



Message from Secretary General

Welcome to the 11th Edition (November 2025) of our Monthly BIMSTEC E-Newsletter!

The month of November 2025 witnessed convening of a series of key sectoral meetings and engagements with partners and other stakeholders, contributing to progress across priority sectors and deepening cooperation with external partners.

While during the visit of Bhutan's Prime Minister, H.E. Dasho Tshering Tobgay, to Bangladesh, the imperative of regional cooperation under BIMSTEC was underscored, my meetings with ADB's Leadership reaffirmed our long-standing partnership and their continued support for regional integration under BIMSTEC.

While the 3rd Maritime Information Sharing Workshop addressed emerging maritime challenges and technology-driven cooperation, the 4th Expert Group Meeting on Maritime Security finalized draft Principles for Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies during their interaction at sea and Guidelines for Coordinated Marine Oil Pollution Response in the Bay of Bengal. It also agreed to hold maritime security exercises.

The 2nd Expert Group Meeting on Disaster Management adopted a Plan of Action to enhance regional preparedness, while the workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction discussed, among others, establishment of the proposed BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Disaster Management.

Other engagements included the 3rd Meeting of the Sub-Group on Countering Radicalisation and Terrorism, which finalised its draft Plan of Action; the 5th Expert Group Meeting on Visa Matters in Colombo, which reviewed regional mobility and visa procedures; and the 7th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine, which reviewed implementation of the Plan of Action and the progress in implementation of key initiatives aimed at development of traditional medicine cooperation.

The 2nd Special Course for BIMSTEC Diplomats held at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service in New Delhi provided young diplomats from the BIMSTEC member States with comprehensive training on regional and multilateral cooperation including regional cooperation under BIMSTEC.

This Edition also features a brief snapshot on cooperation under BIMSTEC in Energy sector, highlighting progress in grid interconnection and energy efficiency.

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 Secretary General Visits Manila to Meet with ADB's Senior Management

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, visited Manila from 06-07 November 2025 to meet with the President of Asian Development Bank (ADB) as well as other members of ADB's senior Leadership..

During his meeting with ADB President, Mr. Masato Kanda, SG highlighted the long-standing cooperation between BIMSTEC and ADB, and appreciated the support it has provided in developing BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan, BIMSTEC Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Study and various sectoral capacity-building programmes. The ADB President expressed his commitment to deepen ongoing cooperation and work together to identify additional avenues for expanding collaboration in future. He underlined the importance that ADB attaches to cooperation with regional organisations like BIMSTEC.

SG also met with Mr. Yingming Yang, Vice President (South, Central and West Asia), and Ms. Fatima Yasmin, Vice President for Sectors and Themes. His discussions with them focused on ongoing cooperation within their respective regions, sectors and themes, with both Vice Presidents expressing their commitment to further enhancing cooperation under BIMSTEC in areas of shared interest. They underscored the convergence in agendas of BIMSTEC and ADB. Senior officials, including Director General and Deputy Director General of the concerned regions and sectors, were also present at the meeting. SG also met them separately.

SG emphasised the need to scale up technical assistance grant and consider project-based collaboration. SG underscored that collaboration between BIMSTEC and ADB was crucial for advancing sustainable development, resilience and shared prosperity in the region.

Media Coverage: [BSS](#) | [UNB](#) | [Daily Sun](#) | [Diplomat Nepal](#) | [The Financial Express](#)

2nd Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Disaster Management Cooperation



The National Disaster Management Authority of India hosted the 2nd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Disaster Management Cooperation on 07 November 2025 in virtual mode, which finalised the BIMSTEC Plan of Action to improve Preparedness and Coordination for responding to natural disasters in Bay of Bengal Region and discussed establishment of BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Disaster Management in India.

BIMSTEC Sub-Group on the Cooperation on Countering Radicalisation and Terrorism Meets Virtually

The 3rd Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Cooperation on Countering Radicalisation and Terrorism was held on 19 November 2025, in New Delhi, in virtual mode.

Hosted by India, it agreed on draft BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Counter Radicalisation and Terrorism and discussed establishing an effective Information and Intelligence Sharing Mechanism and developing a structured Capacity Building Programme for Law Enforcement, Intelligence and Judicial officials of the BIMSTEC member States to strengthen regional efforts in countering radicalisation and terrorism.



4th Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Maritime Security Cooperation

The National Security Council Secretariat of India (NSCS) hosted the 4th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Maritime Security Cooperation, in New Delhi, on 25 November 2025. The Expert Group finalised the “Draft BIMSTEC Guiding Principles on the Conduct of Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies (MLEAs) during Interaction at Sea” and the “Draft BIMSTEC Guidelines for Coordinated Marine Oil Pollution Response in the Bay of Bengal”. It also agreed on convening the 1st BIMSTEC Maritime Security Exercise in 2nd half of 2026.



