

**Remarks by Chief Guest H.E. Wahiduddin Mahmud, Hon'ble Adviser,  
Ministry of Planning, at the BIMSTEC Day Reception 2025**

**H. E. Mr. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC,**

Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners from BIMSTEC Member States, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Senior Officials of the Government of Bangladesh, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

**Assalamu Alaikum and Good Evening.**

It is indeed a great honour for me to be with you tonight as we commemorate the 28<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Day. On behalf of the Government and the people of Bangladesh, and on my own behalf, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to all BIMSTEC Member States. I also express my deep appreciation to the esteemed guests who joined us on this joyous occasion tonight to celebrate this important milestone in our journey of regional cooperation.

Our deep appreciation goes to the Secretary General and his very dynamic team for organizing this wonderful celebration. We also appreciate your continued efforts in advancing our shared vision of a peaceful, prosperous, and integrated Bay of Bengal region.

It is evident that in today's interconnected world, no nation can achieve lasting prosperity without the cooperation and support of others. I commend our fellow BIMSTEC Member States for their continued support over more than two and a half decades. I am confident that, in the years to come, BIMSTEC will be able to fully realize its immense potential and towards that end, Bangladesh continues to

remain deeply committed to strengthening regional cooperation, and promoting mutual trust and friendship with our fellow member countries for the welfare of the people of the region.

As I stand here tonight as a representative of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, we came out of a historic and an epochal transformation that the world witnessed in last July and August. The power of the ordinary people, in particular our youth, presented to our nation an opportunity to overhaul many of our systems and institutions and build an inclusive, just and free society where every ordinary person could materialize his/her dreams. The world eventually saw how people-at-large stood against autocracy, oppression, discrimination, injustice and corruption, both on the streets and virtual. Our people, particularly the youth presented us a new Bangladesh with their exceptional resolve and capability. We derived our inspiration and commitment from that collective resolve which motivated us to stand resolute to play the role of responsibility in the global and regional sphere.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Since its inception in 1997, BIMSTEC has evolved into a unique platform that connects South and Southeast Asia, uniting over 1.8 billion people through our shared aspirations, complementary strengths, and common challenges. The Bay of Bengal is not merely a geographic entity—it is a shared destiny. From connectivity and trade to energy, climate resilience to food security, our cooperation carries immense transformative potential for our nations and for the region at large.

This year's BIMSTEC Day carries particular significance, as it follows the successful conclusion of the 6<sup>th</sup> BIMSTEC Summit, held in Bangkok on 4 April 2025. That Summit was a landmark in the history of BIMSTEC, demonstrating

strong political commitment by our leaders to transform this forum into an action-oriented, institutionally strengthened, and people-centric prosperous, resilient and open regional organization.

We witnessed the adoption of several milestone documents, including the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, BIMSTEC Rules of Procedure, and the Report of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG), which would provide a clear and forward-looking roadmap for a more robust, rule-based and results-oriented BIMSTEC. The signing of the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation, as well as the MoUs with UNODC and IORA not only demonstrate the growing maturity and relevance of BIMSTEC, but also will strengthen cooperation in areas such as maritime security, disaster risk reduction, countering transnational crime and ensuring sustainable regional trade.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Seamless multi-modal connectivity is a precondition for trade and investment promotion and people to people contacts. Energy cooperation is another facilitator for economic development. Bangladesh remains strongly committed to advancing regional economic integration. As the lead country in the Trade, Investment and Development sector, including the Blue Economy Bangladesh has taken meaningful steps to advance this agenda. I am glad to inform that Bangladesh successfully hosted the 3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Working Group on Trade Facilitation on 19 March and the 22nd Meeting of the Working Group on Rules of Origin on 25 March 2025.

We hope to receive continued support from our fellow Member States in hosting future meetings and in facilitating the timely finalization of the BIMSTEC Free

Trade Area (FTA), which is critical for boosting intra-regional trade, investment flows, and overall economic growth of our region.

**Distinguished Guests,**

While we celebrate our achievements, we must also acknowledge the challenges ahead. The success of BIMSTEC will ultimately be judged not by the number of agreements signed but by the tangible benefits we deliver to our people. This is a moment for transition—from dialogue to delivery, from vision to implementation.

Bangladesh, as the current BIMSTEC Chair, envisions a BIMSTEC that is functional, visible, and responsive—a forum defined not by rhetoric, but by results. As the host country, I wish to also reaffirm Bangladesh’s unwavering support to the BIMSTEC Secretariat. We are committed to ensuring that the Secretariat is well-equipped and empowered to serve the collective interests of all Member States. We expect to commence the construction of an iconic building for the BIMSTEC Secretariat very soon.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let us seize this moment of renewed momentum to shape a future of deeper collaboration and shared prosperity in the Bay of Bengal. With political will, mutual trust, and a shared sense of purpose, BIMSTEC can become a dynamic force for peace, progress, and sustainable development in our region.

**I thank you all for your kind presence.**

**Long live the spirit of BIMSTEC!**