



BIMSTEC

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

BIMSTEC E-NEWSLETTER

Volume 14, Issue 02, ISSN 2415-4318



February 2025 Issue

Editorial



Welcome to our second Monthly BIMSTEC E-Newsletter of 2025!

The month of February 2025 began with my visit to Sri Lanka. My engagements with Sri Lanka's leadership underscored the importance of collaboration in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI), health and human resource development, including Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) under the BIMSTEC framework. Sri Lanka's steadfast commitment to BIMSTEC aligns with the enduring commitment of other BIMSTEC member States, providing a solid basis for deeper regional cooperation and integration.

While the 8th Meeting of BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) discussed the matters pertaining to 6th BIMSTEC Summit as well as administrative and financial matters, the 3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators discussed, inter alia, the operational modalities for BIMSTEC Buddhist Circuits & BIMSTEC Cruise Circuits.

The inaugural BIMSTEC Youth Summit and BIMSTEC Youth for Climate Action Conference 2025 held in India further underscored the critical role that Youth must play in advancing regional cooperation. While the BIMSTEC Digital Conclave 2025, themed "Building Digital Public Infrastructure for Shared Prosperity," brought together leaders and experts to discuss regional cooperation in developing DPI for digital transformation and development, the workshop on Emerging Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism emphasized the need for regional collaboration to address the evolving threats and regulatory challenges in combating money laundering and terrorist financing across the region.

I was honored to speak at the Plenary Session on "Navigating New Frontiers: Evolving Maritime Landscape in the 21st Century" at the 8th Indian Ocean Conference 2025. The IOC 2025 also provided a valuable platform to engage various stakeholders in security and development of Indian Ocean Region, including Ministerial and Senior Delegates of the BIMSTEC member States, on the goals, priorities and challenges of BIMSTEC. I also had the opportunity during the month to call on Honourable Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs of India and Honourable Principal Secretary to Prime Minister of India, as well as a member of Secretaries to the Government of India. During the month, I was privileged to meet with heads of regional & international organisations and members of Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh, enhancing BIMSTEC' outreach and partnerships.

As we move forward, BIMSTEC remains dedicated to fostering inclusive and sustainable development amongst its member States. We deeply value your readership and welcome your suggestions to strengthen regional cooperation and to improve this E-Newsletter.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Secretary General's Engagements;
- Core and Sectoral Meetings; and
- Other Events.

(Indra Mani Pandey)
Secretary General

Secretary General Visits Sri Lanka



SG undertook an official visit to Sri Lanka from February 5-7, 2025. During the visit, SG called on H.E. Dr. Harini Amarasuriya, Hon'ble Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, who reaffirmed Sri Lanka's steadfast commitment to BIMSTEC and emphasized the critical importance of strengthening collaboration in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) as well as Health and Human Resource Development Sectors under the BIMSTEC framework. SG commended the Government of Sri Lanka for its leadership in advancing regional cooperation through BIMSTEC.

SG also called on with H.E. Vijitha Herath, Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment & Tourism, to discuss Sri Lanka's priorities and its pivotal role in driving regional cooperation through BIMSTEC. SG also called on H.E. Nalinda Jayatissa, Hon'ble Minister of Health & Mass Media, to explore avenues for expanding collaboration in Health Sector as well as H.E. Chrisantha Abey, Hon'ble Minister of Science & Technology to discuss opportunities for deepening BIMSTEC cooperation in STI Sector.

During the visit , SG delivered a keynote address at the BIMSTEC Digital Conclave, organized by The Asia Group in collaboration with the BIMSTEC Secretariat and with support of the Government of Sri Lanka. SG underscored the significance of the Conclave in advancing regional digital transformation through building DPis and highlighted BIMSTEC's achievements, goals and challenges in fostering regional and other cooperation in digital domains.

The visit underscored BIMSTEC's commitment to strengthening regional cooperation and leveraging collective efforts of the member States to address their shared challenges. SG expressed his gratitude to the Government of Sri Lanka for its warm hospitality and reiterated BIMSTEC' s dedication to achieving security and inclusive and sustainable development of the BIMSTEC member States.



Secretary General participates at BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025



Secretary General delivered special remarks at the BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025, hosted by India, outlining the evolution, vision, goals and priorities of BIMSTEC.

Secretary General addresses Youth Led Action on Climate Change Conference 2025



Secretary General spoke at the Youth Led Action on Climate Change Conference 2025, hosted by Bharat Scouts and Guides under the aegis of Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Secretary General receives Deputy Executive Director of UNOPS



Secretary General received Ms. Kirstine Damkjaer, Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), in his office on 11 February 2025. They discussed avenues for collaboration between the two organisations.

Secretary General participates at the 8th Indian Ocean Conference 2025, Muscat.



Secretary General spoke at the Plenary Session on "Navigating New Frontiers: Evolving Maritime Landscape in the 21st Century" at the 8th Indian Ocean Conference 2025 in Muscat, Oman. SG highlighted BIMSTEC's commitment and key initiatives to strengthen maritime cooperation in Bay of Bengal, focusing on security challenges, enhanced connectivity, and sustainable development.