5th Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Visa Matters

The 5th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Visa Matters was held on 18-19 November 2025 in Colombo. The Meeting reviewed progress since the 4th Expert Group Meeting and discussed measures to enhance regional mobility and visa facilitation amongst the BIMSTEC member States."



7th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine

The 7th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine (BTFTM) was held from 26-27 November 2025 in Colombo, with a view to advance regional cooperation in traditional medicine sector.

Hosted by Sri Lanka, the Meeting reviewed implementation of Plan of Action and other key initiatives for development of traditional medicine, including BIMSTEC Traditional Medicine Portal, BIMSTEC Pharmacopoeia, harmonisation of traditional medicine curricula, research collaboration on COVID-19 and diabetes and operationalisation of two proposed Centres of Excellence on Tropical Medicine and Traditional Medicine respectively.



BIMSTEC Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction

A Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction, aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in disaster preparedness and resilience among BIMSTEC member States, was held from 11–13 November 2025 in New Delhi.

The Workshop brought together participants from BIMSTEC member States to exchange experiences, share good practices and explore coordinated approaches to disaster preparedness and response. It was jointly organised by the BIMSTEC Secretariat, the National Disaster Management Authority of India, and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction.



BIMSTEC Participates at 3rd Maritime Information Sharing Workshop

BIMSTEC participated at 3rd Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW-25), hosted by the Information Fusion Centre - Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) in Gurugram, India, from 3-5 November 2025, which brought together over 50 participants from 30 countries, including representatives from Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Djibouti Code of Conduct/Jeddah Amendment (DCoC/JA), to enhance real-time coordination, interoperability and maritime information sharing across the Indian Ocean Region.

Discussions focused on evolving maritime challenges, the role of information networks and the growing importance of technology-driven cooperation. The Workshop also featured a Table-Top Exercise using indigenously developed Maritime Analytical Tool for Regional Awareness (MANTRA) platform, where participants practiced coordinated responses to simulated maritime incidents such as piracy, illicit trafficking, irregular migration and distress-at-sea incidents.

Media Coverage: [PIB](#) | [News on Air](#)

aphical contiguity, historical linkages and shared cultural heritage of the 'ies in Bay of Bengal region provide a solid foundation for forging regional ration;

'EC member States enjoy close bilateral relations with one another and they ready engaged in bilateral cooperation in areas which are on the agenda of 'EC; regional cooperation under BIMSTEC thus complements and reinforces ral cooperation.



2nd Special Course for Diplomats from BIMSTEC Countries Held in India

The 2nd Special Course for Diplomats from BIMSTEC Countries was held from 17–22 November 2025 at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) in New Delhi, bringing together young diplomats from BIMSTEC member States for an intensive programme on regional cooperation, diplomacy and global affairs.

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, delivered remarks at the Valedictory Session, highlighting BIMSTEC's growing role in fostering regional integration, strengthening partnerships and advancing collective progress across its priority areas of cooperation. He emphasised the importance of equipping the young diplomats with the knowledge and perspectives needed to drive future collaboration in the region.

14 young diplomats from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in the week-long course, which aimed to build a deeper understanding of regional dynamics and strengthen the foundations for future diplomacy within the BIMSTEC framework.



Media Coverage: [The Diplomat Nepal](#) | [Nagaland Post](#) | [MEA](#)

BIMSTEC Secretary General calls on Foreign Secretary of Philippines

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, called on H.E. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, Foreign Secretary of the Republic of the Philippines, during his visit to Manila on 7 November 2025. He briefed her on BIMSTEC and the ongoing engagements between the BIMSTEC and ASEAN Secretariats and proposed exploring avenues for deeper cooperation, particularly as the Philippines prepares to assume ASEAN Chairmanship in 2026.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Receives NIICE Research Director

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, received, in his office on 24 November, Dr. Pramod Jaiswal, Research Director at the Nepal Institute for International Cooperation and Engagement - NIICE.

Their discussion focused on exploring avenues for future collaboration between BIMSTEC and NIICE, particularly initiatives to bring together Think Tanks in BIMSTEC member States for cooperation, research analyses and dialogue to support evidence-based regional cooperation under BIMSTEC in the Bay of Bengal region.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Receives SACEP Director General



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, received at the Secretariat on 30 November 2025, H.E. Norbu Wangchuk, Director General of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP).

Their discussion focused on the functioning of the two organisations and potential collaboration between BIMSTEC and SACEP, particularly in environment, climate change, waste management and related sectors.

BIMSTEC Secretary General at Indian Ocean Maritime Dialogue



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, participated at the Indian Ocean Maritime Dialogue on the theme “India and the Indian Ocean – Shaping Pathways for Peace and Security” held in New Delhi on 27 November 2025.

