



Message from Secretary General

Welcome to 8th Edition (August 2025) of our Monthly BIMSTEC E-Newsletter!

August witnessed significant engagements within and beyond the BIMSTEC framework, reinforcing efforts for a more resilient, secured and developed Bay of Bengal.

BIMSTEC joined the policy roundtable and inception workshop on Agricultural Transformation and Market Integration (ATMI)- Phase II Project in selected BIMSTEC and ASEAN countries, opening avenues for collaboration with ASEAN as well as strengthening regional cooperation in agriculture sector under BIMSTEC.

The 2nd Midterm Review Workshop of the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity in Bangkok enabled the member States to explore strategies for stronger market linkages, streamlined trade, and enhanced connectivity.

The "Sapt-Sur" Traditional Music Festival in New Delhi celebrated the region's rich and diverse cultural heritage through music from all the 7 member States.

The BIMSTEC Energy Centre organized a virtual capacity-building program on green power grid management, sharing India's experience in modern energy solutions.

I participated virtually at the 6th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific and the 9th South and South-West Asia Subregional Forum on Sustainable Development, reaffirming BIMSTEC's commitment to accelerate solutions in achieving sustainable development in the region.

I had the opportunity to call on Honorable Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh to discuss the initiatives that Bangladesh has planned to take as the Chair of BIMSTEC and engage with other stakeholders to deepen regional cooperation under BIMSTEC. I shared BIMSTEC's progress and opportunities with the people of Bangladesh through Jamuna Television, broadening our outreach and visibility.

This edition features sectoral snapshot on Environment and Climate Change as well as Mountain Economy Sectors.

We highly value your readership and welcome your suggestions on strengthening regional cooperation under BIMSTEC and improving our E-Newsletter.

Indra Mani Pandey
Secretary General

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BIMSTEC at ATMI-II Policy Roundtable, Jakarta 2025

In a first of its kind initiative, five BIMSTEC member States - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Thailand- have been included, together with two ASEAN member States - the Philippines and Vietnam- in the Project entitled “Agricultural Transformation and Market Integration Phase II (ATMI-II)”, being jointly implemented by International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); and Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA).

Speaking at the Policy Roundtable and Inception Workshop, held on 4-5 August 2025 in Jakarta, BIMSTEC Secretary General(SG) highlighted the growing salience of BIMSTEC as a regional organisation in Indo-Pacific and the progress made in forging regional cooperation under BIMSTEC in agriculture and other relevant sectors. SG underscored the importance of ATMI Phase II in strengthening the capacity of BIMSTEC member States to develop policies and programs for sustainable development of the agriculture sector and realization of the goal of food security. SG noted that ATMI Phase II, which brings ASEAN and BIMSTEC member States together, provides a practical approach for forging cooperation between BIMSTEC and ASEAN to learn from each other's experiences and best practices.



ATMI Phase II aims at strengthening the institutional capacity of selected ASEAN (the Philippines and Vietnam) and BIMSTEC (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Thailand) countries to formulate and implement policies that would build inclusive, climate-resilient, and market-integrated food systems.

The Policy Roundtable and Inception Workshop brought together representatives from ASEAN, BIMSTEC, IFAD, IFPRI and representatives of the relevant ASEAN and BIMSTEC member States and other Stakeholders.

BIMSTEC and IFPRI signed an MoU in 2023 to collaborate on a range of activities, focusing on policy analysis and advice; research and capacity building; and dissemination of knowledge and best practices in several key areas, including agriculture, trade, food safety and quality, and climate change.

Read more:

southasia.ifpri.info/2025/08/05/asean-bimstec-experts-convene-in-jakarta-for-regional-policy-roundtable-on-agricultural-transformation-market-integration/



1st BIMSTEC Traditional Music Festival Held in India

BIMSTEC marked a new milestone in cultural cooperation with organization of the 1st Traditional Music Festival – ‘Sapt-Sur’ in New Delhi on 4th August 2025. Hosted by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), the Festival brought together mesmerizing performances from all 7 member States, showcasing their rich musical traditions that reflected the cultural unity in diversity in Bay of Bengal region.

Inaugurating the Festival, India’s External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, called it a “living bridge” of cultural harmony, emphasizing that music transcends borders and fosters mutual respect among nations.

