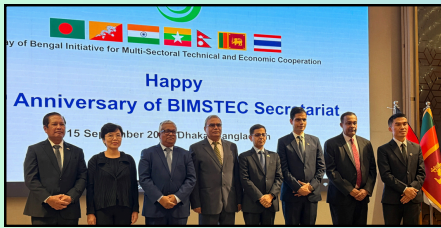




BIMSTEC E-Newsletter

September 2025



Message from Secretary General

Welcome to 9th Edition (September 2025) of Monthly BIMSTEC E-Newsletter!

This month, BIMSTEC celebrated the 11th anniversary of establishment of its Secretariat, a significant occasion graced by Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, H.E. Asad Alam Siam, alongside diplomats, representatives of media, think tanks, business leaders and academics.

A major milestone was grant of Observer Status to BIMSTEC at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG)—a recognition of our sustained efforts to combat terrorism financing and financial crimes, while aligning with global standards and best practices.

At the Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave in Kolkata, BIMSTEC's growing role in forging South-South cooperation was once again underscored. Our outreach extended to youth engagement through the BIMSTEC Youth Leaders Summit in Guwahati, where the next generation of regional leaders came together to shape a shared future. Equally, our co-hosting the Regional Workshop on Infrastructure Resilience in New Delhi, organised in cooperation with CDRI, highlighted BIMSTEC's commitment to collective disaster preparedness in a climate-vulnerable Bay of Bengal.

I also had the opportunity to engage with valued partners, including Mr. Lutfey Siddiqi, Special Envoy of the

Chief Adviser of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Michael Miller, EU Ambassador in Dhaka and heads of the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, and the International Telecommunication Union, to deepen collaboration in food security, policy research, and digital innovation.

This month also saw the release of the 4th BIMSTEC Track 1.5 Security Dialogue Report, advancing discussions on regional security cooperation, and the 3rd Meeting of the Expert Group on Science, Technology and Innovation in Colombo, which reviewed the Plan of Action and steps toward operationalising the Technology Transfer Facility.

In this edition, we feature a sectoral snapshot on Security sector, which reflects BIMSTEC's steady progress and reaffirm the strength of collective action for a peaceful, prosperous, and resilient Bay of Bengal region.

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

Inside this Newsletter:

In Focus: BIMSTEC Secretariat Marks its 11th Anniversary

In Focus: BIMSTEC Granted Observer Status at the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG)

International Forum and Seminar

Sectoral Meeting, Event and Workshop

Call-ons with Dignitaries

Collaboration Meetings

Publication of Report: 4th BIMSTEC Track 1.5 Security Dialogue

BIMSTEC in the Media

Sectoral Snapshot: BIMSTEC's Progress in Security Sector



BIMSTEC Secretariat Marks its 11th Anniversary

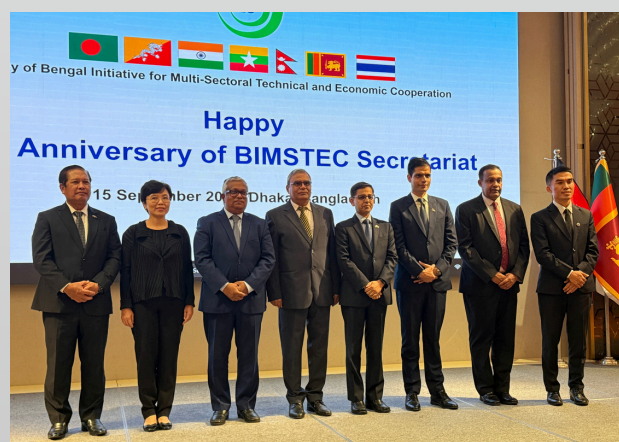
The Secretariat of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) celebrated 11th anniversary of its establishment on 15 September 2025.

H.E. Asad Alam Siam, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, graced the celebration as its Chief Guest, together with Ambassadors and High Commissioners, including from the BIMSTEC member States; members from business, media, think tanks, culture and academic communities; developmental partners; and members of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, etc.

Welcoming the guests, BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, highlighted the Secretariat's role in facilitating consultation, coordination and cooperation amongst the members, aimed at implementing the vast agenda of regional cooperation under BIMSTEC. He noted that, over the past eleven years, the Secretariat has emerged as the anchor for forging cooperation, supporting member States in advancing the shared regional cooperation goals. Secretary General also expressed deep appreciation for the support of the Government of Bangladesh in hosting the Secretariat in Dhaka.

