



Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

Press Release

BIMSTEC Celebrates its 29th Anniversary, Reaffirming its Commitment to Regional Cooperation

Dhaka, 9 June 2026

The BIMSTEC Secretariat celebrated on 8th June 2026 the 29th Anniversary of the establishment of BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). Established through the Bangkok Declaration on 6 June 1997, BIMSTEC has emerged as an important platform for fostering regional cooperation among the countries of the Bay of Bengal region and as a vital bridge between South and Southeast Asia.

The Reception was graced by H.E. Abdul Awal Mintoo, MP, Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, H.E. Shama Obaed Islam, MP, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and H.E. M. Iqbal Hossain, MP, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief.

Welcoming the guests, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, noted that this year's BIMSTEC Day celebration held special significance as BIMSTEC commemorates its 29th anniversary and begins the year-long celebration leading to its 30th anniversary.

The Secretary General highlighted that, over the years, BIMSTEC has made significant progress in fostering regional cooperation in various sectors and has established the necessary institutional framework to function as an effective regional organization. He referred to the BIMSTEC Charter and the BIMSTEC Vision 2030, and noted that the organization's agenda now covers a wide range of priority sectors supported by ministerial meetings, senior officials' meetings, joint working groups, expert groups, and other mechanisms.

The Secretary General further underlined that BIMSTEC is working with like-minded partners, including observer States, international organizations, regional organizations, and UN agencies, to support member States in implementing their decisions and advancing their shared development aspirations. He expressed the Secretariat's gratitude to the Government and people of Bangladesh for hosting the Secretariat and providing continued support, and thanked the Ambassadors and High Commissioners of BIMSTEC member States in Dhaka for their support, including in organizing the BIMSTEC Day Reception.

In her remarks, H.E. Shama Obaed Islam, MP, Hon'ble State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, congratulated BIMSTEC and its member States on this auspicious occasion and reaffirmed Bangladesh's strong commitment to regional cooperation. She stated that Bangladesh attaches high importance to regional cooperation as a cornerstone of its foreign policy and highlighted BIMSTEC's role as a unique bridge connecting South and Southeast Asia. She underlined that, as the current Chair of BIMSTEC, Bangladesh remains committed to fostering trust, inclusivity and collaboration among member States and to advancing an open, prosperous, and connected Bay of Bengal region.

The Chief Guest also emphasized the importance of seamless multimodal connectivity, enhanced trade and investment, technology transfer, stronger supply chains, and people-to-people contacts. She noted that cultural exchange, education, tourism, sports diplomacy, youth engagement, and professional exchanges can bring the peoples of South and Southeast Asia closer through trust and friendship. She further stressed the need to strengthen BIMSTEC's institutional foundations, operationalize the BIMSTEC Charter and ensure that sectoral cooperation mechanisms are properly resourced and effectively coordinated.

The Reception brought together senior government officials, Ambassadors and High Commissioners of BIMSTEC member States, representatives of international organizations, members of the diplomatic corps, media representatives, members of think tanks, and other distinguished guests.

The highlight of the celebration was the vibrant display of the cultural richness and diversity of the BIMSTEC member States. Representatives of the member States participated in a symbolic parade carrying their national flags, dressed in traditional attire, reflecting the spirit of friendship and solidarity that binds the BIMSTEC community. Cultural performances and exhibitions of cultural artefacts, handicrafts, textiles and other distinctive symbols from all member States further showcased the heritage and unique identities of the peoples of the region. Culinary traditions of the member States were reflected in the range of dishes in the large spread for the dinner.

Beyond the primary Reception in Dhaka, BIMSTEC Day was also commemorated across all member States and featured congratulatory messages from Heads of State, Heads of Government, and Foreign Ministers.

About BIMSTEC

BIMSTEC comprises seven countries of the Bay of Bengal region: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. It pursues regional cooperation in the following areas: Agriculture & Food Security; Blue Economy; Connectivity; Culture; Disaster Management; Energy; Environment & Climate Change; Health; Human Resource Development; Fisheries & Livestock; Mountain Economy; People-to-People Relations; Poverty Alleviation; Security; Science, Technology & Innovation; Tourism; Trade & Investment; and Women Development.

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