The performances at the Festival featured a unique blend of folk, classical and indigenous music, resonating with themes of unity, diversity and regional solidarity. It offered an exceptional platform for audiences to experience cultural richness of the BIMSTEC community.

BIMSTEC is committed to organize such cultural fests in the future to celebrate the rich cultural tradition of its member States and strengthen people-to-people ties.



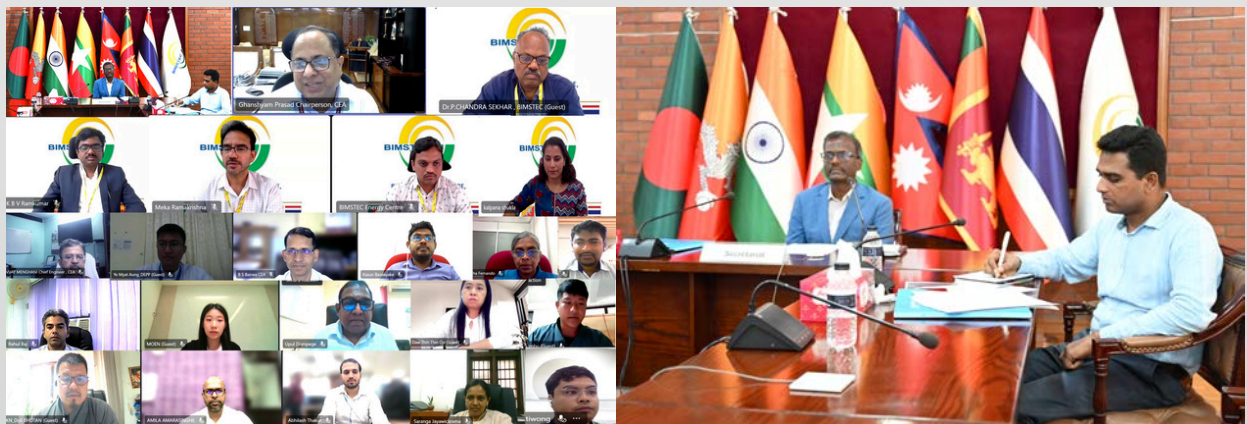
Read more:

bimstec.org/images/content_page_pdf/1754475321_Press%20Release_Music%20Festival_FINAL.pdf



2nd Workshop for Midterm Review of BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity

The 2nd Workshop for Midterm Review of the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity took place in Bangkok from 13–14 August 2025, organized by the BIMSTEC Secretariat in collaboration with Asian Development Bank. The Workshop reviewed the Draft Midterm Review Report, discussed key achievements and challenges and identified future priorities for transport connectivity amongst the member States. It agreed on actionable strategies and a roadmap to accelerate implementation, reaffirming the collective commitment to stronger, more sustainable regional connectivity. The outcomes of the Workshop will guide preparation of the Midterm Review Report, paving the way for expeditious implementation of the Master Plan.



Webinar for Capacity Building on Renewable Energy Integration

The BIMSTEC Energy Centre, located in Bengaluru, India, organized a virtual Capacity Building Program on "Renewable Energy Integration in Indian Context: Grid Operational Challenges and Solutions" on 19 August 2025.

The Program brought together experts and stakeholders from the BIMSTEC member States to share insights on India's renewable energy transition and its relevance for the wider Bay of Bengal region. The discussions highlighted the critical role of knowledge sharing, policy dialogue and collective action for addressing energy security and advancing clean and sustainable energy in BIMSTEC member States.



Thailand Hosts BIMSTEC Training Course on Management of Malaria

BIMSTEC member States participated at the 23rd Virtual International Training Course on Malaria Management, held from 25–29 August 2025. Organized by the Faculty of Tropical Medicine, Mahidol University, Thailand, in collaboration with World Health Organization, the Course focused on clinical and laboratory diagnosis, severe malaria management, anti-malarial drug resistance, case management, and vector control, aimed at strengthening global capacity for malaria elimination.



