



6th BIMSTEC Summit

For Prelims:

[Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, Indo-Pacific Region, Indian Ocean, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.](#)

For Mains:

Key Highlights of 6th BIMSTEC Summit, Significance of BIMSTEC for Regional Cooperation.

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

The Indian **Prime Minister** participated in the **6th BIMSTEC Summit**, hosted by **Thailand** under its **chairmanship**, with the theme "**BIMSTEC: Prosperous, Resilient, and Open**," focusing on **enhancing regional cooperation and addressing key challenges**.

- Also, on the sidelines of the summit, India and Thailand announced to elevate their bilateral ties to a **Strategic Partnership**.

What are the Key Highlights of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit?

- **Vision 2030 Document:** The Summit adopted the **Summit Declaration and Bangkok Vision 2030**, outlining a roadmap for **regional prosperity** with a focus on **economic integration, resilience to global challenges, and collaboration in infrastructure, and technology**.
 - **BIMSTEC Centres of Excellence:** India announced establishment of **BIMSTEC Centres of Excellence** in India, focusing on **Disaster Management, Sustainable Maritime Transport, Traditional Medicine, and Research and Training in Agriculture**.
 - Also, initiative for **linking India's UPI with BIMSTEC payment systems**, and operationalizing the **BIMSTEC Energy Centre in Bengaluru**.
 - It also proposed a **pilot study on [Digital Public Infrastructure \(DPI\)](#)** to enhance governance and service delivery in BIMSTEC.
 - **BODHI Program:** India introduced **BODHI Program (BIMSTEC for Organized Development of Human Resource Infrastructure)** for **skill development**, providing **training, scholarships, and capacity-building** for various professionals across BIMSTEC nations.
 - **Cancer Care Capacity Building:** India proposed a **capacity-building program** for **cancer care** in the BIMSTEC region.
 - **Chamber of Commerce and Business Summit:** Establishment of BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce and hosting an annual **BIMSTEC Business Summit** was proposed to promote **regional economic integration** among member nations.
- **Key Action Plans Announced by India:** India proposed a **21-point Action Plan** and some of the important plan such as:

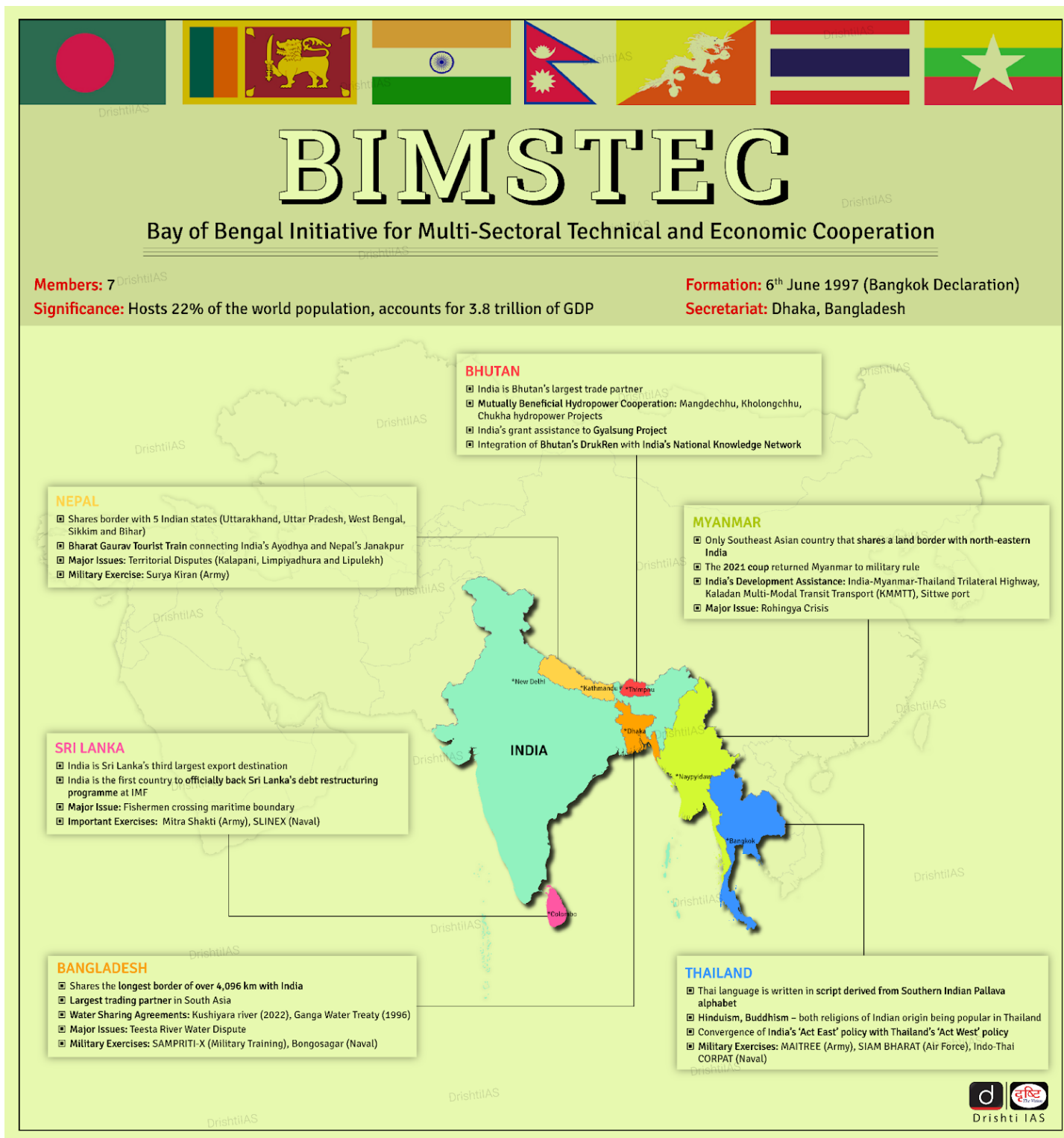
- **People-to-People Linkages:** India announced initiatives to strengthen cultural and people-to-people ties, including, **BIMSTEC Athletics Meet (2025)**, **First BIMSTEC Games (2027)**, marking the group's 30th anniversary, **BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival**, **Young Leaders' Summit and Hackathon** for youth engagement, **Young Professional Visitors Program** to deepen cultural cooperation.