In his remarks, Chief Guest, H.E. Asad Alam Siam, highlighted BIMSTEC's achievements in advancing regional cooperation across various sectors such as connectivity, trade, energy, security, climate change, health and disaster management. As the current Chair of BIMSTEC, he reaffirmed Bangladesh's unwavering commitment to BIMSTEC and reiterated its full support to the BIMSTEC Secretariat in fulfilling its mandate and securing the shared interests of all the member States. Mr. Asad Alam Siam, speaking on behalf of Bangladesh as the Lead Country for Trade, Investment and Development, called upon all BIMSTEC member States to extend their full support for early finalisation and implementation of the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (FTA).

The BIMSTEC Secretariat was established on 13 September 2014 in Dhaka pursuant to decision of the 3rd BIMSTEC Summit held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. The Secretariat is headed by Secretary General. It implements the decisions and directives of the member States and monitors and reports on the progress in regional cooperation under BIMSTEC, contributing to realisation of the shared vision of a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable Bay of Bengal region.





BIMSTEC Granted Observer Status at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG)

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) has been granted Observer Status at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG). This recognition marks an important milestone in BIMSTEC's efforts to strengthen regional cooperation against money laundering and financing of terrorism.

The APG, established in 1997 in Bangkok, Thailand, is the largest Financial Action Task Force-Style Regional Body (FSRB). With its Secretariat based in Sydney, Australia, the APG plays a crucial role in advancing Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) Standards in the Asia-Pacific region. It also works closely with global institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, OECD, UNODC, INTERPOL, the Commonwealth Secretariat, and others.

The APG's decision to grant BIMSTEC Observer Status reflects recognition of BIMSTEC's sustained commitment to regional cooperation in anti-money laundering and financing of terrorism. Since establishment of the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWGCTTC) in 2005, and its Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism, BIMSTEC has consistently advanced initiatives for information exchange, capacity building and development of joint strategies to address illicit financial flows among the member States.

Observer Status at the APG will enable BIMSTEC to engage with the relevant regional and global institutions, benefit from regional best practices and contribute to shaping responses to emerging financial crimes. It will reinforce BIMSTEC's collective commitment to peace, stability and sustainable economic development in Bay of Bengal region. The BIMSTEC Secretariat looks forward to active engagement in advancing the shared objectives.

Read more:

https://bimstec.org/images/content_page_pdf/1757244002_Press%20Release_BIMSTEC_APG-Rev.pdf



BIMSTEC Participates at 3rd Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, addressed the 3rd Indo-Pacific Economic Conclave, held on 18–19 September 2025 in Kolkata, India. He engaged in a Fireside Chat with renowned scholar Shri Prabir De. The Conclave was organised by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry and brought together policymakers, business leaders and experts to deliberate on economic opportunities and challenges in Indo-Pacific region.

In his address, the Secretary General stated that BIMSTEC's agenda for expanding intra-regional trade, investment and connectivity and forging cooperation in realising SDG contributes to the goal of enhancing security and development in Indo-Pacific.

SG underlined the growing salience of BIMSTEC for regional cooperation, encompassing South and South-East Asia. Highlighting progress in maritime, surface and digital connectivity, SG drew attention to other facets of maritime cooperation under BIMSTEC.

During the Fireside Chat, SG highlighted the progress realised in various sectors including people-to-people relations, business-to-business interactions and relevance of BIMSTEC as a platform for regional cooperation in Indo-Pacific.

Speakers at the conclave highlighted that the Indo-Pacific region accounts for more than 60 percent of global GDP, with its trade and maritime partnerships being crucial to shaping future economic trajectories. Discussions at the Conclave also covered economic growth, sustainability, clean energy transitions and trade constraints, aiming to deliver actionable policy insights.

Read the media reports:

[Dhaka Tribune](#) | [BSS](#) | [UNB](#) | [Kuensel](#) | [Times of India](#) | [Press Trust of India](#) | [The Economic Times](#)



3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation

The 3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation was held in Colombo on 11–12 September 2025. It reviewed the progress in implementation of BIMSTEC Plan of Action on cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation (2023–2027), shared national experiences on advancing evidence-based governance and discussed regional assessment report, BIMSTEC Start-Up Conclave and operationalisation of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility.



