
Remarks by the BIMSTEC Secretary General on the occasion of the 11th Anniversary of the establishment the BIMSTEC Secretariat

Monday, 15 September 2025, 1900 hrs, Grand Ballroom, Sheraton

Namaskar!

His Excellency Asad Alam Siam, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Excellencies; Distinguished Ambassadors and High Commissioners of the BIMSTEC member States; other esteemed Ambassadors and High Commissioners; members of diplomatic corps; Representatives of International and Regional Organisations; Friends from media, academia and business communities; members of the BIMSTEC Secretariat; Ladies and Gentlemen

A very Good Evening to you all, Assamualaikum!

Happy 11th Anniversary of establishment of BISMTEC Secretariat in Dhaka!

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to our celebration of the 11th Anniversary of BIMSTEC Secretariat. I take this opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Bangladesh for hosting the BIMSTEC Secretariat. On behalf of the Secretariat and the member States of BIMSTEC, I thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh for its continuous support to the Secretariat, since its establishment in September 2014. We are grateful to the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh Bangladesh for taking time out of his busy schedule to grace our celebration as its Chief Guest.

As you all know Bangladesh is the Chair of BIMSTEC since the 6th BIMSTEC Summit, held in Bangkok on 04 April 2025. I take this opportunity to congratulate, on behalf of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, the Government of Bangladesh for assuming the Chairmanship of BIMSTEC and thank it for various initiative planned and proposed by it to enhance regional cooperation under BIMSTEC.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

As you are aware, BIMSTEC, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, was founded in June 1997. It's an Inter-Governmental Organisation, led by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, with participation of other Ministries and Organs of the Government. It brings together 7 countries located in Bay of Bengal: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. BIMSTEC thus straddles two significant regions of Asia – South Asia and Southeast Asia, which are located at the centre of Indian Ocean Region.

Even though BIMSTEC is not very well known, it has evolved into a dynamic regional organisation. During past 28 years, BIMSTEC has succeeded in creating the institutional framework that it needs to function as an efficient and effective regional Organization. It has its own charter and well-established mechanisms for forging regional cooperation, including regular Summits, Meetings of Foreign Ministers and Sectoral Ministers, Meetings of Senior Officials of Foreign and other Ministries as well as numerous working groups, expert groups etc. BIMSTEC, as a non-political organization, has remained focused on technical and economic cooperation, keeping away from often divisive political issues.

BIMSTEC has a vast and clearly defined Agenda, comprising 16 Sectors, which have been organized into 7 Groups. Each BIMSTEC member State has been designated as the lead State for pursuing cooperation in one of the 7 Groups, which has ensured that each member State considers itself an equal stakeholder in BIMSTEC and contributes equally to its success. BIMSTEC has been engaged in negotiating conventions, agreements and MoUs; it has set up centres of excellence; it has finalized sectoral master plans and action plans; and it has been engaged in collaboration with its external partners.

The year 2025 has been a significant year for BIMSTEC. The 6th BIMSTEC Summit, which was held in April this year, provided the requisite impetus for expanding and deepening regional cooperation under BIMSTEC. In addition to adopting the Summit Declaration, our Leaders also adopted BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030; Rules of Procedures of BIMSTEC; and the Report of Eminent Persons' Group. In a significant step towards enhancing regional maritime connectivity, BIMSTEC member States signed the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation. MoUs with

Indian Ocean Rim Association and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime were also signed.

The ceremonial inauguration of the Secretariat in September 2014 was a momentous occasion. The BIMSTEC Secretariat has since emerged as the anchor for implementation of regional cooperation initiatives under BIMSTEC. In view of the expanding regional cooperation within BIMSTEC, the role of the Secretariat has evolved and expanded. The Secretariat has been working closely with the member States towards implementation of the decisions of BIMSTEC Leaders and Ministerial Meetings through facilitating consultation, communication and coordination amongst the member States.

The Secretariat monitors and reports to the member States on the progress in implementation of their decisions. We have created a Policy Support Unit, an Implementation Support Unit and a Project Management Unit in the Secretariat. In order to enhance visibility of BIMSTEC, the Secretariat has enhanced its outreach to various stakeholders: universities/institutions, think tanks, media, business communities etc. We have also been exploring opportunities for collaboration with various regional, international and UN Organisations located in our region and beyond.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

Let me conclude by reiterating that BIMSTEC provides a conducive and effective regional framework for promoting cooperation amongst the countries of Bay of Bengal region. Given the abiding political commitment of our member States, BIMSTEC is poised to play a leading role in security and sustainable development in Bay of Bengal region. BIMSTEC is keen on building cooperative relationships and working together with other like-minded States, regional organisations, located in IOR and beyond, as well as the UN and International Organisations to promote security and development in IOR.

I once again express my heartfelt gratitude to you all for esteemed presence. Let me reiterate that the BIMSTEC Secretariat remains committed to support the member States in implementation of the decisions taken by them. Thank you all, once again, for being a part of our celebration and for your unwavering support to BIMSTEC. I wish you a joyful evening. Namaskar!
