BIMSTEC Secretariat,
Dhaka, Bangladesh

PRESS RELEASE

20th BIMSTEC MINISTERIAL MEETING
(03 April 2025, Bangkok)

The 20th Session of Ministerial Meeting(MM) of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was held today in Bangkok, Thailand. It will be followed by 6th BIMSTEC Summit of the Heads of State/Government of the member States on 04 April, 2025. Chaired by Thailand, the Meeting brought together Foreign or External Affairs Ministers from member States to review progress, finalize key agreements and outline the future course of regional cooperation.

Following are the Key Outcomes of 20th MM:

● Finalization of the draft Declaration of 6th BIMSTEC Summit, outlining vision, decisions and directives of the Leaders, to be adopted at the Summit;

● Finalization of the draft Joint Statement by the BIMSTEC Leaders on the Impact of the Earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand on 28 March 2025, underscoring early establishment of BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Disaster Management in India. The draft Joint Statement will be adopted at the Summit;

● Consideration of the Report of Eminent Persons Group on the Future Direction of BIMSTEC, which includes recommendations to reform and revitalize BIMSTEC.

● Approval of the Reports of 24th and 25th BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meetings, which contain key decisions and initiatives for fostering collaboration among the member States and advancing BIMSTEC agenda;

● Approval of the BIMSTEC Sectoral Plans of Action on Science, Technology & Innovation; Public Health; Human Resource Development; and Environment & Climate Change which will serve as the frameworks for implementation for respective sectors;

● Approval of the finalized Concept Notes and Memoranda of Understanding(MoUs) between the Indian Ocean Rim Association(IORA) & BIMSTEC; United Nations on Drugs and Crime(UNODC) & BIMSTEC; and the World Bank & BIMSTEC on Strengthening Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response and Health Systems Resilience among BIMSTEC Member States;

●Approval of Institutional Arrangement for Financial Support from the World Bank for Implementation of the BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Public Health (2023-2025);

● Approval of the Deliberations of the 4th Meeting of BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs;

● Approval of the Concept Note on BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting;

● Approval of the Concept Note on Establishment of Expert Group on Fiscal & Monetary Policy;

● Approval of the Audit Report of Panel of Auditors for Financial Year (2014-2015);

● Approval of the Budget of the Secretariat for Financial Year (2023-2024) and estimated budget for Financial Year(2025); and

● Approval of the Concept Note on BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence on Tropical Medicine.

As the key decision-making mechanism, the BIMSTEC MM plays a crucial role in shaping the organization's agenda. During the Meeting, Ministers signed the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation, marking a significant step toward strengthening regional maritime partnerships. They also witnessed the signing of Memoranda of Understanding between BIMSTEC and IORA, as well as BIMSTEC and UNODC, formalizing partnership in areas of mutual interest.

Ministers commended the progress outlined in the BIMSTEC Secretary General's Report, endorsing advancements in regional cooperation across various sectors under the BIMSTEC framework. They also lauded Thailand's leadership in hosting the 20th MM, which has set the stage for a successful 6th BIMSTEC Summit. They expressed confidence that the 6th BIMSTEC Summit will mark a pivotal step towards realizing the organization's full potential.

BIMSTEC comprises seven countries of the Bay of Bengal region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. It pursues regional cooperation in 7 broad sectors: Agriculture & Food Security; Connectivity; Environment & Climate Change; People-to-People Contact; Science, Technology & Innovation; Security; and Trade, Investment & Development. The cooperation also covers 8 sub-sectors: Blue Economy, Mountain Economy, Energy, Disaster Management, Fisheries & Livestock, Poverty Alleviation, Health, and Human Resource Development.

03 April 2025