



BIMSTEC E-Newsletter

July 2026



Message from BIMSTEC Secretary General

Welcome to July 2026 Edition of our Monthly BIMSTEC E-Newsletter.

The month of July 2026 witnessed a series of BIMSTEC Meetings and Activities, held across member States, which reflected BIMSTEC's commitment to address shared developmental and security challenges through regional cooperation.

The 5th Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs, hosted by India in New Delhi, strengthened collaboration on existing and emerging traditional and non-traditional security challenges faced by the member States. The National Security Advisers and Heads of Delegation exchanged valuable perspectives on combating terrorism and organised crime; enhancing Cyber, Maritime and human security; and addressing emerging security threats. Adoption of BIMSTEC Guidelines for Maritime Component of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and endorsement of BIMSTEC Guiding Principles on the Conduct of Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies during Interactions at Sea were the key outcomes, which will contribute to effective coordination amongst the member States to deal with shared maritime security challenges.

Continuing the momentum, the 14th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism, held in Shillong, India, reinforced the existing efforts to combat financial crimes. It significantly strengthened BIMSTEC's financial crime framework by finalizing key policy documents on Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) and capacity building for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT).

Sri Lanka hosted the 4th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators, which highlighted the importance of tourism in strengthening people-to-people relations and taking sustainable regional connectivity forward, particularly as member States begin their BIMSTEC's 30th Year Anniversary celebrations.

Partnering with UNESCO and National University of Singapore, BIMSTEC hosted a webinar exploring artificial intelligence, judicial independence and responsible courtroom technology. In Bangkok, Thailand, during UNESCAP's 9th Meeting of the Committee on Environment and Development (CED9), BIMSTEC reaffirmed its commitment under BIMSTEC Bangkok Vision 2030, emphasizing water security, clean air, and Himalayan Science Council. On World Environment Day, the BIMSTEC Secretariat joined a roundtable organized by Bangladesh's Department of Environment with

UNOPS Bangladesh and the Embassy of Sweden to demonstrate BIMSTEC's commitment to cooperation in health, disaster management and environment.

Further, the Secretariat hosted, aligned with BIMSTEC's priority for outreach and communication, an interactive Session with members of the Diplomatic Correspondents Association of Bangladesh, during which I briefly presented to them the recent initiatives and developments under BIMSTEC in various Sectors.

At a seminar on three decades of BIMSTEC, organized by BIIS, I emphasized the need to turn commitments into tangible regional outcomes. While speaking at a Seminar on Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal, I underscored the need for strengthening collaboration in maritime security, disaster relief and growth of blue economy to realise a more resilient and prosperous Bay of Bengal.

I engaged with students and scholars, as the Chief Guest at Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology's 28th Convocation, where I highlighted the salience of BIMSTEC in forging regional cooperation to address shared developmental and security challenges.

During my official visit to Nepal, I had the opportunity to call on H.E. Mr. Shisir Khanal, Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Khadak Raj Paudel (Ganess), Honourable Minister of Culture as well as Nepal's Foreign Secretary to discuss ways to deepen cooperation under BIMSTEC, including in sectors such as People to People Contact Forum, Culture and Tourism, which are led by Nepal. Our discussions reaffirmed Nepal's commitment to BIMSTEC and the importance that it attaches to BIMSTEC for addressing the shared developmental challenges faced by our member States.

The inauguration of the Project Management Unit in Dhaka was another key milestone, this month. This Unit will enhance the Secretariat's capacity to effectively implement regional projects and provide institutional support to the member States.

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

Indra Mani Pandey
BIMSTEC Secretary General

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5th Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs held in New Delhi



The **5th Meeting of the BIMSTEC National Security Chiefs** was held in New Delhi on 16 July 2026. **H.E. Ajit Doval, National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister of India, hosted** and chaired meeting of National Security Advisers/Heads of Delegations from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

At the outset, **BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey**, presented a comprehensive overview of the status of security cooperation under the BIMSTEC and briefed the member States on the progress made since the previous Meeting in addressing traditional, non-traditional and emerging security challenges. Secretary General underscored the importance of the timely implementation of various decision and initiatives, enhanced coordination and informationsharing, greater knowledge-sharing and continued capacity-building among the relevant organisations of the member States.

