand, a Representative of Myanmar and Secretary General of BIMSTEC.

The Meeting took stock of the close cooperation in health, food security, climate change, security, trade and investment and energy. The member States emphasized the importance of enhancing physical, maritime, and digital linkages to strengthen economic ties and people-to-people exchanges, while also exploring opportunities for capacity building and skill development. The support for the establishment of BIMSTEC Centres of Excellence was also expressed by the member States. The Meeting concluded with a shared resolve to further deepen cooperation within BIMSTEC and prepare for the upcoming Leaders' Summit.

It was the first Meeting of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers in New York on the sidelines of the annual Session of the UNGA. BIMSTEC FMs have also been meeting in Retreat, apart from their regular formal Meetings. It may be recalled that the 2nd Retreat of BIMSTEC FMs was held on 11-12 July 2024 in New Delhi. It was also hosted by India and chaired by HE Dr S Jaishankar, Honourable External Affairs Minister of India.

BIMSTEC comprises seven countries of the Bay of Bengal region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It pursues regional cooperation in seven broad sectors: Agriculture and Food Security; Connectivity; Environment and Climate Change; People to People Contact; Science, Technology and Innovation; Security; and Trade, Investment and Development. The cooperation also covers 8 sub-sectors: Blue Economy, Mountain Economy, Energy, Disaster Management, Fisheries and Livestock, Poverty alleviation, Health and Human Resource Development.

Attachment: Photograph
