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NEWSLETTER

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Editorial



As directed by the BIMSTEC Leaders, the Secretariat is in the process of making the organization stronger, more effective and result oriented.

On the Occasion of 21st Anniversary of establishment of BIMSTEC, the Secretariat has re-launched the BIMSTEC e-newsletter with the objective to keep the people of the Bay of Bengal region informed of the activities of the organization on regular basis.

We hope to publish e-news letter more frequently from now, and would like to welcome valuable feedback from our readers and also contribution of relevant article(s) from academia, media fraternity, Think Tanks, particularly from the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT)



Ambassador M. Shahidul Islam
Secretary General of BIMSTEC

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BIMSTEC Day 2018



The Chief Guest, H.E. Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Bangladesh delivering Speech on the BIMSTEC Day.

The BIMSTEC Secretariat hosted a Reception at the Secretariat premise in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 24 June 2018 to mark the Twenty-first Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC. Although, the BIMSTEC Day falls on 6 June, the celebration was delayed due to Ramadan & Eid holidays observed in the host country.

H.E. Mr. Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, M.P., Hon'ble Foreign Minister of the Government of Bangladesh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Ambassadors/High Commissioners of the BIMSTEC Member States, representatives from the Diplomatic Corps, international community based in Dhaka, senior officials of the Government of Bangladesh, civil society, academia, think tanks, print and electronic media, as well as friends and well wishers of BIMSTEC attended the Reception.

In his remarks, the Hon'ble Foreign Minister urged the Member States to give a 'Big Push' to the BIMSTEC process and transform it into a result oriented organization and strive to be one

of the best performing regional forums of the 21st Century.

The Secretary General of BIMSTEC **Ambassador M Shahidul Islam** while delivering the welcome remarks, expressed his hope that the Fourth BIMSTEC Summit scheduled in Kathmandu towards the end of August 2018 would produce important roadmap to shape the future of BIMSTEC Cooperation.



Ambassador M Shahidul Islam, Secretary General of BIMSTEC delivering welcome remarks.

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**PRIME MINISTER
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
BANGLADESH**

23 Jaistha 1425
6 June 2018

Message

I am happy to know that BIMSTEC Day is being observed on 6 June 2018. I convey my warm facilitations to the government and the peoples of the BIMSTEC member states, the BIMSTEC Secretariat and other supporting mechanisms of BIMSTEC process.

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi –Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was created to improve the lives and livelihoods of the peoples in the Bay of Bengal region through regional cooperation. As a bridge between the South Asain and South-East Asian countries, BIMSTEC, has been a mechanism for member states to promote increased cooperation and harness the huge untapped potentials of these two regions.

Bangladesh attaches high importance to regional cooperation. Bangladesh is one of the founding members of the BIMSTEC. We have been deeply committed to the BIMSTEC process ever since its inception in 1997. Establishment of the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka in 2014 manifests the resolute commitment of my government to the BIMSTEC process and to regional cooperation.

I would take opportunity to extend my sincere wishes for BIMSTEC all success in its future endeavours. I would reaffirm the steadfast assurance of my Government to strengthen the BIMSTEC process for realizing the shared aspirations of our peoples. It is my firm conviction that the strong political determination and vibrant initiatives of the BIMSTEC Member States will make this regional process more effective and will pave the way for a better future for the peoples of this region.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever

Sheikh Hasina



Royal Government of Bhutan

June 6, 2018

PRIME MINISTER

Message

On behalf of the Royal Government and the people of Bhutan, I would like to extend our warmest greetings and felicitations to the people and the government of the Member States of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) on its foundation day.

Since its inception in 1997, BIMSTEC has served as a vital bridge between South Asia and South East Asia in forge friendship, cooperation and unlocking opportunities among the seven Member States.

On this historic day, I wish to reaffirm the commitment and cooperation of the Royal Government and the people of Bhutan to further strengthen the BIMSTEC process in fulfilling our common goal of peace and prosperity in the region.

