



# BIMSTEC

Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation

## BIMSTEC e-NEWSLETTER

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### Editorial



Welcome to January 2024 Edition of the BIMSTEC e-Newsletter!

It gives me immense pleasure to introduce myself to you as the new Secretary General of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). I look forward to serving the member States of BIMSTEC to the best of my abilities.

We are delighted to present our inaugural monthly e-Newsletter. The transition from a quarterly to a monthly e-Newsletter reflects our commitment to keep our esteemed readers informed in a timely manner.

The convening of the 1<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the first BIMSTEC Eminent Persons' Group, on 25 January 2024, which has been mandated to chart a new future for BIMSTEC, marked a significant milestone in BIMSTEC's journey.

The month of January 2024 witnessed a number of other engagements, including sectoral meeting on tourism, preceded by a workshop. These engagements, undoubtedly will bolster cooperation within the BIMSTEC framework.

Enjoy reading our e-Newsletter! Your valuable feedback and suggestions are most welcome!

**(Indra Mani Pandey)**  
Secretary General

### Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey Assumes the Charge of 4<sup>th</sup> Secretary General of BIMSTEC



Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, a senior diplomat of India, assumed the charge of Secretary General (SG) of BIMSTEC on 4 January 2024. He is the 4<sup>th</sup> SG of BIMSTEC and will remain its SG for a period of three years. He has succeeded H.E. Tenzin Lekphell of Bhutan.

On his arrival in Dhaka on 04 January 2024, Ambassador Pandey, was warmly received by Mr. Abdul Motaleb Sarker, Director General (SAARC & BIMSTEC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh.

While speaking to Directors and other members of BIMSTEC Secretariat, the new SG reiterated the commitment of the Secretariat, under his stewardship, to work earnestly and with a new vigour to translate into reality the vision of BIMSTEC member States for expanding and deepening the growing cooperation amongst the BIMSTEC member States, within the framework of seven sectors of cooperation agreed by BIMSTEC Leaders.

SG thanked the member States of BIMSTEC for entrusting him with the responsibility of SG and sought their continued support and guidance, enabling the Secretariat to meet their expectations. He also thanked his predecessors for their distinguished contribution as SGs.

A career diplomat, Ambassador Pandey joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1990. Prior to taking over as SG, Amb. Pandey served as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations and Other International Organizations in Geneva.

Earlier he served as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs of India in-charge of the Disarmament & International Security Affairs Division; Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman; Deputy Ambassador of India to France; Consul General of India at Guangzhou in China; and in various capacities at Indian Missions abroad and at the Ministry of External Affairs of India in New Delhi.

Ambassador Pandey is joined in Dhaka by his wife, Mrs. Sushma Pandey. They are blessed with a daughter.

## Secretary General calls on Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh



Secretary General BIMSTEC, Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, called on Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. Masud Bin Momen, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka on 09 January 2024.

Their discussions focused on strengthening cooperation within BIMSTEC framework including trade, connectivity and security sectors.

## Secretary General meets with the Country Manager of UNOPS



The Country Manager of the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Bangladesh, Mr. Sudhir Muralidharan, called on the Secretary General of BIMSTEC, Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, at the BIMSTEC Secretariat on 10 January 2024.

They discussed the potential avenues of cooperation between BIMSTEC and UNOPS.

## Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh meets the Secretary General



Secretary General of BIMSTEC, Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, received Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh, Mr. IWAMA Kiminori, at the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka on 11 January 2024.

They discussed the avenues for future cooperation between Japan and BIMSTEC, including in the domain of regional connectivity.

## Former Secretary General of BIMSTEC meets with the Secretary General



Former Secretary General of BIMSTEC, H.E. M Shahidul Islam, met with the new Secretary General of BIMSTEC, Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, at the Secretariat on 16 January 2024.

The former Secretary General shared his experience as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Secretary General of BIMSTEC with the new Secretary General.



## Workshop on Leveraging Thematic Circuits for BIMSTEC Tourism



A workshop on Leveraging Thematic Circuits for BIMSTEC Tourism Development was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 17 January 2024, preceding the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Expert Group on Tourism. Officials representing the Governments of the BIMSTEC member States, Asian Development Bank and BIMSTEC Secretariat attended the Workshop.

