

**Statement delivered by the Rt. Hon. Mr. K P Sharma Oli, Prime Minister of Nepal, at the Sixth BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, Thailand.
(4 April 2025)**

Theme: Prosperous, Resilient and Open BIMSTEC

Your Excellency madam Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and Chair of this Summit,

**Esteemed Head of delegates from BIMSTEC Member States,
Mr. Secretary-General, Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen!**

It is both a privilege and an honour for me to address this august BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok today.

I bring with me a message of thirty million Nepali people for the success of this Summit and for everlasting peace, wellbeing and prosperity of people of BIMSTEC Member States.

At the outset, I would like to extend, on behalf of the Government and people of Nepal as well as on my own, our sincere condolences and sympathy, to the Government and people of Myanmar and Thailand for loss of precious lives and properties due to disastrous earthquakes. We pray and wish for quick recovery of the injured.

At this hour of grief, Nepali people remain in a strong solidarity with Myanmar and Thailand.

I express my profound appreciation and gratitude to madam Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra and the Government of Thailand for the warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Summit.

I applaud Chair Thailand for steering BIMSTEC process with vigour and vision over past three years.

We extend our best wishes and assure strong support to our friendly neighbour Bangladesh to lead BIMSTEC as our next Chair.

His Excellency Secretary-General and his team deserve our sincere appreciation for their dedicated and professional contribution.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Over two decades have passed since the seed of BIMSTEC was sown in this very city.

In these two decades we have witnessed a profound change and transformation in the Bay of Bengal region and beyond.

In these two decades, the Bay of Bengal has emerged as one of the fastest growing regions in the global economic landscape.

Yet, the challenges persist. And quest for peace and prosperity persist.

We live in a world rife with compounding challenges— economic disparities, environmental vulnerabilities, and political uncertainties.

The global order is being redefined.

At this defining moment, BIMSTEC must not only navigate the changing tides but also seize the opportunity to reinvigorate our regional cooperation.

And I believe that, the theme of the Summit –**Prosperous, Resilient and Open BIMSTEC**, provides us with that compass –a compass that is pro people, pro prosperity and pro welfare.

Excellencies,

The BIMSTEC exemplifies a unique collaboration between two dynamic regions- South Asia and Southeast Asia.

As a unique bridge, it embodies collective aspirations of over 1.8 billion people striving for a Prosperous, Resilient and Open BIMSTEC which is a befitting theme for this historic Summit.

Prosperity. Resilience. Openness. These three pillars not only align with the Sustainable Development Goals but also resonate deeply with Nepal's national aspiration of **“Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali.”**

Today's theme is not just a slogan, but a call to action.

These three priorities will shape our path ahead.

While the region shows an impressive growth, many people are confronting the common enemy of poverty.

In such a context, prosperity is not an option; it is an obligation.

The BIMSTEC region is richly endowed with natural resources, cultural diversity, and a youthful workforce.

From the majestic Himalayas to the Bay of Bengal's vibrant coastlines, we are blessed with abundant potential.

Given the immense potential of the region, prosperity is not a mere wishful thinking; it is an achievable destiny.

But to arrive at destiny—we must harness it strategically; we must unlock it sustainably.

Investing in human capital is non-negotiable. The Fourth BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in education, skills development, and capacity-building.

Regional connectivity is an important pillar in our quest for prosperity.

Connectivity of markets as well as minds, connectivity of infrastructures as well as ideas, connectivity of culture as well as cyber is yet another backbone of growth.

Implementation of BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity and BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation in a time-bound manner will bring about significant progress in this regard.

It is concerning that intra-regional trade in BIMSTEC remains a mere 5%—far lower than ASEAN, EU, or NAFTA.

Our region is among the least integrated globally, barring natural interconnections among our societies, economies and nations.

This must change.

Building an integrated Bay of Bengal region is a must to unlock our potential and capitalize on the complementarities we possess.

Additionally, recognizing that not all economies in our region are equal, we must extend preferential support to Member States with special needs to enable them to share common prosperity.

Distinguished Delegates,

Today, the world is at a crossroad.

Over the recent years, we have seen uncertainties stemming from multiple domains

- ranging from ecology to economy;
- from trade tensions to technological disruptions;
- from changing climate to conflicts;
- from pangs of pandemics to perils of polarization;
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In such an uncertain world, resilience is our strongest defence.

In such a world of worries, resilience is our antidote against despair.

In such a world of ‘black swans’, resilience is our road to robustness.

Excellencies,

Climate change has posed an existential threat to entire humanity.

For Nepal, the stakes are even higher. Our high Himalayas are perennial water towers and cooling stations of Asia.

While these high mountains contribute as global heat sinks, they have also suffered a disproportionate assault despite our negligible emissions. Further, the impact is confined not only in mountains but also in the downstream lowlands and coastal areas.

To highlight the plight of mountains and linkages between mountains and oceans, Nepal is organizing the first edition of Sagarmatha Sambaad this May and I look forward to see many of you there.

Across the region, sea levels are rising, and tropical storms in coastal regions are becoming more intense. Indeed, the BIMSTEC region faces a wide range of extreme weather events— glacial floods, tropical cyclones, thunderstorms, heat waves, and droughts.

These challenges are not distant threats; they are damaging our everyday life.

It is imperative that we act decisively to safeguard our people and our future.

It is imperative that we adopt a “whole of the region” and “whole of the world” approach to jointly undertake bold climate action.

In a similar vein, we must deepen regional energy cooperation by investing in cross-border energy grids and renewable energy projects, particularly hydropower.

In addition, we must also build resilience against rising trade tensions, supply chain disruptions, and rapid technological shifts.

And such resilience can be achieved through domestic readiness combined with regional cooperation.

Disaster preparedness, public health resilience and inclusive economic policies must remain at the heart of our regional agenda.

Social and cultural harmony must be promoted, and a strong sense of community must be fostered.

A just, inclusive, and people-centric development must be achieved by integrating the SDGs with national and regional policy frameworks.

Excellencies,

For a vibrant and dynamic BIMSTEC, openness is the foundational bedrock.

A comprehensive democracy –which holistically addresses political, economic, ecological and cultural concerns, is essential for long-term stability.

We must strengthen people-to-people connectivity through sustainable tourism, cultural exchanges, educational linkages, and cross-border investments.

A visa-on-arrival policy within BIMSTEC would be a game-changer in easing travel and fostering deeper regional bonds.

We must prioritize digital integration to facilitate e-commerce, cross-border payments, and e-governance.

Lastly, we must prioritize research and development to drive innovation and address shared challenges—from climate change to food security to technology-driven economic transformation.

Excellencies,

The BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, which we are adopting today, serves as a blueprint for our shared future.

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that no BIMSTEC nation is left behind. Nepal remains deeply committed to the BIMSTEC Charter and the principles it upholds. We take immense pride in leading the People-to-People Contact Sector and look forward to deepening partnerships across priority areas.

As we stand at a historic crossroads, let us reaffirm our unwavering commitment to transforming the Bay of Bengal into a Prosperous, Resilient, and Open region.

When the world order is in flux:

- our strength lies in unity, and
- our future shines in solidarity and deeper collaboration.
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We are in a race against time. The future belongs to those who act with urgency and vision.

Let me conclude with wise words of the enlightened son of Nepal Lord Buddha.

“However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do you if you do not act upon them?”

Therefore:

Let us act on our words to build a BIMSTEC that delivers—for our people, and for generations to come.

Let us act on our words to transform the region into a dynamic hub of prosperity, resilience and openness.

I thank you all.