2nd BIMSTEC Conference on Traditional Medicine Knowledge, Genetic Resources & Intellectual Property Rights

The 2nd BIMSTEC Conference on Traditional Medicine Knowledge (TMK), Genetic Resources (GR), and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), was held virtually on 27 August 2025. Organized by the Government of Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the BIMSTEC Secretariat, the Conference highlighted the importance of safeguarding traditional knowledge, promoting research and innovation and advancing collective strategies to protect and utilize genetic resources for sustainable development. It provided a platform for the member States to share national experiences and exchange ideas on strengthening regional cooperation.

On the same day, the 1st Meeting of the BIMSTEC Nodal Group on TMK, GR, and IPR was also convened virtually. The Meeting discussed the Group's role and explored possible areas for collaboration among the member States to protect traditional medicine knowledge, genetic resources and intellectual property rights.



BIMSTEC SG Calls-on Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh

BIMSTEC Secretary General called on H.E. Mr. Asad Alam Siam, Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, on 6th August 2025, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh. They discussed the initiatives that Bangladesh has planned to take as the Chair of BIMSTEC. H.E. Asad Alam Siam reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to take forward the BIMSTEC's Agenda for regional cooperation.



BIMSTEC Talks Progress and Possibilities on Jamuna TV

BIMSTEC Secretary General was invited to a special talk show on Jamuna Television, one of Bangladesh's most prominent and reputed media outlets. In this insightful conversation, he discussed BIMSTEC's progress, the challenges ahead and its future direction in fostering regional cooperation across Bay of Bengal.

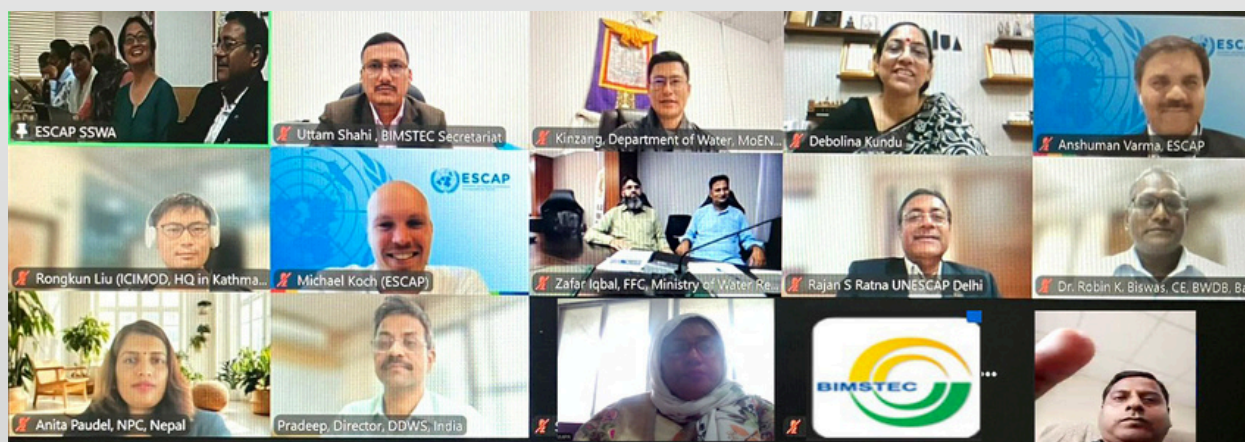
▶ Watch the full interview here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=zaEXnjrXyUw