BIMSTEC Youth Leaders Summit 2025 Held in Guwahati

A BIMSTEC Youth Leaders Summit 2025 was held in Guwahati, India, from 9–12 September. Hosted by Bharat Scouts and Guides, under the aegis of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, the Summit was inaugurated by Assam Governor Shri Lakshman Prasad Acharya. Bringing together 70 emerging changemakers from BIMSTEC member States, the Summit served as a platform for dialogue, collaboration and youth leadership across the Bay of Bengal region.



BIMSTEC Co-hosts Regional Workshop on Infrastructure Resilience

BIMSTEC Secretary General (SG) H.E. Mr. Indra Mani Pandey addressed the inaugural session of the Regional Capacity Strengthening Workshop on Building Infrastructure Resilience, held in New Delhi on 11–12 September 2025, organised by BIMSTEC in partnership with the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

SG underscored that the Bay of Bengal is among the world's most disaster-prone regions and emphasised the urgency for regional cooperation in disaster management through information sharing, early warning and joint preparedness. SG also highlighted BIMSTEC's initiatives, including progress in implementation of its Plan of Action on Disaster Management including establishment of BIMSTEC Disaster Management Centre in India, aimed at enhancing collective disaster preparedness and response. As five members of BIMSTEC are also members of CDRI, two organisations are committed to mutually desirable cooperation in future.

CALL-ONS WITH DIGNITARIES



BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets Special Envoy of Chief Adviser of Bangladesh on International Affairs

BIMSTEC Secretary General met with Mr. Lutfey Siddiqi, Special Envoy of Chief Adviser of Bangladesh for International Affairs, on 4th September 2025. He outlined BIMSTEC's mandate and priorities for regional cooperation and the role of Bangladesh as Chair of BIMSTEC. Mr. Siddiqi reaffirmed commitment of Bangladesh to fostering regional cooperation under BIMSTEC. He noted that BIMSTEC's agenda dovetailed fully with the developmental priorities of Bangladesh.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets EU Ambassador in Bangladesh

BIMSTEC Secretary General met with H.E. Mr. Michael Miller, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union in Bangladesh. Secretary General briefed Ambassador Miller on BIMSTEC's mandate, key objectives and priority areas for fostering regional cooperation in Bay of Bengal region. Ambassador Miller commended the progress achieved by BIMSTEC and underscored its vital role in enhancing regional integration.

COLLABORATION MEETINGS



BIMSTEC SG Meets CIMMYT Director General Dr. Bram Govaerts

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Dr. Bram Govaerts, Director General of International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), to explore opportunities for cooperation with the BIMSTEC member States for advancing food security, sustainable farming and climate-smart solutions for the Bay of Bengal region.



BIMSTEC SG holds dialogue with RIS and Dakshin- Global South Centre of Excellence

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Prof. Sachin Kumar Sharma, Director General, as well as scholars of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi-based policy research institute under India's Ministry of External Affairs, and representatives of DAKSHIN – Global South Centre of Excellence, hosted at RIS. The discussions focused on strengthening cooperation with BIMSTEC through policy research and institutional support aimed at enhancing regional cooperation under BIMSTEC.

BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets with Head of ITU South Asia Office

BIMSTEC Secretary General met with Dr. Pranita Upadhyaya, Head of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Area Office and Innovation Centre for South Asia, New Delhi. They discussed future cooperation between BIMSTEC and ITU in domain of digital and AI technologies, including digital public infrastructure and innovation.



Release of the 4th BIMSTEC Track 1.5 Security Dialogue Report



BIMSTEC released the report of the 4th BIMSTEC Track 1.5 Security Dialogue, held on 6–7 May 2025 at the Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi.

The Dialogue brought together senior officials, experts, and academics from BIMSTEC member States to deliberate on pressing security challenges in Bay of Bengal region. It also provided a platform for sharing perspectives, identifying collective priorities, and recommending strategies to strengthen regional security cooperation.