(Dasho Tshering Tobgay)



सत्यमेव जयते

Prime Minister
Republic of India

Message

On behalf of the people of India and on my own behalf, I convey my warm greetings and felicitations to fellow citizens of BIMSTEC on its 21st anniversary.

BIMSTEC represents one-fifth of humanity in a common space, connects by land and sea, it connects the ecologies of the Great Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal which enrich our land and shores and connect our shared way of life, histories and culture. For India, BIMSTEC is a natural platform to fulfill our key foreign policy priorities of 'Neighborhood First' and 'Act East'.

BIMSTEC countries are among the youngest and the fastest growing economies of any region in the world. Given our region's strategic location in terms of trade routes, it is essential that our deep and vibrant regional cooperation serves as the foundation for regional prosperity and development.

I am happy to note the steady implementation of the robust Agenda of Action agreed during the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat in Goa in 2016. It will help build a better connected and more integrated, prosperous and peaceful region.

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.

I am confident that through our joint efforts, BIMSTEC will scale new heights for achieving peace and prosperity for the peoples of our region.

New Delhi
June 5, 2018

(Narendra Modi)



MESSAGE FROM THE STATE COUNSELLOR
OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE UNION OF MYANMAR ON
THE 21st ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BIMSTEC

On this auspicious day of the 21st Anniversary of the establishment of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), I have a great pleasure in extending my warmest greetings and best wishes to the Governments and Peoples of all BIMSTEC member countries.

BIMSTEC is a unique sub-regional organization, connecting South and Southeast Asia. The region is rich in natural and human resources and bond together by historical linkages and cultural affinities. These factors allow BIMSTEC to provide a conducive platform for the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in our region.

Over the past two decades, BIMSTEC has made visible progress in many areas of cooperation. There have also been fruitful results in institutional development. The establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat in 2014 has provided greater efficiency in the coordination of BIMSTEC activities and led to a more effective implementation of BIMSTEC projects. Progress are also being made in the implementation of the Outcome Document of the BIMSTEC Leaders' Retreat adopted in Goa, India in October 2016 which laid firm foundation for the future direction of BIMSTEC cooperation.

While acknowledging the steady progress in our cooperation, we should recognize the need to accelerate our efforts to gain our common goals of peace, stability and prosperity in our region. It is essential for Member States to resolve disputes and differences through peaceful means in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect. We must also maintain the group's unity and stand together in addressing emerging challenges within our region and beyond.

Myanmar, with its geostrategic position, will continue to make every effort to contribute to the BIMSTEC as it continues along its path to become a more effective and result-oriented organization in the interests of the peoples in the region.

Nay Pyi Taw
6 June 2018

Aung San Suu Kyi



The Prime Minister

Kathmandu, Nepal

6 June 2018

MESSAGE

It is indeed a matter of profound happiness that Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC) is going to celebrate the Twenty-First Anniversary of its founding. On this special occasion, I am pleased to extend, on behalf of the Government and people of Nepal, my best wishes for the continued success of the organization in achieving and furthering regional co-operation and integration for the mutual benefit of the people of the region.

The need for regional cooperation is all the more relevant today, with the emergence, persistence and escalation of old and new regional and global problems such as poverty, climate change and widening socio-economic inequalities. No single society and country is capable of dealing with these cross-cutting and complex problems. Our region is more susceptible and vulnerable to these problems owing to various socio-economic constraints. It is therefore, imperative that BIMSTEC countries, home to almost 20% of the global population, join together and make efforts in dealing with these challenges and achieving greater peace and prosperity in the region. I firmly believe that BIMSTEC is capable of and has huge potentials in furthering regional co-operation by ensuring deeper engagement and establishing connectivity among Member States to sustain the momentum achieved so far and going beyond in future.

There is great prospect for regional integration due to prevalence of enormous resources in the BIMSTEC region, as well as its strategic location linking South and East Asia, its diverse topography-from white Himalayas to blue Oceans and rich culture. In particular, there is huge potential for regional cooperation in BIMSTEC in the areas of trade and investment, connectivity and energy co-operation, among others. We need to accelerate our pace of progress in furthering trade and commerce in the region, and facilitating the movement of people, goods and services in order to achieve concrete results. Deeper engagements, enhanced connectivity, frequent interactions and indentifying the bottlenecks and removing barriers will help realize the fruits of regional co-operation more effectively. I hope that our current efforts and future initiatives will be able to reap the full benefits of regional integration for our common prosperity.

