

BIMSTEC

July 6, 2020

India hosted the first-ever BIMSTEC conference on Combating Drug Trafficking. It was organized by Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

What is BIMSTEC?

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a **regional organization comprising seven Member States lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal** constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- It came into being on 6 June 1997 through the **Bangkok Declaration**
- Initially, the economic bloc was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation). Myanmar joined the group in 1997 during a special Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok, the Group was renamed 'BIMST-EC'
- With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan at the 6th Ministerial Meeting (February 2004, Thailand), the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).
- The regional group constitutes a bridge between South and South-East Asia and represents a reinforcement of relations among these countries.
- BIMSTEC has also established a platform for intra-regional cooperation between SAARC and ASEAN members.
- **Member countries:** It constitutes seven Member States: five deriving from South Asia, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and two from Southeast Asia, including Myanmar and Thailand.

Sector-driven cooperative organization:

- Unlike many other regional groupings, BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization.
- Starting with six sectors—including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries—for sectoral cooperation in late 1997, it expanded to embrace nine more sectors—including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change—in 2008.