

English Translation of Prime Minister of India's Statement during the 6th BIMSTEC Summit
(April 04, 2025)
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Excellencies,

Namaskar!

At the outset, I extend my sincere gratitude to Prime Minister Her Excellency Shinawatra and the Government of Thailand for the excellent organization of this Summit.

Excellencies,

First of all, on behalf of the people of India, I convey our deepest condolences over the loss of lives and property caused by the recent earthquake in Myanmar and Thailand. We stand in solidarity with those affected and wish a swift and full recovery to the injured.

Excellencies,

I commend the Prime Minister and her team for their capable and effective leadership in steering BIMSTEC over the past three years.

BIMSTEC serves as a vital bridge between South and Southeast Asia, and is emerging as a powerful platform for advancing regional connectivity, cooperation, and shared prosperity.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the BIMSTEC Charter came into force last year. I am confident that the Bangkok Vision 2030, which we are adopting today, will further our collective commitment to building a prosperous, secure, and inclusive Bay of Bengal region.

Excellencies,

To further strengthen BIMSTEC, we must continue to expand its scope and enhance its institutional capacities.

It is encouraging to note that the Home Ministers' mechanism is being institutionalized. This forum can play a major role in the fight against cyber crime, cyber security threats, terrorism, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. In this regard, I propose that India host the first meeting of this mechanism later this year.

Excellencies,

For regional development, physical connectivity must go hand in hand with digital and energy connectivity.

I am pleased to note that the BIMSTEC Energy Centre, based in Bengaluru, has commenced its operations. I would like to propose that our teams accelerate efforts towards achieving electric grid interconnection across the region.

India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) has revolutionized the delivery of public services. It has significantly enhanced good governance, increased transparency, and accelerated financial inclusion. We would be happy to share our DPI experience with BIMSTEC member states. To

take this forward, a pilot study could be undertaken to better understand the specific needs and priorities of BIMSTEC countries in this area.

I would also like to propose establishing connectivity between India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and the payment systems of BIMSTEC member states. Such integration would bring substantial benefits across trade, industry, and tourism, enhancing economic activity at all levels.

Excellencies,

Trade and business connectivity are equally vital to our collective progress.

To strengthen collaboration and coordination among our business communities, I propose the establishment of a BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce. Additionally, an annual BIMSTEC Business Summit will be organized to foster greater economic engagement.

I would also suggest conducting a feasibility study to explore the potential for trade in local currencies within the BIMSTEC region.

Excellencies,

A free, open, secure, and safe Indian Ocean is our shared priority. The Maritime Transport Agreement concluded today will strengthen cooperation in merchant shipping and cargo transport, giving a significant boost to trade across the region.

India proposes the establishment of a Sustainable Maritime Transport Centre. This Centre will focus on capacity building, research, innovation, and fostering greater coordination in maritime policy. It will also serve as a catalyst for enhancing our cooperation in maritime security across the region.

Excellencies,

The recent earthquake has been a stark reminder of how vulnerable the BIMSTEC region remains to natural disasters.

India has always stood by its friends as a first responder in times of crisis. We consider it a privilege to have been able to deliver timely relief to the people of Myanmar. While natural disasters may be unavoidable, our preparedness and ability to respond swiftly, must always remain unwavering.

In this context, I propose the establishment of a BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence for Disaster Management in India. This Centre will facilitate cooperation in disaster preparedness, relief, and rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, the fourth joint exercise among the BIMSTEC Disaster Management Authorities will be held in India later this year.

Excellencies,

Public health is a vital pillar of our collective social development.

I am pleased to announce that India will extend support for training and capacity building in cancer care across BIMSTEC countries. In line with our holistic approach to health, a Centre

of Excellence will also be established to promote research and dissemination of traditional medicine

Similarly, to benefit our farmers, we propose the establishment of another Centre of Excellence in India focused on the exchange of knowledge and best practices, research collaboration, and capacity building in the agriculture sector.

Excellencies,

The strides made by Indian scientists in the field of space are a source of inspiration for youth across the Global South. We are ready to share our expertise and experience with all BIMSTEC member states.

In this regard, I propose the establishment of a ground station for manpower training, the development and launch of nano-satellites, and use of remote sensing data for the BIMSTEC countries.

Excellencies,

To enhance youth skilling across the region, we are launching the BODHI initiative, ie "BIMSTEC for Organized Development of Human Resource Infrastructure" initiative. Under this programme, 300 young individuals from BIMSTEC member countries will receive training in India each year.

Scholarships will be offered to BIMSTEC students at India's Forestry Research Institute, and the scholarship scheme at Nalanda University will also be expanded. Additionally, an annual training programme will be organized for young diplomats from BIMSTEC member countries.

Excellencies,

Our shared cultural heritage forms a strong foundation for our enduring ties.

The 'Bali Jatra' of Odisha, the deep-rooted historical links between Buddhist and Hindu traditions, and the linguistic affinities among us—all stand as powerful symbols of our cultural interconnectedness.

To celebrate and showcase these bonds, India will host the inaugural BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival later this year.

Excellencies,

To foster greater exchange among our youth, the BIMSTEC Young Leaders' Summit will be held later this year. We will also launch the BIMSTEC Hackathon and the Young Professional Visitors Programme to encourage innovation and collaboration.

In the field of sports, India proposes to host the BIMSTEC Athletics Meet this year. And looking ahead to 2027, on the occasion of BIMSTEC's 30th anniversary, we are pleased to announce that India will host the inaugural BIMSTEC Games.

Excellencies,

For us, BIMSTEC is not merely a regional organization. It is a model for inclusive development and collective security. It stands as a testament to our shared commitments and the strength of our unity.

It embodies the spirit of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas"

I am confident that together, we will continue to strengthen the spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual trust, and take BIMSTEC to even greater heights.

In conclusion, I extend a warm welcome to Bangladesh as the incoming Chair of BIMSTEC and convey my best wishes for its successful leadership.

Thank you very much.

Bangkok
April 04, 2025

DISCLAIMER - This is the approximate translation of Prime Minister's remarks. Original remarks were delivered in Hindi.