



Message from BIMSTEC Secretary General

Welcome to the 2nd edition of our Monthly BIMSTEC E-Newsletter for the year 2026.

The month of February 2026 has been marked by progress in technical cooperation and high-level external strategic engagements. From agriculture and energy to biosafety and biosecurity, we made progress in strengthening the institutional capacities of Member States required to deal with the challenges in these areas.

The virtual workshop hosted by Myanmar on Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for Agricultural Value Chain Management reflected our commitment to strengthen cooperation in agriculture sector among the BIMSTEC member States. The BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) held a power transmission system maintenance workshop to build capacity and share best practices. Speaking at the Ministerial Panel Discussion on "Global South Clean Energy Solidarity" at the India Energy Week, I emphasised the need to enhance South-South cooperation in Energy sector through BIMSTEC for reducing carbon footprint and transitioning to green and sustainable energy.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-National Institute of High Security Animal Disease organised a virtual training Workshop on Laboratory Biosafety and Biosecurity Issues for Managing

Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonotic Emerging Pathogens from 17-21 February 2026, which focused on biosafety and containment principles, technologies and practices to ensure human and environmental safety.

Speaking at the 6th Edition of India-Japan Intellectual Conclave "Kizuna" in Shillong organized by Asian Confluence, I underlined the salience of BIMSTEC in forging regional cooperation, involving not only the member States but also external partners like Japan, which has abiding interest in enhancing regional cooperation in South and South East Asia. At the Silver Jubilee edition of the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS), hosted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in New Delhi, I underscored the continued relevance of multilateralism to deal with transnational and global developmental and security challenges and highlighted BIMSTEC as a shining example of multilateralism in regional contexts.

We deeply value your readership and welcome your suggestions both to strengthen regional cooperation and to improve this E-Newsletter.

Indra Mani Pandey
BIMSTEC Secretary General

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Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Cultural Cooperation (BEGCC)



4th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Cultural Cooperation (BEGCC) was held on 24–25 February 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting discussed establishment of a BIMSTEC Network of Cultural Institutions, creation of BIMSTEC Digital Cultural Heritage Sites and a framework for coordinated cultural promotion activities to commemorate 30th Anniversary of BIMSTEC.

Virtual Workshop on Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for Agricultural Value Chain Management among BIMSTEC member State



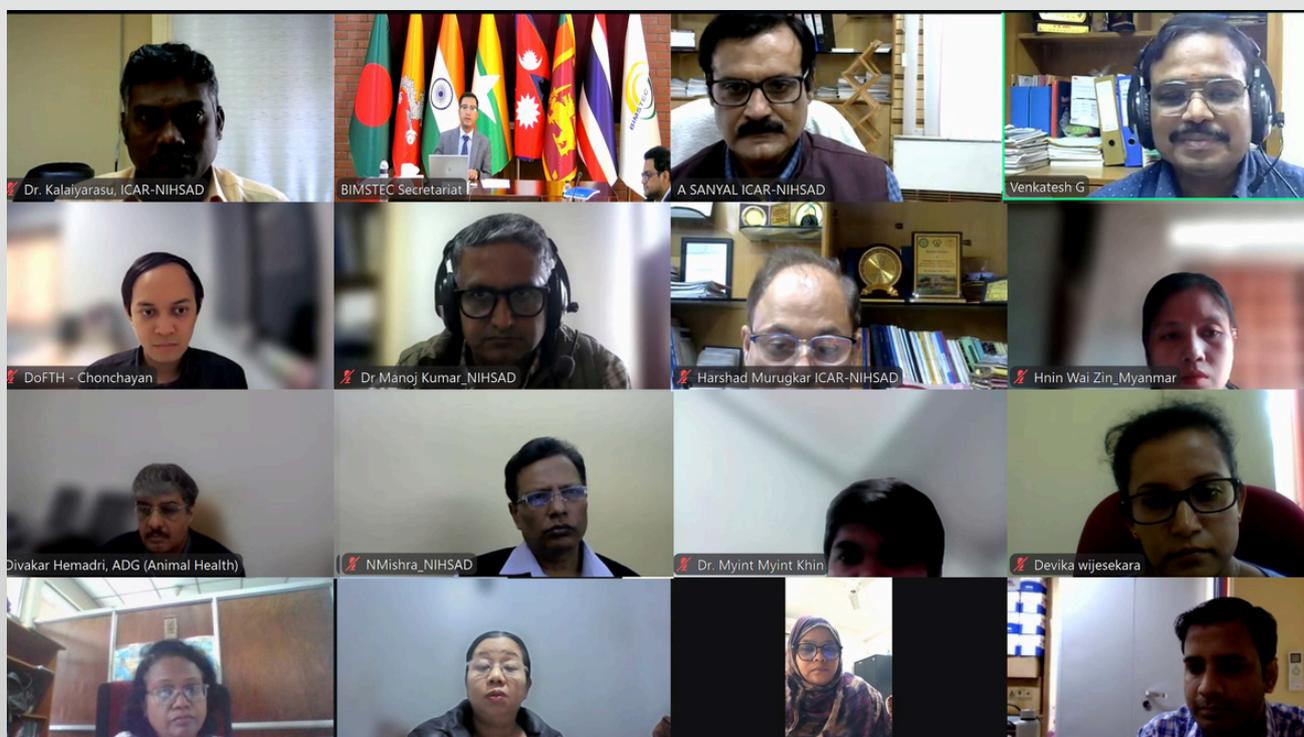
The Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation of Myanmar organized a virtual Workshop on **Strengthening Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for Agricultural Value Chain Management among BIMSTEC member States** on 05 February 2026. It brought together government representatives from the BIMSTEC member States to exchange experiences and share good practices on PPP models, including contract farming and private sector roles in post-harvest management. Participants also explored innovative financing mechanisms and digital solutions, such as an ICT platform, and traceability to support smallholder farmers across the region.