Secretary General Calls on Foreign Minister of Nepal



Secretary General called on H.E. Dr. Arzu Rana Deuba, Foreign Minister of Nepal, on the sidelines of the 8th Indian Ocean Conference in Oman. They discussed Nepal's role in enhancing regional cooperation within the BIMSTEC framework.

Secretary General Calls on Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka



SG called on Sri Lanka's Foreign Affairs Minister, H.E. Mr. Vijitha Herath, focusing on Sri Lanka's critical role in strengthening regional collaboration.

Secretary General meets with Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand



Secretary General met with H.E. Mr. Russ Jalichandra, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, on the sidelines of the 8th Indian Ocean Conference in Oman. They discussed the upcoming BIMSTEC Summit and Thailand's role in strengthening regional cooperation within the BIMSTEC framework.

Secretary General Interacts with Foreign Ministers of Bangladesh, Bhutan & India

Secretary General on the sideline of 8th Indian Ocean Conference, also held discussions with Foreign Ministers of other BIMSTEC member countries. He interacted with Bangladesh's Foreign Adviser, H.E. Mr. Md. Touhid Hossain, to explore ways to enhance Bangladesh's role in BIMSTEC. He held informal conversation with Bhutan's Foreign Affairs Minister, H.E. Lyonpo D.N. Dhungyel, to discuss ongoing engagement in BIMSTEC and regional solidarity. He met with H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Honourable External Affairs Minister of India at Breakfast.

Secretary General Calls on Foreign Minister of Oman



Secretary General called on Foreign Minister of Oman, H.E. Badr Albusaidi to discuss BIMSTEC, highlighting its importance for development and security in Indian Ocean region.

Secretary General Visits India

Secretary General calls on Minister of Youth Affairs, India

Secretary General called on H.E. Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, Honourable Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports of India, to thank him for the initiatives of his Ministry to expand BIMSTEC youth and sports engagements and seek more such engagements in future.

Secretary General calls on Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, India

Secretary General met with Ms. Meeta R. Lochan, Secretary, Department of Youth Affairs, India. They emphasized the critical role of youth in fostering regional cooperation and advancing sustainable development goals in the Bay of Bengal region.

Secretary General calls on Secretary (East), MEA, India

Secretary General called on H.E. Mr. Jaideep Mazumder, Secretary (East) Ministry of External Affairs, India. They discussed India's priorities and its critical role in expanding and deepening regional cooperation through BIMSTEC.

Secretary General calls on Secretary, Department of Sports, India

Secretary General met with Ms. Sujata Chaturvedi, Secretary, Department of Sports, India, to seek future initiatives towards enhancing BIMSTEC sports engagements.

Secretary General calls on Secretary, Ministry of Power, India

Secretary General met with Shri Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power, India. They discussed energy related issues and India's critical role in expanding and deepening regional cooperation within BIMSTEC framework, including the BIMSTEC Energy Centre.



Secretary General interacts with IFPRI/WB/ADB



Secretary General interacted with officials of the South Asia Regional Office of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in New Delhi, on 24 February 2025. Their discussions focussed on deepening collaboration in areas of mutual interest, including promotion of sustainable agriculture practices in the Bay of Bengal region.

Secretary General met with Ms. Mio Oka, Country Director-India, Asian Development Bank on 24 February 2025. They discussed deepening collaboration between the two Organisations.

Secretary General also met with Mr. Andrew Goodland, Program Leader for Sustainable Development for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, The World Bank, India on 24 February 2025. Their discussion centred on exploring collaborative opportunities for the World Bank to support BIMSTEC for sustainable development in Bay of Bengal.

8th Meeting of BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee



The 8th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPWC) was held on 25 February 2025. Chaired by Thailand, the Meeting discussed various matters pertaining to the upcoming Sixth BIMSTEC Summit and its preceding Meetings to be held in Bangkok from 2-4 April 2025.

The BPWC also finalized the recommendations for implementation of Report of the Eminent Persons Group. It also deliberated on other important matters pertaining to external relations of BIMSTEC, administrative and financial matters of the BIMSTEC Secretariat and the BIMSTEC centres / entities.

3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators



The 3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators was held on 06-07 February 2025 in Kathmandu, Nepal. It discussed the operational modalities for BIMSTEC Buddhist Circuits and BIMSTEC Cruise circuits. It also discussed visa facilitation measures, to promote intra-regional tourism, as well as convening of annual BIMSTEC Travel and Tourism Mart/Road Shows.