The National Security Advisers/Heads of Delegations exchanged views on various measures to combat terrorism and organised crime; ensure security in the cyber, maritime and energy domains; enhance connectivity; facilitate efficient disaster management; and tackle new and emerging threats to their security.

The **Meeting adopted the BIMSTEC Guidelines for the Maritime Component of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief**. The Guidelines will help BIMSTEC member States undertake relief operations in the region in an expeditious manner. They also endorsed a set of Guiding Principles on the Conduct of Maritime Law Enforcement Agencies during Interactions at Sea. These principles are expected to provide reference points for increasing predictability and promoting safety during maritime engagements among the member States.

On the sidelines of the Meeting, **BIMSTEC Secretary General H.E. Indra Mani Pandey held separate bilateral meetings with the National Security Adviser of India, Home Secretary of Nepal and Defence Secretary of Sri Lanka**, which provided opportunities to exchange views on matters of mutual interest and discuss ways to further strengthen cooperation within the BIMSTEC framework.



14th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism



The Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India successfully hosted the **14th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (SG-AML/CFT)** in Shillong, India, on 20 July 2026. The Meeting brought together delegations from all seven BIMSTEC Member States, reaffirming their shared commitment to strengthening regional cooperation in combating money laundering, terrorist financing, proliferation financing and other evolving forms of financial crime.

The Meeting reviewed progress made since the 13th Meeting of the Sub-Group and exchanged views on national AML/CFT developments, emerging risks, evolving typologies and good practices. Recognising the increasingly transnational and technology-driven nature of financial crime, Member States underscored the importance of strengthening regional cooperation, timely information sharing, capacity building and the effective use of technology to enhance national and regional AML/CFT frameworks.

As a key outcome, the Meeting finalized the Paper on Illicit Flow of Funds (IFF) and the Action Plan to Prevent Illicit Financial Flows in the BIMSTEC Region, as well as the Memorandum of Understanding on Capacity Building for Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, further strengthening the regional framework for cooperation, capacity building and collective action against financial crime. The Meeting also agreed to develop a BIMSTEC AML/CFT Work Plan (2026–2028) and emphasized the operationalization of the BIMSTEC AML/CFT Contact Point Network to deepen cooperation among Financial Intelligence Units.

The Meeting also discussed ways to effectively leverage BIMSTEC's Observer Status in the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG) to enhance regional capacity building, facilitate knowledge sharing, and strengthen Member States' preparedness for forthcoming FATF mutual evaluations.

Member States also held substantive discussions on emerging risks associated with virtual assets, fintech platforms, artificial intelligence, trade-based money laundering, online fraud and other cyber-enabled financial crimes. The Meeting underscored the need for stronger regulatory frameworks, enhanced public-private partnerships, improved analytical capabilities and closer regional and international cooperation to effectively address these evolving challenges.

Delegations expressed their appreciation to the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, Government of India for the excellent arrangements and warm hospitality extended to all participants. The Meeting also conveyed its appreciation to the BIMSTEC Secretariat for its continued coordination and support.

Fourth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators



The 4th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Tour Operators (BNTO) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 21–23 July 2026.

Tour Operators from the BIMSTEC member States discussed measures to promote intra-BIMSTEC tourism, operationalize BIMSTEC Tourism Circuits and organize commemorative activities to celebrate BIMSTEC Year 2027 through coordinated tourism initiatives. The Meeting reaffirmed the commitment of member States to strengthening people to people relations and promoting sustainable tourism.

BIMSTEC Regional Capacity Building Programme on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism



The BIMSTEC Regional Capacity Building Programme on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT), jointly organised by the Department of Revenue, Government of India, and the BIMSTEC Secretariat, concluded successfully in Shillong on 21–22 July 2026. The BIMSTEC Secretariat is grateful to Ms. Neetu Kumari Prasad, Additional Secretary (Revenue) and Head of India's Delegation to FATF, for her leadership and guidance in successful convening of the Programme.

BIMSTEC Inaugurates the Office of its Project Management Unit in Dhaka



Secretary General BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) inaugurated the office of the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the BIMSTEC Secretariat on 20 July 2026. The establishment of the PMU at the BIMSTEC Secretariat represents an important milestone in BIMSTEC's institutional development.