On the occasion of BIMSTEC Day, I wish to express Nepal's fullest support to regional co-operation and integration in BIMSTEC, and hope that it will serve as a useful forum for attaining greater peace and prosperity in the region.

(K.P. Sharma Oli)



MESSAGE



President of Sri Lanka

I am pleased to convey my felicitations to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) on the occasion of the 21st Anniversary of its establishment.

Sri Lanka recognizes the significant role and the valued contributions of BIMSTEC towards its membership, since 1997 and is proud to have been a founding member of the organization.

Whilst appreciating the endeavours of BIMSTEC, I reassure the support of the Government of Sri Lanka towards realizing the objectives of the organization in shaping the global agenda through regional economic integration.

Sri Lanka resolves to fully engage in the activities of the Bay of Bengal Region seeking innovative measures towards achieving the shared prosperity of our people.

As BIMSTEC steps into its third decade, I am confident that BIMSTEC will assume its rightful place in the region.

May 28, 2018

Maithripala Sirisena



GOVERNMENT OF THE
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH
DHAKA

FOREIGN MINISTER

MESSAGE

I am delighted to extend my warm facilitations to the Peoples of the member states of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) on this happy occasion of the BIMSTEC Day on 6 June 2018.

BIMSTEC is aimed at improving the economic growth, social progress and standard of living of the peoples in the Bay of Bengal region. The region represents two of the fastest emerging regions of the world. We need to forge greater partnership and shared endeavours to prosper together through exploitation of the full potentials of this region. I am confident that the BIMSTEC member states would bring stronger political will and continue putting their best efforts under collective initiatives of BIMSTEC to make this regional process a success.

The Foreign Policy initiatives under the Government of Bangladesh led by Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina always manifest unwavering commitment towards stronger regional ties. As a founding member of BIMSTEC, Bangladesh attaches high importance to this regional integration and cooperation framework. Hosting of the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka is a manifestation of Bangladesh's firm commitment to the BIMSTEC process.

I believe this special day would be an occasion to collectively rejoice in the successes achieved so far. It is also an occasion to renew our commitment to meet the challenges of the future for making this organization a more dynamic, result oriented and people centric one.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Governments and the Peoples of the BIMSTEC member states, the BIMSTEC Secretariat and other supporting mechanisms of BIMSTEC and also reiterate our steadfast commitment to strengthen the BIMSTEC process in promoting and fostering regional cooperation in our region.

Long live BIMSTEC Spirit.
Joy Bangla, Joy Bangabandhu.

(Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, MP)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Royal Government of Bhutan
Thimphu

June 6, 2018

MESSAGE

The Royal Government of Bhutan joins the Member States in celebrating the Foundation Day of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) on 6 June. On this historic day, I would like to extend my greetings and best wishes to the governments and peoples of the BIMSTEC Member States.

To commemorate the occasion, Bhutan is offering a thousand butter lamps and prayers at Simtokha Dzong in Thimphu to celebrate the occasion. It is for world peace and happiness of humanity.

I avail of this opportunity to reaffirm the support and commitment of the Royal Government and the people of Bhutan in strengthening the BIMSTEC process and promote peace and prosperity in the region.

(Damcho Dorji)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Kathmandu, Nepal

Minister for Foreign Affairs

6 June 2018

MESSAGE

I am delighted to know that the Secretariat of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Co-operation (BIMSTEC) is celebrating the Twenty-First Anniversary of the establishment of the organization on 6 June 2018. On behalf of the people and the Government of Nepal, I would like to express our sincere wishes for the continued success of this organization in achieving the goals and objectives for the welfare and prosperity of the people of our region.

