

Dhaka: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will formally inaugurate the BIMSTEC Secretariat here on Saturday, said an official at the Foreign Ministry on Thursday. The Secretariat is expected to enhance Bangladesh's image among the international community and deepen mutual understanding and cooperation with the BIMSTEC member states. BIMSTEC is the first headquarters of any inter-governmental organisation in Bangladesh and the government considers the establishment of its secretariat here as its great 'diplomatic achievement'. The BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) secretariat is located in Dhaka's Gulshan-2. The Prime Minister will also unveil a commemorative stamp on the occasion, said the official. A supplement will be published in local English and Bengali dailies containing the messages from the Heads of State/Government of the BIMSTEC member states. Cabinet Members, Secretaries, including heads of diplomatic corps and international organisations in Dhaka have been invited to attend the event. BIMSTEC was established on June 6, 1997 in Bangkok and it started its journey with only four participating members and six areas of cooperation. Presently, it has seven member states - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand - and 14 areas of cooperation.