What are the Key Initiatives Announced under the India-Thailand Strategic Partnership?

- **Maritime Cooperation:** Collaboration in the [Indo-Pacific](#) through frameworks like the **ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)** and India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)**, with emphasis on maritime security, and regional connectivity via the [India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway](#).
- **Defence and Security:** Expansion of **defence dialogues**, joint military exercises such as **Exercise Maitree**, and cooperation in areas like [counter-terrorism](#), [cybersecurity](#), and intelligence sharing.
- **Trade and Economic Engagement:** Initiatives to boost **bilateral trade**, enhance **supply chain resilience**, promote **private sector investment**, and explore upgradation of the [Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#).
- **Cultural and People-to-People Ties:** Promotion of **educational exchanges**, celebration of [Buddhist](#) cultural linkages, promotion of **tourism**, and deeper engagement with the **Indian diaspora** in Thailand.
- **Science, Technology, and Innovation:** Joint cooperation in fields such as [renewable energy](#), **space technology**, development of [digital public infrastructure](#), and innovation in **healthcare** and [biotechnology](#).
- **Regional and Multilateral Cooperation:** Strengthening coordinated efforts in regional and international forums such as **BIMSTEC**, the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#), the [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#), and the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) to promote a **rules-based international order**.

What is BIMSTEC?

- **About:** **BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation)** is a regional organization comprising **7 member** states as Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand.
- **Objective:** It aims to foster multifaceted technical and economic cooperation among countries in the [Bay of Bengal](#) region.
- **Origin:** It was founded in 1997 with the adoption of the Bangkok Declaration.
 - Initially comprising 4 members, it was known as **BIST-EC** (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Cooperation). In 1997, Myanmar joined, and the grouping was renamed **BIMST-EC**.
 - With the inclusion of **Nepal** and **Bhutan** in 2004, the name was further changed to **BIMSTEC**.
- **Significance:**
 - BIMSTEC countries, with a population of **1.7 billion (22% of the world's total)**, have a **combined GDP of around USD 5.2 trillion (2023)**.



What is the Significance of BIMSTEC?

- **Alignment with Act East Policy:** BIMSTEC aligns with India's Act East Policy, enhancing India's trade and security prominence in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific regions.
- **Alternative to SAARC:** It has emerged as a preferred platform for regional cooperation, offering a viable alternative to SAARC in South Asia.
- **Platform for Regional Cooperation:** It serves as a key platform for fostering deeper cooperation among South and Southeast Asian countries, particularly in security matters and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) management.
 - It also serves as a platform for regional cooperation to balance China's growing influence through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

- **Promotion of Intangible Culture:** India's initiatives, like the **Centre for Bay of Bengal Studies (CBS)** at Nalanda University, aim to preserve the region's intangible cultural heritage, while BIMSTEC fosters **regional collaboration and cultural exchange**.

What are the Challenges Related to BIMSTEC?

Click Here to Read: [Challenges](#)

What are the Suggested Measures for Enhancing BIMSTEC's Effectiveness?

Click Here to Read: [Way Forward for BIMSTEC](#)

Conclusion

The **6th BIMSTEC Summit** advanced regional cooperation, focusing on economic integration, disaster resilience, and cultural ties. India's leadership through initiatives like **Centres of Excellence** and **skill development programs** strengthens the region's future prospects. As BIMSTEC celebrates its 30th anniversary in 2027, the Summit's outcomes foster a more **prosperous** and **resilient** Bay of Bengal region.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. How successful has BIMSTEC been in achieving its goals of economic and technical cooperation among its member countries?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Do you think that BIMSTEC is a parallel organisation like the SAARC? What are the similarities and dissimilarities between the two? How are Indian foreign policy objectives realized by forming this new organisation? (2022)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/6th-bimstec-summit>