BIMSTEC IS CELEBRATING ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR

VOLUME: 15 , ISSUE: 11, ISSN: 2415-4318

BIMSTEC Bulletin

October 2026











Message from BIMSTEC Secretary General

Welcome to October 2026 Edition of our Monthly BIMSTEC Bulletin.

Amidst the unprecedented crises being witnessed by the world, regional cooperation has increasingly been seen as the way forward to deal with the developmental and security challenges which are global and regional in nature. BIMSTEC is increasingly being seen an ideal regional organisation to foster regional cooperation amongst its member States.

The month of October witnessed a series of high-level ministerial and senior officials' meetings of the member States, expanded partnerships and multi-sectoral dialogues. In New Delhi, India, a historic milestone was achieved with convening of the First BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting on 13 October, preceded by First Senior Officials' Meeting of Home Ministries (SOM-H) on 12 October. Delhi Declaration adopted by BIMSTEC Home Ministers embodied the commitment of the member States to combat transnational threats to their security, including terrorism, cybercrime, human trafficking and financial crimes, while reinforcing cooperation through frameworks like the BIMSTEC Convention Against Trafficking in Persons and joint mechanisms with the UN Bodies such as UNODC.

Progress was also made in expanding cooperation in Health and Science, Technology and Innovation Sectors. The 8th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine (BTFTM), held virtually from Colombo, outlined key initiatives, including the BIMSTEC Traditional Medicine Portal and the establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Traditional Medicine. Furthermore, the 8th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT), hosted by the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute (LKI) in Sri Lanka on 14–15 October, created opportunities for regional Think Tanks to deliberate on regional cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation, Health and Human Resource Development Sectors as well as other Sectors.

The 10th BIMSTEC Sub-Group Meeting on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs in Dhaka addressed key security measures for joint operations and proposed a Centre of Excellence. A regional virtual training also enhanced member States' collaboration on integrated pest management and biopesticide techniques. Further, Secretariat's participation in UNESCAP's Asia Pacific Ocean Week 2026 in Bangkok reinforced our commitment to the Bay of Bengal as a model of integrated regional ocean cooperation and climate resilience.

While addressing the Conference on Business Opportunities in BIMSTEC Countries organised by MIICCIA, I highlighted the need to strengthen regional business-to-business ties in the region through the proposed BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce and Industries and BIMSTEC Forum for Investment Promotion Authorities. At the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026, organised by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) in Dhaka, I underlined the importance of regional cooperation in responding to multiple global crises.

I also spoke at the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime to outline progress made in regional cooperation under BIMSTEC to address the threat posed by the shared security challenges. On the sidelines of the Conference, I spoke at the Session on "Accelerating Efforts to Actualize the Promise Contained within the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime", organised by the Government of Vietnam and UNODC, where I highlighted BIMSTEC's regional cybersecurity cooperation to tackle cybercrime.

I also had the opportunity to strengthen BIMSTEC's bilateral engagements through my meetings with Executive Directors of UNODC to strengthen cooperation in tackling transnational crime and Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) to advance disaster resilience in the region. I met with the Secretary of the Ministry of Digital Economy of Sri Lanka to accelerate digital transformation under the STI sector and Chargé d'Affaires of Singapore High Commission to Bangladesh to enhance diplomatic collaborations.

I addressed the 5th Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development, underscoring the importance of regional cooperation to harness space technologies for a resilient and sustainable future. I also had bilateral discussions with UNESCAP Executive Secretary, UN Women Regional Director, and Foreign Minister of Bhutan H.E. Lyonpo D.N. Dhungyel to deepen partnerships in regional cooperation, gender equality, and sustainable development.

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

Indra Mani Pandey
BIMSTEC Secretary General

Inside this Bulletin:

First BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting

In Focus: BIMSTEC Sectoral Meetings

Regional Capacitybuilding Initiatives and Workshops

In Focus: BIMSTEC SG's Engagements

First BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting Held in New Delhi, India



The First BIMSTEC Home Ministers' Meeting was held on 13 October 2026 in New Delhi, India, marking a significant milestone in strengthening regional security cooperation under BIMSTEC.

BIMSTEC Home Ministers adopted the Delhi Declaration, reaffirming their commitment to strengthening regional cooperation towards a connected, secure, resilient, developed and prosperous BIMSTEC region. They called for collective efforts to combat terrorism, drug trafficking, human trafficking, transnational organised crime, cybercrime, money laundering, terrorist financing and the illicit smuggling of arms.

The Ministers emphasised the effective implementation of existing BIMSTEC legal instruments, early finalisation of proposed Conventions, and enhanced information-sharing, specialised training and capacity-building. They also encouraged stronger partnerships with relevant international and regional organisations, including UNODC, INTERPOL and FATF.

The inaugural Meeting represents a significant step towards providing strategic direction to security cooperation under BIMSTEC, with a renewed emphasis on translating regional commitments into effective implementation and tangible collaboration.