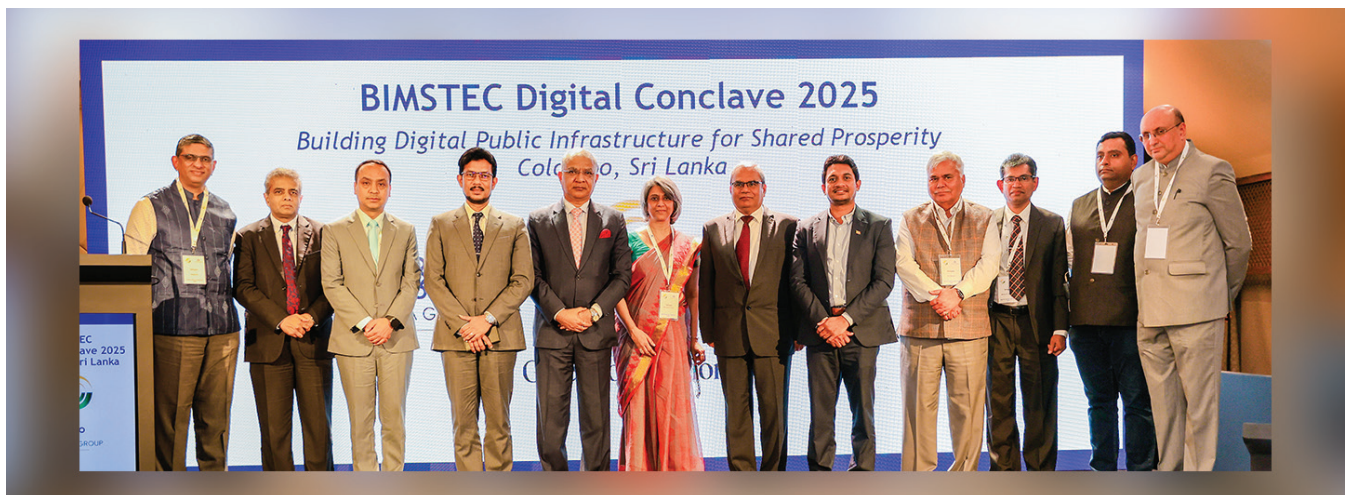
Workshop on Emerging Anti-Money Laundering & Counter Financing of Terrorism Trends and Typologies of BIMSTEC Member States



The Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) organized a Workshop, titled "Emerging Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism Trends and Typologies of BIMSTEC Member States", on 28 February 2025 in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.

It aimed at enhancing regional cooperation and strengthen financial intelligence-sharing mechanisms among the BIMSTEC member States. Delegates from BIMSTEC member States engaged in in-depth discussions on evolving threats and regulatory challenges, while emphasizing the critical need for regional collaboration to effectively combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

BIMSTEC Digital Conclave 2025: Advancing Digital Public Infrastructure in BIMSTEC Member States



The BIMSTEC Digital Conclave 2025, themed "Building Digital Public Infrastructure for Shared Prosperity", was held on 7-8 February, 2025, in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It was organized by The Asia Group, in partnership with the BIMSTEC Secretariat and with the support of the Government of Sri Lanka.

The Conclave brought together leaders and experts from across the region to explore the potential of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in driving digital transformation for regional development. It featured discussions on digital identity, payments, health, SME Transformation, logistics and governance. It provided a valuable platform for sharing experiences and forging partnerships to amplify the impact of DPI initiatives in the BIMSTEC member States.

First BIMSTEC Youth Summit 2025



The first-ever BIMSTEC Youth Summit themed “Youth as a Bridge for Intra-BIMSTEC Exchange,” was held on February 7-11, 2025 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India. It was organized by Department of Youth Affairs, Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Government of India and it saw participation of 70 youth delegates from the BIMSTEC member States, fostering dialogue and collaboration among young leaders.



BIMSTEC Interacts with Media



Continuing the efforts to enhance public outreach and external visibility, Secretary General held an interactive Session with members of the Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh (DCAB) on 11 February 2025 at the BIMSTEC Secretariat, aimed at fostering greater collaboration with media for raising public awareness about BIMSTEC's pivotal role in regional cooperation in Bay of Bengal.

Secretary General highlighted BIMSTEC's core objectives, strategic priorities, past achievements and ongoing initiatives aimed at fostering regional integration and development in Bay of Bengal region. The media persons underscored the importance of media partnerships in amplifying BIMSTEC's mission and activities, ensuring that the public remains informed about the Organization's contributions to progress and development in the region and beyond.

This interaction marked a key step in BIMSTEC's commitment to building stronger ties with the media, leveraging their reach to promote a deeper understanding of the Organization's goals and its impact on the region.

Outreach Program at Independent University



The BIMSTEC Public Diplomacy and External Publicity Team, in collaboration with Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), organized an outreach program titled “Regional Cooperation through BIMSTEC” on February 23, 2025, in Dhaka. It was aimed at raising awareness about BIMSTEC’s initiatives.

Over 40 participants from the Department of Global Studies & Governance attended the program. Emphasizing the importance of youth in fostering regional cooperation, BIMSTEC plans to take similar initiatives with other universities and institutions.





BIMSTEC SECRETARIAT

House No-N.W.(I)-06, Road No-53,
Gulshan-02, Dhaka-1212, Bangladesh

Tele : +880-2222290096-98, Fax : +880-2222287565

Email: info@bimstec.org, media@bimstec.org

Website : www.bimstec.org

Follow us



www.x.com/BimstecInDhaka



www.facebook.com/BimstecInDhaka/



www.instagram.com/bimstec_secretariat



www.linkedin.com/company/bimstec-secretariat