The PMU has been established with the support of the World Bank (WB) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations under the South Asia Regional Capacity Building for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response with One Health Approach Project.

Representatives of the FAO, WB, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and diplomatic mission of the member States participated in the ceremony.

In his address, BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, described establishment of the PMU as an important milestone in strengthening the Secretariat's institutional and implementation capacity. He noted that the PMU would support planning, coordination, implementation, monitoring and reporting on regional initiatives, while promoting greater transparency, accountability and efficiency. He expressed appreciation of the Government of Bangladesh, BIMSTEC Member States, the World Bank, FAO and other development partners for their continued support.

The PMU will support the Secretariat in implementing the Plans of Action on Public Health and Traditional Medicine in close coordination with the BIMSTEC Member States and developmental partners. While established under a regional public health initiative, the Unit will also strengthen the Secretariat's broader capacity to manage and implement complex regional programmes and partnerships.



Global Dialogues on AI for Peace & Sustainability: Algorithmic Sovereignty, Judicial Independence, and Responsible AI Use in the Courtroom



The BIMSTEC Secretariat organized a webinar, “Global Dialogues on AI for Peace & Sustainability: Algorithmic: Sovereignty, Judicial Independence and Responsible AI use in the Courtroom” in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on AI Law & Sustainability and the Centre for International Law (CIL), National University of Singapore. It brought together distinguished judges, legal practitioners, policymakers, and experts to exchange perspectives on responsible use of artificial intelligence in judicial systems, with particular emphasis on algorithmic sovereignty, judicial independence, legal ethics, and the governance of AI in courts.

BIMSTEC at the 9th Session of the Committee on Environment and Development , (CED9)ESCAP



The BIMSTEC Secretariat participated at the 9th Session of the Committee on Environment and Development (CED9), ESCAP, in Bangkok (1-3 July 2026). Mrs. Sonam C. Namgyel, Director, Environment & Climate Change, spoke on regional cooperation for sustainable development.

She highlighted BIMSTEC's four priorities - climate resilience, water security, clean air, and a sustainable blue economy - and its integrated approach under the Bangkok Vision 2030, including the BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate and the proposed Himalayan Science Council.

BIMSTEC reaffirmed its commitment to working with ESCAP for a resilient and sustainable Bay of Bengal region.

BIMSTEC at the World Environment Day 2026 Roundtable, Dhaka



On 15 July 2026, the BIMSTEC Secretariat joined a roundtable in observance of World Environment Day 2026, themed "Nature and Health: Building Climate-Resilient Public Health Systems," hosted by Bangladesh's Department of Environment with UNOPS Bangladesh and the Embassy of Sweden.

Ms. Sonam C. Namgyel, Director (Environment and Climate Change), delivered the closing remarks on behalf of the BIMSTEC Secretary General. She noted that climate change is fueling cross-border public health risks - from vector-borne diseases to water and sanitation disruptions - and highlighted BIMSTEC's cooperation in health, disaster management, environment, agriculture, and energy as key to building regional resilience.

BIMSTEC at the ITU Regional development Forum for Asia and the Pacific (RDF-ASP) 2026



The ITU Regional Development Forum for Asia and the Pacific 2026 (RDF-ASP) was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 16 to 17 July 2026.

Mr. K K Yoganaadan, Director, Science, Technology, Innovation, HRD and Health, BIMSTEC Secretariat, moderated the session titled "**Building UN Partnerships to Achieve WTDC Outcomes.**" The session provided a valuable platform for exchanging views on strengthening cooperation among UN agencies and regional partners to advance inclusive digital development and support the implementation of ITU Regional Initiatives in Asia and the Pacific.

On the sidelines of the Forum, Mr. K K Yoganaadan met with Dr. Cosmas Luckyson ZAVAZAVA, PhD, Director of the ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau (BDT). Dr. Zavazava welcomed BIMSTEC to the ITU-D community, and they exchanged views on how BIMSTEC's regional perspective could contribute to advancing inclusive and sustainable digital development across the Bay of Bengal region.

