

BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise

March 31, 2020

Source: *The Hindu & PIB*

The 2nd edition of the BIMSTEC Disaster Management Exercise was held in Odisha

Key highlights

- **Focus of the exercise:** Heritage structures' protection
- 80 delegates from 05 member countries namely Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Nepal and over 35 participants from various states of India participated in this first of its kind exercise organized by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) as the nodal agency. The complete exercise comprised of a Table Top Exercise (TTX), Field Training Exercises (FTXs) on Flood and an After-Action Review (AAR).
- During the exercise, a "simulated exercise village & Heritage Site (Konark Sun Temple)" was created using local available resources to depict flooded localities.
- The rescue teams of various member nations responded professionally as per the situation and demonstrated quick response using the latest flood rescue equipment.
- **Participants:** Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Nepal have participated in the exercise while Bhutan and Thailand were absent due to travel restrictions. Other institutions who took part in the event were the UNDP, the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration Cultural Property (ICCROM), the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, the ASI, the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group and the IMD.
- There are 3,686 Centrally protected monument sites under

the ASI. Of these, 79 are located in Odisha. According to INTACH, close to 10,000 sites and buildings are protected.

- However, it has listed about 70,000 sites having heritage value in 500 towns. It says there could be 11 lakh sites in an estimated 8,000 towns and villages. Gujarat had witnessed damage at the heritage sites in the 2001 earthquake.