The BIMSTEC region is endowed with abundant natural and human resources and provides numerous opportunities for all-round progress and development. If utilized prudently, it will bring about tangible benefits for mutual prosperity of the region. In order to realize these opportunities, BIMSTEC has so far made some concrete achievements. It has developed comprehensive framework for cooperation on crucial areas such as trade, investment, transport, and energy, among others. I believe that now is the time to deliver results using established mechanisms as we have completed our two decades of journey and are embarking on the third decade. We need to redouble our efforts, based on our past achievements, to bolster our future activities in order to have tangible impacts in the lives of peoples of the region through mutual collaboration and economic integration.

In order to ensure economic integration and enhance connectivity which could be the game changer for our region, we need to be focused and deepen our collaboration in a timely and prioritized manner. Our meaningful co-operation in trade and investment, and energy can deliver us considerable yet sustainable dividends. These initiatives, among others, will not only enhance co-operation in important sectors for mutual benefit but also further the cause of regional integration by laying the critical infrastructures that support regional collaboration on a sustained basis for the benefit of the people of the region.

On the special occasion of BIMSTEC Day, I would like to reaffirm Nepal's firm commitment as the current Chair of BIMSTEC to regional co-operation and partnership under the framework of BIMSTEC, and express our willingness to work together with all Member States to move forward the process of regional integration in a meaningful way.

Happy BIMSTEC Day!

(Pradeep Kumar Gyawali)



Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Colombo, Sri Lanka

MESSAGE

It is a pleasure to convey my heartiest wishes to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) on this special occasion of its 21st Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC.

Since its inception, BIMSTEC has strived to disseminate significant benefits to the Member States from the South and South East Asian Regions.

I strongly believe BIMSTEC will broaden its horizons is achieving its objectives in the coming years. Sri Lanka stands ready to be a hub for the Bay of Bengal region to meet the demands of its rapid economic growth.

I wish BIMSTEC success and strength which would ultimately lead the Member States to meet their collective expectations and we look forward to actively engaging with BIMSTEC.

Tilak Marapana, P.C., M.P
Minister of Foreign Affairs

30th May 2018

Secretary General



BIMSTEC Secretariat
Dhaka, Bangladesh

6 June 2018

MESSAGE

On the occasion of the Twenty-First anniversary of the founding of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), I extend my heartiest greetings and felicitations to the peoples and the governments of the Member States of BIMSTEC - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

BIMSTEC started its journey as a sub-regional cooperation platform of four countries through the Bangkok Declaration on 06 June 1997. Over the years, the organization has evolved into a regional organization comprising seven Member States aimed at promoting peace, progress and prosperity in the Bay of Bengal region. BIMSTEC has also achieved considerable success in creating an enabling environment for rapid economic development through identification and implementation of specific cooperation projects in a wide range of areas including trade, investment, transport, energy, technology, tourism and people-to-people contact.

The BIMSTEC Leaders at their Retreat held in Goa, India on 16 October 2016, pledged to work collectively towards making BIMSTEC stronger, more effective, and result oriented. The Secretariat is committed to the speedy implementation of the directives of the BIMSTEC leaders. I am hopeful that the Member States will be able to conclude the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations soon to advance economic integration of the region, and will also make substantive progress in the areas of connectivity and institution building by moving faster with the agreements in progress.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Bangladesh for providing support for effective functioning of the Secretariat. I also express my deep appreciation to Nepal as the current Chair of BIMSTEC and all other Member States for their continued support and contribution towards achieving the goals of BIMSTEC.

On this auspicious occasion, I urge the Member States to work collectively and give extra efforts to further strengthen the organization in delivering tangibles to the peoples of the region.



Ambassador M Shahidul Islam
Secretary General of BIMSTEC

The Secretary General visited Nepal from 29 May to 01 June 2018 as part of his familiarization visits to all BIMSTEC Member States. The Secretary General called on the leadership of Nepal and had fruitful discussion about the holding of 4th BIMSTEC Summit. It may be noted that Nepal is the current Chair of BIMSTEC and the Summit will be held in Kathmandu.