BIMSTEC Strengthens Institutional Capacity through Capacity Building Workshop on Project Management and Compliance



The BIMSTEC Secretariat successfully concluded the Capacity Building Workshop on Project, Financial, Procurement, and Environmental & Social Management for the BIMSTEC Project Management Unit (PMU), held on 22–23 July 2026 in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Organized in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Bank, the two-day workshop aimed to enhance the technical and operational capacities of BIMSTEC Secretariat and PMU officials for effective implementation of World Bank-financed projects in accordance with applicable standards and procedures.

The workshop brought together officials from the BIMSTEC Secretariat, BIMSTEC PMU, and FAO, with technical expertise provided by specialists from the World Bank.

The PMU will support the Secretariat in implementing the Plans of Action on Public Health and Traditional Medicine in close coordination with BIMSTEC Member States and development partners, while contributing to BIMSTEC's broader cooperation across diverse sectors.



BIMSTEC Engages with DCAB



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, interacted with distinguished members of the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh (DCAB) and highlighted the vital role of the media in promoting awareness about BIMSTEC's vision, agenda, accomplishments and future goals.

He noted that BIMSTEC remains focused on delivering tangible cooperation through implementation of its sectoral action plans, stronger institutional mechanisms and specialised centres of excellence.

The exchange reaffirmed the priority that the BIMSTEC Secretariat attaches to media engagement in advancing regional cooperation and shared prosperity across the Bay of Bengal region.



BIMSTEC Secretary General visits Nepal



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, undertook an official visit to Nepal during 28 to 29 July 2026. During the visit, SG called on **Honourable Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Shisir Khanal**. Their discussion focused on the progress achieved in regional cooperation under BIMSTEC, including in sectors led by Nepal, such as culture, tourism, people to people contact forums and poverty alleviation. Their deliberations covered steps towards strengthening regional cooperation under BIMSTEC and the role of Nepal in realising it. Honourable Minister reiterated the high importance that Nepal attaches to BIMSTEC.



SG, BIMSTEC, also called on **Honourable Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, H.E. Khadak Raj Paudel (Ganess)**, and apprised him of the progress achieved in regional cooperation under BIMSTEC, including in sectors Nepal leads, such as tourism, culture, people to people contacts forum as well as connectivity. Their discussion focused on the vital role of Nepal in strengthening cooperation under BIMSTEC and celebration of the 30th Anniversary Year of BIMSTEC.



In his meeting with **Foreign Secretary of Nepal, H.E. Amrit Bahadur Rai**, SG discussed Nepal's important role in advancing regional cooperation under BIMSTEC, including in sectors led by Nepal. Foreign Secretary reiterated Nepal's commitment to BIMSTEC, including various key initiatives that BIMSTEC is pursuing to enhance regional cooperation and integration among the member States.

BIMSTEC Secretary General visits Nepal Contd...



Secretary General addressed the high-level Policy Dialogue organised by the **Institute of Foreign Affairs of Nepal**, with focus on evolution of BIMSTEC, its vision, agenda, achievements and ongoing initiatives to advance regional cooperation and integration. The Dialogue was attended by diplomats from the BIMSTEC member States, government officials, academia, policy experts, think tanks, researchers etc.



Secretary General also delivered a Guest Lecture at the **Department of International Relations, Tribhuvan University**, and interacted with faculty members and students on the mission, agenda and regional cooperation in Bay of Bengal region under BIMSTEC.



During the visit, Secretary General also met **Ms. Philomena Gnanapragasam, Chief Executive Officer of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development**. SG was interviewed by Nepal Television, where he shared his views on the evolving international order, the role of regional organisations such as BIMSTEC, and Nepal's role in advancing regional cooperation and connectivity.

Nepal is one of the seven member States of BIMSTEC and leads regional cooperation in Culture, Tourism, People-to-People Contact Forums and Poverty Alleviation. Nepal joined as a member of BIMSTEC in February 2004.

BIMSTEC Secretary General Attends the 28th Convocation of CSA University of Agriculture and Technology, India, as Chief Guest



BIMSTEC Secretary General H.E. Indra Mani Pandey attended the 28th Convocation of Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSA UAT), India, as Chief Guest and delivered the convocation address at his alma mater. He was welcomed by Dr. Sanjeev Gupta, Vice-Chancellor of the University, in the presence of the Honourable Governor of Uttar Pradesh, who also serves as Chancellor of the University.

