



# BIMSTEC

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

## BIMSTEC e-NEWSLETTER

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### Editorial



I am delighted to present our 9<sup>th</sup> monthly BIMSTEC e-Newsletter of 2024!

September 2024 was a momentous month for the BIMSTEC Secretariat as we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of its establishment in Dhaka, in presence of H.E. Md. Touhid Hossain, Hon'ble Adviser to Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, along with Ambassadors and High Commissioners of BIMSTEC member States.

Marking a significant milestone, the inaugural Informal Meeting of BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers was held on 27 September 2024 in New York on the sidelines of 79<sup>th</sup> Session of UNGA. It provided them an opportunity to renew their commitment to continue the existing cooperation and identify new areas of cooperation within the BIMSTEC framework. The Meeting concluded with a shared resolve to further deepen regional cooperation through BIMSTEC and prepare for the upcoming Leaders' Summit.

The Eminent Persons' Group held its 6<sup>th</sup> meeting in Dhaka, from 10-12 September, at the BIMSTEC Secretariat, and submitted its Report which includes recommendations to reform, revitalize and repurpose BIMSTEC. The Report will be submitted to BIMSTEC Leaders at their next Summit.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Expert Group on Maritime Security Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal which was held in New Delhi on 11 September 2024, finalized the Draft BIMSTEC Guidelines for Maritime Component of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).

My visit to New York to participate at the Informal meeting of BIMSTEC FMs provided me an opportunity to engage with the potential development partners of BIMSTEC, including UNDP, UNCTAD, UNDESA, ITU, WIPO and WHO.

We appreciate your continued readership and welcome your valuable suggestions!

**(Indra Mani Pandey)**  
Secretary General

### Inaugural Meeting of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers on the sidelines of 79<sup>th</sup> Session of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)



An Informal Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was held in New York on 27 September 2024 on the sidelines of 79<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA. The Meeting was hosted by India and chaired by H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Honourable Minister of External Affairs of India. It was attended by Honourable Ministers of Foreign Affairs/ Foreign Affairs Adviser of Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, Permanent Representatives to UN of Sri Lanka and Thailand, a Representative of Myanmar and Secretary General of BIMSTEC

The Meeting took stock of the close cooperation in health, food security, climate change, security, trade and investment and energy sectors. The member States emphasized the importance of enhancing physical, maritime, and digital linkages to strengthen economic ties and people-to-people exchanges, while also exploring opportunities for capacity building and skill development. The support for the establishment of BIMSTEC Centres of Excellence was also expressed by the member States. The Meeting concluded with a shared resolve to further deepen cooperation within BIMSTEC and prepare for the upcoming Leaders' Summit.

It was the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers in New York on the sidelines of the annual Session of the UNGA. BIMSTEC FMs have also been meeting in Retreat, apart from their regular formal Meetings. It may be recalled that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Retreat of BIMSTEC FMs was held on 11-12 July 2024 in New Delhi. It was also hosted by India and chaired by H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Honourable External Affairs Minister of India.



## Secretary General meets with Director General of World Intellectual Property Organization



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with H.E. Darren Tang, Director General of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in New York on 23 September 2024.

They agreed to forge cooperation between WIPO and BIMSTEC for the benefit of the BIMSTEC member States by creating a conducive environment for innovation including promotion of IPR, for developmental purposes in Bay of Bengal.

## Secretary General meets with Director General of World Health Organization



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Director General of World Health Organization (WHO), H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at United Nations in New York on 26 September 2024.

They exchanged views on potential for cooperation between WHO and BIMSTEC, for the benefit of our member States, in view of the synergies in the goals of the two organization's BIMSTEC WHO, of achieving health for all in Bay of Bengal.

## Secretary General meets with H.E. Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary General of UNCTAD



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey met with Secretary General of United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) H.E. Rebeca Grynspan at United Nations in New York on 26 September 2024.

They exchanged views on potential for cooperation between UNCTAD & BIMSTEC for the benefit of member States, in view of the synergies in the goals of the two organizations, BIMSTEC and UNCTAD, of promoting trade, investment & development in Bay of Bengal.

**Secretary General meets with Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union**

Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), H.E. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, at United Nations on 26 September 2024. They agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation between ITU and BIMSTEC in ICT sector.

**Secretary General meets with Secretary General of SAARC**

Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with H.E. Ambassador Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) at United Nations in New York on 24 September 2024, They exchanged views on the benefits of regional cooperation for the countries in Bay of Bengal.

**Secretary General meets with Deputy Secretary General of ASEAN**

Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Deputy Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) for Political-Security Community, H.E. Dato' Astanah Abdul Azizin, at United Nations in New York on 25 September 2024, They exchanged views on potential areas of cooperation between ASEAN and BIMSTEC.

**Secretary General meets with ASG & UNDP Regional Director for Asia & the Pacific**



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey met with H.E. Ms. Kanni Wignaraja, ASG and UNDP Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, on 25 September 2024 at United Nations in New York. They exchanged views on opportunities for cooperation between UNDP and BIMSTEC.

**Secretary General meets with Under Secretary General of United Nations and UNSG’s Envoy on Technology**



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Under Secretary General of United Nations and UNSG’s Envoy on Technology, H.E. Amandeep S Gill, a member of IFS Family, in New York at the UN ON 27 September 2024. They explored the role of ICTs and AI in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by member States of BIMSTEC.

