

## **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)**

**Prelims** - Current events of International Importance.

**Mains (GS II)** - Regional Groupings.

### **Why in News?**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Thailand to attend the 6<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit.

- It is a regional organization comprising Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the **Bay of Bengal** constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- **Established in** - June 1997, with the signing of the Bangkok Declaration.
- **Founding members** - BIST-EC (Bangladesh-India-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- After Myanmar joined in December 1997, the group was renamed BIMSTEC.
- **Current Members** - Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.

*The region is home to around 1.8 billion people, nearly 22% of the global population, and has a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of US\$3.6 trillion.*

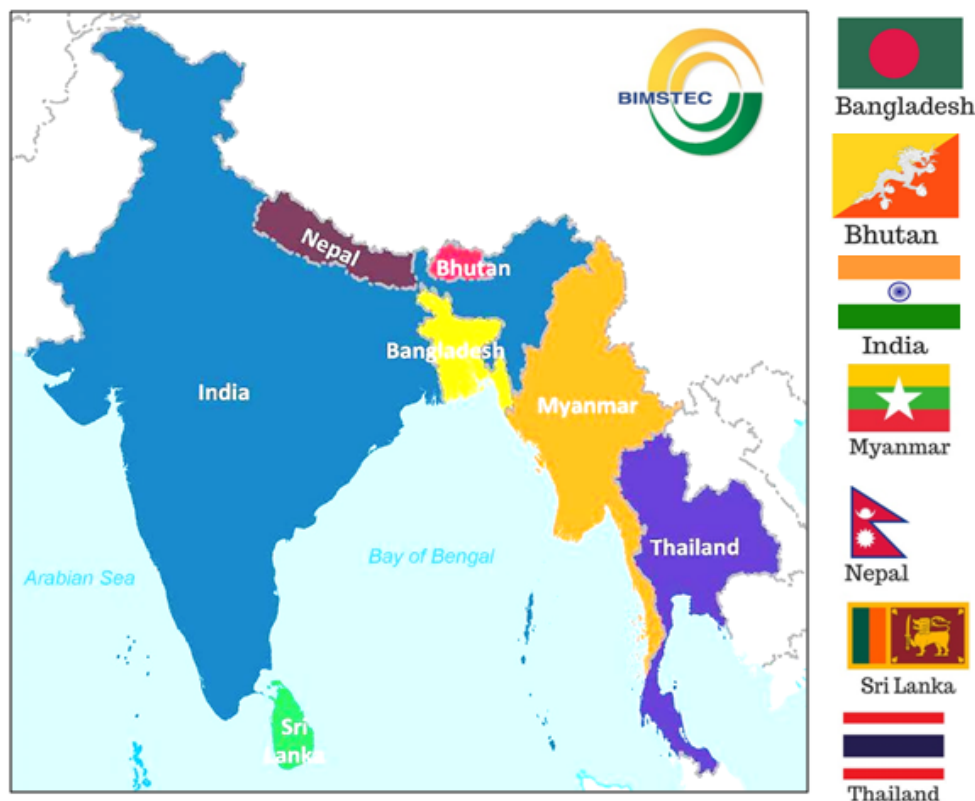
- **Secretariat** - Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- **Aim** - Promotion of economic cooperation between the member countries.
- **Priority areas**

Fisheries	Tourism	Transnational crime
Trade and investment	Agriculture	Environment
Technology	Public health	Natural disaster management
Energy	Poverty alleviation	People-to-people contact
Transport and communication	Counter-terrorism	

- **Objectives** - To create an enabling environment for rapid economic development.
- To accelerate the economic growth and social progress in the Bay of Bengal region.
- To promote active collaboration and mutual assistance on matters of common interest in the economic, social, technical and scientific fields.
- To provide assistance to each other in the form of training and research facilities in the educational, professional and technical spheres.
- **Principles** - Sovereign equality, territorial integrity, political independence, non-interference in internal affairs, non-aggression, peaceful co-existence, mutual respect

and mutual benefit.

- **Significance of BIMSTEC for India** - BIMSTEC is seen as the extension of India's Neighbourhood First Policy.
- BIMSTEC facilitates India's "Act East" policy by enhancing connectivity between South Asia and Southeast Asia, particularly benefiting India's Northeast region, which serves as a gateway to Southeast Asia.
- BIMSTEC overcomes challenges posed by Pakistan in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) by focusing on like-minded nations.
- BIMSTEC strengthens India's strategic depth and regional influence in the Indo-Pacific, countering potential challenges from other regional powers.



## References

1. [BIMSTEC | About](#)
2. [The Hindu | BIMSTEC](#)