A total of 372 students received degrees across undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes, while 27 meritorious students were awarded 33 medals, including Chancellor's Gold Medals, University Silver and Bronze Medals, and Sponsored Gold Medals. In his address, the Secretary General inspired the graduating students with guidance on career development, contributing to national progress, and pursuing excellence and success in their future endeavours.

BIMSTEC Secretary General Calls on H.E. Ms. Shama Obaed Islam, MP, Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, called on H.E. Ms. Shama Obaed Islam, MP, Hon'ble State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, on 7 July 2026 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh. They discussed Bangladesh's existing and future role in advancing regional cooperation under BIMSTEC; Bangladesh is the current chair and a founding member of BIMSTEC

BIMSTEC Secretary General participated at the Seminar on Building Norms and Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, addressed Seminar on **“Building Norms and Maritime Cooperation in the Bay of Bengal,”** organised by Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF) and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (HD) in New Delhi on 15 July 2026. He underscored the need to advance practical cooperation in maritime domain awareness, HADR, search and rescue, marine pollution response, connectivity and blue economy for a secure, resilient and prosperous Bay of Bengal region.

BIMSTEC Secretary General participated in the seminar “Three Decades of BIMSTEC: Advancing Regional Cooperation for Shared Prosperity” in Dhaka.



The Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) organised a seminar titled **“Three Decades of BIMSTEC: Advancing Regional Cooperation for Shared Prosperity”** in Dhaka. H.E. Shama Obaed Islam, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, attended the seminar as the Chief Guest, while H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, participated as its Special Guest. In her remarks, the State Minister emphasised that connectivity must remain at the forefront of the region’s shared ambition. She highlighted the importance of implementing the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity, strengthening transport linkages and deepening energy, digital and maritime connectivity across the Bay of Bengal region.

Secretary General highlighted BIMSTEC’s ongoing initiatives in various sectors on BIMSTEC’s Agenda.

The discussions underscored the need to translate commitments and decisions into practical outcomes through stronger institutions, innovative financing, sustained political commitment, people-to-people connections and closer cooperation among the BIMSTEC member States.

BIMSTEC Secretary General held a courtesy meeting with Head of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Sub-office in Bangladesh



Secretary General of BIMSTEC, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey held a courtesy meeting with Ms. Ruchika Bahl, Head of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Sub-office in Bangladesh, at the BIMSTEC Secretariat on 21 July 2026. During the meeting, they exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and explored opportunities to strengthen cooperation between BIMSTEC and ILO.

Advancing Public Diplomacy in the BIMSTEC Member States

Public diplomacy constitutes an important dimension of the work of the BIMSTEC Secretariat, contributing to greater awareness and appreciation of the Organisation's vision, agenda, activities and achievements among various stakeholders in the BIMSTEC member States.

The BIMSTEC Secretariat advances public diplomacy through sustained engagement with media organisations, academic institutions, policy think tanks, scholars, researchers, policymakers, youth, and other segments of the society. These initiatives also promote the role of the member States and highlight their respective contributions to regional cooperation under BIMSTEC.

Key Activities at a Glance

BIMSTEC has made steady progress in strengthening its public diplomacy and outreach efforts. Key achievements include:

- **Think-tank outreach and policy roundtables**, bringing together experts and policy institutions to discuss regional priorities and provide recommendations for advancing cooperation.
- **Promotion and outreach initiatives of BIMSTEC member States**, highlighting their national perspectives, achievements, cultures and contributions to regional development.
- **Interaction with diplomatic correspondents to strengthen media relations**, through briefings, interviews, press engagement, publications and regular communication with journalists and media organisations.
- **Outreach to academia and universities across the BIMSTEC member States**, promoting knowledge of BIMSTEC among students, teachers and academic communities.
- **Interaction with scholars and researchers, encouraging research**, knowledge exchange and evidence-based discussion on regional issues.
- **Engagement with policymakers and officials**, creating opportunities to exchange experiences and explore practical approaches to regional cooperation.
- **Digital and publication-based outreach**, including newsletters, online platforms and communication materials that make BIMSTEC's activities more visible and accessible.



**BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVE FOR MULTI-SECTORAL
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