H.E. Ambassador M. Shahidul Islam, Secretary General of BIMSTEC called on the Right Honorable President Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari on 31 May 2018.



H.E. Secretary General of BIMSTEC called on the Right Honorable Prime Minister of the Government of Nepal K.P. Sharma Oli on 30 May 2018



H.E. Secretary General of BIMSTEC called on the Honorable Foreign Minister of Nepal Mr. Pradeep Kumar Gyawali on 30 May 2018.



H.E. Secretary General of BIMSTEC called on His Excellency Mr. Shanker Das Bairagi, Foreign Secretary, of Nepal on 30 May 2018.

July Issue

Bhutan Observed the 21st Anniversary of the Founding of the BIMSTEC



Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Bhutan & dignitaries who attended the 21st Anniversary of the BIMSTEC.

Bhutan observed the 21st anniversary of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) by offering butter lamps in Simtokha Dzong/Monastery in Thimphu

Hon'ble Foreign Minister Lyonpo Damcho Dorji, Ambassadors of the BIMSTEC Member States of Bangladesh & India, other dignitaries from regional and international organizations' based in Bhutan and senior government officials attended the butter lamp lighting ceremony.

The Hon'ble Foreign Minister in his address reiterated Bhutan's commitment to BIMSTEC process and prayed for peace and happiness in the region and the world.

Recent BIMSTEC Activities

Workshop on Strengthening Regional Value Chain in Marketing of Pork Meat

At the invitation of the Government of Nepal, the BIMSTEC Workshop on Strengthening Regional Value Chain in Marketing of Pork Meat was held from 13-14 June 2018 in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Delegates from BIMSTEC Member States i.e. Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand participated in the Workshop.



Delegates from the BIMSTEC Member States to the Workshop on Regional Value Chain in Marketing of Pork Meat

Mr. Han Thein Kyaw, Director in charge of Agriculture Sector of the BIMSTEC Secretariat attended the workshop.

The workshop discussed and explored ideas on how to improve regional value chain, how to tackle self sufficiency and how to manage export promotion on pork meat in the Member States. The delegates stressed the importance of sharing technology and recommended to establish a joint technical group or forum to analyze the pig and pork situation in the Member States so as to promote regional value chain.

The workshop also suggested holding the next workshop in Sri Lanka, followed by Thailand and other Member States on a yearly basis.

The Secretariat intends to bring out a featured photos article (s) on the BIMSTEC Countries at regular intervals to help people in the region know the BIMSTEC Member States better. Today's article is on Archery, the National Game of Bhutan - contributed by Kunzang N. Tshering, Director, Social & Cultural Affairs of the BIMSTEC Secretariat.

Archery : The National Game of Bhutan

Archery is the national game of Bhutan played during the New Year celebrations and at happy occasions. It's very popular among the Bhutanese of all ages and even woman can play if they wish to do so. Normally, the men play the game and women enjoy dancing traditional songs & picnicking at the archery range for whole day with their family, friends & special invitees.



An archer is taking aim on the target & shooting the arrow

The game is played between 2 persons or 2 teams for a day or more, either for pleasure or during the tournaments. Each archer shoots a pair of arrow in turns and try to showcase the best skills to hit the targets placed in straight-lines at two extreme opposite-ends of the archery range measuring 145 m between two targets. The targets are made of the soft wood which approximately measures 2x1 feet (LxB), and they are decorated with colorful flags for better visibility.



Kate, the Dutchess of Cambridge (UK) tries her best hand at archery during the recent Royal Visit to Bhutan

Whenever, a player of the team hits the target, rest of the team members dance & sing a dedicated archery song to celebrate the hit and counts the points. A hit on the target is called 'Karey' with 2 points and a hit on the bull's-eye without touching the circle is counted 3 points.



A team of archers dancing to celebrate a hit on the target by a team-mate

Like other sporting events, it is also played for 'the best of three' and whichever team reaches the total point of 25 first is the winner of the game and the team winning 2 games out of 3 is the winner of the match.



A tourist trying her luck on the game of archery in Bhutan with a traditional bamboo made bow and arrow