BIMSTEC at 6th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific

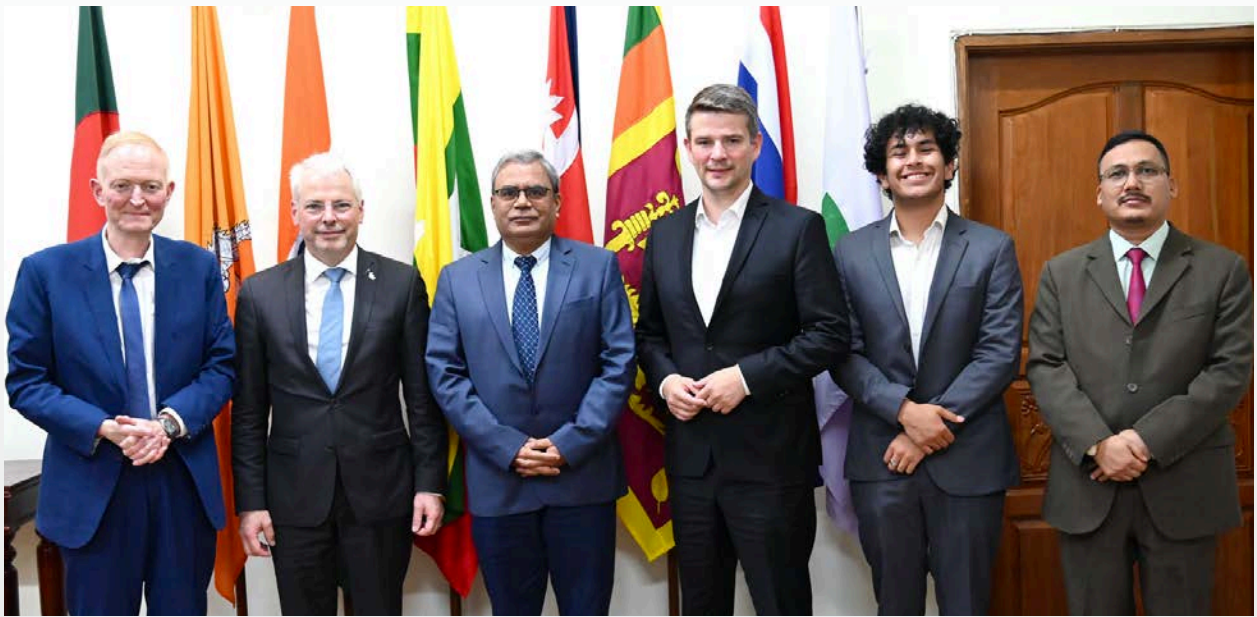
BIMSTEC Secretary General participated virtually at the 6th Forum of Ministers and Environment Authorities of Asia Pacific, held from 26-29 August, 2025 in Fiji. The Forum was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change of the Government of Fiji and the United Nations Environment Programme, primarily to discuss and prioritize environmental issues in the Asia-Pacific region.

In his recorded video message for the Ministerial Segment, SG emphasized the critical role of subregional organizations in accelerating sustainable solutions across the Asia-Pacific region. He underlined the importance of regional organizations in providing the requisite platform for forging collective regional action and highlighted BIMSTEC's progress in strengthening cooperation in areas such as environment & climate change, disaster management, mountain economy and energy. SG reaffirmed BIMSTEC's commitment to promoting inclusive, sustainable and climate-resilient development in Bay of Bengal region.



BIMSTEC at 9th South and South-West Asia Subregional Forum on Sustainable Development

BIMSTEC participated at the Subregional Consultation on Advancing SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation, held virtually on 25 August 2025, as part of the 9th South and South-West Asia Subregional Forum on Sustainable Development. The consultation, organized by UNESCAP Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia (ESCAP-SSWA), brought together government representatives, experts, subregional think tanks and UN agencies to address urgent water and climate challenges in the region. Speakers emphasized the need for transformative, equitable and coordinated actions to accelerate progress in realization of SDG 2030 Agenda. BIMSTEC reaffirmed its commitment to advancing regional cooperation for water security, climate resilience and sustainable development in the BIMSTEC member States.



BIMSTEC Secretary General with FNF Delegation

BIMSTEC Secretary General met with a Delegation of Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung für die Freiheit (FNF) on 14 August 2025 at the BIMSTEC Secretariat. SG briefed the Delegation on BIMSTEC's institutional framework, agenda, priorities and its role in fostering regional cooperation across Bay of Bengal.



BIMSTEC Explores Collaboration in Health Sector

BIMSTEC Secretary General visited the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b), one of the world's leading global health research institutes, based in Dhaka, to explore opportunities for collaboration in public health matters under BIMSTEC.

Discussions focused on potential initiatives such as BIMSTEC Research Fellowship, training health professionals from BIMSTEC countries, specialized training on epidemic management, disease case management, and health research methods in BIMSTEC countries etc.



