



BFIU successfully hosted 13th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on AML/CFT in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

The 13th meeting of the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) sub-group on Anti-Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) was successfully hosted by the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU), on behalf of the Government of Bangladesh, in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh on 1st March, 2025. The meeting, which witnessed participation from representatives of BIMSTEC member countries including Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, and Thailand, focused on collaborative efforts to combat financial crimes in the region. A 12-member Bangladesh delegation comprising officials from BFIU, Foreign Ministry, Home Ministry, Anti-Corruption Commission and CID of Bangladesh Police attended the meeting.



The 13th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on AML/CFT unfolded in two distinct yet harmonious segments: the inaugural session, steeped in ceremony and reflection, and the main session, devoted to rigorous dialogue and collaboration.

The Honorable Governor of Bangladesh Bank, along with the Executive Director and Director of its Chattogram Office graced the inaugural session with their esteemed presence. Joining them were the Deputy Commissioner of Cox's Bazar, the Chief of the Tourist Police of Cox's Bazar, senior officials from



the Cox's Bazar District Administration and various tiers of leadership from the Bangladesh Financial Intelligence Unit (BFIU) including the Head of BFIU—each contributing gravitas to the occasion.

Setting a tone of warmth and unity, Mr. Md. Kawsar Matin, Deputy Head of BFIU, extended a heartfelt welcome to all delegates, ushering them into the coastal charm of Cox's Bazar for this pivotal gathering of minds.

Representing the BIMSTEC Secretariat, Mr. Prasanth Chandran, Director, conveyed his sincere appreciation to the Government of Bangladesh and BFIU for their meticulous organization of the meeting. He also expressed gratitude to the delegates of all Member States for their active and valued participation.



In his address, Mr. A. F. M. Shahinul Islam, Head of BFIU, shed light on Bangladesh's forward-looking strides in fortifying its AML/CFT regime. He underscored BFIU's pivotal role in this ongoing battle, a role affirmed by the 2016 APG Mutual Evaluation Report, which lauded BFIU as the “strongest building

block” in Bangladesh's defense against money laundering and terrorist financing.

The opening session of the meeting was graced by the Honorable Governor of Bangladesh Bank, Mr. Dr. Ahsan H. Mansur. He delivered the keynote address, emphasizing regional cooperation in combating ML/TF. He mentioned, Bangladesh is undergoing significant reforms, with the government prioritizing the recovery of illicitly siphoned assets. A Stolen Asset Recovery Taskforce has been established recently to address this issue, under which BFIU and law enforcement agencies working together to trace and repatriate misappropriated funds.



The day-long 13th meeting formally began with a presentation on the current and future plans of each country regarding the existing structures and criminal trends in the member states of BIMSTEC to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing. During the meeting, delegates discussed various initiatives aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in combating illicit financial flows and improving financial transparency. Key outcomes of the meeting included finalizing the Paper on Illicit Financial Flows (IFF), adopting an Action Plan to counter IFF among Member States, reviewing a MoU between BIMSTEC member states on capacity building on AML/CFT. The Meeting also called for BIMSTEC to explore the possibility to become an Observer of the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), reinforcing regional efforts to combat financial crimes. BFIU pledged continued collaboration with BIMSTEC to combat money laundering and terrorism financing.

It is worth highlighting that the 13th meeting witnessed a turning point, guided by the resolute and visionary leadership of the Chair. Through thoughtful deliberation and collaborative spirit, decisions long deferred in prior sessions finally found resolution.

Among these was the long-awaited finalization of key documents aimed at curbing illicit financial flows (IFF)—a matter that had lingered unresolved in earlier meetings. Equally significant was the consensus reached on capacity-building initiatives related to AML/CFT, steered to completion by the chair of the meeting. Acknowledging that no nation can single-handedly defeat the forces of money laundering and terrorist financing, the chair called for deeper mutual cooperation among BIMSTEC member states. This call to unity bore fruit: despite past hesitations, an agreement on the framework of the MoU was reached, with the attending representatives lending their consent—an achievement made possible by the chair's strategic and steadfast guidance.

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