First Meeting of BIMSTEC Senior Officials of Home Ministries Held in New Delhi, India



The 1st Meeting of BIMSTEC Senior Officials of Home Ministries (SOM-H) was held in New Delhi, India, on 12 October 2026.

It reviewed progress in regional security cooperation and endorsed key initiatives including the BIMSTEC Convention Against Trafficking in Persons; MoU on Capacity Building for Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism; and Plans of Action on Human Trafficking, Drug Control, Illicit Flow of Funds, Disaster Management, Annual Drug Reports etc.

8th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine (BTFTM)



The Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine (BTFTM) was held virtually on 6 October 2026 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. It agreed on a number of key initiatives, including BIMSTEC Traditional Medicine Portal and Pharmacopoeia; establishment of the BIMSTEC Centre of Excellence in Traditional Medicine; collaborative research and innovation; and harmonisation of traditional medicine curricula. The Meeting also discussed regional cooperation on Traditional Medicine Knowledge (TMK), Genetic Resources (GR) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

The Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) held in Colombo.



The Eighth Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) was held on 14–15 October 2026 in Colombo, Sri Lanka, hosted by the Lakshman Kadirgamar Institute of International Relations and Strategic Studies (LKI). It brought together the National Focal Points in the Ministries of the Foreign Affairs and Representatives of the designated BNPTT institutions from the BIMSTEC Member States to deliberate regional cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation, Health and Human Resource Development Sectors as well as other sectors on the Agenda of BIMSTEC. BNPTT has contributed immensely to the evolution of the comprehensive agenda and Plans of Action for regional cooperation under BIMSTEC.

10th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals



The 10th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursor Chemicals was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on 27–28 October 2026. The Meeting reviewed the implementation of the BIMSTEC Plan of Action on Drug Control and explored the possible establishment of a Centre of Excellence to strengthen capacity building, knowledge and information sharing, research, technological development to address evolving trafficking methods, technical and operational cooperation, and early warning mechanisms. The Meeting also discussed the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for conducting international joint operations, the publication of the BIMSTEC Annual Drug Report, and a Plan of Action for implementing the Memorandum of Understanding between BIMSTEC and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Training on "Integrated Pest Management and Biopesticide Use" was held on on 27-29 October 2026



A three-day virtual Regional Training on “Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Biopesticide Use”, organized by Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Agriculture of Bangladesh, was conducted from 27-29 October 2026.

The Program brought together participants from all BIMSTEC member States and provided a valuable platform to exchange experiences, technologies, and best practices on pest management among BIMSTEC member states, particularly in the areas of pest surveillance, monitoring, economic threshold-based pest management, biological control methods and biopesticide application techniques.

BIMSTEC at the Asia Pacific ocean Week 2026



Mrs. Sonam C. Namgyel, Director for Environment and Climate Change at the BIMSTEC Secretariat, participated in Asia Pacific Ocean Week 2026 which was convened by the ESCAP Secretariat at the UN Conference Center in Bangkok, Thailand from 26-30 October 2026.

BIMSTEC’s interventions at APOW advocated for how the Bay of Bengal should become a model of regional ocean cooperation in which economic connectivity, sustainable blue growth, marine ecosystem protection, climate resilience and ocean science reinforce one another; suggested the value of thinking in terms of a mountains–rivers–coasts–ocean continuum; and further pointed to the value in BIMSTEC as a platform for connecting existing national, regional and international efforts.

BIMSTEC Secretary General, participated as a speaker at the panel discussion titled "Building Resilience in an Era of Constant Crisis" at the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Panday, participated as a speaker at the panel discussion titled "Building Resilience in an Era of Constant Crisis" at the Bay of Bengal Conversation 2026 (BoBC 2026), organised by the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), on 4 October 2026, in Dhaka.

In his remarks, Secretary General emphasised the importance of regional cooperation in responding to multiple, interconnected global crises. He noted that challenges faced by developing countries, including disruptions in global trade, energy supplies and commodity supply chains, have been further compounded by climate change and emerging technologies. He underscored that global crises require global and regional solutions, highlighting the growing relevance of regional organisations, like BIMSTEC and South-South cooperation. Secretary General highlighted BIMSTEC's progress in forging tangible cooperation for addressing shared developmental and transnational security challenges faced by its member States.

BIMSTEC Secretary General, virtually addressed the "Conference on Business Opportunities in BIMSTEC Countries"



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, virtually addressed the "Conference on Business Opportunities in BIMSTEC Countries", organised by the Millennial India International Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (MIICCIA) on 5 October 2026 in New Delhi.

In his address, Secretary General highlighted the need to enhance intra-BIMSTEC trade and investments and called for early progress in conclusion of the six Constituent Agreements under the Framework Agreement on BIMSTEC Free Trade Area, particularly the Agreements on Trade Facilitation and Customs Cooperation. He underscored the importance of strengthening business-to-business linkages, including through the proposed BIMSTEC Chamber of Commerce and Industries and BIMSTEC Forum of Investment Promotion Authorities.