**Secretary General meets with Permanent Representative of Bhutan to UN**



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with H.E. Pema Lektup Dorji, PR of Bhutan to United Nations and explored the role that PM Bhutan can play in enhancing the presence and profile of BIMSTEC in UN.

### **Secretary General meets with PR of India to UN**



Secretary General of BIMSTEC H.E. Indra Mani Pandey met with H.E. P Harish, Permanent Representative of India to UN in New York. They explored the role of the Permanent Mission of India to UN in New York in enhancing the presence and role of BIMSTEC in United Nations.

### **Secretary General meets with PR of Sri Lanka to UN**



Secretary General of BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to UN H.E. Mr. Mohan Pieris in New York at Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN on 24 September 2024. They exchanged views on benefits of regional cooperation

### **Secretary General meets with PR of Thailand to UN**



Secretary General of BIMSTEC H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Permanent Representative of Thailand to UN H.E. Mr. Cherdchai Chaivaivid in his office in New York on 25 September 2024. They explored the role that Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations can play in enhancing the presence and profile of BIMSTEC.



H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General BIMSTEC, was interviewed by Asian News International (ANI), after the Informal Meeting of BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers on 27 September, 2024, in New York.

**The interview is available at**  
<https://shorturl.at/Ds4OA>

## BIMSTEC Secretariat Celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



The Secretariat of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) in Dhaka celebrated the 10th anniversary of its establishment on 15 September 2024.

Chief Guest, H.E. Mr. Md. Touhid Hossain, Hon'ble Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Interim Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was joined by Ambassadors and High Commissioners of BIMSTEC member States, other distinguished invitees and members of BIMSTEC Secretariat.

Welcoming the guests, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, underscored the critical role of the Secretariat in implementing the regional cooperation initiatives under BIMSTEC in accordance with its mandate, pointing out that the role of the Secretariat has evolved over the years and will expand further in the future. He thanked the Government of Bangladesh for hosting and extending its full support to the Secretariat.

The Chief Guest, H.E. Mr. Md. Touhid Hossain, stated that BIMSTEC has made remarkable strides in advancing the shared vision and common interests of the people of the Bay of Bengal region. He called upon BIMSTEC member States to engage in result-oriented cooperation, delivering tangible benefits on the ground. He reiterated the commitment of Bangladesh to BIMSTEC and assured its unwavering support to the Secretariat.

The signing of the Memorandum of Association of the establishment of the BIMSTEC Permanent Secretariat at the 3rd BIMSTEC Summit in held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in March 2014 and the subsequent ceremonial inauguration of the Permanent Secretariat in September 2014 marked the birth of the BIMSTEC Secretariat.



## The Eminent Persons' Group Concludes Its Work and Presents its Report



The 6<sup>th</sup> and final Meeting of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC was held on 10-12 September 2024 at the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It was chaired by Dr. Soonthorn Chaiyindeepum, member of the EPG from Thailand, which is the current Chair of BIMSTEC. The members of EPG from all BIMSTEC member States attended the Meeting. The BIMSTEC Secretariat, led by H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General, facilitated the Meeting and assisted the EPG in its deliberations.

The Chair of the EPG has submitted the Report of the EPG to the Chair of BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting, Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, H.E. Mr. Maris Sangiampongsa. A copy of the Report has been presented to the Secretary General of BIMSTEC. The Report of the EPG will be submitted to the BIMSTEC Leaders at their next Summit.

The Report of EPG includes recommendations to reform, revitalize, and repurpose BIMSTEC. In preparing its Report, the EPG has thoroughly reviewed the existing regional cooperation within BIMSTEC in all Sectors. It was mindful of the vision and goals outlined in Bangkok Declaration, BIMSTEC Charter, Bangkok Vision 2030, BIMSTEC Summit Declarations and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It undertook a comprehensive review of the existing institutional framework of BIMSTEC and engaged in consultations with the various stakeholders.



## Secretary General calls on Hon'ble Foreign Affairs Adviser of Bangladesh



Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General, BIMSTEC called on Hon'ble Foreign Affairs Adviser of Bangladesh, Md. Touhid Hossain on 09 September 2024. They discussed the role of Bangladesh in expanding regional cooperation through BIMSTEC.

## Director General of CIRDP meets Secretary General



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey met with Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, new Director General of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), and Dr. Cherdsak Virapat, its outgoing Director General on 9 September 2024 and discussed the areas for future cooperation.

## Regional Representative UNODC, Regional Office for South Asia, meets Secretary General



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, received H.E. Marco Teixeira, Regional Representative of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Regional Office for South Asia on 09 September 2024. They discussed opportunities for future cooperation between BIMSTEC and UNODC



### 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Maritime Security



The 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Maritime Security Cooperation, held in New Delhi on 11 September 2024, finalized Draft BIMSTEC Guidelines for Maritime Component of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR). It also discussed the Draft BIMSTEC Guiding Principles: Conduct of MLEAs during Interaction at Sea and Draft BIMSTEC Guidelines for Coordinated Marine Oil Spill Response.

### Secretary General attended the United Consciousness International Day of Peace



Secretary General BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, participated as an Eminent Speaker and spoke on the theme “**Sustainability with Countries-Communities-Citizens Together**” during the online celebration of United Consciousness International Day of Peace, held on 14 September 2024.

### Secretary General Speaks at Foreign Service Academy of Bangladesh



H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General, BIMSTEC, spoke on "**Promoting Regional Cooperation in Bay of Bengal Region**" at the Foreign Service Academy, Bangladesh on 03 September 2024





# BIMSTEC

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