The workshop aimed at fostering greater understanding of the proposed tourism strategy for BIMSTEC discussed the findings and the plan for implementation of the recommendations and reviewed the current challenges in tourism development faced by BIMSTEC member States.

## Second Meeting of BIMSTEC Expert Group on Tourism



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of the BIMSTEC Expert Group on Tourism was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 18 January 2024 with the participation of representatives from all member States. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Gobinda Bahadur Karkee, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation of Nepal, which is the Lead member State, for shepherding cooperation in People-to-People Contact Sector.

The Meeting discussed and finalized the updated draft Plan of Action on Tourism and also made important decisions regarding, inter alia, operationalization of the Virtual BIMSTEC Tourism Information Center and BIMSTEC Tourism Fund.



## First Meeting of Eminent Persons' Group on Future Directions of BIMSTEC



The First Meeting of the Eminent Persons' Group (EPG) on the Future Directions of BIMSTEC was convened on 25 January 2024 at the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Meeting was chaired by Dr. Soonthorn Chaiyindeepum, member of EPG from Thailand.

The members of EPG from all seven BIMSTEC member States (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand) participated in the Meeting. The BIMSTEC Secretariat, led by H.E. Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, also participated in the deliberations.

The EPG has been mandated to develop an outcome-oriented BIMSTEC 2030 Agenda; examine BIMSTEC activities in all areas of its cooperation; undertake a thorough and comprehensive review of the existing BIMSTEC institutional framework; and come up with practical recommendations, which will serve as guidelines to effectively steer BIMSTEC forward, aimed at enabling the building of a prosperous, resilient and open Bay of Bengal region.

The EPG will hold its next meeting in Dhaka on 11-12 March 2024.

## Secretary General calls on Foreign Minister of Bangladesh



The newly appointed Secretary General (SG) of BIMSTEC, Ambassador Indra Mani Pandey, called on H.E. Dr. Hasan Mahmud, M.P., Honourable Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, on 30 January 2024, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh. SG congratulated H.E. Dr. Hasan Mahmud on his appointment as the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and apprised him of the progress being made in fostering regional cooperation under BIMSTEC framework.

He thanked the Government of Bangladesh for hosting the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka and providing it with utmost support in enabling it to fulfill its responsibilities. He also commended the vital role of Bangladesh in making progress in regional cooperation

BIMSTEC framework. He briefed Honourable Minister on the deliberations by the Eminent Persons Group in their first Meeting in Dhaka on 25 January 2024 on charting a new future for BIMSTEC.

SG discussed with Honourable Minister the avenues for strengthening and deepening future cooperation amongst the BIMSTEC member States, including in the sector of Trade, Investment & Development, which is led by Bangladesh. Honourable Minister underlined the importance of fostering cooperation in other sectors, as well, particularly in the sector of Science, Technology and Innovation.



## BIMSTEC SUMMIT

The BIMSTEC Summit comprise the Heads of State/Government of the member States and is the supreme decision-making body of BIMSTEC. It primarily deliberates, provides policy guidance and takes decisions on key issues pertaining to the realization of the purposes of BIMSTEC. All decisions of the Summit Meetings are made on the basis of consensus.

The BIMSTEC Summit is being held once every two years, preceded by the Ministerial Meeting, and being hosted by the member State holding the BIMSTEC Chairmanship. Thailand is the current chair of BIMSTEC.

## BIMSTEC Summit



Fifth BIMSTEC Summit, Colombo, Sri Lanka, 30 March 2022



Fourth BIMSTEC Summit, Kathmandu, Nepal, 30-31 August 2018



Third BIMSTEC Summit, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, 04 March 2014



Second BIMSTEC Summit, New Delhi, India, 13 November 2008



First BIMSTEC Summit, Bangkok, Thailand, 31 July 2004

Sixth BIMSTEC Summit:  
Proposed to be held in  
Bangkok, Thailand

### BIMSTEC SECRETARIAT

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