Workshop on Best Practices in Maintenance of Power Transmission Systems



BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) successfully organized an Online Workshop on **“Best Practices in Maintenance of Power Transmission Systems”** on 10 February 2026, which brought together experts and participants from BIMSTEC Member States to exchange knowledge, share experiences, and discuss best practices aimed at enhancing the reliability, efficiency, and resilience of regional power transmission infrastructure.

A virtual Training Workshop on Laboratory Biosafety and Biosecurity issues for managing Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonotic Emerging Pathogens



A virtual Training Workshop on **Laboratory Biosafety and Biosecurity issues for managing Transboundary Animal Diseases and Zoonotic Emerging Pathogens** was organized by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases from 17-21 February 2026, with focus on application of appropriate biosafety and containment principles, technologies and practices that are implemented to ensure both personal and environmental safety from the dangerous infectious pathogens.

BIMSTEC Secretary General at Silver Jubilee edition of World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, addressed Ministerial Panel on **“Multilateralism as a force for Hope and Impact at Silver Jubilee edition of World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)**, hosted by The Energy and Resources Institute at New Delhi on 25-27 February 2026. SG underlined the continued relevance of multilateralism to deal transnational and global developmental and security challenges and highlighted BIMSTEC as a shining example of multilateralism in regional contexts.

BIMSTEC Secretary General participated in the Sixth Edition of the India-Japan Intellectual Conclave



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, participated in the **Sixth Edition of the India-Japan Intellectual Conclave “Kizuna”** in Shillong (February 26-27, 2026). It was organized by Asian Confluence in partnership with the Embassy of Japan in New Delhi and Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. Secretary General in his address during panel on "Japan's FOIP (Free and Open Indo-Pacific) and collaborations in the Bay of Bengal" underlined the salience of BIMSTEC in forging regional cooperation involving not only the member States but also external partners like Japan which has abiding interest in enhancing regional cooperation in South and South East Asia.

BIMSTEC Secretary General, Receives Alexander G. Khozin Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, received **H.E. Alexander G. Khozin, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to Bangladesh**, at the Secretariat on 18 February 2026.

Secretary General briefed Ambassador Khozin on BIMSTEC's mandate, vision and agenda for regional cooperation. Ambassador Khozin commended the progress achieved by BIMSTEC and underscored the vital role it is playing in enhancing regional cooperation.

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey Shares Insights on Regional Energy Collaboration in Interview with India's CNBC TV18



In an exclusive interview with India's leading business news channel, **CNBC-TV18**, BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, shared BIMSTEC's Initiatives on Energy Cooperation including Regional electricity grid connectivity, energy transition wave and much more.

Watch the full interview : <https://bit.ly/46TwmEO>

BIMSTEC Secretary General Congratulates H.E. Mr. Tarique Rahman



**BIMSTEC Secretary General
Congratulates
H.E. Mr. Tarique Rahman,**
on his appointment as Prime Minister of the Government of
the People's Republic of Bangladesh.



H.E. Mr. Tarique Rahman
Hon'ble Prime Minister

H.E. Indra Mani Pandey
BIMSTEC Secretary General

BIMSTEC Secretary General Congratulates H.E. Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul



**BIMSTEC Secretary General
Congratulates
H.E. Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul**
the new Prime Minister-Elect of the Kingdom of Thailand.