Read the full report: bit.ly/3VRN3dR

BIMSTEC IN THE MEDIA



BIMSTEC Featured in the Daily Bangladesh Post

The Daily Bangladesh Post recently published a comprehensive article titled “*BIMSTEC: Fostering Regional Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal Region*”, highlighting the growing relevance of BIMSTEC as a catalyst for integration between South and Southeast Asia. The feature underscores BIMSTEC’s role in promoting regional cooperation, prosperity, and sustainable development across its seven member States — Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. A key focus of the article is BIMSTEC’s non-political and consensus-based approach. By prioritising functional cooperation over political differences, BIMSTEC has succeeded in fostering trust and practical collaboration in areas that directly benefit the people of the region. The article observes that this pragmatic and inclusive approach has strengthened BIMSTEC’s credibility and positioned it as a results-oriented regional organisation committed to shared prosperity.

Read the full article: bangladeshpost.net/epaper/2025-09-30?page=9

Shaping Regional Stability: BIMSTEC's Progress in Security Sector



The Bay of Bengal region faces a broad spectrum of traditional and non-traditional security challenges, including terrorism, transnational crime, drug trafficking, cyber threats, and maritime insecurity. These shared threats have significant implications for peace, stability, and sustainable development across BIMSTEC member States.

In response to the emerging threats, BIMSTEC identified Security as one of its seven priority Sectors of cooperation, with India serving as the Lead country. To advance this agenda, the Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC), established following the 8th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting in Dhaka in 2005, is serving as the principal institutional mechanism for co-operation. It operates through five specialised Sub-Groups on (i) Countering Radicalisation and Terrorism, (ii) Human Trafficking, (iii) Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, (iv) Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism, and (v) Legal and Law Enforcement Issues.

Significant progress has been achieved through these mechanisms. The Sub-Group on Narcotic Drugs endorsed India's proposal to establish the BIMSTEC Drug Offences Monitoring Desk (BDOMD). The Sub-Group on Human Trafficking finalised a Plan of Action and, with UNODC support, began developing a secure digital platform for information sharing on trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. The Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues drafted Concept Notes on combating fake narcotic drugs, cybercrimes, and illicit firearms, while the Sub-Group on Countering Radicalisation and Terrorism completed a Concept Note on Regional Co-operation in Countering Radicalisation.

At the strategic level, the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs' Meeting (BNSC) provides policy direction and co-ordination. Four meetings have been held, the latest in Nay Pyi Taw in July 2024, guiding the sector's expanding agenda. Following its recommendations, Expert Groups were established

on Maritime Security, Cyber Security, Space Co-operation, and the Himalayan Science Council. The Expert Group on Cyber Security finalised a Five-Year Action Plan, while the Working Group on Space Co-operation is being set up to implement India's initiatives, including a BIMSTEC Satellite, nano-satellite development, and a ground station for remote sensing data. The Expert Group on the Himalayan Science Council finalised a Concept Paper and a draft Memorandum of Association, currently under consideration by member States.

The Sixth BIMSTEC Summit, held in Bangkok in April 2025, approved establishment of the Home Ministers' Mechanism (HMM) as the apex operational platform, with India offering to host its first meeting later this year. Legal and policy frameworks have also advanced, including the BIMSTEC Convention on Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organised Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking, the Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, and the finalised Convention Against Trafficking in Persons. Draft conventions on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons and Extradition remain under consideration.

Recent milestones include the Guidelines for the Maritime Component of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR) and Observer status at the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG). Partnerships have been strengthened through MoUs with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), expanding BIMSTEC's international engagement.

As security challenges in the region continue to evolve, BIMSTEC's mechanisms and frameworks have become instrumental in fostering trust, building capacity and promoting coordinated action. Through sustained political commitment, regular dialogue and institutional strengthening, BIMSTEC is steadily advancing towards its vision of a secure, stable, and resilient Bay of Bengal region.

Key Achievements at a Glance

- JWG-CTTC operationalised with five Sub-Groups addressing terrorism, trafficking, radicalisation, and financial crimes.
- Plan of Action on Human Trafficking finalised; BDOMD endorsed; digital platform initiated with UNODC support.
- Four National Security Chiefs' Meetings held; Expert Groups established on Maritime, Cyber, Space, and Himalayan Co-operation.
- Home Ministers' Mechanism (HMM) established; key Conventions on Terrorism, Legal Assistance, and Trafficking adopted.
- Cybersecurity Action Plan, Maritime HA/DR Guidelines, Observer Status at APG, and MoUs with UNODC and IORA strengthened regional co-ordination.



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

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