BIMSTEC, UNOPS Explore Pathways for Regional Energy Cooperation

The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) presented its initiative “Accelerating Clean Energy Transition in Southeast Asia”, under the Energy Transition Partnership (ETP) — a multi-stakeholder, multi-donor platform administered by UNOPS. The Session brought together officials from the BIMSTEC Secretariat and the BIMSTEC Energy Centre, Bengaluru, to foster dialogue and explore opportunities for enhancing regional cooperation in sustainable energy development.



BIMSTEC Extends Support to Historic Motorcycle Expedition for Promoting Peace and Regional Unity

BIMSTEC, in partnership with the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI) and Nalanda University, organized the Tri-Services Lord Buddha Circuit Motorcycle Expedition, a historic journey uniting the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean.

Led by Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force, the expedition was a symbol of military camaraderie, spiritual diplomacy, and cultural exchange. The riders continued their journey from Visakhapatnam through Andhra Pradesh, carrying forward the message of Peace, Unity, and Brotherhood.

Advancing Regional Resilience: BIMSTEC's Progress in Environment and Climate Change Sector



The Bay of Bengal region is among the most climate-vulnerable regions in the world. From record-high temperatures and erratic rainfall to increasingly frequent floods and landslides, the impacts of climate change are both visible and intensifying. These threats have direct implications on food security, livelihoods, ecosystems and socio-economic development across the region.

Recognizing the urgency, the BIMSTEC member States have identified Environment and Climate Change (ECC) as one of the Sectors of Cooperation, with Bhutan serving as the lead Country. This decision reflects a shared understanding that regional cooperation is crucial for building resilience and ensuring sustainable development in the face of escalating climate risks.



A Joint Working Group on Environment and Climate Change (JWG-ECC) was established in 2022 as the primary institutional mechanism to guide and coordinate BIMSTEC's climate agenda. Since its inception, JWG-ECC has convened annually in 2022, 2023, and 2024 to deliberate on common and actionable priorities.

One of its landmark achievements has been finalization of the BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Environment and Climate Change, endorsed by member States at the 6th BIMSTEC Summit held in Bangkok in April 2025. The Plan of Action focuses on three core areas for regional collaboration: (i) Biodiversity (ii) Waste Management and (iii) Climate Change. By anchoring cooperation in these areas, the Plan of Action provides BIMSTEC with a framework to translate its commitment into collective action.

Recognizing that environmental and climate challenges transcend national boundaries, BIMSTEC has advanced its climate diplomacy by building partnerships with regional and international organizations engaged in climate action.

These organizations include the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UN Women, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), International Solar Alliance (ISA), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), International

Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), among others.

These partnerships have already resulted in a range of capacity-building programmes, knowledge exchanges, and joint initiatives aimed at strengthening institutional readiness and disaster resilience across BIMSTEC countries.

BIMSTEC has submitted a formal application for Observer Status at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This move signals BIMSTEC's determination to integrate its regional voice into the global climate governance process and to ensure that the unique vulnerabilities of the Bay of Bengal region are adequately reflected in international climate negotiations.



Complementing the Environment and Climate Change agenda, BIMSTEC has prioritized the importance of mountain ecosystems for ecological balance, sustainable livelihoods, and regional development. Accordingly, since March 2023, Mountain Economy has been identified as a new sub-sector of cooperation. The Intergovernmental Expert Group on Mountain Economy has finalized BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Mountain Economy, which includes the following priority areas:

- Compact and sustainable mountain settlements;
- Enhanced connectivity across mountain regions;
- Promotion of clean energy solutions;
- Protection of ecosystems and biodiversity; and
- Development of green tourism and sustainable livelihoods.

As climate threats continue to mount, the successful implementation of the BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Environment and Climate Change as well as the Mountain Economy will be crucial. This requires strong political commitment, resource mobilization, active engagement of multiple stakeholders, and effective monitoring of progress. With its collective will, strategic partnerships, and shared vision, BIMSTEC is steadily advancing towards a more sustainable, climate-ready, and resilient Bay of Bengal region, contributing directly to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



**BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL
TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

BIMSTEC SECRETARIAT

HOUSE: N.W.(I)-06, ROAD: 53,
GULSHAN 2, DHAKA-1212, BANGLADESH

✉ COMMUNICATIONS@BIMSTEC.ORG

☎ +880-2222290096-98, FAX : +880-2222287565

🌐 WWW.BIMSTEC.ORG

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