Speaking during the session on regional maritime structures and identifying gaps and solutions for information-sharing, crisis response, fisheries governance, and subsea infrastructure protection, the Secretary General underscored BIMSTEC’s growing role in advancing maritime cooperation, including maritime security in the region and highlighted key initiatives undertaken by BIMSTEC in maritime security, connectivity, disaster management, environment and climate change and blue economy.

BIMSTEC IN MEDIA

BIMSTEC Secretary General Highlights Regional Integration and Northeast India’s Role on DD News, India



In an exclusive interview with DDNewsLive (Meghalaya), BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, shared insights on BIMSTEC’s growing role as a bridge between South and Southeast Asia and the salience of BIMSTEC for North-Eastern region of India.

Secretary General highlighted that BIMSTEC’s cooperation agenda holds direct relevance for the North-East. Improved cross-border linkages, harmonised procedures and collaborative development initiatives can significantly enhance economic opportunities and strengthen regional integration. He emphasised that the operationalisation of BIMSTEC connectivity master plan will benefit landlocked and border regions, creating smoother corridors for movement of goods, services and people.

Watch the full interview here:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=khVd-J_oJJM



Bangladesh-Bhutan Ties Strengthen Regional Cooperation under BIMSTEC

The three-day State Visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Dasho Tshering Tobgay, to Bangladesh from 22–24 November 2025 marked a significant step toward advancing regional cooperation within the BIMSTEC framework.

Both leaders emphasized their intent to enhance cooperation under BIMSTEC Framework and other multilateral forums, guided by the principles of mutual respect, shared values, and collective development. They also reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening long-term bilateral engagement. As founding members of BIMSTEC, Bangladesh and Bhutan continue to play constructive roles in fostering cooperation across the Bay of Bengal region.



Media Coverage: [Daily Observer](#) | [The Business Standard](#) | [UNB](#)

Powering Regional Integration: BIMSTEC's Progress in Energy Sector



BIMSTEC member States face growing energy demand, uneven resource distribution, limited cross-border power connectivity and the need for accelerated renewable energy deployment. These shared challenges underscore the importance of coordinated regional action to enhance energy security, advance clean and just energy transitions and strengthen economic integration.

Energy was identified as a priority area of cooperation under BIMSTEC, and following the 5th Summit in Colombo in March 2022, the Sector was placed under the Security portfolio with India as the Lead Country. The adoption of the Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation (2005) and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection (2019) provided the foundation for expanding regional energy trade, electricity transmission and harmonised regulatory frameworks. Ongoing progress in this sector includes the development of regional policies on power transmission, trade and tariff mechanisms, the formulation of the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan, and the establishment of the BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) in Bengaluru.

BIMSTEC's energy cooperation is directed through a multi-tiered institutional mechanism. The BIMSTEC Energy Ministers' Meetings, held in 2005, 2010, and 2022, have guided member States' political commitment to regional interconnection and laid the groundwork for BEC. The Senior Officials' Meeting on Energy (SOM-E), comprising senior energy authorities from all member States, has convened five times since 2005 to review progress and set priorities. To advance technical cooperation, the Expert Group on Energy (EG-E) was established after the 4th BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu (2018) to promote collaboration across hydropower, renewable energy and other broader energy-sharing initiatives.

A key mechanism for operationalising power connectivity is the BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Coordination Committee (BGICC), formed under the Grid Interconnection MoU. At its 2nd Meeting held in February

2023 in Bengaluru, the Committee reviewed the draft BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan Study and regional policies on Electricity Transmission, Electricity Trade and Exchange, and Tariff Mechanisms, marking important steps toward establishing a functional regional power market.

BEC, located in Bengaluru, plays a central role as a regional knowledge and coordination platform. Its 1st Governing Board Meeting held in February 2023 finalised the Host Country Agreement, which was subsequently signed in November 2024. As the Secretariat of the BGICC, the BEC supports technical studies, capacity-building initiatives and policy harmonisation efforts across the region.

BIMSTEC's external partnerships under this sector are also expanding. Collaborative engagement with the International Solar Alliance (ISA) aims to accelerate solar energy deployment through policy support, capacity building, and technology transfer. To formalise this cooperation, ISA has shared a draft Concept Note and a draft MoU with the BIMSTEC Energy Centre, outlining potential areas of joint work to advance sustainable energy solutions across the region.

As member States work toward seamless grid connectivity, renewable energy expansion and harmonised regulatory systems, BIMSTEC's institutional frameworks continue to strengthen collective capacity and deepen regional integration. Through dialogues, shared technical platforms and growing partnerships, the region is steadily advancing toward a more secure, efficient and sustainable energy future.

Key Achievements at a Glance

- Adoption of Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation;
- MoU on BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection;
- Establishment of Multi-tiered mechanisms (MM-E, SOM-E, EG-E, and BGICC);
- Progress on regional policies for electricity transmission, trade, exchange, & tariff mechanisms and BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection Master Plan;
- Establishment of BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC); and
- Initiation of Collaboration with the International Solar Alliance.



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

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