BIMSTEC Secretary General addresses the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, addressed the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, held in Vienna during 19-23 October 2026. In his remarks, Secretary General highlighted the progress made in regional cooperation under BIMSTEC to address the threat posed by the shared security challenges, including cybersecurity, terrorism, radicalization, human trafficking, illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, maritime crime etc, including through capacity-building, information and intelligence sharing and coordinated action. Secretary General emphasised the importance of cooperation between BIMSTEC and UNODC and called for enhanced cooperation through technical assistance, capacity-building and the exchange of good practices to strengthen institutional capacities and promote coordinated regional responses by the BIMSTEC member States to transnational organised crime.



Secretary General, participated as a speaker at the Session titled "Accelerating Efforts to Actualize the Promise Contained within the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime

Secretary General, H.E. Indramani Pandey, participated as a speaker at the Session titled "Accelerating Efforts to Actualize the Promise Contained within the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime", organised by the Government of Viet Nam and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), on 20 October 2026, on the sidelines of the 13th Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, held in Vienna during 19-23 October 2026. He commended the work of UNODC and Vietnam and outlined regional cooperation under BIMSTEC in the field of cybersecurity for dealing with various cyber crimes.

BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets with UNODC Executive Director

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with H. E. Ms. Monica Kathina Juma, Executive Director of the UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime , on 20 October 2026, during his visit to Vienna to participate at the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC COP). The two sides reaffirmed the priority they attach to full and swift implementation of the MoU between BIMSTEC and UNODC and explored opportunities to further strengthen their cooperation in addressing the threat transnational organized crime faced by the BIMSTEC member States.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Addresses the 5th Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific



BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, addressed the Opening Session and also spoke under Agenda Item 2, "Harnessing Space Applications for a Resilient and Inclusive Future through Enhanced Regional Cooperation", at the 5th Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific on 28 October 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Conference was co-organised by UNESCAP and the Royal Thai Government, with support from Thailand's Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency (GISTDA).

BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets with UN ESCAP Executive Secretary

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with H.E. Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), on 28 October 2026, during his visit to Bangkok to address the 5th Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen cooperation between BIMSTEC and UN ESCAP and advance regional cooperation for sustainable development across the Bay of Bengal region.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets with Foreign Minister of Bhutan

BIMSTEC Secretary General H.E. Indra Mani Pandey met with the Foreign Minister of Bhutan H.E. Lyonpo D.N. Dhungyel on 28 October 2026, on the sidelines of the 5th Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. They exchanged views on strengthening regional cooperation under BIMSTEC and advancing shared priorities for regional integration and sustainable development.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets with UN Women Regional Director

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Ms. Christine Arab, Regional Director of UN Women for Asia and the Pacific, on 28 October 2026 during his visit to Bangkok to address the 5th Ministerial Conference on Space Applications for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on strengthening cooperation in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment and promoting inclusive and sustainable development across the BIMSTEC region.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets with ITU Regional Director

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Ms. Atsuko Okuda, PhD, Regional Director of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, on 29 October 2026, in Bangkok, Thailand. The meeting provided an opportunity to exchange views on strengthening cooperation in digital transformation and technological development across the BIMSTEC region, with a focus on digital public infrastructure, artificial intelligence (AI), digital skills development, technology transfer, and bridging the digital divide.



BIMSTEC Secretary General Meets with President of Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, met with Prof. Pai-Chi Li, President of Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), on 29 October 2026, in Bangkok, Thailand, to exchange views on cooperation between BIMSTEC and AIT in domain of Technology through capacity building, training and academic collaboration. They also explored the opportunities to establish a framework for cooperation between BIMSTEC and AIT.



BIMSTEC Secretary General received Mr. Waruna Sri Dhanapala, Secretary, Ministry of Digital Economy, Sri Lanka,

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, received Mr. Waruna Sri Dhanapala, Secretary, Ministry of Digital Economy, Sri Lanka, at the BIMSTEC Secretariat on 05 October 2026. During the visit, they exchanged views on strengthening cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation and the Digital Economy among BIMSTEC member States.



BIMSTEC Secretary General H.E. Indra Mani Pandey received Mr. Philip Ong Chargé d'Affaires-designate of the Singapore High Commission to Bangladesh

BIMSTEC Secretary General H.E. Indra Mani Pandey received Mr. Philip Ong, Chargé d'Affaires-designate of the Singapore High Commission to Bangladesh, at the BIMSTEC Secretariat on 8 October 2026.



BIMSTEC Secretary General, received Mr. Aslam Perwaiz, Executive Director of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center

BIMSTEC Secretary General, H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, received Mr. Aslam Perwaiz, Executive Director of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), at the BIMSTEC Secretariat on 25 October 2026 and discussed the avenues for cooperation.



BIMSTEC

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

FOLLOW US ON