

Experts call for regional grid connecting BIMSTEC nations

[Md Saidun Nabi](#)

Published at 10:45 pm February 25th, 2020



Photo: Mahmud Hossain Opu/Dhaka Tribune

BIMSTEC Secretariat in collaboration with the South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy Integration (SARI/EI) of USAID organized the two-day event at its office in the capital

Coordinated regional grid connection would help attain the continued growth in power generation among the member countries of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), experts and policy-makers said on Tuesday.

Governments of the member countries of the regional block must focus on renewable energy to ensure sustainable development in the BIMSTEC region, they suggested while addressing a conference on "Enhancing Energy Cooperation in the BIMSTEC Region".

BIMSTEC Secretariat in collaboration with the South Asia Regional Initiative for Energy Integration (SARI/EI) of USAID organized the two-day event at its office in the capital.

Prime Minister's Energy Adviser Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury said it was high time BIMSTEC had a regional power grid as part of energy operation among the member states.

“Such an electricity network will not only ensure quality supply of power at a lower cost, but also enhance energy efficiency,” he said.

“It is not that some of the BIMSTEC members will export electricity to other members. Rather the proposed grid will smoothen export and import of electricity,” he said.

For instance, the country could export electricity to Nepal during winter when the demand for power drops significantly, he said, adding: “On the other hand, Bangladesh needs more electricity during summer when it can import from Nepal.”

“Without funding, regional grid will never be possible,” he asserted.

The BIMSTEC is a regional block, comprising Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.



On 31 August 2018, the member countries struck a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for installing the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection to enhance energy cooperation among them.

BIMSTEC Secretary General M Shahidul Islam said the platform could play a massive role in establishing an integrated power grid for the region.

Moderating a session, former foreign secretary Farooq Sobhan said the BIMSTEC role was crucial to steer the region’s economic growth.

“In the era of climate change, we also need to focus more on renewable energy for sustainable growth and energy,” he observed.

USAID’s Bangladesh Mission Director Derrick S Brown, India’s Joint Secretary at Ministry of Power Tanmay Kumar, Babu Raj Adhikari of Nepal’s Energy Ministry, Sri Lankan Additional Energy Secretary Merrille Goonetilleke, and Myanmar Oil and Gas Planning Department Director Tin Zaw Myint, among others, spoke at the program.

Dhaka Tribune is the media partner of the conference.