H.E. Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul
Hon'ble new Prime Minister-Elect

H.E. Indra Mani Pandey
BIMSTEC Secretary General

Advancing Poverty Alleviation Cooperation in the BIMSTEC Region

Background :

Poverty Alleviation has remained a foundational pillar of BIMSTEC cooperation since it was decided as a priority sector at the 8th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held on 19 December 2005 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Recognizing poverty eradication as the developmental challenge faced by the Bay of Bengal region, Member States placed poverty Alleviation at the centre of regional cooperation. The 9th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting held on 09 August 2006 in New Delhi, designated Nepal as the Lead Country for the sector to provide leadership and coordination for advancing the regional agenda.

The collective commitment was institutionalized through the 1st BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation held on 09 July 2008 in Dhaka, which underscored the urgency of addressing high poverty levels and entrusted Nepal with preparing a Draft Plan of Action. This effort culminated in the adoption of the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action (PPA) at the 2nd BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on Poverty Alleviation held on 16 January 2012 in Kathmandu. The PPA established a comprehensive framework for accelerated pro-poor growth, social development, targeted support for vulnerable groups, expansion of social protection, disaster preparedness, climate resilience, and good governance, among others.

The Leaders at the 4th BIMSTEC Summit in 2018, reaffirmed their commitment to eradicating poverty in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), emphasizing effective and coordinated implementation of the PPA. To operationalize the PPA, the 1st Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Poverty Alleviation was convened on 01 November 2017 in Kathmandu, reviewing progress and updating priority areas and socio-economic indicators. So far, the Expert group has met 4 times and has made timely updates in the PPA.

Following the reorganization of BIMSTEC's areas of cooperation at the 5th BIMSTEC Summit in March 2022, Poverty Alleviation was initially excluded from the revised structure. However, recognizing its cross-cutting importance, Member States formally reinstated it during the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting in March 2023 as a Sub-Sector under the People-to-People Contact (P2P) Sector, led by Nepal. This reinstatement reinforced the human-centric and inclusive character of BIMSTEC's development agenda.

The revitalization of poverty alleviation cooperation is closely aligned with the strategic direction of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit (Bangkok, April 2025) and the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030. The Bangkok vision envisions Prosperous, Resilient, and Open BIMSTEC by 2030 with the aim of achieving prosperous BIMSTEC where poverty is substantially reduced and considerable progress towards sustainable development and viable growth are achieved including through the implementation of BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action. This commitment underscores that regional poverty reduction efforts are under high priorities under the broader BIMSTEC agenda.

Addressing Emerging Challenges

As the Bay of Bengal region navigates an increasingly complex development landscape, poverty is no longer shaped solely by income deprivation. Climate change, recurrent disasters, economic volatility, digital divides, and shifting labour markets are redefining vulnerabilities across Member States. Recognizing these multidimensional realities, BIMSTEC has progressively adopted a forward-looking and resilience-oriented approach to poverty alleviation.

Discussions within the Expert Group have emphasized the integration of climate and disaster resilience into national poverty and social protection frameworks, alongside strengthening regional cooperation on data sharing, early warning systems, and disaster risk financing. Member States have also highlighted the importance of inclusive, gender-responsive, and community-driven strategies to ensure that no segment of society is left behind.

In parallel, expanding digital public infrastructure and reducing digital inequality have emerged as key priorities, particularly in the context of improving service delivery and enhancing access to opportunities. Greater attention is being given to supporting MSMEs, facilitating green economic transition, promoting demand led skills development and technology transfer.

These evolving priorities reflect BIMSTEC's transition toward a multidimensional, evidence-based, and resilience-driven poverty reduction framework—one that acknowledges the interconnected nature of development challenges in the region.

Advancing Poverty Alleviation Cooperation in the BIMSTEC Region

Key Achievements at a Glance

Over the years, BIMSTEC has made steady progress in institutionalizing and advancing regional cooperation on poverty alleviation. Key achievements include:

- Recognition of Poverty Alleviation as a priority sector in 2005, placing poverty reduction at the centre of BIMSTEC cooperation.
- Adoption of the BIMSTEC Poverty Plan of Action (2012), establishing a comprehensive regional framework for pro-poor growth, social protection, and climate-resilient development and its timely updates.
- Continued commitment of leaders in the Summits to eradicating poverty from the region. Identifying Poverty alleviation as a primary goal towards achieving A Prosperous BIMSTEC under the BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030.
- Establishment and Operationalization of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Poverty Alleviation (2017 onward) to ensure structured review, policy refinement, and coordination.
- Reinstatement of Poverty Alleviation in 2023 as a Sub-Sector under the People-to-People Contact sector, reinforcing its cross-cutting and human-centric role in regional development.
- Updating of the Poverty Plan of Action and development of the Activity Matrix, translating policy commitments into measurable and time-bound actions.
- Strengthened regional knowledge exchange, including through the organizing the Knowledge-Sharing Workshop on Accelerated, Pro-Poor and Inclusive Growth (2025), in collaboration with ADB and UNESCAP.



**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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