

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 457
TO BE ANSWERED ON 12.12.2018

REGIONAL COOPERATION

457. SHRI MUTHAMSETTI SRINIVASA RAO (AVANTHI):

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India's efforts to promote regional cooperation will continue to focus on the Bay of Bengal and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether initiatives were taken for Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in the recently concluded summit in Kathmandu and if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps taken by the Government to increase community and revive Bay of Bengal in India?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
[GEN. (DR) V. K. SINGH (RETD)]

(a) & (b) Yes. BIMSTEC is being given due attention in furtherance of our priorities of 'Neighbourhood first' and 'Act East'.

Prime Minister led the Indian delegation for the 4th BIMSTEC Summit held in Kathmandu on 30 - 31 August 2018. This gave a significant push to regional cooperation. The Kathmandu Declaration adopted at the 4th Summit seeks to intensify regional cooperation in various sectors including connectivity and trade, energy, security and counter terrorism, environment and disaster management, agriculture, ICT and people-to-people contacts, among others. To strengthen institutional mechanism of BIMSTEC, at the Summit it was decided to initiate the drafting of the BIMSTEC Charter, and to strengthen the BIMSTEC Secretariat. An MoU on BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection was also signed at the Summit.

(c) During the 4th BIMSTEC Summit, Prime Minister announced a number of initiatives to be undertaken by India to advance BIMSTEC cooperation and capacity in diverse areas such as security, disaster management, economy and trade, agriculture, health and digital connectivity as well as activities to promote cultural and youth linkages. Steps are being taken to implement these in consultation with other BIMSTEC Member States.
